

SHOULD CHRISTIANS ATTEND GAY WEDDINGS?

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. In January the American Family Radio dropped one of its programs – Truth for Life, by Pastor Alistair Begg. Shortly after, Begg was also dropped as a speaker by The Shepherd’s Conference, one of the largest pastor’s conferences in America hosted by Pastor John MacArthur. Begg is a popular pastor from Cleveland, OH, whose radio show is carried by nearly 1,800 stations nationwide. Why is he being dropped by different ministries? Recently he advised Christians that they should attend gay weddings. To be specific, a grandmother asked him for advice. Her grandson was marrying a transgender person – a man claiming to be a woman – and she wanted to know if she should attend the wedding. Alistair Begg asked her if she clearly communicated to her grandson her convictions as a Christian, that she believes that homosexuality is a sin and she can’t in any way support it, and she said yes. In response, Begg advised her to go to the wedding and to buy them a gift. Begg said that if you don’t go, it will simply reinforce the stereotypes that our culture has about the church, that Christians are judgmental. On the other hand, going to the wedding will help you “to build bridges into the hearts and lives of those who don’t understand Jesus.” Many people have come out in support of AFR, and many people have come to the defense of Alistair Begg.
2. Should Christians attend gay weddings? This is a conversation long overdue, because at some point, if not already, all of us will be invited to a gay wedding. I know some people in our church already have. How should we respond?
3. First, I want to give you a quick reminder on the Bible’s teaching about homosexuality, and then I want to give you several reasons why a Christian must not attend a gay wedding.

II. HOMOSEXUALITY IN AMERICA

1. Homosexuality has come a long way in America:

- i. First, it was outlawed. It was illegal in every state. It is still illegal in 71 countries; in eight countries the punishment is execution.
- ii. Second, it was tolerated. In 1961 Illinois became the first state to decriminalize homosexuality, and then other states followed. In 2003 the Supreme Court legalized it nationwide, so that states can no longer pass anti-sodomy laws. Then in 2016 the Supreme Court legalized gay marriage, so states can no longer outlaw gay marriage.
- iii. Third, it was normalized. Even though it was legalized and tolerated, for a long time it was still seen as sinful, unnatural, taboo, deviant, etc. In 1952, the American Psychiatric Association listed homosexuality as a mental disorder. But beginning in the 1970s, it came to be seen as normal, healthy, and good. I'm reminded of the Seinfeld Show in the early nineties, in which there was an episode where Jerry and George were accused of being gay lovers. They spent the entire episode denying it, but each time they would, "We're not gay; not that there's anything wrong with that."
- iv. Fourth, it was celebrated. Eventually our culture came to congratulate people when they came out of the closet, and to praise them for their courage and moral goodness. And at the same time it became a badge of honor to say that you have given friends, and that you are in full acceptance of that lifestyle.
- v. Fifth, it is now imposed. We have come full circle. Now those who oppose homosexuality and gay marriage are seen as sinful, hateful, monsters, bad for society. Wedding vendors like florists and bakers are being sued and put out of business for refusing to service gay weddings. A school teacher in New Jersey was given a three-year suspension for condemning homosexuality on Facebook. The fire chief of Atlanta was fired because he wrote a Christian book condemning homosexuality. A Kentucky clerk of court was jailed because she refused to issue wedding licenses to married couples. The CEO of a large tech company was fired simply because of his personal belief that gay marriage is immoral. Amazon banned a book about the health hazards of

homosexuality. It used to be illegal to practice homosexuality; now some people want it to be illegal to be against homosexuality.

- vi. And since Christianity is not only tolerated, but celebrated and imposed, many Christians today are confused about it.

III. HOMOSEXUALITY IN THE BIBLE

1. What does the Bible teach about homosexuality? The Bible clearly and repeatedly condemns homosexuality.
 - i. It is condemned in the Mosaic Law:
 1. **Leviticus 18:22** “Do not practice homosexuality, having sex with another man as with a woman. It is a detestable sin.”
 2. **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.”
 3. Notice both of these verses say that homosexuality is a detestable act. Some translations use the word “abomination,” or “abhorrent.”
 4. Vine’s Dictionary says the word means something dangerous, sinister, and repulsive.
 5. Stron’s Dictionary says the word means something morally disgusting.
 6. It means this is an action that is extremely displeasing to God.
 - ii. It was condemned by Jesus:
 1. Jesus gave a very detailed description of marriage.
 2. **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.’”
 3. 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 changed: 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.

iii. It was condemned by Paul:

1. **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."

a. Notice two things:

- i. Both male and female homosexuality are condemned.
- ii. Paul uses the strongest possible language to condemn homosexual behavior. Look at the words he uses:

1. Shameful
2. Unnatural
3. Abnormal
4. Sinful
5. Suffering
6. Penalized

2. **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."

a. Notice Paul's description of homosexuality:

- i. It is described as unrighteous.
 - ii. They will not inherit God's kingdom.
 - iii. It can be forsaken. "And some of you used to be like this."
 - iv. It can be forgiven. "But you were washed."
- 3. **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."
 - a. Notice how Paul describes homosexuality: It "contradicts the wholesome teaching that comes from the glorious Good News." It contradicts Christian teaching.
 - iv. The Christian church has never tolerated homosexuality, and before that neither did Judaism. Only now are some Christians beginning to compromise and change their position, but this is a very recent change, and it is only supported by a small minority within Christianity.

