The Narrow Road



A Bible Study on Homosexuality

Eastside Lutheran Church

Fall 2013

Overview:

Lesson 1—An Important Introduction/Goals/Research/First Look

Lesson 2—Moses and Paul, Part 1

Lesson 3—Moses and Paul, Part 2

Lesson 4—Related Doctrines

Lesson 5—The Narrow Road of Truth and Love

Lesson 6—Wrap Up/Q&A

My Questions: Write down your questions about homosexuality in preparation for our Q&A session during lesson 6.

Part 1: An Important Introduction

1. For culture—Russian Olympics, Glee/Modern Family, and *One Love*
2. For government—“42”, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Gay Marriage.
3. For science—Nature vs. Nurture and Exodus International.
4. For students—“I would know not to take that hallway…3rd period I have to go this way.”
5. For families—“I have a brother who is gay.” “Me, too.” “I don’t know how to talk to my son.”
6. For churches—“We think our denomination has this one wrong.” “That’s why I don’t come here anymore.” “But my mom/friend/son is gay…” “I went to MLC.” LCMS testimonies. Our church directory.

Homosexuality is not an issue for “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_” people out there, but those of us \_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

But who are the people who gather together each weekend for worship? (Table Talk) In three minutes, list the various views on homosexuality that fill our pews at Eastside.

1. (Example)—Disgusted Dan: “I can’t fathom kissing a guy. That is so foul! I just don’t get it…”
2. (Example)—Confused Katie: “If God made me this way, why do so many Christians say it’s sinful?”

The truth is that the Bible’s teaching on homosexuality is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ road that few Christians walk without falling into an unbiblical \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Goals/Approach for This Study: *The Narrow Road*

1. *Doctrinal*: To be able to articulate what we believe about homosexuality and why we believe it.
   1. To study the biblical verses dealing with homosexuality in their original contexts.
   2. To consider various interpretations offered by both “traditional” and “progressive” scholars.
   3. To study other doctrines, which intersect with this issue (Inspiration, repentance, love, hypocrisy, etc.)
2. *Practical*: To submit our thinking and living to God’s Word, wherever that might lead.
   1. To repent of our sin of thought, word, deed (and that which we have left undone).
   2. To rethink our beliefs, stereotypes, and attitude on homosexuality and towards homosexuals.
   3. To find our identity, hope, and joy in God, who loved the *world* enough to send his son, Jesus.
3. *Relational*: To create an environment where struggles, questions, and doubts can be honestly shared.

Research Overview:

1. In depth Bible study
2. Personal interviews:
   1. Suzie Neas—WELS member who battles same-sex attraction
   2. Dr. David Berggren—ELCA pastor of an “affirming church” in Sun Prairie
   3. Rev. Scott Anderson—Gay Presbyterian pastor; Wisconsin Council of Churches
   4. Rev. Scott Carlson—Methodist pastor of an “affirming church” in Sun Prairie.
   5. Rev. Peter and Marlys Ried—WELS pastor and wife whose daughter is a lesbian.
3. Books and Presentations: *Bearing their Burden* (LCMS, traditional), *Jesus, the Bible, and Homosexuality* (PCUSA, progressive), *God Believes in Love* (Episcopalian, progressive), Matthew Vines (Harvard student, progressive).

Quick Definitions:

1. “Traditional” Church—A church that holds to the traditional understanding of sexuality, namely, that homosexual behavior is sinful, needs to be repented of, and is forgiven at the cross of Jesus.
2. “Affirming” or “Progressive” Church—A church that believes the traditional understanding is not only unloving, but also unbiblical. Modern scholarship in the Bible, in science, and our own experiences have proven that God affirms and accepts those who act on homosexual desires.
3. LGBT(Q)—A common acronym for the not-heterosexual community. It stands for “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning/queer”.

6 Passages: A First Look

Read the following key passages in the homosexuality debate and note any verses, words, or ideas as well as any questions that you believe will be important to consider in our study.

**Leviticus 18**

*“The Lord said to Moses,****2****“Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘I am the Lord your God.****3****You must not do as they do in Egypt, where you used to live, and you must not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. Do not follow their practices.****4****You must obey my laws and be careful to follow my decrees. I am the Lord your God.****5****Keep my decrees and laws, for the person who obeys them will live by them. I am the Lord.*

***6****“‘No one is to approach any close relative to have sexual relations. I am the Lord.*

***7****“‘Do not dishonor your father by having sexual relations with your mother. She is your mother; do not have relations with her.*

***8****“‘Do not have sexual relations with your father’s wife; that would dishonor your father.*

***9****“‘Do not have sexual relations with your sister, either your father’s daughter or your mother’s daughter, whether she was born in the same home or elsewhere.*

***10****“‘Do not have sexual relations with your son’s daughter or your daughter’s daughter; that would dishonor you.*

***11****“‘Do not have sexual relations with the daughter of your father’s wife, born to your father; she is your sister.*

***12****“‘Do not have sexual relations with your father’s sister; she is your father’s close relative.*

***13****“‘Do not have sexual relations with your mother’s sister, because she is your mother’s close relative.*

***14****“‘Do not dishonor your father’s brother by approaching his wife to have sexual relations; she is your aunt.*

***15****“‘Do not have sexual relations with your daughter-in-law. She is your son’s wife; do not have relations with her.*

