

Same Sex Blessings and the Perspicuity of Scripture

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My first acquaintance with the term perspicuity occurred while taking a guided reading course under J.I. Packer at Regent College. Numerous times he referred to the perspicuity of scripture. In layman's terms this means the clear meaning of scripture—what is self-evident.

This principle of biblical interpretation requires proper understanding. If the Bible were utterly perspicuous would there be so many denominations? This fact seems to refute the principle. Nevertheless, in many matters there is agreement among Christians.

For the two thousand year existence of the church Christians have accepted the clear reading of scripture regarding same gender sex. The church has also accepted the perspicuity of scripture regarding marriage being the union of one man and one woman. This has been the constant position of the holy catholic church.

For two thousand years the church has accepted the clear reading of scripture regarding adultery: sexual relations with someone you are not married to is adultery¹. Sex is a privilege and if a person is either incapable or unwilling to enter into a marital relationship with a person of the opposite sex, scripture instructs him to live a celibate life. This can be done. Life can be very fulfilling without sex! And living a chaste life is pleasing to God. Adultery is not.

Commonsense agrees with the clear reading of scripture regarding sex. A man and a woman fit together. Two men don't and neither do two women. Marriage is a complementarity relationship. The two become a whole. Children are the fruit of this union. Homo-sex is fruitless.

When the perspicuity of scripture is abandoned and replaced with a new and obscure interpretation red flags go up. People immediately ask, why? The perspicuity of scripture can be forsaken for another reading that the Church has never accepted and may not have ever imagined. And people will immediately ask, why? The National Church Council (NCC) Resolution is proposing that our Synod abandon the perspicuity of scripture regarding scripture's teaching on sex and marriage and that it be replaced with an interpretation that most Christians never even imagined. Why? Compassion, albeit, a wrong-headed, anti-biblical compassion.

A parallel thing is happening regarding how we read the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Did those who drafted this Charter intend to defend the right of same gender sex? Is this in keeping with the clear reading? No. Opportunists often choose to deliberately disregard the perspicuity of a document because they have figured a new way of reading it, a way contrary to the spirit of the document but not in violation of the actual words. Why? Because the new way in some way is beneficial to their selfish interests.

What happens to the church when the clear reading of scripture is forsaken? When scholars are deliberately obtuse? When leaders counsel the blessing of same gender sex? Heresy. Division. Confusion. Anger. Distrust. Bleeding.

Scripture is perspicuous on the gender issue—why can't our best scholars get it straight? Why do they refuse the clear reading of scripture? Why does the panel of erudite scholars write so much on this subject but say so little? Why do they write as if scripture is not perspicuous on this subject?

Some may accuse me of speculation, but I argue its merely connecting the dots: It is their intention to persuade us that scripture has nothing specific to say to our situation and therefore same gender sex is exempted from the thou shall not of scripture. Many of our leaders are intent on accommodating the culture. They offer a sentimental compassion. They don't want to exclude anyone. And by so doing they demonstrate that scripture is not their highest authority for faith and practice.

The only ones who find scripture unclear on this moral issue are those who refuse scripture's perspicuity. They resort to studies and dialogue and testimonies and more studies as a means to persuade others of the need to abandon the clear reading of scripture. They may be motivated by compassion but it is a compassion that violates both the laws of physiology and God's laws and therefore it can't bring a good result.

At our National Convention we should give voice and vote to the holy catholic church—past and present. We should do this because we profess to be a part of the holy catholic church. We certainly do not want to depart from the holy catholic church. Given this kind of vote there is no doubt the local option proposal of our NCC would be soundly defeated. Scripture is clear on this issue. At least it has been clear to Christians for nearly two thousand years. But now in these last days there are a scant few within the holy catholic church who claim scripture is not clear on same gender sex. In essence they argue that the Church and the Holy Spirit have been wrong on marriage and same gender sex for the past two thousand years. This is an incredulous insinuation! Some agree that scripture is clear, but they propose that the Holy Spirit is now leading us to step out in faith and act contrary to the clear teaching of scripture.² This too is incredulous. Dare we take this huge step apart from the Holy Catholic Church?

I end with a prayer from Martin Luther: “Lord, keep us steadfast in your Word; curb those who by deceit or sword would wrest the kingdom from your Son and bring to nought all he has done. Lord Jesus Christ, your power make known, for you are Lord of lords alone; defend your holy Church, that we may sing your praise triumphantly. O Comforter of priceless worth, send peace and unity on earth; support us in our final strife and lead us out of death to life” (LBW, 230).

¹I speak of adultery in the broad sense which includes all sexual sin, including fornication.

²Rev. Kayko Driedger Hesslein in her essay, Issues of Sin: The Bible and the Holy Spirit, is an example of one who counsels us that the Holy Spirit is leading our church to act contrary to scripture and bless same sex relationships.