

Everyone Is Welcome At Lilac Road Church Of Christ

One "big issue" in the religious world today is homosexuality and homosexual marriage. As time goes on there will be more pressure on "churches" to accept those relationships. Already it is said churches who will not perform homosexual marriages should have their tax-exempt status revoked. In order to appear more open minded and friendly, some "churches" advertise their acceptance of homosexuality. Recently, I saw on the internet a post where a denomination on its sign put "LBGTQ" is welcome here. Doing a little google search on the subject, I found multiple denominations are having issues with this topic. There appears to be at least three ways they tried to deal with the homosexual issue.

Some affirm they believe marriage is between one man and one woman. They believe homosexuality is a sin and incompatible with the teaching of the Bible. Others try to remain silent on the issue or state it is up to individual congregations to decided who to accept and not accept. Then a third groups openly accepts homosexuals in their relationships. Below is one such statement:

We believe that God calls us to be a community of love, where all are welcomed and accepted. To this end we have adopted a stance of radical inclusiveness - not simply tolerance of others but active acceptance. We believe that we are all children of God, regardless of race, gender, creed, or sexual orientation.

We are Welcoming and Affirming! That means that LGBTQ persons, their families, friends, and loved ones, are invited to fully participate in the life and leadership of our congregation. We invite you to bring your

whole self, your whole life, and your God-given gifts to share with us as we journey together.

Let me state that I do not believe we should ever be malicious with God's word or physically harmful to anyone. Short of someone either being intentionally disruptive or trying to be harmful to another person, we would welcome anyone who wants to come and study with us at Lilac Road. We accept all races, all genders (of which there are two), all social/economic classes, all educational levels, all nationalities, etc. We are as inclusive as you can get.

One problem with the homosexual issue is these denominations are not dedicated to doing everything the Bible teaches. Their conventions and creed books are testimonies to their departing from God's word. Once a person or place decides they can decide their doctrine, they are in trouble. Homosexuality is clearly condemned in the New Testament. "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Corinthians 6:9-10) We, man, should never be in the business in deciding what our stance on this issue will be. Our belief should be exactly what the Law of Christ states. We can not add to or subtract from God's word and still have the truth.

At the same time, I want to also make plain that we will be just as accepting of homosexuals as the Lord is. Like the church at Corinth, we will preach the Gospel of Christ to everyone. Paul said the people at Ephesus, "walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience." (Ephesians 2:2b). Many Christians had at one time practiced homosexuality, idolatry, and lot of other sins. However, the

Gospel was preached to them. It is through the Gospel they and we have the hope of salvation, Romans 1.16. Apparently, Paul, and Apollos, and Cephas all preached the Gospel, 1 Corinthians 1. Such preaching would include what Paul wrote to the people at Rome.

"Therefore, God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason, God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise, also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due." (Romans 1:24-27)

I will say to the homosexual the message is Jesus loves them, He died for them, and they can go to heaven if they are willing to repent and follow His commandments. It is the same message I would give to the idolater; he has to give up his gods and serve the living and true God, John 4.23. To the thief I would tell them to be honest in the sight of all men and work. The liar must stop lying, the murderer must stop killing, and anyone else in sin must give up their sins. One cannot stay in sin, in a sinful lifestyle, and be told they are acceptable to God. The key is they can be saved but not while in their sins. "But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Corinthians 6:11) -- Dennis Tucker