

TAKE BACK THE RAINBOW

A Stand-alone Sermon

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Since 1978 the rainbow flag has been the signal for Gay Pride. Then in 1999, President Bill Clinton declared June “Gay and Lesbian Pride Month.” So, every June in America the rainbow flags come out. You can’t go anywhere without seeing them. It is displayed on corporate logos and cereal boxes. The children’s show Blues Clues made a new episode in honor of Pride Month. The public library displays LGBT books. Retail stores and restaurants decorate with rainbows and sell special Gay Pride Merchandise. You see the rainbow on tv shows, commercials, and especially all over social media. In June 2015, the President Obama Whitehouse was lit up with rainbow colors to celebrate the Supreme Court decision to legalize same-sex marriage. In 2017 the U.S. Women’s Soccer Team wore a pride-themed jersey. This year the San Francisco Giants became the first major league baseball team to wear pride-themed uniforms. The flag has come to symbolize and communicate that gay is good; it is normal; it is moral; it is not sinful; it is something to be proud of and to celebrate.
2. Writing for the Center for Biblical Worldview, **Joseph Backholm** said, “It’s ironic that those who started “Pride” events used the term “pride” to describe them. They named their entire movement after one of the seven deadly sins; a sin that Proverbs assures us is the prelude to our destruction: “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall” (Prov. 16:18). It is almost as if God was looking to make it obvious what was actually happening here. Just as we would be wise to avoid celebrating “Wrath Month” or a “Lust Parade,” Christians should be wary of celebrating pride. After all, we know what happens next.”

II. THE REAL MEANING OF THE RAINBOW

1. But what is the real meaning of the rainbow?
2. The Bible tells us that early on in human history mankind had become very evil; so evil, that God decided to do something about it.
 - i. **Genesis 6:5-7** 5 When the LORD saw that human wickedness was widespread on the earth and that every inclination of the human mind was nothing but evil all the time, 6 the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and he was deeply grieved. 7 Then the LORD said, “I will wipe mankind, whom I created, off the face of the earth, together with the animals, creatures that crawl, and birds of the sky—for I regret that I made them.”
3. How did God wipe out mankind? With a worldwide flood.
4. However, God found favor with one man – Noah.

- i. **Genesis 6:8** “8 Noah, however, found favor with the Lord. 9 These are the family records of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among his contemporaries; Noah walked with God.”
- 5. God told Noah to build an ark – a huge boat – that would protect Noah’s family, and preserve two of every kind of animal to repopulate the earth.
- 6. Eventually God sent the flood.
 - i. **Genesis 7:11-12** “11 In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the sources of the vast watery depths burst open, the floodgates of the sky were opened, 12 and the rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.”
- 7. The flood destroyed all the people and animals on the earth except those who were in the ark.
- 8. Eventually the rain stopped, and the flood waters receded, and God made a promise to Noah to never flood the earth again.
 - i. **Genesis 9:13-15** “13 I have placed my bow in the clouds, and it will be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. 14 Whenever I form clouds over the earth and the bow appears in the clouds, 15 I will remember my covenant between me and you and all the living creatures: water will never again become a flood to destroy every creature.”
- 9. So, what does the rainbow represent?
 - i. The rainbow represents God’s faithful mercy.
 - 1. On the one hand, it represents God’s faithfulness. Our God is a promise-keeping God. God promised to never flood the entire earth again, and after thousands of years, He has kept His word. At the same time, God has promised that one day Jesus will judge the living and the dead, and the righteous will go to heaven, and the unrighteous will go to hell.
 - 2. On the other hand, the rainbow represents God’s mercy. Mankind hasn’t gotten any better since the time of Noah. We are still very sinful. And God still hates sin. But God doesn’t treat us the way we deserve. Not only has He promised to never flood the earth again, but He has provided a new ark – Jesus Christ, His Son – to save us from the coming flood of His judgment. All who repent of their sins and turn to Jesus Christ in faith will be forgiven and receive eternal life.
- 10. With that in mind, it is a shame that the rainbow has been adopted as the symbol to represent the celebration of homosexuality – a terrible sin in the eyes of God.

