



Jacob's Ladder



A NEWSLETTER OF BURNS UNITED METHODIST AND HAMMITT HILL UNITED METHODIST CHURCHES

Rev. Christopher C. Diggs, Pastor

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Homosexuality and The Church

by Clarence H. Franklin

What does the Bible say about homosexuality? The US Supreme Court's recent *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision making same-sex marriage legal in all 50 states has certainly brought this question to the forefront, particularly in the church. Burns UMC Pastor Christopher C. Diggs preached an emotional sermon on the subject just two days after the decision was handed down. Pastor Diggs concentrated his sermon on what the Bible, the ultimate authority for the church, has to say on the subject. Some of the scriptures he used are the following:

"Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination."

--LEVITICUS 18:22

"People wanted only to do evil. So God left them and let them go their sinful way. And so they became completely immoral and used their bodies in

shameful ways with each other.

They traded the truth of God for a lie. They bowed down and worshiped the things God made instead of worshiping the God who made those things. He is the one who should be praised forever. Amen.

Because people did those things, God left them and let them do the shameful things they wanted to do. Women stopped having natural sex with men and started having sex with other women.

In the same way, men stopped having natural sex with women and began wanting each other all the time. Men did shameful things with other men, and in their bodies they received the punishment for those wrongs."

--ROMANS 1:24-27

Using these scriptures and others, the pastor made it clear that God frowns upon homosexuality. He talked about the fact the Supreme Court does not exactly have a record for getting things right, mentioning *Plessy v. Ferguson* which established “separate but equal” as the law of the land. (I would add to his list, *Dred Scott v. Sanford*, which ruled that blacks “had no rights which the white man was bound to respect.”) He stated that regardless of what the Supreme Court ruled, he would not perform a same-sex marriage ceremony in his church nor would he allow one to be performed in any church he pastored. He did not stop there though, lest he be accused of condemning just one sin. He also read EXODUS 20:1-17, the Ten Commandments. “Don’t steal, lie, kill, commit adultery, covet, etc.” All are sins. That brought his whole argument home. God frowns upon them all. One is no less a sin than any other.

I agree with everything he said. Those scriptures do not lie, and are not at all ambiguous.

I don’t know how many people can say this, but I actually read the entire Supreme Court decision, including all three dissensions. It is a fascinating read. It is available at the following web address: www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/12pdf/12-144_8ok0.pdf.

There is something that concerns me though. Jesus himself, in all four gospels spoke out about many sins. He said “All have sinned and fallen short of God’s glory.” Jesus particularly did not like hypocrites. We, in the United Methodist Church, are about “Open Hearts, Open Minds, and Open Doors.” It is so easy for us, as human beings, and unfortunately, as Christians, to condemn others for their wrong doings, while ignoring our own shortcomings. To make my point I want to close with the following very familiar scripture:

They said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery.

The Law of Moses commands us to stone to death any such woman. What do you say we should do?”

They were saying this to trick Jesus. They wanted to catch him saying something wrong so that they could have a charge against him. But Jesus stooped down and started writing on the ground with his finger.

The Jewish leaders continued to ask him their question. So he stood up and said, “Anyone here who has never sinned should throw the first stone at her.”

—JOHN 8:4-7



Pictorial Highlights of Vacation Bible School

The Orchard, Burns and Hammitt Hill UMC, and The Oxford Community Church came together for Vacation Bible School on June 22-25, 2015. The following is a few pictures from the event.





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