

Homosexuality

Written by Rev. C. Bouwman
Published on 20 September 2012



Why is Homosexuality an Abomination?

Last spring President Obama went on record as now being supportive of same sex marriage. Report has it that his daughters' take on the subject was a contributing factor to his change of heart; these young girls (it's said) could see no reason why marriage had to be between two persons of opposite gender. That comment was included in the news because the Obama girls are (we're to understand) typical of today's North American young people. Thanks to the public education system, today's western Young People see nothing inherently wrong with homosexual activity.

Scripture

Scripture presents a very different assessment of homosexuality. The people of Sodom & Gomorrah demanded Lot's two male guests "so that we can have sex with them" (Genesis 19:5). Their demand confirmed to the Lord God that the "sin" of these cities was "so grievous" (18:20) that they had to be destroyed; "the LORD rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah" (19:24). Consistent with the Lord's disgust at their homosexuality, the Lord told His people-by-covenant, "If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads" (Leviticus 20:13; cf 18:22). Paul writes to the Romans that homosexual behavior is itself a punishment from God on the earlier sin of sexual impurity whereby the body is worshiped instead of the body's Creator (see Romans 1:24-27). Elsewhere he writes, "Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders ... will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9f).

Why?!

Texts as those listed above lead to an obvious and straightforward conclusion: the Lord God condemns and hates homosexual activity. Since He is the final Judge of right and wrong (and not public opinion), it's obviously His Word to which one needs to conform. That being said, one can still ask why God hates and condemns homosexual activity. Given that today's Young

People are largely OK with same-sex activity, Christian youth (and the not so young) need an answer to this question. That's the more so because it's not only outside the church that persons struggle with homosexual leanings. Why, then, does God use a word as 'abomination' or 'detestable' (depending on which translation you use) to describe His evaluation of this behavior?

What's wrong with it?

The Lord God first created one person, a male, and placed him in the Garden (Genesis 2:7ff) with the mandate to care for it. That done, the Lord God noted that it wasn't good for the man to be alone, and so determined to "make a helper suitable for him" (Genesis 2:18). The helper God made was not a second man but a woman (Genesis 2:22). More, the helper God made was not a new creation in the sense that God collected more dust and shaped it into the form of a woman; instead, God took a part from the existing man and fashioned from it a female.

Why did God create two genders? The answer cannot be that God needed two genders for human procreation. He fashioned other creatures that reproduce without the involvement of a second gender. Google to parthenogenesis to find examples. More, God is almighty and so able to have more people arrive on Planet Earth in the same way the first two people arrived; He could repeat the creation of Adam endlessly (see Matthew 3:9), and of Eve too. To help us to an answer, we should turn to the first mention of two genders in relation to the human race, and that's Genesis 1:27: "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."

Image of God

What's striking in this text is that the creation of "male and female" is mentioned in the same breath as the notion of the image of God. The reference to 'image of God' does not refer to mankind's outward looks, as if we have a nose where God has a nose and toes where God has toes. If that were the case, how far would we have to press the human anatomy in relation to God – specifically since the Bible consistently uses the male pronoun in relation to Him? That would lead to the conclusion that the woman images God less accurately than the man does.... Yet that flies in the face of the text just quoted from Genesis 1:27.

The term 'image of God' needs to be understood in terms of what we act like – specifically in how we rule over God's creation. As God is loving to all He has made (Psalm 145), so mankind's manner of ruling is to be loving to all creatures; as the Lord God is kind, so mankind's manner of ruling is to reflect kindness; as He's holy, so we're to be holy; as He hates sin, so we're to hate sin; as He's just, so we're to be just, etc. From man's behavior, then, creatures on earth, the angels above, and even God Himself, should be able to see something of what God is like. Imaging God is obviously a high calling (Ps 8).

Alone

What does this have to do with two genders? Consider this. God reveals what He is like specifically in His relation to mankind – in distinction from His relation to robins or rabbits. Only with the human race did God establish a bond of love so that people can call God Father and themselves be His children; only for the human race did God create a Garden-of-

abundance in which to live (though He undoubtedly put birds and animals in the Garden, and supplied their needs generously); only to the human race did God give the privileged responsibility to work the Garden and care for it (Genesis 2:15); and only for the benefit of humanity did God habitually come to the Garden in the cool of the day (Genesis 3:8). And there's the question: could Adam relate to a racoon the way God related to him? Could Adam's relation with a buzzard catch the depth of God's tender care for His covenant partner – both in physical care and in communication? We realize well: with a racoon there was no way Adam could image God's unique covenant relation with man – simply because on this level Adam was “alone” (Genesis 2:18).

God's solution? God did not create a second man for Adam to relate to, but a woman. The woman He fashioned was just like the man – true humanity, a child of God, equally talented as the man. And yet she was so different – in gifts and strength and emotions and so much more; the Holy Spirit says that she is “the weaker partner” (1 Peter 3:7). Had God created a second man identical to the first, He would not represent accurately the difference He created between Himself and the creature with whom He established His covenant; two men together (identical) would communicate that God and man are somehow on a level. As it is, God created a second human being very different from the first, and yet one with whom Adam could relate very well, so that the male and the female in their relation together could image well God's covenant relation with the human race.

Marriage

Where this leaves us? God created the human race to image what He is like – and that required the creation of two genders, male and female. More, young men and young women are to learn to relate together in such a way that they reflect well something of God's relation with His covenant partner. That's why Paul can write that husbands are to love their wives “just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her to make her holy.... In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies” (Ephesians 5:25ff). Note the reference to “just as” and “in this same way”; that's imaging God! Similarly, “as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything” (Ephesians 5:24); that's how they image God. And sexuality, of course, belongs in marriage as an expression of total self-giving for the benefit of the other (Genesis 2:24).

Conclusion

Given, then, that God created the human race in two genders to image what He is like, we can now understand why God considers homosexual behavior to be “detestable”, an “abomination”. The two parties in the covenant relation between God and people never, ever have an identical standing and never, ever become equals. Homosexual behavior gives the lie to God's relation with people, as if God and man are somehow identical.

Next time, DV: How ought a Christian to relate to a homosexual?

C Bouwman
September 20, 2012

