

Notes: November 5, 2016

Start: 10 AM

Order of service:

1. Meet and Greet
2. Introduction (if new people)
3. Ma Tovv
4. Open in Prayer for service
5. Liturgy – Sh'ma +
6. Announcements
7. Jeri - Drash
8. Praise and Worship Songs
9. Message
10. Aaronic Blessing
11. Kiddush
12. Oneg

Children's Blessing: Tolerance is not Patience

Transliteration: *Ye'simcha Elohim ke-Ephraim ve hee-Menashe*

English: *May God make you like Ephraim and Menashe*

Transliteration: *Ye'simech Elohim ke-Sarah, Rivka, Rachel ve-Leah.*

English: *May God make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah.*

Introduction: A Call To Repentance – A Call To Action For The Body of Messiah

This message was given three days before the 2016 United States Presidential Election

There is an ever growing transformation occurring within the body of Messiah. Yet, I would not call it one that is positive, but one of great concern.

Over the years I have shared with you many troubling things that some in the body of Messiah have embraced. In just the last 8 years, we have seen significant changes in law for our nation that was not supported by the majority. These changes have been compared to the civil rights movement of the 60s and the women's movement of the 70s. Keeping in mind that in both cases we are talking about a representation of 20+% and over 50% of the population being impacted. In the case of the changes in the last 8 years, we are talking approximately 3%.

Yet, my concern comes from where some of the support is coming from.

David Gushee wrote an article "*Christians, Conflict and Change*" back in August 2016 where he wrote the following:

"Middle ground is disappearing on the question of whether LGBT persons should be treated as full equals, without any discrimination in society – and on the related question of whether religious institutions should be allowed to continue discriminating due to their doctrinal beliefs."

<http://religionnews.com/2016/08/22/on-lgbt-equality-middle-ground-is-disappearing/>

In other words, relating to a sermon I did earlier this year...the grey is going away to where the black and the white are expanding.

Gushee continues...

“It turns out that you are either for full and unequivocal social and legal equality for LGBT people, or you are against it, and your answer will at some point be revealed. This is true both for individuals and for institutions. Neutrality is not an option. Neither is polite half-acceptance. Nor is avoiding the subject. Hide as you might, the issue will come and find you.”

I experienced this reality earlier this week when I returned a phone call of someone who was interested in the congregation. I was confronted with the question...“what is your view on transgender?” It was not the person who was calling but they had indicated it was a friend and were concerned if they would be welcomed in our congregation.

Needless to say the conversation was an eye opening experience in terms of just how passionate some people are. I basically received a hyper-grace sermon from this individual, telling me their friend has been serving Christ with passion of years as someone who is transgender.

I was basically being called intolerant because I had asked the question “had they transitioned” with the response being - “why does that matter?” to which I responded, that if they had not yet transitioned there is still the possibility of repentance. To which the person asked...“what about everyone else who sins?” “Do you accept them?”

The individual I talked with ultimately didn't think repentance was important if you have accepted Christ. It was all about love and grace. There was no mention made about pursuing righteousness.

And it went on for about a half hour.

I want to get back to David Gushee and the magnitude the Supreme Court decision of 2015 is having...

“Institutions where full LGBT equality is mandatory now include any entity associated with the federal government, including the military and the civil service.

And the vast majority of the education sector, its schools, trade groups, accreditors and staff, both because of the values of most educators and because of federal regulations.

And most clinical, medical and helping professions, associations and leaders.

And most titans of corporate America.

And most of the media and entertainment business, including its most visible celebrities.

And most of the nonprofit and civil society sector, including former longtime holdouts like the Boy Scouts.

And most of the sports world, including its famous athletes.

And many state and local governments and their leaders.

And the vast majority of America's secularists; minorities in many other American religious communities; and majorities in some of these religious communities.”

I don't know if anyone noticed one area not mentioned by David Gushee...the church, the body of Messiah.

Yet, he does go on in his article to talk about this further.

This is one issue, whereby the number of people who actually identify as being LGBT is small, but its impact is far reaching. Ultimately impacting people who never thought it would affect them.

What I am saying, may sound like hate-speech, but I am not here to promote anything against the LGBT community, but rather to let this congregation know there is a much bigger picture that all believers must be aware of...that bigger picture is the world's transformation of the body of Messiah by man. We are talking about religious leaders who are embracing a much bigger tent, yet are compromising Adonai's standards in order to expand this tent.

In an article from August 2016 entitled *“Top 10 Questions About Religious Liberty, Jesus and LGBT People”* Reverend Susan Russell, an Episcopal priest and activist from California answers questions pertaining to the the title

of the article. The first two questions...

1. **Is being gay a sin?**

No. Sins are acts that separate us from God and keep us from loving our neighbors as ourselves. Being gay is not a sin. Bullying is a sin. Being hateful to other people is a sin. Putting yourself in the place of God to judge others is a sin. Being gay is not.

Yet, acting upon it is.

Lev 18:22 " You are not to go to bed with a man as with a woman; it is an abomination.

Lev 20:13 If a man goes to bed with a man as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they must be put to death; their blood is on them.

Two times Adonai conveys this to Moshe. Call this two witnesses.

2. **What did Jesus say about gay people?**

Jesus said the same thing about gay people that he said about all people: God loves you beyond your wildest imagining and calls you to walk in love with God and with each other. He also said a whole lot about loving your neighbor, welcoming the stranger, embracing the outcast and ministering to the marginalized.

This is true, however, Yeshua does say...

Joh 14:15 "If you love me, you will keep my commands;

If we are to truly walk in love with God, then we cannot ignore this verse.

He didn't need to say anything further, because Torah speaks for itself.