***16****“‘Do not have sexual relations with your brother’s wife; that would dishonor your brother.*

***17****“‘Do not have sexual relations with both a woman and her daughter. Do not have sexual relations with either her son’s daughter or her daughter’s daughter; they are her close relatives. That is wickedness.*

***18****“‘Do not take your wife’s sister as a rival wife and have sexual relations with her while your wife is living.*

***19****“‘Do not approach a woman to have sexual relations during the uncleanness of her monthly period.*

***20****“‘Do not have sexual relations with your neighbor’s wife and defile yourself with her.*

***21****“‘Do not give any of your children to be sacrificed to Molek, for you must not profane the name of your God. I am the Lord.*

***22****“‘Do not have sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman; that is detestable.*

***23****“‘Do not have sexual relations with an animal and defile yourself with it. A woman must not present herself to an animal to have sexual relations with it; that is a perversion.*

***24****“‘Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, because this is how the nations that I am going to drive out before you became defiled.****25****Even the land was defiled; so I punished it for its sin, and the land vomited out its inhabitants.****26****But you must keep my decrees and my laws. The native-born and the foreigners residing among you must not do any of these detestable things,****27****for all these things were done by the people who lived in the land before you, and the land became defiled.****28****And if you defile the land, it will vomit you out as it vomited out the nations that were before you.*

***29****“‘Everyone who does any of these detestable things—such persons must be cut off from their people.****30****Keep my requirements and do not follow any of the detestable customs that were practiced before you came and do not defile yourselves with them. I am the Lord your God.’”*

Leviticus 20

*“The Lord said to Moses,****2****“Say to the Israelites: ‘Any Israelite or any foreigner residing in Israel who sacrifices any of his children to Molek is to be put to death. The members of the community are to stone him.****3****I myself will set my face against him and will cut him off from his people; for by sacrificing his children to Molek, he has defiled my sanctuary and profaned my holy name.****4****If the members of the community close their eyes when that man sacrifices one of his children to Molek and if they fail to put him to death,****5****I myself will set my face against him and his family and will cut them off from their people together with all who follow him in prostituting themselves to Molek.*

***6****“‘I will set my face against anyone who turns to mediums and spiritists to prostitute themselves by following them, and I will cut them off from their people.*

***7****“‘Consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am the Lord your God.****8****Keep my decrees and follow them. I am the Lord, who makes you holy.*

***9****“‘Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death. Because they have cursed their father or mother, their blood will be on their own head.*

***10****“‘If a man commits adultery with another man’s wife—with the wife of his neighbor—both the adulterer and the adulteress are to be put to death.*

***11****“‘If a man has sexual relations with his father’s wife, he has dishonored his father. Both the man and the woman are to be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.*

***12****“‘If a man has sexual relations with his daughter-in-law, both of them are to be put to death. What they have done is a perversion; their blood will be on their own heads.*

***13****“‘If a man has sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They are to be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.*

***14****“‘If a man marries both a woman and her mother, it is wicked. Both he and they must be burned in the fire, so that no wickedness will be among you.*

***15****“‘If a man has sexual relations with an animal, he is to be put to death, and you must kill the animal.*

***16****“‘If a woman approaches an animal to have sexual relations with it, kill both the woman and the animal. They are to be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.*

***17****“‘If a man marries his sister, the daughter of either his father or his mother, and they have sexual relations, it is a disgrace. They are to be publicly removed from their people. He has dishonored his sister and will be held responsible.*

***18****“‘If a man has sexual relations with a woman during her monthly period, he has exposed the source of her flow, and she has also uncovered it. Both of them are to be cut off from their people.*

***19****“‘Do not have sexual relations with the sister of either your mother or your father, for that would dishonor a close relative; both of you would be held responsible.*

***20****“‘If a man has sexual relations with his aunt, he has dishonored his uncle. They will be held responsible; they will die childless.*

***21****“‘If a man marries his brother’s wife, it is an act of impurity; he has dishonored his brother. They will be childless.*

***22****“‘Keep all my decrees and laws and follow them, so that the land where I am bringing you to live may not vomit you out.****23****You must not live according to the customs of the nations I am going to drive out before you. Because they did all these things, I abhorred them.****24****But I said to you, “You will possess their land; I will give it to you as an inheritance, a land flowing with milk and honey.” I am the Lord your God, who has set you apart from the nations.*

***25****“‘You must therefore make a distinction between clean and unclean animals and between unclean and clean birds. Do not defile yourselves by any animal or bird or anything that moves along the ground—those that I have set apart as unclean for you.****26****You are to be holy to me because I, the Lord, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be my own.* ***27****“‘A man or woman who is a medium or spiritist among you must be put to death. You are to stone them; their blood will be on their own heads.’”*

1 Corinthians 6:1-11

*“If any of you has a dispute with another, do you dare to take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the Lord’s people?****2****Or do you not know that the Lord’s people will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases?****3****Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!* ***4****Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, do you ask for a ruling from those whose way of life is scorned in the church?****5****I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers?****6****But instead, one brother takes another to court—and this in front of unbelievers!*

***7****The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?****8****Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers and sisters.****9****Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men****[***[***a***](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20cor%206&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28477a)***]******10****nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.****11****And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”*

1. The words *men who have sex with men* translate two Greek words that refer to the passive and active participants in homosexual acts.