III. HOMOSEXUALITY IN AMERICA

- 1. American’s view of homosexuality has come a long way.
- 2. At one time it was outlawed. Today, homosexuality is still a crime in 71 countries; in eight countries homosexuals are executed for being gay. In 1961 Illinois became the

first state to decriminalize homosexuality. In June 2003 the Supreme Court decriminalized homosexuality in the case of Lawrence V. Texas.

3. Then it was tolerated. It was allowed, but still condemned by just about everyone in society. In fact, in 1952 the American Psychiatric Association listed homosexuality as a mental disorder. But it was tolerated.
4. Eventually it was normalized. Starting in the 1970s, homosexuality was viewed less and less as taboo and deviant, disordered and evil. Instead, it came to be seen as normal, natural, healthy, good. I'm reminded of the Seinfeld episode in which Jerry and George were accused of being gay together. They spent the entire episode trying to prove that they weren't gay. And every time they denied being gay, they would quickly follow up by saying, "Not that there's anything wrong with that." Homosexuality had become normalized. In 2001, 40% of Americans said that homosexual relationships were morally acceptable. In 2017, that number was up to 63%.
5. Then it became celebrated. Gay people were portrayed by Hollywood and the media as the most compassionate people; the nicest people; the life of the party. More and more celebrities came out of the closet as gay, and they were celebrated; congratulated; and commended for their bravery. Being gay is not something to be kept private, it's something to be shouted from the roof tops. It's not something to be ashamed of, it's something to be proud of. It's not something to hide, it's something to show and tell. Not only did society celebrate gay people, but it began to honor those who supported the gay community. Homosexuality was no longer an alternative lifestyle; it was the superior lifestyle.
6. And now it is being imposed. Now people in America are being punished for condemning homosexuality; for not supporting it; for not celebrating it; for not affirming and accepting it. Christian bakers and photographers and florists are being sued for not serving at gay weddings. A school teacher in New Jersey is serving a three-year suspension because she condemned homosexuality on Facebook. Amazon banned a book about the health hazards of homosexuality. A Kentucky clerk of court was put in jail because she refused to issue a same-sex marriage license. The fire chief of Atlanta was fired by the city council because he wrote a book that condemned homosexuality. Mozilla Firefox fired its CEO when it was discovered that he was against same-sex marriage.
7. So, the homosexual revolution has come full circle. It was once criminalized; now it is criminalized to oppose it. It was deviant and taboo; now it is deviant and taboo to speak against it. It is not evil, unloving, hateful, and intolerant to be a Christian.

IV. THE CRISIS IN THE CHURCH

1. This has led to a crisis in the church in America. Many pastors are afraid to preach on the subject. This has left Christian parents with a lack of clarity and conviction about the issue. And this has resulted in our children learning about homosexuality

from the media, Hollywood, Big Tech, and the public school system – all of whom are very clear and convinced about their position in favor of homosexuality.

2. Many Christians are convinced that homosexuality is not a sin. Many are not sure. Many believe it is a sin, but they also think it is a sin to say that it is a sin (because you're not supposed to judge).
3. The church needs clarity on this issue.

V. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

1. Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19).
 - i. Homosexuality is mentioned in the first book of the Bible, Genesis 19. Two cities, Sodom and Gomorrah, were so filled with homosexuals. Two angels entered the city of Sodom to see how bad it was. When Lot saw them, he persuaded them to spend the night at his house because the town square was so dangerous. When the men of the town learned that Lot had some male guests, they demanded that Lot send them out so that they could have sex with them. They attempted to break down the door, but the angels blinded them. Then the angels escorted Lot's family out of the city before God rained down burning sulfur, completely demolishing the two cities.
 - ii. The New Testament explains the nature of their sin. **Jude 1:7** "Likewise, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns committed sexual immorality and perversions, and serve as an example by undergoing the punishment of eternal fire."
2. The Mosaic Law
 - i. Next, in the Law of Moses the Bible makes it very clear God's stance against homosexuality.
 - ii. **Leviticus 18:22** "Do not practice homosexuality, having sex with another man as with a woman. It is a detestable sin."
 - iii. **Leviticus 20:13** "If a man practices homosexuality, having sex with another man as with a woman, both men have committed a detestable act. They must both be put to death, for they are guilty of a capital offense."
 - iv. Notice both of these verses say that homosexuality is a detestable act. Some translations use the word "abomination." It means this is an action that is extremely displeasing to God.
3. Jesus Christ
 - i. The entire Bible is very clear that sex is only for the context of marriage.
 - ii. Jesus goes into great detail to define marriage.
 - iii. **Matthew 19:4-6** "4 'Haven't you read the Scriptures?' Jesus replied. 'They record that from the beginning God made them male and female. 5 And he said, 'This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.' 6 Since they are no longer two but one, let no one split apart what God has joined together.'"

