

Clobber verses explained by Matthew Vine from 'God and the gay Christian'

1. The Story of Sodom & Gomorrah (Genesis 19)

This story in Genesis 19 is probably the most popular passage used to condemn homosexuality. Here is how Vines explains it:

"God sends two angels disguised as men into the City of Sodom where the men of Sodom threatened to rape them. The angels blind the men, and God destroys the city. For centuries, this story was interpreted as God's judgement on same-sex relations, but the only form of same-sex behaviour described is a threatened gang rape. "

So gang rape is not the same thing as homosexuality. But the recap of Sodom & Gomorrah found in Ezekiel 16:49 highlights what Vines believes is the real point of the story:

"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."

2 & 3. When God calls homosexuality an abomination

(Leviticus 18:22) (Leviticus 20:13) We've all heard that Leviticus is where the Bible straight-up says that homosexual behaviour is an abomination. And yes, it does. It also says that homosexuals should receive the death penalty (!!!). It also says the same thing about eating pork or shellfish, charging interest on loans, and a whole bunch of other restrictions that were a part of the Old Testament Law Code. But for Christians, the Old Testament doesn't (dare I say "shouldn't?") settle any issue because Romans 10:4 says that Christ is the end of the law. Which is probably why most Christians today eat meat, use credit cards, wear make up, and support equality for women.

4. When people turn away from God (Romans 1:26-27)

"Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones; in the same way, men committed shameful acts with other men and received in themselves the due penalty for their error."

This is where Vines really digs in on the the cultural context angle. In Biblical times, same-sex behaviour was primarily seen as happening between adult men and adolescent boys (masters and servants), via prostitution, and by men who were married to women. In all of those cases, we can see why it would have been viewed as sinful, excessive, lustful, and against God's law. But he makes no mention of love, commitment, faithfulness, or the type of same-sex relationships that are at question in the debate around marriage. (By the way, Paul also says that men having long hair is "unnatural" and that women shouldn't speak in church, so it's clear Paul himself may have had some issues of his own.)

5 & 6. Uses of the Greek words "Malakoi" and "Arsenokoitai" (1 Corinthians 6:9-10) (1 Timothy 1:10)

These words are included in the New Testament's lists of people who will not inherit God's kingdom. And there has been much debate over their original meaning. Some believe them to mean homosexuality and sodomy, whereas others have said that the closest modern translation would be "dirty old men." Here's how Vines explains it:

Paul's view of same-sex relations (nor did he support women speaking in church...), but the context he was writing in is worlds apart from gay people in committed, monogamous relationships. The Bible never addresses the issues of sexual orientation or same-sex marriage, so there's no reason why faithful Christians can't support their gay brothers and sisters.

Additional verses used to condemn gay people

"Hate the sin, love the sinner." It was St Augustine who said this, but Gandhi who quoted it. He did not support it though. What he actually wrote (in his 1929 autobiography). "Hate the sin and not the sinner is a precept which though easy enough to understand is rarely practised, and that is why the poison of hatred spreads in the world." So he didn't endorse it, he said it was almost impossible to do.