

Ben Bailey's Response to Recent Accusations Against Stoning Homosexuals

In a recent *rawstory* article several things were reported about me that are not true and that I do not believe. Please allow me a moment to clear the air as to what I do believe and teach.

From the outset, please understand that I do not believe Christians should stone homosexuals. I did not teach this in any of my sermons. This idea would be directly opposed to the teaching of Christ and the spirit of love in the New Testament (John 3:16; Mt. 5:21). Likewise, I do not believe that our liberal society is the reason homosexuals are not stoned today. Again, I've never taught this in any lessons, and this would be opposed to the teaching of the New Testament.

The *rawstory* article took an excerpt from a recent sermon that aired on THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST TV program. Based on this small excerpt, some are being led to believe things that I did not teach in that sermon nor do I believe. Here is what I did say in that sermon. The Scriptures do teach that homosexuality is a sin. The Holy Spirit says, *"For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due"* (Rom. 1:26-27). God has always taught that homosexuality is a sin. Under the Old Testament homosexuality was a sin. In Leviticus 18:22 God said, *"You shall not lie with a male as with a woman it is an abomination."* Under the Old Testament this was a sin deserving of stoning as the punishment (Lev. 20:13).

Friend, I hope you will listen very carefully to this...for this is where I have been greatly misrepresented. I clearly recognize and teach that Christians are not living under the Old Testament Law. In the above mentioned sermon, just moments before the section on the sin of homosexuality, I clearly stated this principle. I quoted from John 12:48 and clearly emphasized we are going to be judged by the Words of Christ. I then quoted from Colossians 3:17 which states we must have the authority of Christ in all that we do. The Scriptures affirm that Jesus established His New Testament (Heb. 9:15). The Old Testament has been nailed to the cross and is not the binding law on Christians today (Col. 2:14ff; Eph. 2:14ff). After having shown we are going to be judged by the Words of Christ, I then stated in my lesson that "under the Old Testament" stoning was the penalty binding on Old Testament Jews. This principle was mentioned to show the gravity of the sin by illustrating the punishment incurred then--not today. Those who are trying to promote the idea that I believe we should stone homosexuals are putting words in my mouth.

I never said Christians should stone homosexuals for I believe this too would be a violation of God's New Covenant Law (Gal. 6:10; John 13:34-35). How should Christians feel about homosexuals? We should love them, teach them the truth, do good to them, and look for ways to reach them with the Gospel so that they may find the salvation that is in Christ (John 14:6). God loves all men and wants them to be saved from their sin, and this is my main motivation in everything I teach and preach (1 Tim. 2:4; John 3:16; Eph. 4:15; Gal. 4:16).

While I am thankful for the opportunity to clear the air, I don't want this misrepresentation to take away from the real issue. Although I love homosexuals and want them to repent and go to Heaven, the Bible clearly teaches homosexuality is a sin. God's Word teaches that homosexuality is vile, unnatural, shameful and an error (Rom. 1:26-29). The Scriptures clearly teach, along with a list of other sins, that those who practice homosexuality will not inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-11). My plea, out of love, is for homosexuals to turn from the sin of homosexuality and turn to God (Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19).

Ben Bailey, church of Christ evangelist (Eph. 4:11; 2 Tim. 4:2-5)

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