

Pastor Enno's Weekly Message

Dear Friends,

I got an email from, I am assuming, a local person who is concerned about seeing our church's name associated with the upcoming Pride event happening this weekend. She asked if I could call her. I told her I was off to our Conference Annual Meeting but would be glad to meet her next week, in person, not over the phone or over email as those conversations can be so clunky.

I am assuming that she believes in the Biblical marriage between one man and one woman, and that the Bible condemns all other relationships -- and that youth (which she mentioned we have to protect) being exposed to such ideas of LGBTQ+ people and relationships open themselves to Satan. Here are some points that I will share with her:

- There are over 2,000 verses in the Bible that tell us we are to help the poor and only 7 that we interpret to condemn homosexuality.
- There are 46 verses in the Bible that tell us to welcome the stranger and only 7 that we interpret to condemn homosexuality.
- Throughout the Bible, the greatest commandment is declared: "You are to love the Lord your God, with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself." And, the laws and the prophets are summed by this: "Treat others as you want to be treated." There is no mention of sexuality of any kind as an impediment to carrying these out.
- Jesus doesn't condemn homosexuality in the four Gospels at any point, and he does lift up eunuchs (those who aren't male or female) as being part of the kingdom in Matthew 19:12-15.
- Ezekiel and Jesus called the greatest sin of Sodom and Gomorrah to be their inhospitality, nothing about sexuality.
- God has created a world where there is an abundance of diversity. We, humans, have many different skin and eye colors, are right- and left-handed, each with different gifts and talents. Why is sexuality (a gift from God) and human identity restricted to male and female, married or abstinent?
- If homosexuality is such a big deal for God, why wasn't it in the 10 commandments over bearing false witness, stealing, or coveting your neighbor's property?
- Finally, God is a God of love. Where there is love, there is God (found throughout the Bible).

I am not going to change her mind, but neither am I going to let her think that she (and her church) has the corner and knows everything about the Bible and what is acceptable or not. I am going to treat her as I want to be treated and love her as Jesus asks me to.

In this day and age, there are more and more people who are becoming violently opposed to 'allowing' LGBTQ+ people to be themselves. If there is an opportunity to have a conversation over a coffee, I will take it. But it doesn't lessen the Pride event as a protest where our brothers and sisters and siblings proclaim, "WE ARE HERE, WE ARE QUEER!" and they are welcome here in our community, our country, and our world.

Peace

Pastor Enno