1 Timothy 1:3-11

*“As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer****4****or to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. Such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God’s work—which is by faith.****5****The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.****6****Some have departed from these and have turned to meaningless talk.****7****They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.* ***8****We know that the law is good if one uses it properly.****9****We also know that the law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers,****10****for the sexually immoral, for those practicing homosexuality, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine****11****that conforms to the gospel concerning the glory of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.”*

Genesis 19:1-13

*“The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city. When he saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground.****2****“My lords,” he said, “please turn aside to your servant’s house. You can wash your feet and spend the night and then go on your way early in the morning.”*

*“No,” they answered, “we will spend the night in the square.”*

***3****But he insisted so strongly that they did go with him and entered his house. He prepared a meal for them, baking bread without yeast, and they ate.****4****Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom—both young and old—surrounded the house.****5****They called to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them.”*

***6****Lot went outside to meet them and shut the door behind him****7****and said, “No, my friends. Don’t do this wicked thing.****8****Look, I have two daughters who have never slept with a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them. But don’t do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof.”*

***9****“Get out of our way,” they replied. “This fellow came here as a foreigner, and now he wants to play the judge! We’ll treat you worse than them.” They kept bringing pressure on Lot and moved forward to break down the door.*

***10****But the men inside reached out and pulled Lot back into the house and shut the door.****11****Then they struck the men who were at the door of the house, young and old, with blindness so that they could not find the door.*

***12****The two men said to Lot, “Do you have anyone else here—sons-in-law, sons or daughters, or anyone else in the city who belongs to you? Get them out of here,****13****because we are going to destroy this place. The outcry to the Lord against its people is so great that he has sent us to destroy it.”*

Romans 1:18-2:1

*“The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness,****19****since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.****20****For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.*

***21****For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.****22****Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools****23****and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.*

***24****Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.****25****They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.*

***26****Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones.****27****In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.*

***28****Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done.****29****They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips,****30****slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents;****31****they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy.****32****Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.*

***2****You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.”*

Conclusion: A great debate with great issues at stake…“That’s why I don’t come to Eastside anymore.”

Lesson 2: Moses and Paul, Part 1

Introduction: The Chevy Nova or No Va? The big difference of little words…

Goal: To discover the clarity (or lack of it) of the words Moses and Paul used to address sinful same-sex behavior.

Leviticus 18:1-5, 22

*“The Lord said to Moses,****2****‘Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘I am the Lord your God.****3****You must not do as they do in Egypt, where you used to live, and you must not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. Do not follow their practices.****4****You must obey my laws and be careful to follow my decrees. I am the Lord your God.****5****Keep my decrees and laws, for the person who obeys them will live by them. I am the Lord…****22****Do not have sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman; that is detestable.’’”*

1. Context: God gives his law to Moses at Mt. Sinai in the 15th century B.C.
2. Immediate context: God is forbidding various types of sexual immorality, including types of incest, adultery, bestiality, and idolatry.
3. Verse 22 forbids \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ between \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
4. The word “detestable” is the Hebrew “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_”. (Remember this!)
5. Based on the wording of the 10 commandments, how would you respond to this: “Moses can’t be forbidding same-sex relationships in general because he says nothing about women being with women.”

Leviticus 20:7-8, 13

***7****“Consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am the Lord your God.****8****Keep my decrees and follow them. I am the Lord, who makes you holy…****13****If a man has sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They are to be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.”*

1. Context: God gives his law to Moses at Mt. Sinai in the 15th century B.C.
2. Immediate context: God is giving the nation of Israel its civil laws, including punishment for various offenses. These include idolatry, incest, and adultery.
3. Verse 13 lists the punishment for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ having sexual relations with other \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Objection! Based on what we just read and your knowledge of Leviticus/Old Testament law, how would a progressive, affirming church respond to the seemingly “clear” passages above? (Table Talk)

Leviticus forces us to decide which commands are time-sensitive (just for ancient Israel) and which commands are timeless (for all believers of all time). Do we need to love our neighbor as ourselves? Do we have to avoid shellfish? Is adultery now okay? What about homosexuality? But who decides which commandments apply to today?

A: The \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

***9****Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men****10****nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.****11****And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”*

