

What I Believe About Jesus, the Bible, and LGBTQ+ Inclusion

Jesus' Love and Radical Inclusion

I have been reflecting on the claim that *“Jesus did not eat with homosexuals.”* This idea does not align with what I know about Jesus. Throughout his ministry, Jesus was known for breaking societal and religious barriers. He welcomed and dined with tax collectors, prostitutes, and outcasts—people whom religious leaders condemned.

When criticized for this, Jesus responded:

“It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” (Luke 5:31-32)

If homosexuality was considered sinful in his time, I believe Jesus still would have shared a meal with LGBTQ+ individuals, just as he did with others whom religious leaders rejected. Furthermore, Jesus never spoke directly about homosexuality. His teachings were centered on love, mercy, and justice, not exclusion. When asked about the greatest commandment, he responded:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind... and love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:37-39)

For me, this is the foundation of what it means to follow Christ. If Jesus never condemned LGBTQ+ people, I do not believe the church should either.

What the Bible Really Says About Homosexuality

Many of the passages used to condemn homosexuality refer to different cultural contexts, such as violence, exploitation, or ritual purity laws, rather than loving, committed relationships.

1. The Sin of Sodom Was Not About Homosexuality

One of the most common arguments against LGBTQ+ inclusion is the story of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19). However, when I look closely at this passage, it is not about loving same-sex relationships—it is about violence, inhospitality, and injustice.

- The men of Sodom sought to rape the visiting angels, an act of power and domination, not love.
- The real sin of Sodom is made clear in Ezekiel 16:49-50:

“Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. They were haughty and did detestable things before me.”

- **Nowhere does this passage mention homosexuality—it condemns greed, inhospitality, and injustice.**

The idea that Sodom was destroyed because of homosexuality is a misinterpretation. The real lesson of Sodom is about oppression and the mistreatment of the vulnerable, which is the opposite of Jesus’ message of love.

2. Leviticus – A Holiness Code, Not a Universal Law

Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 are often cited against same-sex relationships. However, I see these laws as part of the Holiness Code, which applied specifically to ancient Israel’s ritual purity.

- **These same chapters also forbid eating shellfish, wearing mixed fabrics, and planting different crops together—laws that most Christians no longer follow.**
- **Many scholars believe these passages were addressing cultic male prostitution, not loving relationships.**

If Christians do not apply the rest of Leviticus literally, why should these verses be singled out?

3. Paul’s Writings Condemn Exploitation, Not Love

Paul’s writings in 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10 contain Greek words (*malakoi* and *arsenokoitai*) that are often translated as “homosexuals.” However, their meanings are debated:

- ***Malakoi* means “soft men” and often referred to weakness or excess, not necessarily same-sex relationships.**
- ***Arsenokoitai* is a rare word that likely refers to exploitative relationships, such as pederasty (adult men with boys) or temple prostitution.**

Given Paul’s strong stance against Roman sexual exploitation (rape, prostitution, and abuse of power), I believe these passages do not apply to modern, loving same-sex relationships.

Being Made in God's Image & What Is Truly "Unnatural"

One of the most powerful truths in the Bible is that we are made in God's image.

"So God created mankind in His own image, in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them." (Genesis 1:27)

If God created me in His image, then everything about my existence—my thoughts, my emotions, my identity—is part of His design. If a person naturally experiences same-sex attraction, then that attraction is part of how they were made. It is not chosen; it simply is.

Some point to Romans 1:26-27 to argue that same-sex attraction is "unnatural," but when I examine this passage closely, Paul was referring to people who *exchanged* their natural inclinations—suggesting they were likely heterosexual but engaged in same-sex acts. The key issue here is acting against one's natural orientation, not being gay itself.

Forcing a heterosexual person into a same-sex relationship would be unnatural. Forcing a homosexual person into a heterosexual marriage would also be unnatural. The real sin is denying one's true self out of fear of human judgment rather than embracing the truth that God already knows.

4. What About Women in Same-Sex Relationships?

Some argue that Romans 1:26 condemns women who have same-sex relationships. However, when I examine this passage, I see that it refers to pagan idol worship, not committed relationships. The broader passage (Romans 1:18-32) describes people abandoning God and engaging in excessive and exploitative sexual acts—which were common in Roman temple rituals.

- Many scholars believe Paul is condemning people who abandoned their own natural inclinations, not those who were naturally attracted to the same sex. If a woman is naturally gay, then her relationship would not be an "exchange" of her nature—it would align with how she was created.
- The Old Testament includes laws about male same-sex acts but never condemns female same-sex relationships. If God saw it as a grave sin, why was it never directly addressed?
- Jesus never spoke about same-sex relationships, and Paul only discussed exploitative or unnatural acts, not loving, committed relationships between women.

This leads me to question whether modern interpretations of these passages are correct. If God intended to prohibit same-sex love, wouldn't the Bible have addressed it clearly for both men and women? The lack of condemnation for women's same-sex relationships suggests that our understanding of these passages may be shaped more by tradition than by God's actual word.

Biblical Inclusion and the Call to Love

Jesus consistently rejected judgment, legalism, and exclusion. He reminded us in Matthew 7:1-5 not to judge others and in John 13:34-35 that love is the defining mark of his followers.

The early church also wrestled with issues of inclusion. In Acts 10:9-16, God revealed to Peter that he should not call anyone impure whom God has made clean. In Galatians 3:28, Paul reminds us that in Christ, divisions are erased—we are all one in Him.

If God created each of us intentionally, as Psalm 139:13-14 declares, then LGBTQ+ people are part of that divine creation. If Christ's truth sets us free (John 8:32), then shouldn't we allow people to live truthfully rather than force them into unnatural roles?

Even Jesus acknowledged those who lived outside traditional gender and social roles, like the eunuchs in Matthew 19:11-12, showing that God's kingdom is open to all.

My Belief in a Church That Reflects Jesus' Love

When I study Jesus' ministry, I see a Savior who stood with the rejected, who healed the outcast, who rebuked religious leaders for their judgment, and who always led with love. If we are to follow Christ, we must ask ourselves:

- Are we creating a church that welcomes as Jesus welcomed?**
- Are we leading people toward God, or placing barriers between them and His love?**
- Are we focusing on love, as Jesus commanded, or are we upholding human traditions that cause harm?**

I believe that the Church should reflect Jesus' love. I believe that all people, regardless of their identity or orientation, should be welcomed fully into the body of Christ. I

believe that God's love is bigger than any of our divisions, and that is the message I choose to share.