

MCLEAN BIBLE CHURCH
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PASTOR LON SOLOMON

>> PASTOR LON SOLOMON: It's great to be together and studying the word of God as the McLean Bible Church family. You know, virtually every one of us here knows someone personally who would claim to be a homosexual. Maybe it's a relative, maybe it's a friend, maybe it's a co-worker, and some of us here even struggle with same sex attraction ourselves. Well, as we resume our verse by verse study in the book of Genesis, this is what we want to talk about today. And as we all know, this topic is probably the most controversial topic in all of America at this present time. And so many people have asked me, hey, Lon, are we going to skip this because it is so controversial?

Well, let me just say that here at McLean Bible Church; we don't skip topics, that's not what we do. We teach the Bible, verse by verse, and when we come to any topic, we deal with it Biblically, and we deal with it straightforwardly, and then we move on to the next verses and we deal with whatever topic that they bring up. And this is what we're going to do today.

Now, I know a lot of churches have addressed this subject and they've done so in a hateful manner, and in a homophobic manner, but that is not who we are at McLean Bible Church. We're going to address this issue from a Biblical perspective, in a Biblical way, which means we're going to teach what the Bible really says about the topic of homosexuality and same sex marriage, but we're going to do it in a way that reflects the love and the compassion of the Lord Jesus Christ for every single one of us.

So, are you ready? Are we ready to dig in?

Now, what brings all this up are the events of Genesis 19. So let's go there. But a tiny review, we haven't been there for a while. Remember in Genesis 18, three men appear to Abraham, two of them are angels in human form, and one of them is the Lord Jesus Christ himself in the appearance of a man. And as part of that visit, Genesis 20, the outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great and their sin is exceedingly grievous.

So what was there sin that was so grievous in the sight of God? Well, let's go into Chapter 19 and we'll find out, verse 1. So the two men, that is the angels, arrived in Sodom in the evening and Lot was sitting in the city gate. And when Lot saw the two men, he rose and went to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground, and said, "Sirs, please step outside, you can wash your feet and spend the night there and then go on your way early in the morning." But before they went to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom, both young and old, surrounded Lot's house. And they called to Lot and said, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them."

So Lot went outside to meet them and said, "No, do not do this wicked thing." But the men said, "Get out of our way."

But the two men, the angels reached out and pulled Lot back into the house and shut the door, then they struck the men at the door, young and old, with blindness. And after Lot and his family get out of Sodom, verse 24, then the Lord rained down fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah and thus, he overthrew those cities.

Now, what was the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah that was so exceedingly grievous in the Lord's sight that he did this to these cities?

Well, some people say based on a verse in the book of Ezekiel that it was lack of hospitality on the part of these men. But my friends, that is just not the case. And we know that because in the New Testament we have commentary on this chapter that makes it clear what the sin was that the Lord was upset about. Second Peter 2:6. "God condemned Sodom and Gomorrah to make them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly." This is especially true of those who indulge in the lusts of unclean passions. And the Greek word here, meosmis that is used for unclean passions is a word that is used of sexual passions only. That's what it's talking about. So whatever the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was, it was a sexual sin. And in light of the passage, the only sexual sin that meets the test is, of course, the homosexual behavior that these men wanted to engage in with the two angels.

So, now that we've settled that, let's talk about where we are in America today on this issue. Well, as you probably know this past Tuesday, Minnesota became the 12th state to legalize same sex marriage. You also probably know that California's Proposition 8 by which the citizen's of California had passed an amendment to the California constitution, state constitution, outlawing same sex marriage, that that is now being considered by the United States Supreme Court and most experts expect fully that it's going to be overturned. As a matter of fact, the Pew Research Society did a poll last year and March, 2012, found that 70 percent of people born here in America support same sex marriage. 70 percent.

Now, why -- why do all these people support same sex marriage?