1. Context: Paul is in Ephesus, writing to church in sex-crazed, depraved Corinth (ancient Greece) around A.D. 55.
2. Immediate context: Paul is addressing various sins in the church, including the sexually immoral (ch. 5) and the greedy (6:1-8).
3. “Wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God”—Paul is warning against a lack of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
4. “Do not be deceived”—Paul implies that some will try to say \_\_\_\_\_ is not \_\_\_\_\_\_.
5. Complete Paul’s equation (=, >, or <): Greed\_\_\_Drunkenness\_\_\_\_Slander\_\_\_\_Adultery\_\_\_\_Gay Sex
6. The phrase “men who have sex with men” is the NIV2011’s translation of two highly-debated Greek words:
   1. Malakoi—Literally, “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_”, but most often used for the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ partner during gay sex.
      1. BDAG (The “cadillac” of Greek dictionaries)—“To being passive in a same-sex relationship, *effeminate* esp. of *catamites,* of men and boys who are sodomized by other males in such a relationship.”
      2. Louw/Nida (Greek dictionary)—“The passive male partner in homosexual intercourse—‘homosexual.’”
   2. Arsenokoitoi—Literally, “Men who takes to \_\_\_\_\_ (koitoi) other \_\_\_\_\_\_ (arsen).”
      1. BDAG—“A male who engages in sexual activity w. a pers. of his own sex, *pederast*.”
      2. Louw/Nida—“A male partner in homosexual intercourse—‘homosexual.’ It is possible that ἀρσενοκοίτης in certain contexts refers to the active male partner in homosexual intercourse in contrast with μαλακός, the passive male partner.”
7. “And that is what some of you were. But you were washed…”—Paul refuses to define repentant believers by their past \_\_\_\_\_ or their present \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Instead, they are defined by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_!
   1. WDTM?—“You were washed.”
   2. WDTM?—“You were justified.”
   3. WDTM?—“You were sanctified.”
8. Agree/Disagree: Christians who daily battle pride, jealousy, and perverted thoughts should define themselves with these words: I am a proud man. I am a jealous woman. I am a pervert.

1 Timothy 1:8-11

“**8***We know that the law is good if one uses it properly.****9****We also know that the law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers,****10****for the sexually immoral, for those practicing homosexuality, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine****11****that conforms to the gospel concerning the glory of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.”*

1. Context: Paul is writing in the late 60’s A.D. to Timothy, a young pastor ministering in Ephesus.
2. Immediate context: Paul is urging Timothy to address false teachers in Ephesus who misuse the law of God and teach false doctrine.
3. Paul says the law is for the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and not for the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
   1. Since Paul uses the law to guide Christians to godly living, he must be referring to using the law to threaten those living in \_\_\_\_\_\_ (aka “rebels”).
4. “Those practicing homosexuality” is the Greek word \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
5. According to Paul, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is “contrary to sound doctrine”.

Objection! Not everyone is convinced by Paul’s “mysterious Greek words”.

1. Justin (Lead writer for the Gay Christian Network)—“I think that it's fairly safe to assume that the arsenokoitai of Paul's day were men engaging in some kind of homosexual behavior. But what kind of behavior? That's pretty much impossible to know for sure. Whatever it is, it would have to be something fairly common and well-known to Paul's audience; these are very short lists of common sinners (e.g. thieves, greedy, liars, etc.) everyone would be readily acquainted with. The most likely explanation is that Paul is referring to a practice that was fairly common in the Greek culture of his day — married men who had sex with male youths on the side.”
2. Matthew Vines (Gay Harvard student)—“This is the first recorded use of the word in Greek anywhere…We should return to the ambiguity [of the translation] of the last 1900 years.”
3. Gene Robinson (Gay Episcopalian bishop)—“The Greek word arsenokoitai is an even greater mystery. It is found nowhere else in Scripture—nor is there any record of it being used in any other contemporaneous text. We have nothing…to give us guidance as to its meaning…Do we really want to base our condemnation of an entire group of people on a shaky translation of an unknowable Greek word? A reasonable person, not to mention a compassion Christian, would not.”

In summary, progressive voices view Paul’s Greek words as too rare and mysterious to be used to doctrinally define an issue as important as this. Others claim that healthy gay relationships simply didn’t exist and, therefore, Paul could not be condemning the kind of relationships that he had never seen. Combining this with the challenging nature of the timeless vs. time-based laws of Leviticus, the traditional interpretation does indeed seem to be skating on thin ice…

The Septuagint Speaks

The Septuagint (aka the “LXX”) is a famous \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ translation of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Old Testament. It was written in the 3rd century B.C (300-200 years before Christ) and widely used in the ancient world. In fact, the New Testament quotes the LXX often!

Oddly enough, the LXX helps to answer two of the toughest questions regarding homosexuality and the Bible:

