

**Outline for Seminar IV**  
***“Principles, Silence, Analogy, and the Pro-Gay Argument”***

**I. Pro Gay Arguments Based off General Principles**

a. “Judged not lest ye be judged ethic” (Matt. 7:1)

**Pro Gay Argument:** Pro gay folks appeal to this scripture in Matt. 7:1, saying that we do not have a right to judge anyone; only God can do that.

**Traditionalist Response:** Pro gay folks misapply the text. It fails to consider that in v. 2 Jesus gave permission to judge so long as we have first done a thorough self examination. The pro gay argument also fails to make a distinction between the differences in judging moral and spiritual character (*discernment*) and judging someone’s eternal state after death. (*The first is necessary the second is unwise*) The church has always had to make judgments on moral and spiritual fitness for its officers and its members. It *is* Biblical to judge; there are qualifications for the whole church and the church most uphold God’s standards, lest it fail in God’s command to preach repentance and grow in sanctification.

b. “The Love ethic”

**Pro Gay Argument:** God is a God of love and if we are to love the homosexual then we must affirm the homosexual and their lifestyle.

**Traditionalist Response:** This argument is a perversion of the Biblical definition of love. Love does not always equal acceptance and approval. It is actually unloving to approve of everything people want to engage in.

c. “The Justice Ethic”

**Pro Gay Argument:** This is a matter of justice. People are being denied their fundamental rights as church members; therefore we need to accept homosexual ordination and marriage.

**Traditionalist Response:** The principle of seeking justice should not be misused to support agendas that are in contradiction to God’s will as it concerns human sexuality. Christian discipleship talks a whole lot more about self-denial and sacrifice than it does our “personal rights.”

d. “The Christo-Centric” (*Christ-Centered*) Principle

**Pro Gay:** Jesus is all about love and inclusion. The OT is all about a harsh and judgmental God. In the NT Paul is mean, harsh, and judgmental as well. Anytime there is a conflict between what Jesus taught in the gospels and what is said in the OT or by Paul, Jesus should win out. Since Jesus never said anything condemning about homosexuality then Jesus trumps the OT and Paul’s teaching.

**Traditionalist Response:** This argument is loaded with problems. First it sets up a false dichotomy between Jesus and the OT, and Jesus and Paul. They do *not* contradict one another as the pro gay argument asserts. Second, the idea that Jesus never said anything is also problematic because such an assertion attacks the doctrine of the Trinity. How is that? The doctrine of the Trinity asserts that Jesus, before he took upon himself human flesh, existed from throughout all eternity as God the Son, along with God the Father and God the Spirit. As Christians we believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God. God spoke his holy Word in Scripture. Since the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are each the one Triune God in three persons it means that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit all equally spoke the Word of God in Scripture. While it may be true that the incarnate Jesus never spoke an explicit word of condemnation against homosexuality in the gospels he did speak words of condemnation against it in the OT and in the epistles of the NT. Jesus is the inspirer of all of scripture. I will share more on this in the second section of this outline.

e. “The inclusion of the Gentiles in the life of the early church”

(*Peter and Cornelius story in Acts 10 and the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15*)

**Pro Gay:** When the early church started to grow in the gentile world non-Jews began to enter the church as professing Christians. In the book of Acts the Jewish Christians were faced with the dilemma of what to require of the Gentiles, as it concerned keeping OT laws. The Jews eventually welcomed these Gentile Christians without requiring them to keep all of God’s laws. Likewise we should welcome homosexuals and not require them to change things about themselves that they cannot change, just like the Jewish Christians did for the Gentile Christians in the book of Acts. God is doing a “new thing” in our day by breaking down this new barrier in the life of the church.

**Traditionalist Response:** While it is true that were some aspects of the OT were not required of the Gentiles in order to join the Christian Church, the moral law of the OT was *never* done

away with as a requirement. Some OT laws were no longer necessary to keep because they had been fulfilled by Christ, such as the OT sacrificial system. Some OT signs were changed in the NT, such as baptism replacing circumcision as the outward sign of being in the family of God, but the moral law remained. In the NT the Ten Commandments were held up by Jesus. The seventh commandment is “thou shall not commit adultery.” Lying behind this commandment is a whole host of sexual sins that the commandment negatively portrays. (See case laws in the book of Leviticus, or even Jesus’ teaching in the Sermon on the Mount) This argument also fails to acknowledge that the early church in the book of Acts did come up with three simple moral and ethical guidelines that they would require of the Gentiles: (1) don’t eat food sacrificed to idols (2) don’t eat meat with blood in it (3) abstain from all forms of sexual immorality. How the pro-gay folks can use these texts to argue for the acceptance of homosexuality while at the same time ignoring the final decision of how the early church would deal with Gentile Christians is beyond me.

f. “There is neither Jew or Gentile, male nor female, slave nor free, for we are all one in Christ” (Gal. 3:28)

**Pro Gay:** Jesus Christ obliterates all distinctions that human beings create/make amongst themselves. Jesus has come to tear down these walls of division between people; therefore it is time for the church to tear down the walls of divisions between the homosexual and heterosexual community by welcoming and affirming our GLBT brothers and sisters and their lifestyles in the life of the church.