Well, it's like President Obama said six years ago, he said and I quote, "The basic principle America is founded on the idea that we're all created equally, applies to everybody, regardless of sexual orientation, as well as race or gender or religion or ethnicity. Let's treat everybody fairly. Let's treat everybody equally."

In other words, all these folks that are supporting same sex marriage are doing it because they see this as a civil rights issue. They see it as a fairness issue. They see it as a let's treat everybody equally issue. And if we as followers of Christ, here is where the rub comes for us, because if we oppose same sex marriage and homosexuality just on a civil rights basis, or just on

a fairness basis, or just on an equality basis, if that is the reason we oppose it, then folks, every wrong and nasty thing that the world says about us is true of us. We are bigots. We are prejudiced. We are sexist. We are racist. We are intolerant. And, we are mean spirited. But as followers of Christ, we are people of the Book, which means that first and foremost, every issue in the world is not a civil rights issue; first and foremost, it is not a fairness issue; first and foremost, it is not an equality issue, first and foremost. First and foremost, it must be a Biblical issue. And then - (Applause) -- and then, based on what the Bible says, we decide how we're going respond to that issue.

So what does the Bible say about homosexual behavior and same sex marriage?

Let's begin, Leviticus 20:13. "The Bible says if a man lies with another man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable."

Leviticus 18:22. "You shall not lie with a man as one lies with a woman. It is an abomination in the eyes -- who joined of the Lords. As we've already seen in Leviticus 18:20, God said, "The sin of Sodom -- which we know now was homosexual behavior -- "was grievous in His sight."

If we go into the New Testament, we find the Bible taking the same position. In Romans 1:26, "degrading". In Romans 1:26, the Bible calls it "unnatural". In Romans 1:27, the Bible calls it "indecent". In Romans 1:28, the Bible calls it "depraved and not proper". In 2 Peter 2:6, the Bible calls it "ungodly". In 2 Peter 2:10, the Bible calls it "unclean".

I could give you a lot of other versus, but I think the point is clear, that the Bible has a totally consistent position on homosexual behavior, a position that has never changed since homosexual behavior first appeared here on earth; namely, that God regards it as sinful, ungodly behavior.

And what about same sex marriage? What's the Bible say about that? Well, the Bible, likewise, says that that's not part of God's plan for the human race either.

Listen, Genesis 2:24, here's where God made the institution of marriage. The Bible says, "A man -- in Hebrew, iysh, meaning male as opposed to female -- "A male shall cleave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his -- Hebrew, iyshah, doesn't mean wife, it means female -- "and they shall become one flesh."

From the very beginning God's man was one male and one female making up a marriage. And the Lord Jesus corroborated this, Matthew 19:5. He said, "A man shall cleave to his -- Greek word Gonae, which means not wife, but it actually means woman or female. And so it's true, that God loves the world. And it's true that Jesus died on the cross to offer forgiveness to everybody in the world. But if you think that changes God's position on homosexual behavior and on same sex marriage, my friend, I'm afraid you're sadly mistaken.

Now, let's look together at Romans 1. Are you with me? And here in Romans 1, the Bible is describing for us how human societies deteriorate morally and spiritually and come under God's judgment. There are three stages of this deterioration. And notice that each successive stage is denoted by the phrase, "God gave them over." Watch.

Stage number one is humanism. Verse 21 Romans 1. So, "For although men knew God existed, they refused to glorify him as God and exchanged the glory of God for images, idols in the form of men and birds and animals. Therefore, here comes our phrase, "God gave them over so that they worshipped and served created things, idols, rather than the Creator."

So stage one in a society's fall comes when it dethrones God as the head of that society and replaces him with man. Man's wisdom, man's achievements, man's capacities, man's idols: Fame, fortune, money, power, reputation. And it seems to me when it comes to the United States, that we are already well through stage one here in America.