- iv. Jesus is actually quoting from Genesis 2, the second chapter in the Bible. He is saying that God's plan for human sexuality has never altered: One man and one woman in the context of marriage. Any sexual behavior outside of that formula, whether it is adultery, pornography, pre-marital sex, or homosexuality is against God's will.

4. Paul

- i. **Romans 1:26-27** "26 That is why God abandoned them to their shameful desires. Even the women turned against the natural way to have sex and instead indulged in sex with each other. 27 And the men, instead of having normal sexual relations with women, burned with lust for each other. Men did shameful things with other men, and as a result of this sin, they suffered within themselves the penalty they deserved."
- ii. Notice two things:
 - 1. The sin of homosexuality is not just males, but females.
 - 2. The strong language used by Paul to describe homosexual behavior:
 - a. Shameful
 - b. Unnatural
 - c. Abnormal
 - d. Sinful
 - e. Suffering
 - f. Penalized
- iii. **1 Corinthians 6:9-11** "9 Don't you know that the unrighteous will not inherit God's kingdom? Do not be deceived: No sexually immoral people, idolaters, adulterers, or males who have sex with males, 10 no thieves, greedy people, drunkards, verbally abusive people, or swindlers will inherit God's kingdom. 11 And some of you used to be like this. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."
 - 1. Notice Paul's description of homosexuality:
 - a. It is described as unrighteous.
 - b. They will not inherit God's kingdom.
 - c. It is included in a list of vices.
 - d. It can be forgiven.
 - e. It can be forsaken.
- iv. **1 Timothy 1:10-11** "10 The law is for people who are sexually immoral, or who practice homosexuality, or are slave traders, liars, promise breakers, or who do anything else that contradicts the wholesome teaching 11 that comes from the glorious Good News entrusted to me by our blessed God."
 - 1. Notice how Paul describes homosexuality: It "contradicts the wholesome teaching that comes from the glorious Good News." It contradicts Christian teaching.

5. From Genesis to the New Testament, the Bible clearly condemns homosexuality.

VI. THREE OBJECTIONS TO THE BIBLE'S TEACHING

1. The textual objection: The Bible doesn't really condemn homosexuality. It doesn't condemn homosexuality between two consenting adults in marriage. Instead, it only condemns behaviors such as homosexual prostitution, rape, promiscuity, or pedophilia.

i. Listen to some well respected Bible scholars who are also pro-homosexual advocates:

1. **Luke Timothy Johnson**, Emory University: "The task demands intellectual honesty. I have little patience with efforts to make Scripture say something other than what it says, through appeals to linguistic or cultural subtleties. The exegetical situation is straightforward: we know what the text says... I think it important to state clearly that we do, in fact, reject the straightforward commands of Scripture, and appeal instead to another authority when we declare that same sex-unions can be holy and good.... By so doing, we explicitly reject as well the premises of the scriptural statements condemning homosexuality – namely, that it is a vice freely chosen, a symptom of human corruption, and disobedience to God's created order."

2. **Dr. Walter Wink**, in his booklet, *Homosexuality and the Bible*: "Where the Bible mentions homosexual behavior at all, it clearly condemns it. I freely grant that. The issue is precisely whether that Biblical judgment is correct."

