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Did Jesus Ever Teach against Homosexuality?

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#STRask - Stand to Reason

Questions about how to respond to someone who claims Jesus never taught against homosexuality, who also doesn't consider anything outside the Gospels to be authoritative, and advice for befriending a lesbian couple without appearing to condone their lifestyle.

* How should I respond to a friend who claims Jesus never taught against homosexuality and who also doesn't consider anything outside the Gospels to be authoritative?

* Any advice for befriending a lesbian couple without appearing to condone their lifestyle?

Transcript

(upbeat music) (bell dings) - I'm Amy Hall, I'm here with Greg Cockel and you're listening to Stand to Reasons #STRAsk. Greg's trying to make me laugh, so I apologize to all of you. - I succeeded.

(laughs) - All right, let's go to a question from Dylan Wake. - Okay, Dylan. - I have a friend who claims that Jesus never taught against homosexuality and who also doesn't consider anything outside the gospel's authoritative, such as the Book of Romans.

How do I respond to this? - Well, there's a couple of things to say about this. First of all, we do not know that Jesus never spoke against homosexuality because we don't have everything that Jesus ever said, okay? And John at the end of the gospel said that, you know, if all the things that Jesus did and said were recorded, they'd fill all the books in the world. So he's speaking hyperbolically there, of course, but there's a lot we don't have.

Now, of course that doesn't make our case, I'm just trying to put this in perspective, okay? Secondly, there's a presumption. And the presumption is if Jesus did not speak explicitly against it, then he must at least be neutral towards it, morally neutral towards it. But Jesus never said a thing about slavery.

Jesus never said a thing about child abuse. Jesus never said a thing about wife abuse or gay bashing for that matter. There are all kinds of vices that are clearly vices that are spoken of maybe in other parts of the Bible even or that we clearly recognize as vice.

That Jesus, we have no record of Jesus ever speaking on it. Now, are we to presume that the silence of the record regarding Jesus views on these things means that Jesus is approving of it. This is an argument from silence and a dangerous one.

There are ways to argue legitimately from silence and that's when the silence is deafening. That is where one would have expected something to be said but nothing was said. But that's not the case here because there's a whole host of things as I just pointed out, that racism, Jesus never said anything about racism.

So what are we to think? Now, one could say, well, Jesus taught some other things that have ramifications for these issues that he didn't speak directly about when I think that's a fair thing to say. We wanna be careful that we are accurately concluding from these other things, the sense of Jesus that we're inferring from these other comments. But I think that's the way you can go.

The problem is this does not work in favor of the homosexual. First of all, Jesus was a Torah observant Jew. Okay? And he says, excuse me, in Matthew 5, he says that you can't do away with the law.

The law stands, it still stands over us. The way of resolving our problems with the law, not keeping it, isn't to do away with the law. So he affirms it.

Now he says it's gonna be fulfilled, that's the way it gets resolved. There are particular ways that work out theologically, but notice he affirms the law. And he affirms Moses.

Now the problem with that is, is that it's Jesus himself affirming areas of scripture that apparently this person does not wanna affirm. He just wants to affirm the gospels, but you can't affirm the gospels and Jesus' words without affirming the things that Jesus affirms, which is also Moses. And Moses wrote about homosexuality.

All right, and it wasn't in support of it. It was a capital crime. Now some argue, well, they didn't really mean that.

Nobody was executed for homosexuality. I don't know how anybody would know that for sure. But the argument there is that, well, that was just to show how egregious this sin was from God's perspective.

That's why he made it a capital crime, even though he didn't kill people for it. Okay, minimally then, it shows that God thinks that homosexuality is an egregious sin. Minimally, even on that line of reasoning, and this is what Jesus endorsed, okay? So you're not gonna get out that way because Jesus endorsed all kinds of passages or

writers or sections of the Bible that do explicitly speak regarding homosexuality.

But I guess more to the point of the red letters, Jesus' words in the gospels is Matthew 19. In Matthew 19, Jesus is dealing with the problem of adultery. I'm sorry, not adultery, but divorce.

And he's asked about that. And so in giving his answer, he goes back to the creation order. Even though the law makes provision for adultery, which it didn't for homosexuality, Jesus said, "There's a more foundational principle here.

"The provision was made because of the hardness "of your hearts. "It was a protective thing for the woman, basically." But in the case of marriage, what God's goal is, his purpose is ideal. You go back to the creation order.

