



You are the Salt of the Earth . . .
You are the Light of the World.

Matt. 5:13-16

Stand for Marriage

June 2013

The Supreme Court recently handed down two rulings on marriage. Marriage is the first institution created by God in the book of Genesis. One man and one woman in a marriage covenant relationship for life is the divine pattern expressed throughout the Bible. Jesus declared:



Have you not read that at the beginning, the Creator made them male and female, and said: 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and the two will become one flesh?' So they are no longer two but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let no man separate (Matthew 19:4-6).

A good marriage enables people to be happier, live longer, and build more economic security. But it is not just about the individual. Marriage is an exclusive union that takes its distinctive character from being founded, unlike other friendships, on this bodily unity that sometimes generates new life. Certainly, marriage has value in itself and not just as a means to procreation. Yet marriage is the form of relationship that is uniquely suited for childrearing, which is why it is a matter of vital public concern and not just a “private matter.” In fact, marriage is a public, social contract for which the law requires witnesses. Why? It has profound implications for the common good, for the health of society.

Marriage impacts children. Wherever possible, children should be reared in the context of the bond between the two parents whose marital union gave them life. Research shows that when both genders are represented in the parenting role, children have the best opportunity for health, wellbeing, development, and success in life. Every civilization has been built upon the institution of marriage. It is the foundation. The happiness and success of individuals, the welfare and security of children, and the soundness of society, are all largely dependent upon the stability of marriage according to the divine pattern. Regardless of Court rulings, we must stand for marriage.



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Supreme Court Rulings on Marriage

What They Mean: The Supreme Court ruled on the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) and essentially refused to rule on California's Marriage Amendment (Proposition 8)

- Thankfully, the Court learned from the disaster of *Roe v. Wade* and refrained from redefining marriage for the entire country.
- However, by striking down the federal definition of marriage in DOMA, the Court is asserting that Congress does not have the power to define the meaning of words in statutes Congress itself has enacted. This is absurd.
- The DOMA ruling will result in more litigation and challenges from homosexual couples who "marry" in one state where it is legal and move to another state where it is not, demanding the same federal benefits.
- The Prop. 8 decision left California's Marriage Amendment in place for now, but it is alarming because the opinion seems to allow the executive branch of state government to simply nullify the initiative process by refusing to defend a voter-approved law or amendment.

How Should the Church Respond?

- The DOMA ruling of the Supreme Court left it to the states to determine whether or not to allow same-sex "marriage." It is therefore incumbent upon Christians to encourage their elected officials either to sustain existing man/woman marriage laws in their states or seek to enact them.
- While churches and religious bodies cannot be compelled to host same-sex "marriage" ceremonies in their facilities or on their grounds, every church needs to have an explicit statement within its Statement of Faith/Doctrine, Constitution and Bylaws and any property-use documents to the effect that the only biblically approved act of sexual intimacy exists between a man and a woman within the covenant of marriage, and that advocates or practitioners of other points of view, while welcome to attend, may not be members or allowed to marry on church grounds.
- Opposition to same-sex "marriage" is not hatred or bigotry. It is grounded in the teachings of Scripture, which are "settled in heaven forever" (Ps. 119:89). These teachings argue that any non-marital and non-heterosexual forms of sexual intimacy or legal union violate the will of God.
- Jesus was filled with "grace and truth" (John 1:14). This is the model we should imitate: Showing kindness and compassion to persons who identify as homosexual or who admit to struggling with same-sex attraction, while also speaking the truth to them about God's changeless standards and the power He will give those who love Him to live by them.

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