

Brave Church/Hard Topics, 9/29: Sexual Orientation/Identity

The chat log of the discussion. NOTE: Names have been removed for privacy.

Covenant Rules:

- 1) we will accept conflict and commit to the way of kindness
- 2) we will take responsibility for how our own words are received.
- 3) we will ask permission before we challenge someone's views on a subject
- 4) we will show respect for one another and graciously receive feedback if someone feels disrespected.
- 5) we will use 'i' instead of 'you' statements. we will not accuse or attack.
- 6) Give everyone who wants to speak who wants to speak an opportunity to do so (:use raise hand feature::)

The Spectrum of Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation = who you are attracted to

Gender identity = how you identify yourself

Discussion: Have you ever felt like you didn't fit in with your community, school, church? What was it like? What did you learn from it?

seek group you feel comfortable with when might not feel you fit in elsewhere

"I was one of the nerdy girls in high school. " Same

as shy/introvert felt on the outside of conversations until gained skills to "step in" to conversation

minimal social interaction in HS/College; felt apart from other students

feeling that those outside the "special group" were the outsiders

not fitting in during HS, mother helped explain that it's ok to "be like we are" (introverted) - ok to be different and to be the way you are

And it's definitely to be an introvert.

grew up with intent to go to college not the mines; athletic ability wasn't enough to be "with the jocks"; felt outside of many things loved by those where grew up, accused of "being gay or worse" - most friends were on the margins/not part of in crowd. solidified resolve to move away - realized that while he wasn't what he was accused of, he had friends who were - created empathy/listening/support

personal experience ended up preparing him for his parenthood experiences

"failure" of divorce based on her faith; but couldn't fully participate in the faith she knew. Mother gave her healing by accepting Grace as a community

other people assign you your sexual orientation or identity; which is none of their business. "accused of being gay" based on stature, disinterest in sports, wore glasses, intelligence, socially timid, theater /artistic implication, - gave him sympathetic attitude of those who were gay

takes grit to resist someone else's assignment of a particular situation/association; build grit by necessity

met up with a friend from high school group many years later, found out she had been in a long-term same-sex relationship. It was a surprise because when they were growing up, nobody talked about sex. It was a repressed time, community.

feeling like an outsider for not joining sorority

the importance of life-experiences to help us be more empathetic and seeing what those with different life experiences really might not have the same level of empathy (or any at all)

Different Christian Views and What the Bible Says About Homosexuality

On Genesis 19:1-10 (Sodom): (for what it's worth - I struggle with using that verse for any reason since he seems to be raised up for protecting visitors yet was willing to put his daughters into that situation... - not the topic for today, but felt the need to share)

Discussion: How do we make sense of the different interpretations of the Bible on homosexuality? What guides you most? What do you struggle with?

Other churches are struggling with these issues. CO Presbyterian Pastor Amy Morgan was willing to tackle tough issues in her sermon [Link added to the Brave Churches-Hard Topics web page]

Judge not that ye be judged.

Love your neighbor

Let he who cast the first stone.

The Bible writers had different thoughts in those days. But the message is clear that those writers do not approve of homosexuality. Though the speaker disagrees with them.

No one is perfect. Who am I to disagree with someone leading their own lives and not harming others.

Treat people with love and kindness.

Paul was raised in strict Jewish law. But he was traveling in a Greco Roman love where they believed this was a higher love.

The Greek gods had many homosexual relations among themselves.

“There is no longer Jew or Greek; there is no longer slave or free; there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.”

Greatest Commandments: and one of them, an expert in the law, asked [Jesus] a question to test him.

“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” [Matthew 22:35-40]

so many voices and no "pillar of the church" who must be right. weigh perspectives compared to "Jesus is the norm of the Bible" - and the character of Jesus comes through over and over again - and the idea that he would turn LGBTQ+ away goes against everything we know about him

similarity between Romans passage and what Moses found when he came down the Mountain with the 10 Commandments

we are discounting passages of the Bible that others are using to condemn. with our church we question what Bible says/means vs. others who have an authority they trust to figure out the answers for them. Possibly that puts us ahead of others who are accepting those who are not like us.

The Leviticus 20 passage clearly says that they are to be put to death for their sin. The writers of that passage obviously meant it. [NOTE from Nelson: This is worth further discussion on what this passage says, what other sins are considered in the same light, and what Jesus taught – for instance, although the woman in John was caught in adultery, which was also punishable by death, Jesus responded with “let he who is without sin cast the first stone” and then forgave the woman with no further punishment.]

is it a Bible study if you can't ask questions?

Methodists talking about it since pre-covid

Struggle w/ reading passages, what was said, what the original language said. Am I finding the reasons because they're there or because I want them to be there?

having ideas and using discussion groups to bounce ideas off each other to help us wrestle with these questions

love your neighbor as yourself - respect neighbors even if looking questioningly at what they're doing. Are their actions loving or destructive? Should we condemn loving actions?

Jesus said love your neighbor and knew that person would love/think/act/etc differently than you. That's the entire point.

Some of us were raised during a time when the Bible was the inerrant Word of God. Questioning some parts of the Bible now is sometime difficult.