

EVANGELISM AND THE SUPREME COURT'S RULING

By David Evans

The recent Supreme Court decision confirmed what many people have already observed.

Our culture is shifting and behaviors once understood as contrary to a biblical standard has now been legally validated. Although the world proclaims with the social media hashtag, "#lovewins," it seems that #religiouspersecution may be on the rise. Those who claim to be tolerant express intolerance toward religious freedom. *How should the church respond?*

Of course the only answer is that we respond with Jesus, but even that raises the question: How do we continue to share the story of Jesus in today's culture? Well, the short answer is pretty much the way that Jesus did it. We must be loving, clear and intentional. The place to begin is with ourselves. To prepare, we must:

1. Live love as we speak of the God of love.
2. Check your own heart for any kind of hate, phobia and sin and confess it (Psalm 26:2; Luke 6:41-42).
3. Realize that everyone has an identity crisis outside of Jesus (Galatians 2:20).
4. Ready yourself to journey along with someone who is struggling with sexual sin. The journey would be a disciple-making journey with a struggling believer or with someone that may have never encountered salvation before. The person may already feel that they are a Christian but have fallen into sin (Proverbs 2:16-22).

When evangelistically engaging people that are in sexual sin:

1. Always communicate in kindness. Realize that sexual sin is most often hidden because someone is embarrassed or struggling. A conversation with someone in sin is an opportunity for God to use you in His redemptive story of his or her life.
2. Be ready to give a reason for the hope within you. If the individual asks a question be ready to give a gospel-centered answer. A gospel-centered answer would be a response that has Jesus as the main character and not your personal sin.

Be ready to answer questions from a Biblical perspective and know the answer to questions like:

- a. Where in the Bible does it say that marriage is only between a man or woman?
 - b. If you accept divorced people in your church, then will you accept homosexual people?
 - c. If other denominations are okay with it then why is your church not?
 - d. The Old Testament may condemn homosexuality but does Jesus in the New Testament?
3. Realize that we are the messengers and Jesus is the judge. Be clear – but gracious - that sin is sin and trust the Holy Spirit to do the work of conviction (Romans 2:1-2).
 4. Dialogue the gospel. Do not preach a monologue. Although you would be right, you would not be heard. Allow the gospel conversation to be thick through a dialogue or a Q&A time with the individual (Acts 8: 26-40).

What if someone asks you how you feel about same-sex marriages? Communicate that:

1. God loves them and you do, too.
2. Everyone has an identity crisis outside of Jesus, which is why we need Jesus.
3. The Bible is your guide in everything so you must rely on its teaching of marriage. The Bible teaches that marriage is between one man and one woman (Genesis 2:22-23; Leviticus 20:13; 1 Corinthians 11:1-12; Ephesians 5:22- 33).

Several helpful resources related to the topic and today's post-Christian mindset that are worth adding to your library are Don Everts' and Doug Schaupp's, "I Once Was Lost: What Postmodern Skeptics Taught Us about Their Path to Jesus;" Dan Kimball's, "They Like Jesus but Not the Church: Insights from Emerging Generations;" David Kinnaman's, "Unchristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity and Why It Matters;" and John Stott's, "Issues Facing Christians Today."