IV. 3 REASONS TO NOT ATTEND A GAY WEDDING

1. A gay wedding is not a wedding.
 - i. A wedding is a marriage ceremony (Merriam-Webster).
 - ii. According to the Bible, marriage is the union of one man and one woman for a lifetime.
 - iii. In other words, gay marriage is not actually marriage, and a gay wedding is not actually a wedding. Therefore, it is impossible to attend gay weddings because according to the Bible they don't exist.
 - iv. Biblically speaking, according to Christianity, a gay wedding is a fake wedding. An illegitimate wedding. A counterfeit wedding. A fraudulent wedding. It makes a mockery of a wedding.
 - v. Why shouldn't Christians attend gay weddings? Because they aren't real weddings.
2. A gay wedding is the celebration of sin.

- i. A gay wedding is the celebration of a homosexual relationship. As Christians, we cannot celebrate what God condemns.
- ii. Think about what is happening at a gay wedding. Two people are making a public and legal promise to continue living as homosexuals for the rest of their lives. We cannot celebrate or support or accept that.
- iii. You might say, "I don't support homosexuality; I'm just going there to support my friend."
- iv. You cannot attend a gay wedding without supporting and celebrating homosexuality. It's impossible.
- v. **Albert Mohler** "Attendance at a wedding is not a neutral act."
- vi. Do you know what people who attend a wedding are traditionally called? Celebrants. Everyone in attendance is celebrating.
- vii. Think about the typical wedding invitation. It usually says something like, "So and so invites you to join them as they celebrate the wedding of their son or their daughter."
- viii. Your very presence at a gay wedding signals support and acceptance of the relationship.
- ix. In 2013 George H.W. Bush and his wife Barbara attended a gay wedding. Notice how their attendance was interpreted. The Washington Post reported, "Another prominent Republican has come out in support of same-sex marriage—or, at least, in support of one particular same-sex marriage." The New York Magazine declared that they are apparently in favor of same-sex marriage "since they not only attended a lesbian couple's wedding on Saturday, but served as witnesses as well." One of the lesbians that was married that day said that the Bushes' presence was a powerful affirmation that the union was "real and normal."
<https://answersingenesis.org/family/homosexuality/should-i-attend-my-friends-gay-wedding/>
- x. **Al Mohler** points to "the nature and history of the wedding ceremony. The presence of witnesses at a marriage ceremony affirms the righteous nature of the union. The ceremony then

becomes an occasion of shared joy and celebration.”

<https://albertmohler.com/2011/10/18/would-you-attend-a-same-sex-wedding>

- xi. You might say, “But they know where I stand; I told them before the wedding.”
 - 1. First, that’s simply a case of saying one thing and doing another. That’s like saying, “I’m against the New Orleans Saints,” but then going to the game and cheering for them. Simply attending the wedding is an act of support and celebration.
 - 2. Second, “Even though you communicated your position with the bride or groom, what about everyone else? Unless you send a letter to everyone in attendance that says, “It’s not what it looks like,” your presence will be interpreted as celebrating and supporting the relationship.
 - xii. And what about that part of the wedding when the pastor says, “If anyone present knows of any reason why the couple should not be joined in holy matrimony, speak now or forever hold your peace”? You can’t in good conscience hold your peace. Are you really going to go to a gay wedding and stand up and object?
 - xiii. And what about the wedding reception? Everyone will get in line to hug the bride or the groom and say, “Congratulations! I’m so happy for you! Beautiful ceremony!” As Christians we can’t say those things.
 - xiv. We’re not picking on homosexuals. There are all kinds of weddings that Christians could not attend. An incestual wedding; a bestiality wedding; a polygamous wedding; a polyamorous wedding; the wedding of a man to his A.I. companion. Or if your friend abandoned his wife and children to marry his mistress, would you attend the wedding? I hope not. All of these are sinful, and as Christians we cannot celebrate and support what God condemns.
3. You can love your gay friends without attending their weddings.
- i. Some Christians might say, “We need to attend gay weddings to show our gay friends that we love them.”

- ii. Yes, the Bible says to love your neighbor; to love your enemy; to love sinners. But that doesn't mean that we have to participate in their sin, and attending a gay wedding is participating in their sin.
- iii. Some people point out that Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners. Yes, He did. Christians can eat with gay people. We can have friendships with gay people. We can work with gay people. We attend their birthday parties. We can celebrate holidays together. You can go watch your gay friend play football or basketball. I'm not calling for a complete rejection and separation from gay people. We should be friends with sinners. But there's a difference between having dinner with a gay person and attending a gay wedding. Again, it comes down to what a wedding is. A gay wedding by its very nature is a sinful event.
- iv. Remember what love is. Love is doing what is best for people, not what makes them feel good. It is giving people what they need, not what they want. It is to desire their well-being and promote their true flourishing.
- v. Going to a gay wedding may make them feel good; but it's not what's best. It may be what they want, but not what they need. It does not contribute to their well-being or promote their true flourishing.
- vi. Love doesn't always affirm. It doesn't always support. It doesn't always say yes.
- vii. I have a friend who is a drug addict. I love him, but I'm not going to do drugs with him; I'm not going to buy drugs for him; I'm not going to give him a ride to buy drugs; I'm not going to watch him do drugs; I'm not going to let him do drugs in my house. But I still love him.
- viii. It is not unloving to abstain from gay weddings.
- ix. It is not unloving to abstain from an activity or event for the sake of your moral or religious convictions. Would it be unloving for a Jew to refuse to attend a Nazi Party meeting? No. Would it be unloving for a black man to refuse to attend a Ku Klux Klan meeting? Of course not. The reason we abstain from gay

