

## The case for Equal Marriage

### In 100 words

God designed humans to be in relationship. Denying gay people what straight people take for granted contravenes this. Marriage is exclusive, publicly declared ‘till death us do part’ mutual love and companionship. What matters is not a couple’s gender, but their commitment to faithfully sharing life together. Marriage points to the relationship Christ seeks with all of us, His Church. This is true, whether the couple are straight or gay. The ‘clobber passages’ are wrongly applied. We’ve changed our interpretation on divorce and the ministry of women. Valuing marriage, we should marry all couples, not just the straight ones.

### In 750 words

The Bible doesn’t change; but our *understanding* of it, does! We’ve changed our mind on divorce, and the submission of women to men. It’s the same with LGBTQ+ inclusion.

Every person – whatever their ability, age, ethnicity, gender, *or sexuality* – is made in God’s image. No exceptions! Whether straight or gay, we are ALL ‘fearfully and wonderfully made’.

Just as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Trinity, are in perfect relationship, so all people are made by God to be in relationship: with God; others; ourselves; and with Creation. Hence, God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone.” Are we saying, “It is not good to be alone” – *unless* you are gay, in which case, you *must* remain alone – and for life? Equal marriage enables gay couples to experience what straight couples take for granted.

When Adam sinned, all humanity sinned. It makes *no* difference if we are straight or gay – we are ALL sinners. To single out one group as a special category of sinners misses the point (and reveals our own judgmentalism.) Adam looked to shift the blame on to others. We *still* do this today!

Some Christians are highly selective with the Old Testament Law. They’re OK with prawn sandwiches, tattoos, ripped jeans, even polyester shirts – despite the Law prohibiting these. They don’t stone to *death* those who do chores on the Sabbath, or children who curse their parents. Yet, the Law says, we *should*. And, when the Law says, a man found guilty of *raping* a young woman must be made to marry her, they ignore *this* law. What a cruel scenario that would be. So, *why* do we say, *those laws don’t* apply today, but the two, out of 613, laws that, it is *claimed*, refer to gay people, must be taken *literally*? (And out of context!)

Jesus was very clear. The whole of the law is summed up as, LOVE. Love God. Love others. Love yourself.

Again, Jesus was *very* clear: “Do *not* judge, or *you* too will be judged”. He was *radically* and famously *inclusive*. So should we be.

At first, the Church in Acts rejected Gentile believers – those they said the Law condemned. Then Peter heard, “Do not call anything – *anyone* – impure that God has made clean”. Despite *some* progress, sexism, racism, and *homophobia* are still the spirit of this age.

*If* we say, we welcome *all* people, treating everyone the same – including those who are LGBTQ+ – why deny same-sex couples the opportunity to marry? We would be saying, you’re *less than/ worse* than straight people.

We humans are forever labelling each other, based on our differences of ability; age; ethnicity; gender; sexuality, etc... But, when we follow Christ, we are given a new *super*-label – ‘*In Christ*’ – that trumps all other labels. Paul says: “*In Christ*, you are ALL children of God through faith, for ALL of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” Then, **BOOM!** “**There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are ALL one in Christ Jesus**”.

As God’s ‘new humanity’, the Church is called to be prophetically inclusive of all who are ‘in Christ’. This includes LGBTQ+ people.

All the Biblical reasons why we support straight couples to marry, apply equally to gay couples. Marriage is a publicly-declared, faithful, ‘till death us do part’, union of two people who love each other. Marriage is a covenant made with God. Marriage supports the bringing up of children. All these are equally true, whether the couple are straight or gay.

Like the intimacy a married couple have together, so Christ seeks intimacy with us, His Church. To state the obvious, the Church isn’t only women; Christ’s Bride includes *men* too. The Biblical groom/bride metaphor applies, whether the couple are straight or gay. It’s not about who can, and cannot, marry; it’s about the intimacy Christ seeks with us all.

Heaven is a beautiful vision of intimacy and inclusion, involving ALL people, not just the straight ones – from every nation, group, characteristic, and language.

In conclusion, the marriage of two people – in exclusive, faithful, publicly-declared, mutual love and companionship – prophetically points to the relationship Christ seeks with all of us. The gender of the couple is not the point. We marry straight couples, whether they: have faith, or not; attend church, or not; live together, or not; have been previously divorced, or not.

Equal marriage simply enables more couples to experience the joy of marriage.