Now, let's go to stage two, which is accepted homosexual behavior in a society. Romans 1:26, "Because of this, humanism, next -- here we go -- God gave them over to degrading passions for their women exchanged natural relations with men for that which is unnatural. And in the same way, men abandoned natural relations with women and burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing indecent acts.

And it ought to strike you as curious here that God mentions women first. The women in society first. Why does he do that? Well, it's because the Bible is trying to tell us that what we have here in stage two is not just a few closet homosexuals in a society. What we have here is an entire society accepting and approving and normalizing homosexual behavior so much so that even their women who normally are the more chaste and virtuous element of any society, even their women are brazenly taking part in it. Now this, it seems to me, is where our country is teetering right now here in stage 2. In fact, Time magazine had a cover article weeks ago, entitled Gay Marriage Already Won.

Exit polls in November 2012 showed that, "83 percent of voters here in America believe that same sex marriage will be legal nationwide in the next five to 10 years." End of quote.

And my friends, this is not an accident. We need to understand this is all part of a deliberate strategy by the gay community. In his article entitled the Overhauling Of Straight America, author Marshall Kirk says, and I quote, "The first order of business is desensitization of the American public concerning gays and gay rights. Our campaign should not demand direct support for homosexual practices, but should instead take antidiscrimination as its theme. You can forget about," he says, "trying to persuade the masses that homosexuality is a good thing. But," he says, "if you

can only get them to think that it is just another thing, then your battle for legal and social rights is virtually won."

And he concludes by saying, "And we can undermine the moral authority of homophobic churches by portraying them as antiquated backwaters badly out of step with the times and with the latest findings of psychology, such has worked well on churches before on such topics as divorce, and abortion." End of quote.

That brings us to stage 3, which is spiritual hardness. The Bible calls this kind of society a society with a reprobate mind. Watch. Verse 28, Romans 1, "Since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God in their minds -- here's our phrase -- "God gave them over to a reprobate mind so that they became filled with every sort of wicked behavior and depravity, not only did they themselves do such behavior, but they took pleasure in convincing other people in society to do them also."

In this final stage, we have a society without a conscience, a society that has become desensitized to sin. As the verse says, "It's full of every sort of wicked behavior and depravity."

You say, well, hey, Lon, at least praise God we're not there yet.

Really? You ever watch television lately? You ever watch cable lately? I mean, adultery and premarital sex are as casual as having a Diet Coke now on television in cable. Murder is in virtually every show. Pornography is rampant, and foul language has become so commonplace that the bleeps don't even matter anymore.

What's happening to our society? Well, we are beginning to enter stage three. And how does all this relate to homosexuality? Well, because Romans 1 tells us that once a society legitimizes homosexuality, it's like that society loses its moral compass and a morale decline begins in that society from which history tells us no society has ever survived.

Now, that's as far as we want to go in our Biblical treatment of this subject, but it does leave us with a very important question. And we all know what this is, don't we?

Y'all still okay out there?"

>> AUDIENCE: Yeah.

>> PASTOR LON SOLOMON: Are you ready, Loudoun, Bethesda, the Edge, all around the world? Here at Tysons, are we ready?

All right. Nice and loud.

>> AUDIENCE: Go forward.

>> PASTOR LON SOLOMON: You say, Lon, that's pretty heavy stuff you dropped on us. So what are we supposed to do?

I'd actually suggest to you we need a two-pronged response. A two-pronged so what. Response number one is we need the church to keep standing for God's truth.

Remember we said two weeks ago that one of the four purposes of the church is to proclaim God's truth as found in the Bible to a lost and dying world? Therefore, response number one is that we

need to continue telling the world God's position on homosexuality and same sex marriage.

Now, I have to tell you, personally, I'm inclined to agree with Time magazine that gay marriage already won. That we have gone so far over the precipice at this point that apart from a holy spirit-driven, earth shaking revival in America, there is no turning this back around again. But I'm praying for that kind of revival. However, whether it happens or not, it doesn't resolve us as a church of our responsibility before God to preach the word, 2 Timothy 4, to preach it without compromise and to preach it whether it's popular or not. And that's exactly what we plan to keep on doing here at McLean Bible Church. Amen. (Yes.) All right. That's us.

