

## Methodist Church and Homosexuality

After reading an article in an upstate newspaper recently (*A personal reflection on the General Conference of the United Methodist Church*, March 08, 2019) written by Dr. Tom Norrell, Pastor of Central United Methodist Church in Spartanburg, you would be left with the certain impression that he is a sincere man with great *human* compassion for homosexuals. He wrote, with apparent emotion, that recent actions by the General Conference of the United Methodist Church in St. Louis, Missouri, concerning the churches official view of homosexuality had left him with sadness and fear! His compassion and understanding, however, seems to be grounded on and guided by human reasoning and not biblical reasoning!

Dr. Norrell's authority for concluding homosexual activity is not sin is only his *personal* opinion; and, he accepts, with out question, the conclusions reached by the authors of "Human Sexuality by Masters and Johnson" that at some point in life "homosexuality is not a choice." That ultimate conclusion, if true, *actually* confirms the Biblical teaching that at some point in life (accountability) humans become *involuntary slaves* to sin and separated from God in sin! The issue then becomes how to bridge that separation! We can't do it, God can! If mankind did not become slaves to sin and we could establish our own individual *spiritual* relationship with God, there would simply be no compelling need for Jesus Christ to waste His sinless life on the cross! The *eternal spiritual issue* of sin only comes dramatically into play for us individually after receiving knowledge of the death for our sin on the cross and resurrection for our life of Jesus Christ. Based on *faith alone* in that truth alone the Holy Spirit is given to those that believe. There is no other way!

Dr. Norrell seems to erroneously conclude that if homosexuality is in fact not a choice (Masters and Johnson) but an irresistible compulsion it can not, therefore, be sin! *The Bible teaches otherwise*, and the Bible is authority for Christians on homosexual sin or any sin. We can not base Church doctrine on individual personal opinions even if compassionate or conclusions on human sexuality reached by *scientists as authors of Human Sexuality by Masters and Johnson*. It is Biblically immaterial, in our spiritual relationship with God, if you practice sin *voluntarily or involuntarily*; and, *after* accountability **all** humans are involuntary slaves to their particular sins, not just practicing homosexuals! If we *practice* sin, even if *involuntarily*, we are nonetheless slaves to Satan, separated from God by that sin as a barrier to a *spiritual* relationship with God! Sin has consequences with God! An earthly Biblical analogy concerning God's view of "involuntary" slavery is the nation of Israel being once in **involuntary** slavery to the Pharaohs of Egypt. In that slave state they were not free on earth to serve anyone but Pharaoh; and, they could do nothing about it, nor set themselves free! God could not accept earthly worship from another's slaves bound to another master; nor, bless *slaves* while in Egypt even though they were *involuntary* slaves to Pharaoh! God had not condemned Israel to slavery-Pharaoh had! Israel was already condemned as slaves when God came to them and offered free earthly freedom in Moses to freely worship God on earth, but not as involuntary slaves to Pharaoh. God now freely offers us free spiritual and heavenly freedom and life in Jesus Christ, but not as slaves to Satan! You can not serve two masters. God in Egypt under His own power *freed* Israel from the *earthly* power of Pharaoh in order for Israel to freely worship God on earth and receive gifts from Him on earth! At least Israel recognized they were slaves! If we practice sin continuously and voluntarily, after being shown the way out in the offered free spiritual gift of Jesus Christ, we

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Persons who do not demonstrate to God and man we prefer to be spiritual servants of Satan in sin. The terrible eternal consequence of freely returning to serve spiritual sin is typically taught in the earthly Old Testament in that after God dramatically freed Israel and the nation left Egypt; and, more compellingly God had, alone, destroyed Pharaoh's ABSOLUTE power over the nation of Israel (as Jesus destroyed the spiritual power of Satan at the cross), some Israelites who had witnessed that awesome power wanted to *voluntarily* go back and *voluntarily* serve Pharaoh again! They did not trust God's promises about the gift and blessings of the earthly Promised Land and preferred Egypt! God destroyed those who preferred to serve Pharaoh, although Pharaoh was no longer their master because of God's actions, in the wilderness! Remember also that ALL first born (a typical teaching that all in Adam are under God's wrath) in Egypt were under God's wrath-not just Egyptians. The First born in Israel were spared God's wrath only by the blood of the lamb. Christians are spared God's wrath by the blood of Jesus! Those that turned back were not allowed to enter the Promised Land and receive the earthly blessings with Israel!

After accountability (Israel had not been "conquered" to be slaves, Jacob and the eleven entered Egypt voluntarily) we *all* initially, voluntary become slaves to sin and can not free ourselves after accountability. I have had personal experience with the enslaving, destructive and deceiving power of sin! But humbly *recognizing* this horrible state is beneficial to us sinners! Jesus encountered two men in the Temple in Jerusalem. One was *very* "religious" *under that earthly worship system* and did not consider himself a sinner; but, his religious prayer did not impress Jesus favorably! The other, a publican, beat his breast and cried out broken hearted: "God be merciful to me a sinner!" Jesus was impressed with his prayer and said that he went home *justified*. Luke 18, 10-14. Jesus also told the *highly religious* chief priests and elders of Israel in that earthly worship system that publicans and harlots (great sinners) would enter the Kingdom of God before them! Matthew: 21, 31. Can you imagine the depth of their *religious hatred* of Him for such a statement? Why would such "sinners" enter first and not hard working *religious people first, even to the exclusion of "sinners."*?? Because "**Sinners**" that recognize their spiritual sin state come to Jesus in confession (*we agree with God that we are sinners, helplessly separated from God*) and in our repentance (*save us and give us power to turn from our sins and turn to God through Jesus-give us power to worship God in truth and in spirit in Jesus*)! We must **know the truth** of what we are and trust in Jesus to be set free!