**Traditionalist Response:** The pro gay advocates twist this text to make it mean something that it does not mean. What Paul was talking about was how the fruit of being reconciled to God in Jesus Christ ultimately leads to reconciliation between people in the church. While we are all one in Christ it did does not negate the fact that there are still males and females in the church, blacks and whites, and rich and poor, etc... Furthermore the principle of this text can’t be used to promote or justify a lifestyle that God otherwise deems as immoral and falling short of his intent for all of humanity. If we were to take the pro gay argument in this text to its logical conclusion and apply this principle to other things, we could justify a whole of other sins, all in the mane of being “one in Christ.” That would be absurd.

## II. The Pro-Gay Argument from Silence

**Pro Gay:** There are two things that folks on this side of the argument would say. First, the Bible says little about homosexuality. There are only eight texts in the Bible that address this matter. If that is the case doesn’t that mean we are majoring in the minors? Why are we

making such a big deal out of something that the Bible rarely addresses? Second, Jesus never said anything about homosexuality.

**Traditionalist Response:** So what if the Bible says little about it, the Bible says a little about a whole lot of things! Besides that, homosexuality only affects a small percentage of the population; therefore there is no need to repeatedly address something that affects so few people. On top of that, it still does not change the fact that what the Bible does say about it is overwhelmingly negative. As for Jesus having never said anything about it, I refer you back to the Christo-centric point in the first section of this outline. None-the-less, let's give the pro-gay folks the benefit of the doubt and assume that Jesus never said anything about it. Ok. So what? There all kinds of things that Jesus never said anything about. He didn't say anything about incest, bestiality, smoking crack, or driving drunk, but that does not mean that he would approve of such things!

The other things that we need to remember when we consider this argument from silence is this: Context determines when the Bible speaks about homosexuality. In the OT the Jewish people spent the vast majority of their time not in the own homeland, but in exile in foreign lands. In those foreign lands the Jews were surrounded by peoples who were affirming of homosexuality, so this explains why the OT steers the Jewish people away from such a lifestyle. In the NT the Pauline epistles and the general epistles were written to audiences who were in the Gentile world (*that's where the gospel spread*) and since the Greco-Roman world was affirming of homosexuality it makes sense that Paul and the other apostles would condemn homosexuality as an unacceptable way of life. In the Gospels we have a very different context. Jesus is not in the Greco-Roman world, but in the world of Jerusalem, surrounded by Jewish people like himself. In that Jewish world there was no one who would have affirmed homosexuality; therefore it was not necessary for Jesus to address the matter in those gospels. Understanding these different contexts explains why, how, and where the Bible addresses homosexuality.

The final problem with the argument of silence is that it fails to acknowledge what Jesus did *positively affirm* when it came to human sexuality. Jesus uplifted marriage between one man and woman as being the only acceptable context for sexual intercourse to take place. By default this positive affirmation of monogamous heterosexual marriage is a silent critique against homosexuality, and other forms of sexual intercourse that deviate from the norm of what God intends for his people.

### III. Arguments Based on Analogy

We should change our mind on homosexuality because changing our mind on it is analogous to the church changing its mind on divorce, slavery, and women preachers. What lies behind this kind of statement is that the Bible is against divorce, women preachers, and pro-slavery. I want to challenge this statement and say that we didn't change our minds to go against scripture, but rather that we changed our minds and brought the church more in conformity to the scriptures.

#### a. Divorce

**Pro Gay:** The church went against scripture and changed its mind on divorce; therefore it ought to do the same on homosexuality.

