



Topic: How do Christians respond to the Supreme Court ruling on same-sex marriage as a constitutional right?

1. Intro: Start with personal humility and Scriptures

"Something I learned in seminary is that with every issue, there are two sides. And there are scholars on both sides who are more intelligent than I am. So the best I could do was to study, pray, examine my heart, and make a decision. My goal is to stand before God and be able to say, 'I prayed and studied this passage. I tried to ignore my personal desires and interpreted it as best I could'... I also try to hold my views with humility, allowing God to convince me of a better understanding at any point in the future through more study, prayer, and heart-examination." [Francis Chan; "You and Me Forever: Marriage in Light of Eternity", pp.73-74]

- a. Clarify biblical understanding of homosexuality & marriage
- b. Provide a biblical response for how to engage people and the culture with both Jesus' truth and love
- c. Host an open, safe Q&A time

Biblical Definitions:

1. Homosexuality

- a. Engaging in homosexual thoughts and behavior is sin
 - i. (Lev 18:22; Rom 1:18-27) Homosexual behavior is a sin in both Old and New Testaments
 1. (Unlike Civil or Ceremonial OT Law) Moral Law reflects God's character and lasts forever
 2. (1 Cor 6:9; 1 Tim 1:10) "Arsenokoites"; literally the sin of a man "lying in bed with another man" (in a sexual manner)
 - ii. (Matt 5:21-30) Sin is not just outward behavior, but also internal thoughts
- b. All sexual sins are equally serious
 - i. OT: (Lev 18) Lists a variety of sexual behaviors as equally sinful
 - ii. NT: (Matt 19:5) "Porneia" is an all-encompassing term for all types of sexual immorality
 - iii. (1 Cor 6:18-20) Sexual sin is against one's own body, the temple of the Holy Spirit in you
 - iv. Don't single out homosexuality as if it's a worse sin; do see it as a serious sin
- c. Identity: "God made me this way"?
 - i. There's strong evidence that being gay is not a choice, possibly genetic (like addiction)
 - ii. Being gay or having same-sex attraction is not sin; it's what you do with the desires
 1. Example: Being an alcoholic is not a sin, but getting drunk or dwelling on it are
 - iii. Solution: Jesus gives us a new identity
 1. (2 Cor 5:17) Being gay is not your only or primary identity; if you turn to Jesus, being a new creation in Christ is your true & greater identity!
 2. (Eph 4:22-24) Jesus empowers us to live out our new identity in Christ (even though feelings of same-sex attraction persist)
- d. Issue: (Without the sexual part) how can "love" be wrong?
 - i. (1 John 4:8-10) God is the Author of love
 1. (v.8) As author, He defines what is love (right & wrong)
 - a. Love is more than just human feelings, which can be right or wrong
 2. (vv.9-10) Love is in opposition to sin, and wants to rescue from sin
 - a. Example: Is an affair without sex permissible, if I really love the person? Still adultery
 - ii. Confusion about platonic love & romantic love
 1. Platonic: (1 Sam 18:1) Understand deep, healthy connection in same-sex friendships
 - a. Don't stigmatize godly, meaningful same-sex friendships; we need them
 2. Romantic: (Gen 2:25) "Become one flesh" involves spiritual, emotional and physical intimacy
 - a. We cannot divorce the sexual side of romantic love from the emotional
 - b. Example: When people rationalize non-sexual reasons for cohabitation, yet (statistically) it leads to sexual intimacy outside the commitment of marriage
 - iii. "Love wins"? Sin and idolatry win (Rom 1:18-27). This is not love, according to its Author

2. Marriage

- a. God is the Author of marriage
 - i. (Gen 2:18-25; Matt 19:5) As author, He has always defined it, from the beginning of mankind, as a sacred covenant-relationship, bound by God, between a man and woman
 - ii. Marriage is meant to be a reflection of the gospel (Eph 5:22-32)
 1. A holy testimony (even in non-believers) of God's relationship with people He saves from sin

