

7 Things That Still Stand

The evangelical community of churches both in Malaysia and worldwide alike are saddened by the Supreme Court decision on 26th June 2015 to legalize same sex marriages in the US.

This development will no doubt have an impact on the world stage as the sitting US president is himself pro-LGBT and will undoubtedly use his country's economic clout to induce many nations to adopt a similar stance in exchange for subsidies and trade benefits.

Those who advocate teaching young children the alternative lifestyle will be harder to thwart. Child adoption by same-sex parents is set to surge while priests and pastors will increasingly be prosecuted for refusing to conduct and recognize "legal" marriages. Asian conservatism will not be spared in the onslaught from this new tsunami of liberalism.

Nevertheless, it is crucial to remind ourselves that 7 fundamental truths remain intact.

1. The God of Genesis is still God.

Since creation, it has always been Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve. Franklin Graham said it succinctly – "God gave us marriage and God doesn't change His mind ...and His decisions are not subject to review or revision by any manmade court. It did not define marriage and therefore is not entitled to re-define it."¹

2. The God who punished Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19) for their lewd behavior has not changed His standard for judging mankind.

Sodom and Gomorrah were ill reputed for sexual perversity. Such immorality was not circumscribed as Old Testament phenomena; the New Testament similarly alludes to these gross sins - see Matt. 10:15, Luke 10:12; Rom. 9:29; 2 Pet. 2:6 and Jude 7.

Jude 7 cites "just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire." ESV

What happened in Sodom and Gomorrah is an example and *warning* for all of us.

¹ Newsmax, 29th June 2015.

Clearly the Supreme Court's decision and the subsequent celebration over the institutionalization of decadence can only anger God.

3. It is God who defines sin.

In the pathetic attempt to redefine "marriage" is the feeble endeavor to redefine "sin."

It is the God of the Bible who "sets the ideal, the standard for human behavior, and the most frequent biblical words for sin (Heb. *ḥāṭā'*; Gk *hamartēma*) meant originally "to miss the mark, fail in duty" (Rom 3:23)."²

Sin is when we miss the mark set by God, not necessarily when the Supreme Court declares it so. The legal definition does not change the biblical definition.

If there is sin in the Church, it is sin! It is what God says, not even what the pastor says (should he similarly try to redefine what is right and wrong). It does not matter what the Human Rights Commission asserts, what any court declares, or what a referendum decides. If the Bible calls it sin, it is sin.

4. The way to eternal life is through repentance at the foot of the cross.

There is no self-prescribed way to salvation. One cannot get saved just because you come to Jesus "just as you are". *Repentance* cannot be omitted from our homilies.

Repentance involves acknowledgment of sin. How can one get saved whilst intending to remain unrepentant and ungodly?

The verb "repent" appears 84 times in Scriptures, almost equally divided between the Old Testament and the New Testament.³ We fool ourselves to think we do not need to repent. We are delusional to redefine sin in order to abrogate the need for repentance. There can be no regeneration without repentance and turning to God in faith.

² Elwell, W. A., & Beitzel, B. J. (1988). In *Baker encyclopedia of the Bible* (p. 1967). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.

³ Bridges, R. F., & Weigle, L. A. (1994). In *King James Bible word book* (electronic ed., p. 287). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

5. After salvation, there is no biblical exemption to lead a sanctified life.

There are three stages in the process of salvation viz. justification, sanctification and glorification.

Simply put, justification is “the act of God in bringing sinners into a new covenant relationship with himself through the forgiveness of sins.”⁴ This takes place when a person repents, acknowledges Jesus as the only way and is saved. Thereafter, he is expected to live a sanctified life.

The New Hampshire Baptist Confession (1833) states: “We believe that sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of his holiness; that it is a progressive work; that it is begun in regeneration; and that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means - especially the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer”.⁵

There are no unique exceptions for special groups to be exempted from pursuing a sanctified life. To artlessly embrace *gay believers* without expounding transformation is sheer compromise.

6. God will not change who goes to heaven.

In the last chapter of the last book of the Bible, we are told –

Revelation 22:14 Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.

15 But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral (the lewd, adulterers - Amplified Bible) and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie. NKJV

The warning of Revelation is not about to be re-written. And any proposed gay Bible⁶ expounding “friendlier doctrine” is surely an abomination.

⁴ Elwell, W. A., & Beitzel, B. J. (1988). In *Baker encyclopedia of the Bible* (p. 1252). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.

⁵ Ibid

⁶ See article by Matt Slick, on the Queen James Bible, the gay bible.

7. God is not mocked.

The eschatological writings forewarn us of the emergence of the harlot church in the last days. Nevertheless the true Bride, the Church remains confident that God still has the upper hand.

We may be disappointed about the changing trend and moral decline in the world landscape but we are not despondent.

Indeed God is not mocked –

Galatians 6:7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. NKJV

I like the way Eugene Peterson paraphrases Galatians 6:7 in *The Message*, “No one makes a fool of God.”

Hence the stand of the Malaysian Evangelical Church remains steadfast, biblical and unchanged.

As we move forward, I am reminded there is indeed a great harvest out there. We must continue to embrace all with love and understanding, in the hope that *all* would live godly lives that please God.

In these vexing times, no man can do an effective work as an unclean vessel. Therein is the challenge before the Church leadership - to hold the moral plumb-line steadfastly before a watching world. Without this, there is no testimony, notwithstanding all our achievements.

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1st July 2015.