1. Do the passages of Leviticus apply today?
2. Are Paul’s “mysterious” Greek words really that mysterious?

From Moses to the LXX to Paul: A Common Thread

1. Lev. 18:22—καὶ μετὰ ἄρσενος [**arsen**] οὐ κοιμηθήσῃ κοίτην [**koiten**] γυναικός βδέλυγμα γάρ ἐστιν.
2. Lev. 20:13—καὶ ὃς ἂν κοιμηθῇ μετὰ ἄρσενος [**arsen**] κοίτην [**koiten**] γυναικός βδέλυγμα ἐποίησαν ἀμφότεροι θανατούσθωσαν ἔνοχοί εἰσιν.
3. How do we know the same-sex prohibitions of Leviticus are timeless? Because Paul repeated them with the exact same \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_!
4. Therefore, Paul (through the inspiration of God) tells us Moses’ words still apply. Moses (through the inspiration of God) tells us what Paul’s words really mean!
5. Ron (A Christian who is battling his same-sex attraction; Lead writer for the Gay Christian Network)—“Naturally, over the years, I’ve spent a lot of effort trying to discover a “spin” on these passages which would enable me to embrace a gay relationship. But each time I’ve tried to do so, I’ve found that my conscience clobbers my pro-gay arguments…The key debate over this passage concerns the meaning of the term arsenokoitai. There is a lot of debate over this word, but having studied Greek, it seems to me fairly self-evident that arsenokoitai is a compound word referring to those offenders condemned in Leviticus 18:22. In the Septuagint, we find “You shall not lie [koiten] with a male [arsenos] as with a woman; it is an abomination” (Leviticus 18:22). The linguistic problem seems to me to be exactly analogous to this: suppose I have an Old Testament text which says, “It is unlawful to lay bricks,” and I have a New Testament text that says “bricklayers are lawbreakers.” It would seem inconceivable to me to say that “Greek scholars don’t know exactly what bricklayer means.” Yet Mel White claims (with an apparently straight face) that “Greek scholars don’t know exactly what arsenokoitai means.” While I can appreciate Mel’s desire that this should be true (since I shared that desire for years), it simply is not true. My New Testament Greek Lexicon (put together by Greek scholars!) defines arsenokoites (the singular of arsenokoitai) as “one who lies with a male as with a female, sodomite, homosexual.” It is true enough that there are some Greek scholars who reject this interpretation, just as there are some Biblical Scholars who argue that God is not the Creator, or that Christ was not born of a virgin, or that He wasn’t the Son of God, or that He did not rise from the dead. But if Christians had to give up their beliefs every time a scholar professed disbelief, Christianity would not have survived a week… But most compound words have obvious meanings. A homosexual, for example, is a person sexually attracted to their own sex.”

Apply it! In groups, respond to the following statements based on God’s Word:

1. “Homosexuality is the worst sin of all!”
2. “The Bible passages about homosexuality are too confusing to come to any official conclusions.”
3. “If you eat shrimp, you shouldn’t call homosexuality a sin because Leviticus condemns eating shellfish, too!”
4. “There is no hope for you if you are attracted to your own sex.”

Conclusion: A Blog Debate

Lesson 3: Moses and Paul, Part 2

Introduction: Sodomy seems simple…until Ezekiel 16.

Goal: To discover the clarity (or lack of it) of the words Moses and Paul used to address sinful same-sex behavior.

Genesis 19:1-13

*The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city. When he saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground.****2****“My lords,” he said, “please turn aside to your servant’s house. You can wash your feet and spend the night and then go on your way early in the morning.”*

*“No,” they answered, “we will spend the night in the square.”*

***3****But he insisted so strongly that they did go with him and entered his house. He prepared a meal for them, baking bread without yeast, and they ate.****4****Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom—both young and old—surrounded the house.****5****They called to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them.”*

***6****Lot went outside to meet them and shut the door behind him****7****and said, “No, my friends. Don’t do this wicked thing.****8****Look, I have two daughters who have never slept with a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them. But don’t do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof.”*

***9****“Get out of our way,” they replied. “This fellow came here as a foreigner, and now he wants to play the judge! We’ll treat you worse than them.” They kept bringing pressure on Lot and moved forward to break down the door.*

***10****But the men inside reached out and pulled Lot back into the house and shut the door.****11****Then they struck the men who were at the door of the house, young and old, with blindness so that they could not find the door.*

***12****The two men said to Lot, “Do you have anyone else here—sons-in-law, sons or daughters, or anyone else in the city who belongs to you? Get them out of here,****13****because we are going to destroy this place. The outcry to the Lord against its people is so great that he has sent us to destroy it.”*

1. Context: Moses is around in the 15th century B.C. with the knowledge that the Holy Spirit gave him about the beginning of humanity.
2. Immediate context: When Abraham and his nephew Lot ran into trouble with their growing flocks, they parted ways. Lot chose to live in Sodom (south of the Dead Sea?), which was known for being both a fertile land and morally corrupt. In Genesis 18, Jesus and two angels appeared to Abraham and the Lord revealed to Abraham his plans to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah for their “grievous sin”. Abraham pleaded for the righteous people living in that city, “bartering” Jesus down until they agreed—If only ten believers lived there, God would not destroy the city. Unfortunately, ten could not be found…
3. “Turn aside to your servant’s house” (v.2)—A major value in the ancient near east was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
4. “Bring the men out so we can have sex with them” (v.5)—A number of sins are present here:
   1. A lack of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
   2. Gang \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (A common way to degrade captured men in the ancient world)
   3. Threats of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
   4. Puffed-Up \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
5. The names “Sodom” and “Gomorrah” appear 27 times after this account:
   1. Most use Sodom as an example of total disaster.
      1. Isaiah 1:9—“Unless the Lord Almighty had left us some survivors, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah.”
   2. Jesus mentions Sodom when he sends his disciples out to look for hospitable places to stay during their mission trip.
      1. Matthew 10:14-15—“If anyone will not welcome you…It will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.”
   3. Others use Sodom to describe various sins.
      1. Ezekiel 16:49-50—“Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. 50They were haughty and did detestable things before me. Therefore I did away with them as you have seen.”
      2. Note: The Hebrew word for “detestable things” is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
   4. Jude mentions Sodom’s sexual sin.
      1. Jude 7—“Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion.”
      2. Note: The literal Greek of Jude 7 says, “Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves to sexual immorality and went off after other/unnatural flesh.”
6. Other Voices:
7. Scott Carlson—“Sodom is a story about hospitality. Rape is wrong, same sex or opposite.” (Had not heard about Jude 7 and the Greek translation…)
8. Matthew Vines on Jude 7—“There are many types of sexual immorality.”
9. Testament of Naphtali (2nd century B.C. non-biblical book)—“Sodom departed from the order of nature.”
10. Some claim there was an ancient Jewish legend that the women of Sodom slept with male angels.
11. Philo (Jewish historian, 20 B.C.-50 A.D.) on Sodom—“Those who were men lusted after one another, doing unseemly things, and not regarding or respecting their common nature.”
12. Many progressive voices point out that nothing in Genesis 19 resembles the kind of committed, church-going, monogamous relationships that gay Christians have today.
13. Table Debate: God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah because its inhabitants were gay and proud of it.