Now, but there's a second response that we need to also have, and that is we need to reach out to homosexual people with Christ centered love and compassion because homosexual behavior can result in some really bad consequences in people's lives.

You know, there were three studies published in the archives of general psychiatry, published by the journal of the American Medical Association. It's not a Christian journal. And the concluding one of these studies was by J Michael Bailey. Now J Michael Bailey, in case you don't know, was one of the researchers that worked on the gay twin studies that have been used by the gay community to support the fact that people are certain -- just certain people are just born that way. So my point is, he is not anti-homosexual by any stretch of the imagination, he's one of their heroes, and yet even he said, and I quote, "These studies contain arguably the best published data on the association between homosexuality and psycho pathology. And both studies converge on the same unhappy conclusion, that homosexual people are at substantially higher risk for some forms of emotional problems, including suicidality, major depressions, anxiety disorder, conduct disorder, and substance abuse." End of quote.

What did I say? This kind of behavior can have some really ugly consequences. And in his article, Homosexuality and Mental Health Problems, Doctor Neil Whitehead summarizing the same three studies in that journal said, and I quote, "Recent studies show homosexuals have a substantially greater risk of suffering from psychiatric problems than do heterosexuals. We see higher rates of suicide, depression, bulimia, anti-personality disorder and substance abuse."

We need to have compassion on people who are caught up in behavior that is having potentially horrible consequences in their life.

You say, but Lon, wait a minute, wait a minute, maybe the reason they're having all of these terrible consequences psychiatrically is, is because of the social stigma here in America that goes along with being homosexual. In other words, if our society in parts,

weren't so anti-homosexual, then maybe they would -- they wouldn't develop these psychiatric problems.

Well, I'm afraid that's just not true. And Dr. Whitehead, one of studies was done in the Netherlands, Dr. Whitehead said the authors of the studies, one of the three, in Netherlands, were surprised to find so much mental illness in homosexual people in a country where tolerance of homosexuality is greater than in almost all other countries.

Do you understand what he's saying is that in a country where there are no such social stigmas, people still have all of these same consequences to their behavior.

He goes on to say another good comparison is New Zealand which is much more tolerant of homosexuality than the United States, despite this broad level of social tolerance in New Zealand. In a study done in New Zealand, suicide attempts among homosexual people were common at about the same rate as in the United States.

Now, I'm sorry, it's not that we live in a tougher culture and that causes the psychiatric issues in people indulging in homosexual behavior, that's not it. It's the behavior itself, my friends. The behavior itself.

You say, but Lon, what about homosexual people who say that they really have this inborn attraction for members of the opposite sex, that it's not a choice that they make, and it's not their imagination, that it's real? Well, I believe them. You say, you do? Of course, because as a non-gay man, I have an inborn attraction to members of the opposite sex and it's not my imagination either.

You say, so you agree, Lon? You agree that same sex attraction is intrinsically ingrained in some people?

Absolutely, I agree with that. So is lying, cheating, stealing, adultery, manipulation, scheming, coveting, gossiping. Remember we saw in the book of Genesis earlier that when Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the garden, that one of the consequences is that every human being is born with an intrinsic sin nature? And all of these things we just named, lying, cheating, stealing, adultery, homosexual desire, all of it is part of that sin nature. But folks, that's not the real issue. The real issue is what we do with these inborn sinful desires.

Remember, it is not sin to have a sinful desire. It is sin to act on it. I've been married now, next month, for 39 years and I know what God says, says in the Bible, "Thou shall not commit adultery." So I have to depend on the Holy Spirit power to shut down that innate attraction that I have for other women, not to act on it, but to mortify it. That's what the issue here is all about. It's about helping homosexual people by the Holy Spirit's power control their same sex desires in obedience to God, just like I have to control my heterosexual desires by the power of the Holy Spirit in obedience to God. There's no difference.

