

## 1. Jesus' Core Teachings on Love and Inclusion

At the center of my understanding of Jesus' message is radical love and inclusion. I see how He consistently elevated the value of relationships rooted in love, compassion, and justice. When He was asked about the greatest commandments, His response still echoes deeply within me:

- *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”* (Matthew 22:37–40)

For me, Jesus shifted the focus from law-based righteousness to heart-centered living. He challenged people, including me today, to rethink how holiness is defined—not as strict adherence to rules, but as embodying love and grace.

## 2. Jesus' Silence on Homosexuality: What Might It Mean?

I've wrestled with the fact that while Jesus directly addressed issues like greed, injustice, and hypocrisy, He never mentioned homosexuality. His silence leads me to consider a few things:

- **Not a Central Concern:**

Jesus was outspoken when people distorted God's message, especially religious leaders. His silence on same-sex relationships makes me think it wasn't central to His mission of proclaiming the Kingdom of God.

- **Focus on Oppression, Not Orientation:**

I see how Jesus' heart was always drawn to those who were oppressed rather than concerned with policing personal identities. His harshest critiques were directed at those who used religion to exclude or harm others.

- **Cultural Context:**

I realize that in first-century Judaism, same-sex behavior wasn't discussed openly like it is today. Jesus' Jewish audience already knew the Levitical laws, but He often challenged traditional interpretations—whether about the Sabbath, food laws, or His interactions with Gentiles and women.

## 3. Jesus and the Marginalized

One of the clearest patterns I see in Jesus' ministry is His embrace of the

**marginalized:**

- **The Woman at the Well (John 4):**

A Samaritan woman, shunned even within her own community, yet Jesus engaged her with dignity and respect.

- **The Roman Centurion (Matthew 8:5-13):**

A Gentile military officer who may have had a servant described with intimate language (*pais*), and Jesus praised his faith without judgment.

- **Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10):**

A despised tax collector whom Jesus chose to dine with, leading to transformation through love, not condemnation.

When I reflect on this, I believe that if Jesus were physically present today, He'd be found among the people society often pushes to the margins, offering grace, healing, and belonging.

#### **4. Paul's Letters and Misunderstood Texts**

Some argue that Paul addressed same-sex relationships in passages like Romans 1:26–27, 1 Corinthians 6:9, and 1 Timothy 1:10. But when I look closely, I see that the original Greek words (*arsenokoitai* and *malakoi*) are complex:

- **Context Matters:**

Paul often addressed specific practices in the Greco-Roman world, like exploitative relationships, temple prostitution, and pederasty—not consensual, loving same-sex relationships as we understand them today.

- **Translation Issues:**

I've learned that modern translations can obscure the original meaning. The word "homosexuality" didn't even appear in any Bible translation until 1946, which raises questions about interpretive bias.

For me, Paul never contradicts Jesus' core message of love and grace. His letters make more sense when I read them through the lens of Jesus' life, rather than as isolated legal codes.

#### **5. A Theology of Radical Love**

When I take Jesus' life and teachings seriously, I see that:

- He prioritized love over legalism.
- He embraced those society rejected.

- **He challenged religious leaders who used faith to harm others.**

**This radical love extends to LGBTQ+ individuals today. I believe that affirming same-sex relationships rooted in love, faithfulness, and mutual respect is not only consistent with Jesus' teachings—it embodies them.**

### **Final Reflection**

**Reflecting on all this, I'm invited to wrestle with Scripture honestly. Jesus never avoided hard topics—He spoke boldly against injustice. His silence on homosexuality, combined with His message of inclusion, suggests to me that God's heart isn't focused on condemning people for who they love. Instead, God calls us to live lives of compassion, integrity, and grace.**

**My faith grows when I ask bold questions. I appreciate the space to explore this openly. Understanding Jesus through the lens of His purpose, His lived experiences, and the radical love He embodied opens up profound conversations about identity, relationships, and what it truly means to follow Him.**