Practiced sin, voluntary or involuntary, separates us from God and inherently separates man from the eternal life of God unless God provides a bridge; and, He has! "For all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God." Romans: 3, 23. Simply stated we are all sinners-but despite that we need to know that there is hope from God! There is *good news* for those who recognize their sin as sin separating them from God-and they can not free themselves, whether homosexuals or others; and, be forgiven their sin, washed clean; and, be given power through the cross to *turn from sin and turn toward God* through Jesus Christ. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." John: 3, 16. Jesus also stated "Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God." (In a sense the nation Israel was "born again" in the Wilderness in that many thousands (Of those that knew the difference between Good and evil when they left Egypt and

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made it to the promised land and were lost (Joshua 1 and Caleb) of Israelites that left Egypt were destroyed in the Wilderness, except those that had not yet learned the difference between good and evil, and new ones born to Israel in the wilderness) The nation could not enter until an earthly typical regeneration occurred-neither can we individuals enter the Kingdom of God without spirit regeneration!. John: 3, 3; and, "I am the way, the truth and the life: no man comes to the Father but by me." John: 14, 6.

The basic issue addressed by Dr. Norrell is homosexuality and how do we as Christian Churches deal with homosexuality! Simply stated Homosexuality is sin! Is there any wriggle room? None! "You shall not **lie with a male** as with a **woman**; it is an abomination." Leviticus 18, 22 and "**If a man lies with a male** as with a **woman**, both of them have committed an abomination; **they** shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them." Leviticus 20,13. Jesus said he did not come to change the law! Therefore this law is in full force and effect. *It actually shows us what sin is!!!* Matthew 5, 17-19. The Apostle Paul said the law actually showed him he was a sinner, in fact a spiritual transgressor Romans: 7, 7-27! Until that time he thought he was a highly righteous religious man highly approved of God in Israel because he sought perfect obedience *not faith*. Philippians: 3, 1-14! Jesus did not change the law He fulfilled it! There was no need for Jesus to enumerate all the laws of the Old Testament. He came not to condemn but to save. We are condemned as slaves to sin already!

Can Jesus save homosexuals? Absolutely! Through faith in His cross! Jesus told the woman taken in adultery that He did not *condemn* her for her adultery. Please note He did not say she was not guilty as she was guilty under the law; nor, did He say she was not due stoning-under the Mosaic law she was! But she had now experienced an encounter with Jesus Christ (life itself and He came to save *not condemn*) and her life placed in His hands; and, she had been saved from a certain earthly stoning death for her single sinful transgression through Him (He bares the just penalty in our place and due us for our sin and gives us spiritual life instead! God's Love, Justice and Mercy meet and are vindicated through and in Jesus Christ alone! Her life was in His hands alone! But Jesus did not give her a license to later commit adultery (Thou shalt not commit adultery. Exodus: 20,14) in the future but, instead told her to *sin no more!* John: 8, 1-11. Jesus also healed the paralytic man "*Behold thou art made whole: sin no more lest a worse thing come unto thee.*" John 5: 1-15. Until Jesus the man was disabled in sin. Like or not, God hates sin!

Jesus will forgive homosexuals too, based on their faith in Him alone, but the future admonition would be the same. Jesus told **neither** of these to *never* sin again but implied not voluntarily re-entering into and preferring a *sinful lifestyle* again after an encounter with Him. Don't turn back to Satan, turn to God in Jesus Christ. Homosexuals and all sinners must know the truth! Remember what happened to those Israelites, once freed, that wanted to return and freely serve Pharaoh! Serving Satan is death-either as free servants or slaves. There should be true repentance. Homosexuals, or any sinner, can not come to Christ and expect to willingly re-enter their sinful lifestyles serving Satan without dire consequence no matter what *Human Sexuality by Masters and Johnson*, public opinion polls, apostate Protestant churches, or the United States Supreme Court, or homosexual teachers teach or say!

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The spiritually regenerated Church of Jesus Christ is not a rehabilitation center, it is not a civic club, it is not a social club, it is not a theological debating or philosophical debating society, or neighborhood club! It is a born again collection of people who are dedicated to the praise of God through Jesus Christ! The reason to gather in local groups, regularly or irregularly, is to learn about what God has done and is doing in Jesus Christ alone and offer encouragement to sometimes struggling believers in multiple ways. The basis of all teaching is Biblical truth, popular or unpopular to the general public. Numbers are not important, truth is! And Jesus Christ and the Spirit of God are the catalyst for any good deeds done, not our inherent motivations. Through faith in Jesus Christ we are forgiven of sin, live, are justified before God, and given imputed righteousness and assured of God's love in the ultimate death of this sin inclined body and resurrection or transfiguration in a new body in Jesus Christ. All is earned and made freely available through faith in the cross of Jesus Christ alone. We do not deserve it and can not earn it, but thank God, God *freely* gives it to those that believe His Word. God has always blessed those who believe His Words from the creation of the earth. .

The General Conference made the right decision in this issue for a Church that bases its Doctrine on the Bible. Those who disagree should either repent or leave the church!