And so here's the bottom line: God's message in the Bible to homosexual people and to heterosexual people, my friends, is the same. Remember, all sin is equally offensive to Almighty God. And God loves every sinner equally. And Jesus died on the cross for heterosexual people, just as much as he did for homosexual people. Equally. And we need to reach out to people who are involved in homosexual behavior with compassion and tell them that through the life-altering power of Jesus Christ, and with the help of some loving, godly friends, every one of us, homosexual, heterosexual, whatever, we can all live in obedience to God. That is the message of the Bible.

Praise the lord, huh? And that's what our message is. (Applause) Now, let me just conclude by saying that if you're here today and you're struggling with same sex attraction, and it's not a choice you're making, it's real in your life, and you've never told anybody, ever, because you're embarrassed or you're afraid, I'm here to tell you that hiding this is the absolute worst thing you can do. Jesus said in John 12, he said, "Walk in the light." Friends, healing only happens in the light. It doesn't happen in the darkness. That's not just for same sex attraction. It's for every sin. Healing happens in the light where we can bring the power of the spirit of God to bear on that area, and where we can get some godly loving friends to walk with us in that area. But it's got to be in the light. It's got to be in the light.

So, if this is something you struggle with, what I want you to do is I want you to get in touch with your campus pastor, they understand that they'll be getting these contacts and they're ready, and let him know what's going on in your life so we can come alongside you and be the friends that you need, and help you learn to walk in the Holy Spirit's power.

And if you're here today and you've never trusted Jesus as your real and personal savior, there was a pre-step for you. And the pre-step is you got to trust Christ. Friends, the Holy Spirit's power that enables us to live in obedience to God only gets activated when we get born again. It only gets activated when we accept Christ as our savior and become a child of God. That's a pre-step for you.

And so, you need to call our campus pastors, too. Because if you try to tackle this with the greatest of motives without the power of spirit, you don't have a chance. None of us has a chance.

Now, listen, we don't skip topics at McLean Bible Church because they're controversial. But by the same token, we don't harp on topics because they're controversial. So, this is it. We're done. We're not going to talk about homosexuality next week, or the week after that, or again until we get to a passage that mentions it, because that's how we do it here. We go verse by verse and we preach the passage. But this was the passage today, and I hope that we've dealt with it with Biblical clarity so you know exactly what the Bible teaches us. All this propaganda, we have to know

what God says. But I hope we've also dealt with it in a way that's compassionate and in a way that reflects the love of Jesus for every sinner on earth.

Let's be careful here not to be 21st century Pharisees. Oh, thank you, God, I'm not like them and I'm not like them. Huh-uh. Yes, you are. We're all like each other in the sight of Almighty God. We're all sinners. And we all need the same grace and mercy from the Lord Jesus Christ. So let's go out and extend it to everybody. Let's pray.

Heavenly father, thank you for talking to us today about an extremely sensitive and controversial topic. And, Lord, I hope today we have done what we said, that we've been true to the word of God, not only in the truths we've taught about the issue, but also in the spirit in which we've taught them, that is in the spirit of Christ's love and compassion for all of us.

Father, I take -- I pray you take this message because it's going viral, we know that, and you would use it in the hearts and lives of people, not just here in Washington, but everyone who hears it, to convince people that they can live in obedience to God. I don't care what sin they're dealing with, through the power of God's spirit, and in community with loving godly friends, and may they be motivated by your spirit to get that help that they need and come to Christ.

So, Lord, we commit this message to you, use it in a mighty way for the glory of Christ in people's lives and help us be people to reach out to everyone with that compassion and love of Christ. And we pray these things in Jesus' name.

And what do God's people say? (Amen.) Amen. Thanks for being here today. God bless you.

(Applause)

(Music)

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