

Questions of Sexuality: Do We have Something to Say?

Should we not conclude along with many churches that the Bible is an unreliable guide when it comes to questions of sexuality?

Much of the NT is written to precisely the kind of culture we find ourselves living in today.

So much about society that is now emerging bears an astonishing resemblance to the most prominent features of what we call the classical world - its institutions, its priorities, its recreations, its physics, its sexual morality, its food, its politics, even its religion. Often without our being in the least aware of it, the ways in which we live our rich and varied lives corresponds almost eerily so to the ways in which the Greeks and Romans lived theirs. (Ferdinand Mount: Full Circle: how the classical world came back to us)

1 Peter 2:11-3:7 Living godly lives in a pagan society.

Live such **good** lives among the pagans that though they accuse you of doing wrong they may see your **good** deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. (2:12)

For it is Gods will that by **doing good** you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. (2:15)

Peter echoes Jesus teaching in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7)

Disciples are to be salt (distinctive) and light (conspicuous) in the world.

1. **Live as free people but do not use your freedom as a cover up for evil live as Gods slaves (2:16)**

Freedom is the catch word of the sexual revolution

But this kind of freedom only goes so far.

We are not free to not react resentfully when we don't get what we want.

The Bible's view of reality does not have room for absolute freedom

Christian freedom: **Matt 5:38-42**

Jesus quotes the OT law of retaliation. He sets that aside and brings a different order to bear

Free to be generous towards those who oppose us.

2. **Show proper respect to everyone.**

Respecting marriage.

Jesus defines marriage. Matthew 19: 4-6

Haven't you read,' he replied, 'that at the beginning the Creator "made them male and female,"^[a] 5 and said, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh"^[b]? 6 So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.'

The relationship though points beyond itself.

As a man is joined to his wife so humanity is heading to the place where God will be united to his people. The Bible ends with the consummation of a marriage.

The surprising thing is we find the Bible using sexual imagery to communicate the relationship of God to his people. (see Ezekiel 16)

We ought to look like people whose hopes and expectations are directed to this ultimate and eternal relationship.

The church should not make sex in marriage its idol.

- Christian marriage is a call to self sacrifice.
Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the Church.
- It means saying 'No' to sex outside of marriage
- It means saying 'Yes' to persevering in situations that are tough

- We should be seen to care about other people's marriages
- We should contend with the Government over its policy towards marriage.

Singleness

Our society has alleged that it impossible to enjoy life without sex.

Singleness is not a burden, an unwanted sentence. It's a calling. Those who are single whether same sex attracted or heterosexual bear witness to the faithful nature of God's love by their resolve to abstain from sex outside marriage. They are not waiting for marriage they are waiting for the Kingdom.

John the Baptist & Jesus (Luke 7:33,34)

The expectation on young single people is they will engage in the opportunities to pursue sexual pleasure. (virtually or casually) To refuse on the grounds that you are waiting for something better is a powerful testimony to God and his goodness.

3. Love the Family of Believers.

Tim Chester: I shocked someone recently by asking them to name one occasion on which Jesus speaks positively about family. Every time Jesus talks about families he sees them as competing for loyalty to him and his community.

In a culture that makes sex so important is it possible for the church to offer a credible alternative where intimacy and belonging are experienced by those who are not married?

"Walking into church on a Sunday is a bit like coming home. Its like walking into a family living room." (Tracy)

Intimacy is not confined to sex. Paul had a close and intimate relationship with Timothy. He called him his son. He referred to Rufus's mother as someone who had been a mother to him.

This raises issues of friendship

Self sacrifice is woven through marriage but also through friendship.

Greater love has no one than this: to lay down his life for one's friends. (John 15:14)

Jonathan and David's friendship involved self sacrifice

Friendship lets people get a glimpse behind the 'curtain' of our lives.

If we are to progress we need people to speak into our sin. (Prov 27:6)

Friendship involves giving and receiving.

Christian friendship is not fashioned out of shared interest but shared destiny. Its not too precious to give up for a time - eg church planting

- Contend for marriage because its good for the emotional and psychological development of children
- We do so for the sake of women who are saved from psychological control and aggression by the bible's vision
- We have a better alternative to the pornography and promiscuity and fruitless pursuit of self fulfilment.