

AN OFFENDED GAY CHRISTIAN

After reading your opinion on homosexuality I, as a gay christian woman, took offence at being compared to a thief. I am an honest, loving, compassionate human being. I in no way would be a threat to anyone. You might want to do a little more studying on homosexuality and the Bible.

God did not condemn same sex loving, relationships, only those practiced in pagan temples. By the way, same sex unions were celebrated in the Roman Catholic Church, long ago. Read John Boswell's Books.

Just voicing my opinion,

Offended Gay Christian

Dear OGC,

I certainly have no intention of offending you by comparing you to a thief.

Perhaps the point I wish to make is in need of more clarity. I wrote that there is a time in the life of a person who steals where they become known as a thief rather than by their own identity. I also wrote that I don't believe that it is right to make this kind of a disparaging judgement about other individuals because it could rob them of that very individuality. Jesus actually said that to call someone a fool was a hell bound remark. You signed with your real name and that's good enough for me.

To be known as a thief truly troubles those who have been so deemed by our judicial system. A few years ago I meet a man who had recently been released from prison. I asked him what he did for a living; I was just making friendly conversation. To my surprise he said that he was a thief. He went on to explain that he had spent most of his life in jail for thievery and had never held any kind of position for very long. He went on to say that he usually lost a job when he was caught stealing from the company.

I have never forgotten how hopeless he sounded nor how lost he seemed. The tone of his voice, the way he described his existence, sounded like he was living out a script written for some B grade movie. He had no life of his own. He believed he was a thief through and through. His individuality was gone. I was struck by what a tragedy it was that a man or woman could loose their God given uniqueness to the banality of sin. He had forgotten who he was. He was an Esau who had traded his birthright identity for the gratification of a stolen bowl of instant lentil soup.

I regularly read Dan Savage's advice column in an alternative San Francisco newspaper. He insists on being called "Faggot". The questions he chooses to answer in his column are all addressed to, "Hey Faggot". Mr. Savage is an exceptional person. He is a gifted writer who is able to communicate a strong sense of his own identity. He is not at all troubled that the term somehow might demean him. I presume, that in spite of how he wishes to be addressed, he is still Dan Savage and not a "faggot".

You say you are a Christian. I have no reason to doubt that. You must admit that calling oneself a Christian identifies you as someone very different from other people. We Christians are no longer the individuals we used to be. We are united with Christ. We believe that His Spirit has actually come into our bodies and has made us new creatures. As the Apostle Paul wrote, "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been

bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body." (1 Cor 6:19-20).

Calling oneself a Christian is so evocative that one usually has to explain what one means. If not, most people assume you to be a bigoted, judgmental, materialistic, homophobic, anti-Semite who is against almost anything that could possibly be fun. Unless, of course one is as able to communicate one's uniqueness as well as, say, Mr. Savage can.

Calling yourself a "gay Christian" as you do, I must confess, only confuses me. I don't know what you mean. I don't understand what you are saying, mostly because of another passage in the same letter that Paul wrote to our brothers and sisters in the Corinthian Church of antiquity, "Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor 6:9-11).

What perplexes me is that I used to be one or more of the above, but I'm not anymore. I don't mean that I am sinless, but I no longer have a self-image problem. When I go before God to pray I feel whole and totally accepted by Him. My own conscience no longer condemns me. I know I'm a new person even if my behavior doesn't necessarily prove it. I don't understand why you call yourself a gay Christian. I don't call myself an adulterous, lying, fornicator Christian.

If you mean that you believe you are a third gender, then we do differ on that notion. According to the Bible, God creates only males and females. The only third-ish thing I know of in the Bible is what Jesus said, "For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb; and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men; and there are also eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to accept this, let him accept it." (Mat 19:12).

In the ancient world eunuchs were usually men who often had no sexual or reproductive desires or abilities. The Roman Army had eunuchs of the man-made kind because they made good soldiers. They never needed to go home and take care of their families. Some, because they were of the man-made variant, might well have been pretty angry bad-dude fighters. They might even have preferred sexual relations with other guys like themselves. That must have been a scary thought for the opposing army to contemplate.

Part of what you have written is most certainly true. There is nothing in the Bible that forbids anyone from being as you say, "...an honest, loving, compassionate human being." God does not, as you say, "...condemn same sex loving, relationships...". There is no condemnation of love between members of the same gender because God says He is love. However, as you know loving someone is not the same as having sex with them. People have sex with people they don't love all the time. I have had sex with people I didn't love. You seem to be saying that you are a Christian who is both emotionally and sexually involved with another woman. I gather that you also believe that this kind of a relationship is not prohibited in the Bible. Please correct me if I'm wrong.

OGC, I am not your judge nor do I want you to be judged by God or anybody else for that matter, but unless you can say with Paul, "All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything." (1 Cor 6:12). You are living in circumstances that would scare me. I am not able to say all things are lawful for me and I have been working on believing in my complete freedom for more than 30 years.

This is what I fear for when I read that you say you are a gay Christian:

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "...but the righteous man shall live by faith."

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened."

"Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen."

"For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; and, although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them." (Rom 1:16-32)

It would certainly be wrong for me to single out homosexual behavior from the previous text and say that it was the worst thing anyone could do.

But please take note OGC, for your own sake, where in this passage it is positioned. Most of us are surprised to discover what the wrath of God is and that it came because man failed to honor or thank God. He has already begun to let go of His restraining power over mankind. It amazes me that His wrath is simply described as an act of letting go of us so that our own narcissistic personalities take over. Apparently all of humanity when unrestrained by God is extremely selfish.

The reason that I ask you to notice where in this downward spiral women start to desire one another is because God's wrath is depicted as progressive. Your desire for a woman as a sexual partner is near the beginning of the big let go. There is more wrath to come. The Bible teaches that unless God saves us we are all doomed by our own excesses.

You used Boswell as a source for information about Roman Catholicism and the practice of same sex unions. If you check out Catholic history you will discover that they also practiced chastity. Some undoubtedly failed in their efforts. However, these unions were more like what we would call communes rather than marriages. They might have been put off by my seeing it this way, but they sound as though they were trying to be Jesus' harem. At any rate this practice hardly applies to your situation, because you are not living in a monastery with other women who consider themselves to be the brides of Christ.

Please feel free to write. Perhaps you can help me to better understand why you believe what you do and how you know you are right. By right I mean, how do you know if what you believe is what the Apostles believed? It seems to me that for one to be authentically Christian, one ought to base one's beliefs on the foundation they laid. Be assured that I'm not in the least bit offended by lesbian relationships. In fact, I myself have been in love with a woman for over 37 years.

Ted Wise

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