Romans 1:24-2:1

***24****Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.****25****They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.*

***26****Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones.****27****In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.*

***28****Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done.****29****They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips,****30****slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents;****31****they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy.****32****Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.*

***2****You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.”*

1. Context: Paul is writing to the Christians at Rome around A.D. 57. His letter begins by proving that “all have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God” (both Jews and Gentiles) and goes on to show that “all have been justified freely by the grace of God”.
2. Immediate Context: After a brief introduction, Paul focuses his sights on the Gentiles in 1:18-32 before moving to the Jews in chapter 2. The Gentiles were often known for outwardly sinful living, characterized by the sexual sins of Greek and Roman culture. The Jews were often outwardly “moral”, but they still sinned plenty and were often hypocrites in their self-righteous attitude toward the Gentiles!
3. “They worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator” (v.25)—At the very heart of idolatry is serving \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ahead of God himself. In the Gentiles’ case, they often loved \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ more than they loved God.
4. Paul goes on to describe and condemn their “shameful lusts”, which were “unnatural”. What does this mean?
   1. Some say Paul is condemning straight men who had gay sex as part of pagan worship.
      1. Matthew Vines—“Paul is preaching against heterosexuals who rejected their sinful nature and had gay relationships.”
   2. Some say Paul is condemning the Roman custom of older men using young boys as sex objects.
      1. Scott Anderson—“Same-sex activity was abuse in the ancient world. That’s not acceptable in any relationship.”
   3. Some say Paul is condemning same-sex activity because he didn’t know or understand the “natural” part of homosexuality as we do today.
      1. Scott Carlson—“What if Paul understood, as we do, that this was natural? This was even outside the realm of Jesus’ experience as something natural…If Jesus or Paul would have our understanding, they would clearly say, ‘God loves gay people.’”
   4. Some say Paul is condemning same-sex activity in general.
      1. Pastor Richard Starr (WELS)—“These men were inflamed with lust for one another. This is not forced or curious behavior.”
   5. Who is right? A, B, C, D, or something else?
5. God’s Word gives us some clues:
   1. “Even their women exchanged…”—This would eliminate option \_\_\_\_ above since the Romans had no custom involving older women using younger women as sex objects.
   2. “Men were inflamed with lust for one another”—This would eliminate option \_\_\_\_ since a straight man would not feel that way about gay sex in pagan worship.
   3. “Unnatural”—Assuming you believe the Holy Spirit is the true author of Scripture and not a 1st century-constrained man like Paul, God understands everything about sexuality. This would eliminate option \_\_\_\_.
6. “They have become filled with every kind of wickedness…” (v.29-31)—Paul includes all kinds of sins, once again leveling the playing field for sinners. “All have fallen short!”
7. “Therefore, you have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else…” (2:1)—Paul cuts off \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ “Jewish” thinking that would scoff, “Yuck! I would never, ever, ever do something as depraved as that!”
   1. Scott Anderson agrees with Gene Robinson—“Paul seems to be saying that using his words to judge homosexuals in our own day would be a grievous error.”
8. Remember where Romans 1-2 are leading…Romans 3!

Make Your Case: Based on our study of the “6 key passages” on homosexuality, how would you try to convince another person that homosexuality is a sin like any other sin, no more and no less?

Robert Gagnon—“On the descriptive level, throughout the Bible there is not a single hero of the faith that engages in homosexual conduct: no patriarch, no matriarch, no prophet, no priest, no king, no apostle, no disciple. The Song of Solomon is devoted to singing the praises of committed heterosexual love. On a prescriptive level, every regulation that affirms the sexual bond affirms it between a man and a woman—without exception. In addition, every proverb or wisdom saying refers to heterosexual-not homosexual-relationships as fitting for the lives of the faithful. There is an abundance of OT laws and proverbs regulating and establishing proper boundaries for sexual intercourse between male and female. By way of contrast, there are no laws distinguishing proper homosexual conduct from improper homosexual conduct, b/c in every law code homosexual conduct is presumed to be forbidden in toto. This includes the 10 Commandments. There only make sense where heterosexual couplings alone are sanctioned. Likewise, every discussion in the NT about marriage or sexual unions always and only seeks to regulate heterosexual unions b/c there is no conception of a proper homosexual union. There was no need to talk about fidelity and loving concern in same-sex unions b/c it was universally understood that homosexual unions were abominable. The relationship between Yahweh and Israel and a between Christ and the church is imaged as a marriage between a husband and a wife. It would have been absolutely unthinkable for any prophet or NT author to conceive of this relationship in homosexual terms. In short, the universal silence in the Bible regarding an acceptable same-se3x union, when combined with the explicit prohibitions, speaks volumes for a consensus disapproval of homosexual conduct. To say that there are only a few texts in the Bible that do not condone homosexual conduct is a monumental understatement of the facts. The reverse is a more accurate statement: there is not a single shred of evidence anywhere in the Bible that would even remotely suggest that same-sex unions are any more acceptable than extramarital or premarital intercourse.”

