

5 Implications of the Supreme Court Same-Sex Marriage Decision

June 26, 2015 by Owen Strachan

Same-sex marriage is now legal in all 50 states, per the ruling in Obergefell v. Hodges. What should Christians think and do in response?

1. We should recognize that this is a dark hour for America. This development has not occurred in a vacuum. It is the realization of many decades of cultural decline. Our country's identity has symbolically shifted from a Judeo-Christian nation to a neo-pagan one.

2. The Enlightenment has presently overwhelmed the Great Awakening. We have embraced a vision of sexuality and humanity that has nothing to do with biblical truth and traditional wisdom. A secular view of mankind scrubbed of religious ideals and driven by vague notions of "equality" has triumphed over the religious understanding of mankind as a created being responsible to obey and worship the Creator.

3. Adults have chosen to cater to themselves rather than to children. Marriage—the covenantal union of a man and a woman—blesses spouses. But it also serves to protect and care for children. Children need a father and a mother. With this ruling, we will now witness many children growing up in compromised homes. This development will cause real suffering in the lives of little boys and girls.

4. Rights now take precedence over duties in America. Our self-obsessed society has made good on its orientation. We now care more about personal rights, rights which have no constitutional precedent, than we do about duties to God, family, country, and community.

5. The church is now a marginalized community. Our witness has not carried the day in the public square. To a considerable degree, we now find ourselves at the mercy of those who disagree with us.

So what should we do?

We should do exactly what we have been doing. God is reigning now as he was before this ruling. Our lives are not determined by rulers of this world. They are shaped by the decrees of a greater ruler.

We should pray. We should ask the Lord to do a mighty work amidst the wreckage of this decision, to convert sinners, to rouse the church to moral witness, and to do unthinkable things in our time. We should petition God to grant us favor such that our churches and organizations will continue to flourish.

We should invest in the church. More than we've likely ever felt, our congregations are little outposts of the kingdom. We should help build our local churches and make clear to all we can that they are way-stations of grace in the name of Jesus Christ. We now have a terrific opportunity to show people drawn to homosexuality that we really do love them, and that we are ready more than ever to receive them into membership through repentance and faith. We may be beaten in the broader culture at present, but we're not keeping score. We're not in this, ultimately, to win political victories (important as they are), but to minister grace and truth. We are thrilled to have the opportunity to do just that.

We should plunge back into the public square. This is a Supreme Court ruling. It's a very big deal. But it's only the latest such major event. We've seen slavery struck down in America; we've witnessed the long, slow death of Jim Crow in the twentieth-century. Christians of all people believe in divine reversals, shocking redemption, and Copernican revolutions. We are the people of hope. We've seen Abraham made into a mighty nation, Israel march out of Egypt, mighty Babylon and fierce Persia and lordly Rome crumble into ash, the church explode as the gospel slipped its first-century cage. We believe in a God of ridiculous power who does inconceivable things. From this backdrop, we are poised to plunge back into the public square out of love for neighbor and the pursuit of shalom for all people, including those who oppose us.

Lastly, we should cultivate our families and reinvest in our marriages. It's right and even needed to seek the reversal of this decision and the undoing of its many baleful effects. We must and should do that, and every single Christian should participate meaningfully in the political system at every level they can. But let's get this straight: our major work going forward, along with what I've said thus far, should in truth be the cultivation of our own gardens.

Let's allow this decision to shock us back into taking stock of the log in our own eye. Let's use it to motivate us to dig into our marriage and truly love our God-given spouse. Let's recommit to loving our children in a distinctly biblical way. May this Supreme Court ruling awaken God's people to display the beauty of complementarity as never before, to put the union of a self-sacrificial head to his loving bride on IMAX display wherever we are.

The church may feel shaken. The culture may seem to be crumbling. But God is on his own throne and his gospel is on the move. America is the new Rome. But Rome is where the message of Christ crucified and resurrected slipped its surly bonds. Rome is where the church flourished and grew despite terrific opposition. Rome tried to snuff out the light of Christ, but in total honesty, Rome failed miserably.

May the church of America be like the church of Rome.