

Studies on Homosexuality

St Paul's Lutheran Church Glenelg

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A. Homosexuality and Creation

1. Question: does God create people with a disposition to homosexuality?
2. Genesis 1: 27-28:
*God created man (humanity) in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.
God blessed them and said to them,
“Be fruitful and increase in number;
fill the earth and subdue it.”*
 - Creation of humans as male and female: norm
 - Male and female as terms for both sex and gender
 - Biology and identity
 - Humans as complementary sexual beings
 - Male and female as co-bearers of God's image
 - God's blessing of the union of male and female
 - Connection between sexuality and procreation
 - Homosexual desire and activity as a result of the fall
 - Homosexuality as the perversion of the image of God
3. Reasons for present discussion: social changes
 - Traditional view: homosexual sexual intercourse as immoral act and sin against God
 - Prohibition of sodomy by the law as a crime against humanity
 - Recent legalisation of homosexual acts between consenting adults
 - Moral sanction of homosexual acts by most people in Australia
 - Pressure for legal sanction of homosexual partnerships as “marriages”: connection with anti-discrimination legislation and possible bill of rights
 - Pressure for the enactment and blessing of homosexual “marriages” by the church
 - Ordination of practising homosexuals as pastors and bishops (see Gene Robinson in the USA)
 - Shift from focus on homosexual acts to homosexual persons: deeds ► identity
 - New distinction between sexuality as something biological and gender as socially constructed
 - Sexuality: male, female, hermaphrodite, neuter
 - Gender: heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, transsexual, asexual identity

4. The origin of homosexuality: theories

- Most likely not genetic
- Prenatal events
 - Hormonal imbalance
 - Maternal trauma
 - Rejection of the unborn child by its mother
- Lack of proper identification with parents
 - Physically or emotionally absent father: no attachment
 - Smothering mother: no detachment
- Marital discord
- Fixation at pre-puberty stage of identification with members of the same sex
- Seduction in adolescence by a person of the same sex
- Sexual abuse or failure in relationships with the opposite sex
- Deliberate choice of homosexual identity and lifestyle: coming out

B. God's Attitude to Sodomy

1. The Teaching on Sodomy in Leviticus

a. The prohibition of sodomy in Leviticus 18:22:

You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.

- Context of family:
None of you shall approach any close relative to uncover nakedness (18:6).
- Lying as with a woman: anal intercourse
- Second last in a list of sexual sins
- Abomination: abhorrent to God
- Reasons
 - Pagan practice:
You shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where you lived, and you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you (18:3)
 - Protection of flow of life from God through the family:
You shall keep my statutes and my ordinances; by doing them a human being will live/have life by them (18:5)
 - Defilement:
Do not defile yourselves in these ways, for by these practices the nations I am casting out before you have defiled themselves (18:24)

b. The penalty for sodomy in Lev 20:13:

If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death; their blood is on them.

- Penalty of death: self-destruction
- Reason for harsh penalty: desecration of God's holiness:
Consecrate yourselves and be holy; for I am the Lord your God. Keep my statutes and observe them; I am the Lord who makes you holy (20:8-9).

2. The Teaching on Sodomy in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11:

Do you not know that unrighteous people will not inherit God's kingdom? Stop deceiving yourselves: neither fornicators nor idolaters nor adulterers nor catamites nor sodomites nor thieves nor greedy people, not drunkards nor abusive people nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

- List of ten sins that all exclude people from receiving their inheritance from God the Father
- Catamite: "soft" passive partner that plays the female role in an act of sodomy ► male prostitute
- Sodomite: dominant partner who "has intercourse with a male" (see 1 Tim 1:10)

- Rescue from all these by Christ in baptism
 - Clean before God in Christ
 - Holy before God in Christ
 - Pardoned before God in Christ
- Does this contradict the law of God in Leviticus?
 - See the words of Jesus in Matt 5:17:
I have not come to abolish the law and the prophets but to fulfil them.
 - See Paul's words in Gal 3:13:
Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.
- What does this teaching mean for anyone who has engaged in sodomy?

3. Idolatry and Homosexuality

Paul's Discussion in Romans 1:18-27:

The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of those who by their wickedness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made.

So they are without excuse; for though they knew God, they did not honour him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools; and they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being or birds or animals or reptiles.

*Therefore **God gave them over** in the desires of their hearts to impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is praised forever. Amen.*

*Therefore **God gave them over** to shameful passions. Even their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural. In the same way also the men abandoned natural intercourse with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.*

- General knowledge and experience of God
- Suppression of truth by guilt and unbelief
 - Refusal to honour God and give thanks to him
 - Own glory: self as god
 - Own achievements
 - Darkened heart
 - Foolish thinking: fantasy and futility
 - Distorted conscience
 - Folly of idolatry
 - Gross: statues of gods
 - Subtle: body beautiful
- Two exchanges
 - Glory of God for glory of an idol: don't reflect God but ourselves and animals
 - Truth of God as the life-giving Creator for a self-degrading lie: ourselves as creators and our service of creatures
- God's judgement on human idolatry
 - Handing over to what we desire: our idol
 - Desire for what is unclean ► degrading of bodies
 - Desire for own sex ► homosexual intercourse
 - Stewing in our own juice from the consequences of our idolatry
- Note the terms used sexual immorality and homosexual intercourse
 - Folly
 - Idolatry
 - Degradation of the body
 - Living a lie: delusion

- Shameful passion
- Unnatural act
- Indecent act
- Perversion/error
- Three questions
 - What kinds of sexual intercourse are acts of idolatry?
 - In what ways is homosexual intercourse an act of idolatry?
 - In what ways is God's giving people over to their sexual sins a positive, helpful reaction them and the people around them?