And here he says, and I'll just give the summary that I often use 'cause it's memorable. It's easy to recall. Jesus' formula that goes back to the beginning is one man with one woman becoming one flesh for one lifetime.

One man with one woman becoming one flesh for one lifetime. Okay, so now you've got Jesus affirming God's original plan. Notice that sex is binary according to God's original plan and Jesus affirms this.

Okay, already this is not very friendly to that whole movement, right? And then he talks about marriage between a man and a woman. Okay, that's also not friendly to that movement. And then he says, "This man and this woman become one flesh.

"That's sex." In other words, what Jesus is endorsing as the plan is sex between a married male and the female. That male is married too. Pardon me for the tedious characterization there, but that's what has to be done now because of the way the culture is, all right? And so clearly, implicitly and without distortion Jesus is affirming sex in one relationship and restricting it to that relationship because what he just described there excludes all the other behaviors that the Old Testament scriptures and New Testament scriptures also exclude.

B.C.ality, fornication, adultery and homosexuality, and homosexuality, for prohibited sexual behaviors, all with sex with someone other than your individual spouse who is of this opposite sex that you have pledged your life to. So that is a Jesus-owned view is by today's standards, excessively conservative. And automatically rules out all of the popular variations that are being promoted.

So this, I call this Silent Christ, by the way, this maneuver and I've written about it before, I think we did a solid ground on it. And I'm mentoring a letter on it in the past, it might be online, but if you look up Silent Christ, you might find it, but I'm also integrating it into this new book that'll be out in the summer. That Jesus was silent, if he was silent, means nothing.

Although I do appreciate someone acknowledging that what Jesus says means something. Notice how they're trying to get Jesus on their side. Okay, well, Jesus never said, "Oh, why does that matter?" Well, 'cause Jesus, he knows a thing or two, and he's an authority of something.

Okay, great, well, that'll look at what, let's look at, if you think that's true, if that's your attitude about Jesus, then let's look at what he did say. It's not gonna help their case. It's going to 86 it, it's going to deep six it.

It's gonna be, I'm trying to think any other metaphor. It disagrees with it. It refutes it, Matthew 19, one man, one woman, becoming one flesh for one lifetime.

- It's really not surprising at all that Jesus didn't directly address this question. As you know, as you said, the law had already made this completely clear to their society, and this wasn't an issue in their society. Now, you'll see this today.

What you see Christians responding to publicly, like we get a lot of questions about what's actually being questioned in the day. So if that wasn't being questioned in the day, there was no need for Jesus to address it. So instead you see him addressing divorce, for example, because that was being challenged in the day.

The law was being challenged in that area. So that's really not a surprise. Now, Dylan, what I would say, if somebody said this to me, is I think you said, how do I respond to this? Well, I think this person's biggest problem is not their view of homosexuality.

I think this person's biggest problem is that he doesn't consider anything outside the gospels authoritative. Sometimes it's great to answer their challenge, but sometimes you need to look at, you need to really figure out what the biggest problem is here. And what this person is saying is that they do not believe anything else written in the Bible.

I didn't even know how you make sense of Jesus without that, without the whole story, without the law, without the interpretation of what Jesus came to do. Now, you may have to use Jesus' words to get there because if they really do, now I suspect they don't really respect Jesus that much. My guess is that even if you use Jesus' words, that won't cause them to accept them.

That's just my guess. But let's say they really do respect Jesus' words. And you can get to the point of seeing that these other parts of the Bible are actually authoritative, as Greg mentioned, by quoting Jesus, who said the Holy Spirit spoke through David and he says the scripture can't be broken.

And he said a bunch of things. So if they do really honor Jesus, I would say, okay, well, let's talk about that. If you think Jesus is authoritative, let's look at that because I think it's a very serious problem if you're rejecting God's word.

Now, surely you agree if God said certain things and you dismiss it, that's a big issue. And maybe they would agree to that, maybe they wouldn't. But I think I would, after responding to this, I would definitely take this question in that direction and explore this a little more because you can't, if you're gonna reject what God has to say, this goes back to the last show, Greg, when we were talking about not loving truth.

Do they love God? Do they love Jesus? Well, then they should wanna know what God thinks. - Yeah, I had another thought as you were talking about the tactical responses in the 10th anniversary of tactics, as many tactics called what a friend we have in Jesus. And the idea there is actually what this objector is doing is you let Jesus do the arguing for you, so to speak.

People say, well, you guys are bigoted 'cause you think Jesus is the only way, wait a minute. That's not my idea, that's his idea. So you put it on Christ as an example.