Conclusion: She almost joined our church…

Lesson 4: Beyond the “Key 6”

Table Talk/Introduction: How would you respond to the following objections?

1. “But Paul didn’t know what we know about homosexuality, so he couldn’t speak about our situation.”
2. “But Jesus loved the outcast and accepted those his society rejected. He surely would accept the bullied, excluded, and rejected gay community of our time.”
3. “How could God condemn his own creation? If you are born gay, God must have wanted it that way.”
4. “If you march in a gay pride parade, you certainly cannot be saved since you are not repentant.”

Goal: To understand the doctrines often used to undermine the biblical understanding of homosexuality.

Objection #1: “But God created gay people that way.” (Doctrines=Creation/Fall into Sin/Sinful Nature)

1. The Logic:
   1. “God don’t make no mistakes. I’m on the right track, baby. I was born this way.” (Lady Gaga)
   2. “If God has created someone that way, who am I to judge?” (Rev. Scott Carlson)
   3. Summary: Since God is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and God is the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, then what he created must be \_\_\_\_\_!
2. The Scriptural Response:
   1. Genesis 5:1, 3—“When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God...Adam had a son in his own likeness, in his own image.”
   2. Psalm 51:5—“Surely I was sinful from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.”
   3. Ephesians 2:3—“We were by nature objects of wrath.”
   4. Summary: God’s original creation was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, but since the Fall into sin, it has been \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
      1. Proof: What is “natural” for us when it comes to sharing, forgiveness, revenge, selfishness, etc.?
      2. My “debate” with Rev. Carlson…“To be honest, I haven’t thought a lot about the sinful nature…But I wouldn’t say a child is an object of wrath!” (Rev. Scott Carlson)

Objection #2: “But Jesus said you shouldn’t judge.” (Doctrine=Love of Neighbor)

1. The Logic:
   1. Matthew 7:1—“Do not judge or you too will be judged.”
   2. “Paul seems to be saying [in Romans 2:1] that using his words to judge homosexuals in our day would be a grievous error.” (Gene Robinson)
   3. Summary: No human being should \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ another’s behavior as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. The Scriptural Response:
   1. Matthew 7:2, 5—“For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged…You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.”
   2. Romans 2:1—“You who pass judgment do the same things.”
   3. Titus 2:15—“These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.”
   4. Summary: Christians, because they love themselves and others, are told to call sin “sin”, first in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and then in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Objection #3: “But Jesus loved and accepted all people, especially the outcasts.” (Doctrine=Love of God)

1. The Logic:
   1. Matthew 9:11—“Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”
   2. “Jesus was consistently on the side of those who were outcast by society and bore the unfair burden of disdain, discrimination, and prejudice. It is likely that he would look at modern-day lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people and hold real sympathy for them and their plight.” (Gene Robinson)
   3. Summary: Jesus accepted outcasts \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Certainly, Jesus would accept homosexuals who are outcast \_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. The Scriptural Response:
   1. Matthew 4:17—“Jesus began to preach, ‘Repent for the kingdom of heaven is near.’”
   2. Luke 5:32—“I have come to call sinners to repentance.”
   3. John 8:11—(To the woman caught in adultery) “Neither do I condemn you…Go now and leave your life of sin.”
   4. Summary: Jesus loves every human being \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, but Jesus only “accepts” those who come to him in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Objection #4: “What God said then, he doesn’t necessarily say now.” (Doctrine=The Bible)

1. The Logic:
   1. Just like God changed his mind about some of the laws in Leviticus (food, ceremonies, etc.), he changes his mind throughout the history of the church.
   2. “We can’t nail down what God said and apply that forever…I think God is much more fun and engaging than that!” (Rev. Scott Carlson)
   3. “God spoke to me through experience regarding homosexuality…In the years of seminary I began to see that the bible is much more than a set of words and rules to live by…God gave the church the weighty responsibility to continue that ability of interpreting and applying the law to each generation.” (Dr. Berggren)
   4. “The church is in the process of discerning the ‘living Word’”. (Scott Anderson)
   5. “We understand God differently today than we did 100 years ago, even 10 years ago…things change. The Reformation is still going. God is still speaking…Evolving revelation is very Scriptural.” (Dr. Berggren)
   6. Note: These views are connected to a movement called “neo-orthodoxy”, which does not see the Bible as a set of inerrant facts, but as a “very real human document that reliably recorded a very real encounter of real people with a real God.” (Jack Rodgers)
   7. Summary: Even if the Bible labels homosexuality a sin, our \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and the advances in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ are proof that God has changed his mind on the issue.
2. The Scriptural Response:
   1. John 17:17—“Your Word is truth!”
   2. Isaiah 8:20—“To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn.”
   3. 2 Timothy 3:16—“All Scripture is God-breathed.”
   4. 2 Peter 1:21—“Men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”
   5. Summary: The Bible is the Word of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and therefore is the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ word.