**Traditionalist Response:** The Bible permits divorce. Divorce is not ideal and the Bible does not encourage it, but it does permit under some circumstances. The reason it does is because it seeks to mitigate (minimize) the negative effects of relationships that are damaged beyond repair. Jesus himself gave adultery as legitimate grounds for divorce, the apostle Paul allowed for divorce if a non-believing spouse wanted to end the marriage. None of this is ideal but sometimes it is the only alternative for a relationship that cannot be salvaged. This means that when the church began to allow for people who had been divorced to serve as ordained officers it was opening itself up to the possibility that there were some people who could serve because it may have not necessarily been their fault that they were divorced. Consequently, we did not necessarily go against the Bible when the church made this change. But while we are on the subject I do think it is important to say that we might need to tighten up some of our thinking on this matter because we are now in a culture of easy divorces and we need to become more stringent in our dealings with this problem. It must also be stated that even though the church has made room for divorcees serving in the church no one has ever said that divorce is a good thing. It has always been viewed by all to be what it is- a sad situation that falls short of God's original intent. Gay ordination is very different in that its supporters celebrate homosexuality as a good thing.

#### b. Women Preachers

**Pro Gay:** The church went against scripture and changed its mind on women preachers; therefore it ought to do the same on homosexuality.

**Traditionalist Response:** The idea that we went against the Bible when we allowed for women ministers is largely based off what Paul said about women speaking in church in two scriptures, I Corinthians 14:34 and I Timothy 2:12. In these texts he stated that it was not permissible for women to speak. However it must be stated that Paul had to have in mind something other than what it sounds like at face value because in I Corinthians 11 Paul allows for women to prophesy in the church. Also in Romans 16 Paul lists several women in his concluding remarks, one of which he calls and apostle (Junia) and another a deaconess (Phoebe). If this is the case then we ought not to read what Paul said in I Cor. 14:34 and I Tim. 2:12 as blanket condemnations against women ministers. In the gospels Jesus had many female disciples and the first evangelists to the resurrection were women. In the OT the Bible lists Deborah as a judge and *prophetess*, and it lists Miriam and Huldah as *prophetesses*. A prophet is someone who proclaims the Word of God! In the New Testament Anna is listed as a prophetess in Luke 2. Acts talks about sons and daughters prophesying in the later days. Aquila (female), along with her husband, taught and disciplined Apollos (male) in the book of Acts. So unlike gay ordination and the acceptance of the GLBT lifestyle, there is good, strong, and solid Biblical evidence to support women's ordination in the church.

### c. Slavery

**Pro Gay:** The church went against scripture and changed its mind on slavery; therefore it ought to do the same on homosexuality.

**Traditionalist Response:** In the OT the Jews did run a slave economy. In fact it's just the opposite! The Jews were the ones who were enslaved and God is the one who liberated them. Any slavery you find in the OT is pretty much confined to Jew on Jew slavery and that was typically volunteer slavery in order to pay back one's debt. (*Not whole lot different than our debt enslaved culture today. Some people are slaves to their work and their jobs because of all the debt they owe.*) None-the-less, in the OT there were laws that prohibited a person having a slave indefinitely and there were mandates that forced the slave holders to set people free. So as far as the OT is concerned it is pro-liberation, not pro slavery. In the NT slavery is listed as a cultural reality in the Greco-Roman world and yes as Paul wrote his letters to various churches he did counsel the Christian slaves to obey their masters and Christian slave holders to treat their slaves with dignity, but that does not mean that Paul supports slavery. His counsel has more to do with how the slave and slave holder were to get along in their immediate context. If you want to get an idea of whether or not Paul supported slavery then read what he said to slaves in I Cor. 7 and what he said in his letter to Philemon. In Cor. 7 he told the slave to make the best of his situation, but should the opportunity afford itself to get his freedom then go for it! In his letter to Philemon he told him to accept his runaway slave

Onesimus as a brother in Christ, not a slave. In that letter Paul lovingly, gently, subtly, and persuasively argues for the freeing of Onesimus.

## **Conclusion**

One thing that really helps in understanding these analogies and the challenge that the gay debate is forcing on the church is to always go back to Genesis 1-2. In those first two chapters of the Bible we get a picture of the way it was before sin entered the world. You can deal with most any moral problem by asking yourself is this something that we find in Genesis 1-2? If not then it is probably not a good thing to endorse it.

In Genesis 1-2 there is no divorce, just one flesh union between Adam and Eve. There is no slavery, just freedom in the Lord. There are no men dominating over women, just mutuality and a shared partnership in stewarding over God's creation. And there is no homosexual marriage, but only the male/female complimentary union between two differentiated genders. Homosexuality, divorce, the silencing of women and slavery are all consequences of living in a fallen world, not God's endorsement of such things! Jesus, as the second Adam, is working to restore things back to the way it was in Genesis 1-2, before sin entered into the world. That's what the theology of the "new heavens and new earth" is all about in the NT.