But what he's saying is Jesus implicitly must be in favor of homosexuality if he is not explicitly against it. Okay, so that's how this is working. He's using the tactic too.

So this is, here's a couple of questions that would come to mind immediately. Well, Jesus never just say anything about it. Why should that matter? I would only ask him.

And the question is to get him to establish Jesus as the standard. Why should that matter? Because Jesus, such and so. Jesus is the guy.

He's the one. It's the red letters. He's the one with spiritual insight.

Whatever, I don't know what he's gonna say, but he obviously thinks that Jesus is an authority to listen to. Okay, great. So if Jesus were, next question, if Jesus were to have spoken against homosexuality, would you be against it? - That's the key question right there.

- Yeah, so let's just see. That's an integrity question to see if they're just using this approach, Jesus, for their own advantage, or they really think that he is the authority. Okay, and then it depends on what they say.

So if they say no, then why does it matter if Jesus didn't? What about, do you think that Jesus approved racism? Where did he object to that? See, it's all these are questions, and I'm using questions now to employ the concerns that I expressed a little bit earlier. Here are the problems with this approach. Here's what they look like in questions.

And then you can go to what if Jesus made it really clear that marriage was between a man and a woman, and that's where sex was to be practiced in that lifelong marital relationship. What would you say then? And then if he says, well, if that matters, or I think about it, well then you can take on to Matthew 19. I think what's going to happen when you do the integrity question is they're gonna fail, because they do not care what

Jesus thinks.

They are using Jesus in the moment to justify what they want to do and what they want to believe. And Jesus is convenient for them. But when Jesus disagrees with them, then that doesn't matter.

- So if they respond to that question, if I could show you that Jesus was against homosexuality from what he explained about marriage and sex, would you agree with him? And if they say, no, now you know where to take this. Now you know, you've got to start at square one with your apologetics with this person. Because now you know that maybe there's a cultural idea that Jesus is an authority, but there's no real understanding of who he is, and there's no desire to follow him.

You've got to start back way farther, and this might not be the best topic to start with. - Right. - Especially if you have limited time.

- Yeah, but sometimes by asking these questions and pushing them and then when they get to realize, no, I'm not gonna do that if that's what he said. Well, okay, here's what he said, Matthew 19. That's a stone in this shoe.

You know, this is gardening, gardening, gardening, gardening. We've heard the concept before. We are just doing what we can in the moments that we've been given.

We're not closing the deal. We're not swinging for the fences. We're gardening, so massive mixed metaphors there where you get the point.

- And I would also say the younger the person is who makes this claim, the more I would think there's possibly some, what's the word I'm looking for? - Opportunity, long term, to change their mind. - Maybe so, but what I mean is they could genuinely be deceived here and are hearing these messages from the culture and they're trying to work through this. - So they could care what Jesus said, so I wouldn't assume that they don't, but the younger they are, I think the more possible that is.

Let's go into a question from Amber. Any advice for befriending a lesbian couple without appearing to condone their lifestyle? - Well, I would suggest reading. - Rosaria Butterfield.

- There you go, I'm positive 'cause I never can pronounce her name properly. Rosario, when I enter a period. - Rosaria.

- Oh, see, there you go. (laughs) - I was so embarrassing when I was trying doing the interview because I kept getting wrong. So I just wanted to call her Rosie.

Can I just call you Rosie? You know, but anyway, she was a lesbian and deeply embedded in that lifestyle and was one to Christ over a period of time through the

hospitality of a Christian pastor and the kindness. And I think you're gonna find a lot in there. And I think that Christians who are deeply conscientious about this issue are afraid that friendship itself is condoning.

And I don't think that's true. And I don't think that you have to weigh in against against lesbianism or homosexuality in general in order to qualify the relationship you're having. You know, you're really nice and well, hang out a little bit.

You just need to know that I think the way you live is sinful. So I'm just so you got that, okay? 'Cause I don't want you to misunderstand. No, I don't think we have to do that.

I think we have to live with grace. And as when opportunities in conversation come up, then you can take those opportunities to express your views. And it might, I can think of, I think in the very first day, I wasn't even 24 hours old in Christ.

And I had, my brother was with me and we had gone to a, to the beach, her body surfing, and then we came back and we have a barbecue with some friends. There were my brother and I and then two other married couples. And one was my doubles partner in tennis.

And this gal pulled this tract, the chick tract that she had been given at the beach. And she is speaking disparagingly of it. Really disparaging, oh, a lot of, and I just said, well, I believe that.