2. The genetic objection: People are born gay, so how can it be a sin.

i. This is called congenital determinism; some people are genetically incapable of making any other choice than to entertain homosexual desires and engage in homosexual conduct.

ii. Some people might even say, "This is the way God made me; it is who I am; so how can it be wrong? I was born that way."

iii. 46% of American believe that homosexuals are born that way.

iv. There are four problems with this objection:

1. Science has never found a "gay gene," or any proof that homosexuality is determined before you are born. In fact, if anything, science has proven the opposite with the many studies of identical twins. If homosexuality is genetic, then 99% of all identical twins should share the same sexual orientation. But that's not the case. There are countless examples of one twin being gay, but not the other.

2. Many studies have pointed to environment as to the cause of homosexuality, such as the emotional or physical absence of a caring

father during childhood; or sexual abuse sometime during childhood or adolescence.

3. Even if you were born gay, that doesn't justify your behavior. Being born with a proclivity or impulse to act a certain way doesn't mean that action is moral. Some studies seem to show that some people are born with a proclivity for alcoholism, but that doesn't justify alcoholism.
 4. There are countless examples of people who were once gay, but through the power of Jesus Christ that have found freedom from homosexuality and now live happily as heterosexuals. Michael Glatze was a former gay activist and the editor of a gay magazine aimed at youth in San Francisco. After he had a health scare and no one to turn to, He turned to Christ. Christ radically saved him and changed him. He resigned from the magazine, left his sexual partner of over 10 years, and in October of 2013 he got married to a woman named Rebekah. When he quit his job he left a note on the computer that read, "Homosexuality is death, and I choose life."
3. The emotional objection: I didn't choose these feelings, so how can they be wrong.
 - i. I have heard people says, "Did you choose to be straight? Neither did I choose to be gay."
 - ii. The problem with this is that feelings and emotions do not justify behavior. Just because you feel like doing something doesn't mean you should do it. Just because you feel like punching someone in the face doesn't mean you should do it. Just because you feel like committing suicide doesn't mean you should. Just because you feel attracted to someone other than your spouse doesn't mean you should act on it. The human heart is desperately wicked, and is often filled with wicked desires and impulses that we must repress and destroy. Feelings of same-sex attraction do not justify same-sex behavior.

VII. CONCLUSION

1. The clear teaching of the Bible is that homosexuality is against God's will. It is sinful, and sinners must repent.
 - i. This is why Christians cannot wave the rainbow flag and celebrate Gay Pride.
 - ii. This is why Christians cannot service gay weddings and events.
 - iii. This is why Christians cannot attend same-sex wedding ceremonies.
 - iv. This is why practicing homosexuals cannot join our church.
 - v. This is why we don't want public schools teaching kids that homosexuality is moral and normal and healthy.
 - vi. We cannot condone what God has condemned.
2. Some might object to this sermon by saying, "It's not right to judge." I am not judging; I'm just telling you what the judge has said. It would be like if I told someone to slow down and go the speed limit in my neighborhood, and they

accused me of being judgmental. I'm not judging, I'm just telling you to follow the law.

3. Often Christians are accused of being intolerant and hateful because of our convictions on homosexuality.
 - i. We're not stopping anyone from being gay. We're just telling people that it is against God's will.
 - ii. True love is not silent. It is willing to tell people the hard truth.
 1. Would it be loving for a doctor to not tell his patient that they have cancer, or high blood pressure, or that they to lose weight, because he doesn't want them to feel bad?
 2. Would it be loving to not tell your neighbor that his house is on fire, because you don't want to upset him?
 3. True love tells the truth, even though it may be painful.
 - iii. As Christians, we know that God's will is best. We know that sin leads to suffering. And we know that people who refuse to repent of sin will spend eternity in hell. So we can't love our neighbors without speaking the truth.
 - iv. **Jim Denison** "While we wish to offer the dignity and respect of Christian grace to all persons, we cannot truly love them while endorsing that which is unbiblical in their lives."
 - v. As Christians, we need to love our gay neighbors. We need to show them kindness and respect. But the main problem among American Christians today is not that they are cruel to homosexuals, but that they are caving in to the homosexual agenda. They are compromising with God's word. They are indifferent when they should be alarmed. They are silent when they should speak up.
4. Let me close with a quote by Charles Spurgeon:
 - i. **Spurgeon** "Perseverance in the truth when it is unfashionable is the test of a real believer."