weddings is not because we hate gay people, but because same-sex marriage is a sin, and we can't celebrate it.

x. We must not let unbelievers redefine the definition of love.

1. Love doesn't affirm, or celebrate, or support sin.
2. **1 Corinthians 13:6** "Love finds no joy in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth."
3. Another translation says, "It does not rejoice at unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth."

xi. We must not let unbelievers redefine true Christianity.

1. When they really want to insult us, they say, "That's not how Jesus would act. Jesus loved people. Jesus washed feet. Jesus said don't judge. You're a hypocrite. You're not a true Christian."
2. Jesus told the woman in adultery, "Go and sin no more."
3. Jesus said if your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away.
4. Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven."
5. **Ephesians 5:11** "Don't participate in the fruitless works of darkness, but instead expose them."

xii. But I want to turn things around for a moment. Instead of asking if Christians should attend gay weddings, I'd like to ask, "Should homosexuals invite Christians to their weddings?" There are three possible reasons that a homosexual would invite a committed Christian to their wedding.

1. First, maybe they feel obligated. They know what you believe, and they don't expect you to come, but they love you and don't want you to feel left out. In this case there's no pressure to attend. No harm, no foul.
2. Second, maybe they don't know your beliefs. This is understandable, especially since there are so many false and confused Christians in our country. This is a wonderful opportunity to share the gospel with them. You could write a letter, an email, or even have a face-to-face conversation.

3. Third, they are incredibly insensitive and offensive. If they know what you believe about homosexuality but still invite you to the wedding, then that's just wrong on so many levels. For example, I have several friends who don't celebrate Christmas because they are Jehovah's Witnesses. It would be insensitive of me to invite them to my Christmas party, and it would be stupid of me to get angry with them for declining my invitation.
- xiii. In other words, the assertion that Christians are judgmental and critical because they don't go to gay weddings is ridiculous. Would you be offended if your Jewish friend refused to eat your pork roast? If you bought your Mormon colleague a cup of coffee on the way to work, would you be offended if he refused to drink it? Following one's moral and religious convictions is not offensive. It is respectable. And Christians will garner more respect from homosexuals by being true to their convictions than by compromising.

V. ENCOURAGEMENT

1. Let me say four things that I hope will encourage you.
 - i. First, I realize that this is a very difficult issue. It is a terrible thing to have to abstain from a close friend's wedding. Nobody wants to do that; nobody should have to do that. That's horrible.
 - ii. Second, don't be surprised if you face persecution. Don't be surprised if people hate you. Some Christians are under the delusion that if Christians are just nice enough, then unbelievers will love us. Nobody was more loving than Jesus, and people hated Him. And He promised that if we truly followed Him, some people would hate us, too.
 1. **Luke 21:17** "You will be hated by everyone because of my name"
 2. **2 Timothy 3:12** "In fact, all who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."
 3. **1 John 3:13** "Do not be surprised, brothers and sisters, if the world hates you."

- iii. Third, Jesus warned that the gospel would divide families.
 - 1. **Luke 12:51-53** “51 Do you think that I came here to bring peace on the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. 52 From now on, five in one household will be divided: three against two, and two against three. 53 They will be divided, father against son, son against father, mother against daughter, daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”
 - 2. Don’t be surprised if your own family members reject you because of your faith in Christ.
- iv. Fourth, Jesus commanded us to put Him before our families.
 - 1. **Luke 14:26** “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, and even his own life—he cannot be my disciple.”
 - 2. In other words, don’t use your family as an excuse to sin. Don’t say, “I want to obey God, but I don’t want to destroy my relationship with my family.”
 - 3. Jesus doesn’t want to destroy your family. However, when the decision is to please God or please your family, then you must please God, even if it means losing your family.
 - 4. Christians in America are finally beginning to experience the first taste of persecution, and the main reason is because of the Bible’s teachings on homosexuality. Now is not the time to cave in and compromise. Now is the time to stand firm on the word of God.
 - 5. And the strength of our conviction will be a much more powerful witness than the weakness of our compromise.

VI. CONCLUSION

- 1. Should Christians love gay people? Yes. Should we attend gay weddings? We cannot.
- 2. And if the world hates us for our convictions, then we need to remember the words of Jesus.

3. **Matthew 5:11-12** “You are blessed when they insult you and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of me. 12 Be glad and rejoice, because your reward is great in heaven. For that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”