“Traditional” Objection #5: “All gay people who don’t repent are going to hell.” (Doctrine=Repentance)

1. The Logic:
   1. 1 John 1:6—“If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth.”
   2. Hebrews 10:26—“If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left.”
   3. Summary: Since homosexuality is sinful, you must \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of it to be saved.
2. The Scriptural Response:
   1. Hebrews 10:26—“If we *deliberately* keep on sinning after we have received knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left.”
   2. Psalm 19:12-13—“Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults. Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then will I be blameless, innocent of great transgression.”
   3. Luther’s Small Catechism—“What sins should we confess? A: Before God, we should plead guilty of all sins, even those we are not aware of.”
   4. “It is quite possible that the confusion [on the biblical teaching of homosexuality] keeps them from sinning against clear conscience…By God’s grace, that heart has yet been preserved from ‘willful sins’, the sin of homosexuality in their lives still remains in the area of ‘hidden faults’ (Psalm 19:12-13). Where someone is yet confused, I must NOT deal with them as if I am dealing with someone who knowingly and willfully is turning a deaf ear to God’s Word.” (WELS Seminary Prof. Richard Gurgel)
   5. Proof: Living in Speed Limit “Sins”?
   6. Summary: The unrepentant are those who \_\_\_\_\_\_ they are sinning against God, but don’t care. They are not those who are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in sin without even \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ it.

Change Your Mind? How would you respond to the following objections?

1. “But Paul didn’t know what we know about homosexuality, so he couldn’t speak about our situation.”
2. “But Jesus loved the outcast and accepted those his society rejected. He surely would accept the bullied, excluded, and rejected gay community of our time.”
3. “How could God condemn his own creation? If you are born gay, God must have wanted it that way.”
4. “If you march in a gay pride parade, you certainly cannot be saved since you are not repentant.”

Lesson 5: Our Approach

Introduction: Make a list of sins a “traditional” church might commit as it deals with the same-sex attraction of its community and its own members.

Goal: To create a “narrow road” culture of both radical biblical truth and radical biblical love at Eastside.

A Church of Biblical Truth

1. We want to fear, love, and trust in \_\_\_\_\_\_ (and his \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) above all things.
   1. 2 Timothy 4:2-5—“Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. **3**For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. **4**They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. **5**But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.”
   2. What words in the passage above apply to teaching God’s Word on homosexuality today?

A Church of Biblical Love

1. We want to love the world (Straight, LGBT, struggling with sin, proud of sin, etc.) as much as \_\_\_\_\_ loves it.
   1. “For the LGBT community, the Christian church is perceived as public enemy #1.” (Scott Anderson)
   2. We \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for our sins against those who have same-sex desires.
      1. A Sad Story: Me and “Mark” (and pastel shirts)
      2. Missouri Synod official statement—“Loving, compassionate recognition of the deep pain and personal struggles that same-sex inclinations produce in many individuals, families and congregations may not be neglected in the name of moral purity.”
      3. Luther—“Help and befriend your neighbor in every bodily need…Defend your neighbor, speak well of him, and take his words and actions in the kindest possible way.”
      4. Illustration—Vomit and a Diamond Ring
   3. We \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the habitual struggles of our own sins, no matter what they are.
      1. Do you expect “them” to stop their sinful behavior faster than you are stopping yours?
      2. Romans 7 and an apostle with 25 years of experience.
   4. We \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ all those whom God accepts in his family, the masculine and effeminate, without varying degrees of affection or love.
      1. “I felt so ashamed and guilt ridden for having such thoughts and was frankly scared to tell anyone in the church b/c of seeing how many fellow believers got angry when talking about homosexuals.” (A LCMS pastor who struggles with same-sex attraction)
   5. We \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ those with same sex desires, recognizing that they may have a heavy cross of loneliness to bear.
      1. Matthew Vines, Genesis 2, 1 Cor. 7.
      2. “We’ve been beaten down by society, we grow up being told we’re abominations and deserve all the hate and ridicule that society gives us, that we’re the scum of the earth, we hate ourselves, and often want to kill ourselves. There’s a reason why so many people are leaving the church.” (Karen, former WELS member)
   6. We bear the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of family members who are hurting because of a loved one who has accepted a lifestyle that God doesn’t accept.
   7. We remind the repentant that God’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is always greater than their \_\_\_\_\_\_.
      1. “You emphasize grace for other things, do it for this, too. I think it’s important to realize that it’s okay to “be” gay and you’re not trying to change a person’s wiring. But you are extending grace and saying that God loves them even though they struggle with these feelings just like God loves you even though you struggle with pride. And sometimes you screw up. And you know you’re never going to totally get it right. But you are thankful for Jesus.” (An Eastside member)
      2. A Happy Story: Tom Trapp and Suzie Neas

Conclusion: A “Train Wreck Conversion” (=Narrow Road)

Homework: Read the blog post from a WELS pastor and the (many!) comments he received. http://ctkpalmcoast.wordpress.com/2013/04/

Lesson 6: Wrap-Up/Questions and Answers

Introduction: Go back to the groups of people who come to Eastside each week. Based on this Bible study, what would you say to each one?

Do’s:

Don’ts:

Questions and Answers: