

A Brief History

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 07 September 2014

Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0:00] Well, our study is Homosexuality in the Bible, and this morning we're going into a brief history of the homosexual movement, and especially what we're going to be looking at the religious homosexual movement.

! To be gay and Christian, let me use the term, or we're going to have to spend a lot of time every time I want to say gay Christian, and you know what I'm talking about.

I'm going to have to say a paragraph and say, now you know they may not really be Christians, but they're struggling, or whatever. However, in this business we're going to see next week, too, Lord willing, that the whole terminology is loaded with freight and carries ideas that are antithetical to the Scripture.

So you can't even use these terms, homosexual and heterosexual and gay, without, as it were, yielding part of the playing field.

And we'll look at some of that difficulty next week, and perhaps then I'll repent of having ever used the term homosexual and heterosexual and so on. It is a difficult day in which we live.

[1:31] Sexual relations between people of the same sex is an ancient sin. It's noted as early as Genesis 19, isn't it? The record of Sodom and Gomorrah.

So all unnatural sex came to be called sodomy after its first mention in Scripture in Sodom. It even predates Moses and the giving of the law by approximately 500 years.

Then through Moses, God published his law that condemned it as an abomination to God. And so as we think of the history of this particular sin, all of Old Testament Judaism had only one view of it. They were united in their condemnation of this sin as an abomination to God. Now, the Christian church as well, from its inception 2,000 years ago, has openly condemned such behavior as sin. As sinful. It's only been recently, as in the last half of the last century, that there was a move in the West, especially, to accept homosexuality as an acceptable alternative lifestyle.

[2:56] And many of us are old enough to say that we've lived through that history. We remember when it was the unanimous opinion of the churches of Christianity to decry and to say homosexuality is a sin.

But we have lived through this whole period where that witness of the church has been changed.

And to where we have Christian churches, in quotes, approving of a homosexual lifestyle. So I want to trace this change this morning in three steps.

And to look at this history, I've used a multitude or at least several sources, little bits here and there, but especially the book of one who's been on the other side of this issue.

Joe Dallas lives six years as a professing homosexual and tells his story along with the broader story of how homosexuality has become more and more acceptable in the churches that call themselves Christian.

[4:04] He was an ordained minister. He was defrocked. He joined the gay community for six years. In 1984, he left both the gay church and its community.

And he says, since then, I've seen my story repeated too many times in too many lives. It's time we recognized those lives and the seductive effect that the gay religious movement is having upon them.

He became one of the presidents of the institution that is no more but the Exodus International, a group of a ministry to seek to help homosexuals repent and change.

He directs a biblical counseling practice in Tustin, California, is what the fly of the book says, and lectures at churches and seminars.

So that's Joe Dallas. His book is entitled The Gay Gospel, How Pro-Gay Activists Misread the Bible. First written in 1999 under a different title, A Strong Delusion.

[5:12] So I say I'm drawing heavily from his overview of this history. We start with the world. At first, this sin was only heard of in the world where we would expect to see it.

If a man will not reject his sin, then he'll often seek to rationalize and justify it, making himself look better. And so the world were the first to normalize it and to put a different face upon it. And more and more people started coming out. Indeed, that was part of the whole agenda. To show the world that it's not just the social outcasts, the weirdos that have this orientation called homosexuality.

But it's people we're familiar with, likable personalities and celebrities and athletes and musicians, Christian musicians, popular people. And so as they came out, it put a different face on homosexuality in the world.

And as they came out, they spoke of the torment that their lives were as they repressed and tried to deny what they really are at heart.

[6:30] And that being homosexual, I'm stating it from their perspective. And so they spoke of the freedom to finally be true to who they were created to be. And it became a defined movement with a carefully planned agenda using politics, the media, entertainment, education to wear down the negative views of it.

If you've watched any television over the last 50 years, you know exactly what we're talking about in wearing down the sensitivities, the moral sensitivities of our nation.

Even using the Christian religion in that service to put a new face upon this behavior. So that's the first stage, it's the world. The second stage is that some of the liberal churches began to accept same-sex behavior as normal.

It's interesting, one survey that I read of says that one-third of homosexuals and lesbians attend church. So it's not like they've abandoned Christianity to hold on to their sinful lifestyle.

No, they have found a home in church. And it started chiefly with the liberal denominations.

[7:48] And the gay Christian movement has adopted the slogan that God loves and accepts us just as we are and homosexuality is okay with him.

Now, at first, it was gay groups and caucuses within the mainline denominations that were a strong voice. And they kept putting pressure upon their denomination to change their official position on this issue of homosexuality.

Many of them had positions stating it as sinful. And so these gay groups within the mainline denominations applied pressure upon their denominations to condone, officially condone homosexual practices and openly ordain homosexual ministers.

There was no discipline of them for their views or for their lifestyles. And so it was only a matter of time before denominations caved into their pressure and changed their official stance to accept homosexual behavior as normal and allowing practicing homosexuals as members and ministers of their denominations.

In 2003, the Episcopal Church elected an openly homosexual, Gene Robinson, as a bishop, as one of the leading members of the church.

[9:08] And the speed of this transformation of society and especially the religious society, at which homosexuality has been assimilated into the Christian church, has surprised even the gay Christian movement.

Even Gene Robinson, as I heard him say in a documentary, was shocked at how quickly they had achieved their goals. Just seven years before he was made bishop, the Episcopal Church was locked in a heresy trial over the ordination of a practicing homosexual deacon.

That just shows you how quickly it changed. So there's this great controversy in the Episcopal Church. We've got a deacon that's openly homosexual, and that shouldn't be.

And others said, oh, there's nothing wrong with it. And they were locked in it. But just seven years later, they've made a practicing homosexual the bishop within their church. So it happened very quickly.

Many denominations now accept homosexual members and clergy and are willing to have their clergy perform same-sex marriages and unions. Now, here's a question for you to respond to.

[10:22] Why would we expect this to be the case in liberal churches? We've moved from the world.

This is the way the world was, and we're seeing that liberal churches opened their arms and began to accept the world's thinking and to approve it. Why would we expect that in liberal churches?

Okay, did you hear that? That they do not tend to base their beliefs upon the scriptures. Any other comments, then? Why would we expect liberal churches to be the first to cave in? They should accept everybody. Okay, good.

The very view of God is such that God is not judgmental. He doesn't judge anyone, and he accepts everyone as they are, so we should too.

[11:19] Any other things? Yes. Well, we can't forget that, can we? There is a way to fill a building. Martin Lloyd-Jones says, if that's our goal, I'll announce that I'm wearing a swimming suit next week as I preach, and we'll fill the hall. But that's not the goal, is it?

But sadly, it is in many places. But it is the view of scripture that is the foundation bedrock of any church and any denomination group of churches.

And when a church or a group of people or an individual denies the inerrancy, the inspiration and authority of the word of God, of the scriptures, and said, this book is without error, that the scriptures are inspired by the Holy Spirit, then once that's denied, what are they left with? Man's ideas. And that was the case in liberal denominations. They had long ago abandoned the word of God, the inspiration, inerrancy, and authority of the scriptures.

[12:33] And once the foundation is gone, it's a control mechanism for what the church does and believes. But once the foundation is gone, anything, literally, anything goes.

So either you accept the authority of God in scriptures, or you put yourself on the throne with all the authority. And it's what I think, and what I feel, or what this man thinks, and what he feels. And from there, the process is relatively easy, isn't it?

Once this is gone, well, then we can redefine God, as Linda said. And we can make God to be all love, and no judgment. But what about, no, no.

We don't believe that stuff, all of that stuff anymore. Now, we can redefine God. We can redefine the gospel. We can redefine sin. We can redefine homosexual behavior.

And so the Bible becomes a piece of putty to shape, as men like it. And they redefine Jesus, and have a Jesus other than the Jesus of scripture.

[13:36] Let me give you an example of a homosexual Episcopalian minister, Robert Williams, commenting on the Apostle Paul's very anti-homosexual views in scripture. We'll be getting to those verses in our study in the future.

So he's commenting on the Apostle Paul's anti-homosexual views. So what? Paul was wrong about any number of other things, too.

Why should you take him any more seriously than you take Jerry Falwell, Anita Bryant, or Cardinal O'Connor? It's easy for liberals who don't accept the Bible as authoritative to dismiss anything sinful in the homosexual lifestyle.

In 1968, openly homosexual, Troy Perry founded the first pro-homosexual denomination of churches. It's the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches.

That's a mouthful. Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. He's remained a leading voice in what's called the gay Christian movement.

[14:43] And we'll examine that oxymoron later on. In his book, *Don't Be Afraid Anymore*, he made this interesting admission. Quote, I knew I would have few, if any, problems with the so-called liberal churches.

Liberal churches do not usually deeply involve themselves with scripture. End quote. No kidding. And if you don't deeply involve yourself with scripture, what are you left with?

Your own thoughts. Man's thoughts. Versus the word of God. So there is nothing to replace God's written word except man.

And with the authority of scripture gone in so many of the mainline denominations, the pro-homosexual movement found a home. A convenient place. And made hay quickly.

There's an order to the devil's strategies. By stripping the mainline denominations of the inspiration, inerrancy, and authority of scripture, the devil had effectively disarmed them and left them with nothing to fight against the devil's lies.

[15:57] And so, his agenda is first disarm the churches of their weapons and then attack. First, rob them of the category of objective truth and then slip them the lie.

It was that way in the Garden of Eden, wasn't it? The lie didn't come first. You will not surely die. That came second.

What came first? has God said? Planting doubt in the word of God. Did he really say this? Accusing God of being their enemy and then comes the lie.

You'll not really die. You can't trust this God. He's holding you back and he's not for you. Listen to me. I'm for you. And if you eat, you'll know good and evil like God does.

Well, that's his agenda. Disarm, then attack. Rob them of truth, then slip them the lie. So we should not be ignorant of Satan's devices even in this issue of homosexuality.

[17:10] So liberal denominations are falling like dominoes to the homosexual agenda. Just go online and type in any number of mainline churches and what is their view on homosexuality and you'll see that they're all in a tizzy.

They're all over the board. They're in study groups are going on and they're changing their views and coming out as promoters of it. Well, I say, we would expect that, wouldn't we?

Because of their view of scripture. But what has been especially troubling and alarming is how quickly homosexuality is making inroads now into evangelical churches.

And this is the thing that has moved my heart to do this study with you. Churches that still hold to the Bible as being inspired, inerrant, word of God, that believe in the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that believe in the deity of Christ, the humanity of Christ, his virgin birth, his supernatural miracles, his gospel, that salvation is found in Jesus Christ alone and through his blood shed upon the cross by grace, not by works, that Jesus is coming again to judge the world and assign all men their places in heaven and hell.

They profess to hold to these fundamentals of the faith and yet, at the same time, do not regard homosexuality as a sin but as a gift of God to be celebrated to his glory.

[18:40] Troy Perry, again, the founder of this first pro-gay denomination of churches, says, how could we go on being ashamed of something that God created? Yes, God created homosexuals and homosexuality.

Or homosexual author Mel White, I have learned to accept and even celebrate my sexual orientation as another of God's good gifts. So, homosexuals were being told then that there's a way to maintain your belief in God and in his God-breathed word and all the other fundamentals of the gospel and at the same time to affirm your homosexual behavior as acceptable to God.

Now, there are six main passages in the Bible that have been understood for thousands of years to forbid and to condemn same-sex relations.

Three in the Old Testament, three in the New. Those who want to be homosexuals and Christians sometimes refer to these as the clobber passages.

The clobber passages. One homosexual author was discussing theology on a radio program when a woman called in and quoted some Bible verses against homosexuality and the author sneered, well, congratulations, honey, you've got all the clobber passages down just right.

[20:09] What does labeling them that way do? Yeah. So, it's reading our motive that because we hold to these passages, we hate you and we just want to beat you with these.

You see how it puts us on the defensive. Who wants to be known as a clobberer, right? I mean, we talked about that. We don't want to clobber people out with some kind of ill will toward them that that language evokes.

But just sharing scripture texts makes you a homosexual hater who's just out to clobber them. You see?

Well, there are these six clobber passages and these homosexuals who would call themselves conservative Christians do not just dismiss them as the liberals easily do just by saying, well, Moses and Paul, they were wrong.

They were just bigots. They just hated homosexuals and so on. And with that, those texts just go out the window. They don't carry any weight to them. No, these folks like us believe that Moses and Paul's writings are inerrant and inspired and authoritative.

[21:30] And so rather than just dismissing these texts, they have reinterpreted them. They bring to light new information that proves that none of these passages are really condemning homosexual behavior at all.

As early as 1955, an Anglican theologian Dr. Derek Bailey mounted the first serious challenge to the Bible's condemnation of homosexuality. His book *Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition* argued that Sodom was not destroyed for homosexual acts, but for inhospitality.

And we're going to look at that when we get there to that text. But this man has been quoted for decades as having established that truth long ago.

I guess if you say something long enough, loud enough, it becomes truth. And that's the way it is in many people's minds. During the 1970s, more gay Christians, quote unquote, gay Christian books were written and found their way into Christian bookstores as well as secular.

The Lord is my shepherd and he knows I'm gay by Troy Perry. Take Off the Mask, Malcolm Boyd, Jonathan Love, David, Tom Horner, Is the Homosexual, My Neighbor, Letha Scanzoni in Virginia, Mollenkot.

[22 : 53] During the 70s, I say, these books came out. But they were based more on experience, testimonials. You know, I always had these problems since I can remember.

I was just born this way. It was more experience, testimony-laden, or the word of the psychologist, the sociologist, the medical sciences, culture, and history.

But they were doctrinally weak. They weren't setting out to prove from the scriptures that this was right in God's eyes. And so they were not the kind of books needed to convince the toughest critics that they had, which were conservative Christians.

They're holding out for a biblical exegesis of the critical text. Can you show us from the scriptures, to the scriptures?

If they don't answer according to them, there's no light in them. Well, that book would be written by John Boswell called Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality.

[23 : 53] It hit the bookstores in 1981. And this was the book that really made inroads into conservative churches. Mr.

Dallas says that most any pro- homosexual religious book written since then, 1981, is loaded with quotes from his massive 434-page defense of homosexuality.

He was a professor of history at Yale University. He spent 10 years researching homosexuality. He turns to the original languages to show that the six key Bible texts assumed to condemn homosexual sex do not refer to homosexuality at all, but to various other forms of immorality.

And we'll come to that as we go to those six texts. But here he is. He's dealing with the original languages of Greek and Hebrew. It's a very serious scholarly work.

He's dealing with the context of the passage. He's not just picking them out and taking them out of context, but laboring for the context of the passage. And his arguments seemed valid to many.

[25 : 09] His scholarly credentials did not hurt him. There's one more thing you need to know about Mr. Boswell. He was a homosexual and died of AIDS in 1994.

I'm not saying that no homosexual has an ounce of objectivity in him, but we need to know that, don't we? that there were ulterior reasons why this man would see scripture texts the way that he did.

Now we look at how these six texts are handled. We're going to look at them and often go back to his groundbreaking book. It became the biblical justification for the whole gay Christian movement. It would take some ten years before it would trickle really into the more conservative wing of the church, but this was the book that if any could, would press its way into fundamentalist and conservative circles because it dealt with scripture.

It took scripture supposedly seriously, and that's what the conservatives wanted. so now the gay Christian movement had a more serious reply to the clobber passages that condemned homosexuality.

[26 : 34] That's just your interpretation of those Bible passages. There's another way to see them and understand them, you know. Now before we go any further in looking into those six passages, I want us to consider several texts to put this whole newfound interpretation into the broader context of fallen human nature.

Turn to 2 Peter chapter 3. 2 Peter chapter 3 and as Peter comes to the end of his little epistle here, he talks about scripture twisting.

This was 2,000 years ago and it just reminds us that scripture twisting is nothing new. Notice what he says, he's talking about the apostle Paul's writings.

Verse 15, bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him.

He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things which some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people

distort as they do the other scriptures to their own destruction.

[28:04] It's possible to take what is the pure, inerrant, inspired word of God and to so distort and twist it that what you end up with is exactly opposite of what that inspired authoritative word actually means.

Peter says people were doing that to their own destruction. And that's not too strong of a word to use. Because Jesus says you will all likewise perish unless you what?

Repent. What do you need to repent of? Sin? But if the homosexual behavior and lifestyle is no longer sinful, then they will not repent of it and they will perish and be destroyed because of it. So Peter's right on when he says some people twist. There are some passages of scriptures. There are some truths revealed in holy scriptures that people in twisting them destroy their own souls. Not every truth is like that. Is Jesus coming back before a thousand year reign on earth or is there no such thing? You may twist that view and not do so to your own destruction.

[29:27] Many issues in the Bible that you can twist but not to your but there are some that are to their own destruction. And so it's going on Peter says. What's the answer to that?

How do we keep ourselves from that kind of problem and error? Well he tells us therefore dear friends verse 17 since you already know this be on your guard realize that it's happening and be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of what kind of men?

Lawless men. Men who live not according to God's laws but according to their own passions and pleasures and their own laws.

so we see that this twisting is being done by lawless men and so be on guard that you don't fall away from your secure position but instead grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The way to not be fooled by scripture twisters is to grow in grace and knowledge. Add to your faith knowledge. Well another text we want to look at 2 Timothy chapter 4 2 Timothy chapter 4 verses 2 to 4 Paul is telling Timothy preach the word preach the word this is the charge that he's giving to him as a gospel minister 2 Timothy 4 to preach the word be prepared in season out of season correct rebuke and encourage with great patience and careful instruction.

[31:15] Why? Because the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine instead to suit their own desires they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.

They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. What is the reason that many people Paul predicts will turn away from the truth to these other teachers?

What is it? Do they think that they're not teaching the scriptures properly? Why do they turn away from those to please their own desires?

In other words desire is running theology now. desire is determining who I listen to and who I like to dish out the Bible to me.

Those that will say what I want to hear. Look at 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 just a little bit earlier in the New Testament right before Timothy's.

[32:27] 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 verses 9 through 12 Paul talks about the coming of a lawless one. And he says here that the coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs, and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing.

They perish because they refuse to love the truth and so to be saved. And for this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.

Why don't people love and embrace and believe the truth? Because they delight in wickedness. In other words wickedness has a dreadful effect upon the mind as to what it believes and holds as truth.

And let me just insert at this point this is not just a homosexual problem. It's every man's problem. It's a fallen human nature problem.

Look at Jeremiah 17 verses 9 and 10. We see fallen human nature here. What does he say? The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure.

[33:52] Who can understand it? I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind to reward a man according to his conduct according to what his deeds deserve. But the heart is deceitful.

That's why we're told that whoever trusts in his own heart is a fool. Because your own heart will deceive you. And that's especially true when you love wickedness. Demosthenes lived about 400 years before Christ. He was not an evangelical Christian. I doubt that he ever read Jeremiah 17.

He was an idolatrous Greek statesman and orator who committed suicide. Nevertheless, he must have been a careful observer of sinful human nature because this is what he concluded.

Quote, nothing is so easy as to deceive oneself for what we wish we readily believe. What we wish here we readily believe here.