I just weighed in, that's all. I wasn't looking to get into an argument. I just said, no, it did not end well, or at least that's the way it seemed to me.

There was a kind of a ricochet of angelism kind of story which I don't have time for that, four down, four years down the road came to roost and God rescued one of those people who became a Christian. However, I had no sense of it at the time. But how that got initiated is there are was friends with them and everything.

But when this issue came up in the disparagement, I just identified myself with the view that was being disparaged, and that gave opportunity for conversation. Now, if something like that might happen, and you befriend somebody, you hang with them, you're nice to them, sweet, hos-hos-hovital to them, and you're not judgmental of their behaviors and stuff, and there's no sense doing that, by the way, because everybody needs Christ, regardless of what their peculiar sins happen to be. So build that relationship, and then if something comes up and they said, "All those Christians," and you said, "Well, I'm a Christian," you identify yourself, then that's going to be an opportunity for conversation.

Well, all right, well, you don't believe that. Well, I do believe that, 'cause that's what Jesus believed. Then it was, "Well, you never seem to act that way.

"Well, it's good, I'm glad that I'm never acted in a better." You know, you can just see how a conversation might go. But of course, this could be, at that point of revelation, could be the end of the relationship, because the other people will end it oftentimes. But I'm just describing a potential way to maneuver in that, and I, but I'm especially answering the question, will this friendship potentially compromise my own view? And my answer is no, no, it won't.

And if you read Rosaria's, they get it right? Yeah, that's right. What's her last name? Butterfield. Oh, that's easy.

Butterfield's book, and actually she's got a couple of them. I think her most recent one is the gospel comes with the house key. So I think the most recent one is on the topic of hospitality.

So it's more, it goes deeper into that idea. The first one I think is called the Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert. I think that's the name of that one.

She might have three, but-- I think she has three. The first one is her testimony. The second one is something else about, but yeah, but she's a great source.

And yeah, and it's good for people to see what difference it made to her just to have this friendship with Christians and how that changed her life. What Alan always says is you treat them the same way. You treat any of your lost friends.

Yeah. You, if you had friends who were living together, you wouldn't feel the need to say, you know, just so you know, I'm against you living together. It's just, for some reason, we feel like we have to make ourselves clear on this topic, but just treat them the way you would anyone else, any other lost person that you're befriending and that you're close to.

So if you have any questions about this, start thinking about those other friends and see how you would treat them, and that's a good clue at how to treat any friends who are gay or lesbian. Yeah, and by the way, it doesn't mean that you can never bring it up. The question really is, will this necessarily compromise be compromising in some way? I said, it's not.

But as your relationship builds, I mean, part of what friends do, a faithful other wounds of a friend, what friends do is sometimes they speak the truth to other people. And so if you have a couple that's living together whatever, there may be an opportunity to say, you know what, if you guys really love each other, why don't you get married? Why don't, to the man, especially, you know, making honest, well, the phraseology that we used to do as a past now is not gonna be acceptable, making honest woman out of her. But the idea is, the idea is to protect the girl.

Well, you know, the guy's getting what he wants for free. The gal's putting out and she's

getting something too, but she's the one vulnerable, okay? The woman is the most vulnerable here, okay, I can just get up and go. Woman can get pregnant.

She get dependent on a guy and all that other stuff. So there is a, there is a, in a certain sense, a, we talked about human flourishing before, there's a element of human flourishing that has to do with sexual behavior and there may be a place in conversation with a friend to be talking about the behaviors and not like, you know, God's man at you. I mean, there may be a place for that too.

I mean, certainly in communicating the gospel at some point. But, but you could engage these things when there's a good opportunity for the benefit of the couple in question here. It's for their good.

And especially if they claim to be Christians or they're new Christians, that's when this conversation, I think, is appropriate to-- Oh, yeah, that would be a much sooner conversation, I think. But thank you for clarifying that because I don't want anyone to take my words as saying that you should never say anything about it. But when you're starting out and you're befriending someone, it's not like you said, you don't lead with that.

That doesn't even-- it's not something people do. But thank you for saying that because I do think the closer you get, the more likely these things will be discussed. And hopefully the relationship will survive that.

And it did with Rosaria. So definitely read that book and see what she has to say, get some advice from her. All right, Greg, we've reached the end of our time for this episode.

Thank you, Dylan and Amber. We appreciate hearing from you. This is Amy Hall and Greg Kolkle for a stand to reason.

[BELL RINGING]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

(upbeat music)

(upbeat music)