- iii. As author, God's definition precedes any man-made institution or cultural tradition
- b. Issue: Condemned to a lifetime of loneliness?
 - i. Reframe: Marriage can't be an idol; singleness is not a curse
 - 1. Marriage is temporary for a lifetime, not eternal (Matt 22:30)
 - 2. Choosing singleness to follow & serve Jesus is a blessing (1 Cor 7:8, 7:32)
 - 3. Culture and church have wrongly elevated marriage to be life's ultimate fulfillment
 - a. It becomes an idol we worship. It's good, but it's not God
 - 4. See God's calling to be single or married as good and a blessing, where we can experience contentment and joy (1 Cor 7:17; Phil 4:11)
 - ii. There is a cost to following Jesus (Luke 9:23-24)
 - 1. If what we hold onto most in life is not Jesus, we're called to surrender it (Mark 10:21-22)
 - 2. Having Jesus is better
 - iii. In our trust & sacrifice, God provides for our emotional, relational needs (Mark 10:28-30; Psa 68:6)
- 3. What's the big deal?
 - a. Sin grieves the heart of God
 - i. Rejecting God: "You're not good; You're not God. I'll be my own god & make up my own standards."
 - ii. God loves people, and sin is always destructive (Gal 6:8)
 - iii. How seriously do I take sin, as evil against God and self-destruction of people?
 - b. How we honor, trust & obey Jesus, and influence others, matters (Matt 10:32-33)

Biblical Response:

- 1. How to engage the culture (public): Be faithful with truth and compassionate with love
 - a. Show Jesus' goodness in your attitudes, words and actions (Matt 5:13-16)
 - i. Requires: Don't be afraid or invisible to speak about Jesus & His truth (Matt 10:26-33)
 - ii. Legislation? "I don't want to impose my Christian morals on non-Christians"
 - 1. Every time people vote, laws legislate someone's morality
 - iii. Issue: What about civil rights?
 - 1. We can't reframe homosexual orientation as a minority issue when it's a morality issue
 - 2. Suggest "civil union"? To provide benefits/protection, without co-opting "marriage"?
 - 3. Focus: Not to deprive of financial/legal rights, but to protect what God created/defined as holy
 - b. Don't be hateful, bitter or angry
 - i. Don't cast stones; do speak forgiveness & repentance (John 8:7-11)
 - c. The church must be united, not divided
 - i. United in love, holiness, perseverance and prayer (Rom 12:9-13)
 - ii. Don't let Satan use this issue to create a rift between you and others in the family of Christ
 - d. If & when persecution comes:
 - i. Don't be surprised (Matt 10:16-25)
 - ii. Bless and do not curse (Rom 12:14-21; Matt 5:44)
 - e. Most important: Focus on pointing people to the gospel (1 Pet 3:15)
 - i. "With gentleness and respect"
 - ii. People do not repent of sin until they meet Jesus
 - 1. Example: "Jane Roe" (of Roe v. Wade) became a Christian after experiencing the winsome love of Christ through other Christians, then changed her stance on abortion
 - iii. Nothing is more loving than introducing people to Jesus and His saving grace
- 2. How to engage an individual (personal): Love your neighbor (Matt 22:39)
 - a. Offer friendship with welcome, dignity, acceptance
 - i. They've already experienced enough judgment and rejection
 - ii. At church: All imperfect people are welcome, whatever our sins
 - b. Love people with kindness (1 Cor 13:4-5) and truth (1 Cor 13:6)
 - i. Love generously, without condoning or celebrating sin (Rom 1:32)
 - c. With believers struggling with same-sex attraction
 - i. Embrace them: Their sin is no worse than mine; we are all equally recovering sinners together
 - d. With believers struggling with celibacy
 - i. Be God's relational provision to singles in friendship, support, family (Mark 10:29-30; Psa 68:6)

May you be a friend, known for your faithfulness to Jesus' truth and compassionate with Jesus' love