

## **Abortion and Homosexuality – Dividing the Church?**

I'm finally able to get an opportunity to type this lesson. I've planned to do it several times, but something has always been in the way. I guess Satan doesn't want this message to get out, but I've got a God whose bigger than the Devil. I do want to ask that you pray for me and for this ministry. It is tough to find time to do everything when you're a single Dad working a full time job while taking care of a toddler and the house.

Now, getting to the lesson, I guess people are wondering about the topic today. Have I had you in suspense for a while? Just to remind you, this series of lessons has been about how the Church universal has become divided, and how this fragmentation is causing the Church to be less powerful than it should. Remember, Jesus said that a kingdom divided against itself would be brought to desolation, it cannot stand (Matthew 12:26). A divided Church is ineffective in carrying the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Among the most controversial subjects in our land today are the two mentioned in the title – abortion and homosexuality. Unfortunately it appears that the divide is within as well as outside of the church, or at least within what would appear to be the church to the outside world. For that reason I think that it's important that we discuss these issues and come to an understanding of how this divide is causing problems for the Church.

Let's first look at the issue of homosexuality. Now before we get to far into this I'm going to go ahead and make sure that everyone is well aware of my view of homosexuality. I believe that it is abomination (Leviticus 18:22). I believe it is vile (Romans 1:26). I believe that it is against nature (Romans 1:26). I believe it is rebellious (Romans 1:32). We could go on, but I think you get my point.

But what about those who claim to be genetically predisposed to homosexuality. Did God make them that way? God forbid! I would say, though, that EVERYBODY is predisposed to some type of sin. This, I think, is where the divide really comes about. You've got one group of Christians who seem to forget that we're all sinners and another group of Christians who seem to forget that God is calling us all to repentance. For the first group it's all about homosexuality being sin. For the second group it's all about the love of God.

Both groups are right. Now I know you're probably thinking that's strange coming from someone who considers himself a fundamentalist. I think, though, that when we get too focused on love we tend to forget that God hates sin, and when we get too focused on sin we tend to forget that God loves the sinner.

So am I saying that the Church should accept homosexuality? No! I by no means think that homosexuality should be acceptable within the life of a Christian. I also don't think that lying, cheating, stealing, fornication, adultery, etc. should be acceptable in the life of a Christian.

This, though, becomes a problem when the love of God has been emphasized so much to the world. We're living in a culture where love is taught outside the Church, but it's not really godly love. You see, love is being taught as believing that everything is a personal choice, and people shouldn't be told what's right or wrong. With this being taught in the

world, and the love of God being overemphasized in some churches, the natural tendency is for the world to take a negative view of those who proclaim homosexuality to be wrong. Then, Satan uses this to further intrench himself within the church, leading others to believe that it's OK to overlook some sin, and even to put practicing sinners into positions of authority. 1 John 3:9 teaches us that true Christians do not continue in sin, so accepting sin is not what Christ would do.

Now looking at the abortion issue. I'm going to once again make my stand on this perfectly clear. I believe that the Bible teaches that a life is sacred even when in the womb (Exodus 21:22).

Once again I think that division within the church exists because of the language that is used in the world. We are taught in the Scripture that we have a free will, so why shouldn't people have the right to "choose" what they do with their own body? You see, by letting the world dictate the language the fundamental church has allowed division. Our rights end when they begin to negatively affect others, and if we truly believe that a baby is formed at conception (every part of the child is there at conception – it's in the genes) then we do not have the right to kill that baby.

Many people have justified in their own minds that maybe abortion is OK in certain situations (rape and incest being the main ones). I think that this compromise has further undermined the message. If a life is a life it's a life no matter how it was formed, and the world seems to understand this better than the church.

So it seems that focusing on the wrong things when it comes to abortion and homosexuality has led us down a path to division. Can we gain harmony? It will be difficult, and I do not recommend that we compromise more to gain it. Compromise will ultimately lead to even greater division.

I think the best course of action is just to teach the gospel in love. When we teach against homosexuality make sure that we don't just teach against homosexuality but that we point out that God has made a way of escape. When we teach against abortion don't use hate filled rhetoric – make sure we show the love of God. When we balance the message with the truth of God's love of humanity and hate of sin it will break down many divisions.

I hope that this series of lessons has been beneficial to you. I encourage you to go back and read all of them together. Also, drop me an email to let me know you're out there. While I may not always get a lesson written, I will answer my email. Finally, please be in much prayer as I prepare to begin a new series of lessons on what is often referred to as the seven deadly sins.

Yours in Christ,

Bro. John Rich