

Straight Talk on Marriage

By Greg Witherow

Christianity teaches there are parameters to whom we can marry. The tenets of the Faith teach we can't marry whoever we want, nor is consent the sole criteria. Two thousand years of Church teaching are crystal clear. Many reject Christianity stating, "I don't care what Christianity teaches". That's their prerogative. However others seek approval of religion; even the Christian Faith. They twist it to justify their choices with slogans like "Love is Love" and "Love is stronger than Hate". These sound as if they were lifted straight out of the New Testament. That's the whole point! These phrases sound religious and approving. After all isn't Christianity about love? But in this case love means desire. That is not Christian love. Here we will address, "can I marry whoever I want?" from Christian testimony.

Christ talked about marriage in the Sermon on the Mount. In it, Jesus made a pretty jolting statement. Listen to this. He said a person who gets divorced and then remarries commits adultery. Wait. What? Say that again. Slowly. Two adults - who are legally married - in the eyes of the State - yet are in sexual sin? Yes. Adultery is a sin in Natural Law (people inherently know it's wrong), the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus told the woman caught in adultery, "go and sin no more." Clearly in the case of adultery, "love is love" is off limits. Christ has a high view of marriage.



Christ speaking the truth in love at the Well

The Woman at the Well is a famous gospel story. In it Christ evangelizes a Samaritan woman. After introductions Christ quickly got to the status of this woman's marriage. "Bring your husband here." He knew she had been married five times and the man she was living with was not her husband. Christ was not being hateful nor practicing micro-aggression. Instead He spoke in love. Original Sin warps our judgement. *We are born that way.* Not wanting her to be ruled by her desires, which leads to bondage, He prompted her to turn from sin and have a relationship with Him. He loved her.

St. John the Baptist was martyred for his stance on marriage. King Herod had married Herodias, his living brother's divorced wife. Extra-biblical sources document she was Herod's niece (incest). Yet they married; two adults who were in love. However wife swapping with a brother (with incest thrown in) was a sin. John the Baptist spoke out against it, hate speech in today's jargon. "Don't **** with my freedom!" is the loving retort. Herodias had John executed. His head was served to her on a platter.

The Apostle Paul dealt with "love is love" in the Church. At Corinth a man married his own step mother (*I hear it was consensual*). However incest "love" is incompatible with the Faith. The man was excommunicated in order to shock him into repentance. He did and was restored. Elsewhere Paul wrote that same-sex passions are unnatural and incompatible with Christian life. Pretty clear stuff.

St. John the Baptist vs. Love is Love



These are *concrete examples* of Christian belief on marriage. For this reason Christians cannot condone divorce, adultery, fornication, incest, polygamy, or same-sex unions. To condone one is to condone all! For those that reject Christ, this is irrelevant. But Christ said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life". For Christians, being faithful to Jesus is a big deal. It is freeing! So - whom do you choose to follow? *Write your answer here.*