[35:00] You see, the love for wickedness in the heart affects the mind. And that's why Paul will tell us when we come to Romans 1 that people who suppress truth, they do it out of wickedness.

Out of love for wickedness, they suppress the truth. And that leads to all kinds of people calling themselves wise who really become fools.

Let me return to the testimony of Joe Dallas, the author of the gay gospel. He made a profession of faith at age 16. He describes himself as a conservative born-again believer who cut his teeth under the teachings of Chuck Smith, founder of the Calvary Chapel movement during the Jesus movement.

He became himself an ordained minister. From childhood he had wrestled with same-sex attractions, though not exclusively, and he found that these desires did not just go away.

His entry into the gay community came at age 22 with a visit to an adult bookstore, led into a year-long relationship with another man. He was defrocked, his ordination was rescinded.

[36:05] And so at age 23 in 1978, his life was in ruins, he was lonely, and he made his way one day, one Sunday morning, into a gay church, the Metropolitan Community Church.

He says, I wanted to see if it was possible to be actively homosexual, Christian, and confident of a right standing before God.

I knew better, of course. I knew the scriptural condemnations of homosexuality in both the Old and New Testaments, that they were clear and final, and any attempt to get around them was purely self-serving.

But it was self, after all, that I was serving in those days. Every major decision I'd made that year, entering the pornographic bookstore, the adultery, the homosexuality, had been based on what I wanted, not on what I knew to be right.

And in that darkened frame of mind, I was ready to believe what I wanted to believe instead of what I truly believed. And what I wanted to believe, more than anything, was that my self-serve, self-centered sexuality, and faith could live together peacefully.

[37:15] And in visiting the gay church, I was looking for something to confirm that. So here he comes into the church Sunday morning. There's a building full of homosexual couples, lesbian couples, singing gospel songs and choruses, immediately set him in ease.

He heard Bill and Gloria Gaither songs and hymns that he was familiar with and had sung in his own past. And here they are worshipping, hearing a sermon, taking communion. And he says they all look so content, so free of turmoil over their sexual behavior.

If I would only give up my letter-bound obsession with the Bible, I could be content too. And I would be comfortable with myself like them. That is what he calls the bottom-line issue.

It was a contest between comfort and truth. I could either believe what made me comfortable, or I could believe what I knew to be true. Never had the choice been clearer, and to this day I'm amazed at how easily I made it.

And he chose comfort. That to say, there is something of that in every believer, a desire to believe things that line up with what we want.

[38:39] Remember, well, yes, we're more than just the old man, the flesh, aren't we? But he still remains, and that just means that there's a part of you that will tell you to find somebody to tell you what your desires want them to say, and to believe it.

So, as we come into these reinterpretations of Scripture, we need to see it in the broader context of what the Bible teaches then about fallen human nature. So as we come into these texts and we see what men are doing with them, never forget the connection between a love for wickedness here in the heart and what a man believes in his head.

and may it be a good tool for all of us then, that in coming to the word of God, to put ourselves under it.

Every time we open it for our devotions, every time we hear it preached, we're putting ourselves under it. What is a Christian? What is a disciple of Jesus?

If he's not somebody who comes to Jesus to learn how to think, what to believe, how to live, you can't be a Christian, you can't be a disciple of Jesus unless you put your mind under his word.

[40:10] So let's do that consciously. Let's pause as we get ready to worship, let's pause before we open our Bibles to read our devotions and say, Lord Jesus, thank you.

Thank you for the truth. And I now bring my mind and I put it underneath you. Open my eyes that I might see wonderful things in your love.

That I might see it for what it is. And if it condemns me, give me the humility and meekness to profit from it and to confess my sin and to condemn myself. Is that not how we get into the kingdom?

We agree with God. What I've done is wrong, is sinful, deserving of wrath, and we have nothing good to say for ourselves. We put ourselves under and we condemn ourselves.

And we look to the cross and the blood of Jesus to cleanse us from our sins. Our time's up. That's the brief history. We'll go on next week.

[41:11] God bless you. God bless you.