Of all the institutions mentioned by David Gushee, the body of Messiah is fast becoming one of them. Some denominations and some non-denominational churches have fully embraced and accepted people who live this lifestyle openly and unrepentantly.

Reform Judaism is ignoring Torah on this very subject.

My point for all of what I am saying here is that we as a nation are continuing on a path away from Adonai. We are conforming to the world. Back in 2012 when Maine was one of three states with a referendum on its ballot for Same Sex Marriage to 2015 when the Supreme Court made it the law of the land, there is a significant battle going on and will conclude on Tuesday. The battle for the Supreme Court.

This is where religious liberty will either be strengthened or defeated.

If the Democratic Party retains the office of the President, and therefore has the power to nominate Supreme Court Justices for which there is currently a vacancy, then you will see a likely shift in the balance of the Court.

Imagine what a total period of 12 to 16 years of Democratic control will do. There will likely be another 3 – 4 Supreme Court vacancies filled. With a court that included Justice Scalia adopting same sex marriage by a 5-4 decision, considering there were 5 judges appointed by Republican presidents and yet this decision was still adopted, imagine what will happen if there are as many as 6 – 7 justices appointed by Democratic presidents.

Gushee writes:

“Openly discriminatory religious schools and parachurch organizations will feel the pinch first. Any entity that requires government accreditation or touches government dollars will be in the immediate line of fire. Some organizations will face the choice either to abandon discriminatory policies or risk potential closure. Others will simply face increasing social marginalization.”

This will ultimately impact congregations who hold Adonai's Word as the foundation of their faith and lifestyle. This will all be called into question. We will ultimately become the minority whose rights will be violated.

You are seeing today the revolt against God in our nation.

In this week's Parashah we first saw the people rebel against Adonai.

Gen 6:5 Adonai saw that the people on earth were very wicked, that all the imaginings of their hearts were always of evil only.

Gen 6:6 Adonai regretted that he had made humankind on the earth; it grieved his heart.

Gen 6:7 Adonai said, "I will wipe out humankind, whom I have created, from the whole earth; and not only human beings, but animals, creeping things and birds in the air; for I regret that I ever made them."

To where we saw the same thing happen time and again with Adonai's people Israel...rebellion against their God. So much so that the Prophet Isaiah would be instructed to convey the following...

Isa 5:20 Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who change darkness into light and light into darkness, who change bitter into sweet and sweet into bitter!

In this way, we will be viewed as intolerant, hateful, bigoted.

In this way, I say to you that it is even more vital to grasp on to Adonai, not accepting the manner by which Yeshua is being presented...a tolerant Messiah who overlooks transgression all in the name of love.

The love of Adonai is clear. He wants us to follow Him, not the world and not the world's interpretation of Him. Likewise Yeshua, we are to pursue the King of Israel, the Jewish Messiah, the Word who became human and dwelt among us.

2Ch 7:14 then, if my people, who bear my name, will humble themselves, pray, seek my face and turn from their evil ways, I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin and heal their land.

I have been hearing this scripture quoted many times over the last few weeks. It seems to be a very popular Scripture for the body of Messiah at the time of election.

Who Bear My Name:

He is speaking to His people, those who were chosen to follow Him and accepted His call. In addition, it includes those who chose to follow Him.

To bear one's name, means that you have taken on the identity of that person or have established authority under that person. In the case of Adonai, He has placed His Name on the people of Israel:

We hear this every week at the end of service with Aaron's b'ruchah:

Num 6:27 "In this way they (the Cohen) are to put (invoke) my name on the people of Isra'el, so that I will bless them."

As a believer in Messiah, you have accepted to follow Him in His ways and by His instructions. The very instructions given to Moshe. The very instructions taught by Yeshua.

Will Humble Themselves:

2Ch 34:26 "But you are to tell the king of Y'hudah, who sent you to consult Adonai, that Adonai the God of Isra'el

also says this: 'In regard to the words you have heard,

***2Ch 34:27** because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before God when you heard his words against this place and its inhabitants — you humbled yourself before me, tore your clothes and cried before me — I have also heard you,' says Adonai.

2Ch 34:28 'Here, I will gather you to your ancestors; you will go to your grave in peace; and your eyes will not see all the calamity I am going to bring on this place and its inhabitants.' " So they brought back word to the king.

***Jas 4:7** Therefore, submit to God. Moreover, take a stand against the Adversary, and he will flee from you.

Jas 4:8 Come close to God, and he will come close to you. Clean your hands, sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded people!

To humble means: Having or showing a lower estimate of one's own importance.

One who is humble is willing to submit.

Just because you can do something, doesn't mean you have to show everyone.

In order to continue the steps as mentioned in 2 Chronicles 7:14, a humble nature must be present.

Isa 66:1 "Heaven is my throne," says Adonai, "and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house could you build for me? What sort of place could you devise for my rest?"

Isa 66:2 Didn't I myself make all these things? This is how they all came to be," says Adonai. "The kind of person on whom I look with favor is one with a poor and humble spirit, who trembles at my word.

Pro 18:12 Before being ruined, a person's heart is proud; before being honored, a person must be humble.

Yeshua told this parable...

Luk 14:7 When Yeshua noticed how the guests were choosing for themselves the best seats at the table, he told them this parable:

Luk 14:8 "When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, don't sit down in the best seat; because if there is someone more important than you who has been invited,

Luk 14:9 the person who invited both of you might come and say to you, 'Give this man your place.' Then you will be humiliated as you go to take the least important place.

Luk 14:10 Instead, when you are invited, go and sit in the least important place; so that when the one who invited you comes, he will say to you, 'Go on up to a better seat.' Then you will be honored in front of everyone sitting with you.

Luk 14:11 Because everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but everyone who humbles himself will be exalted."

Luk 14:12 Yeshua also said to the one who had invited him, "When you give a lunch or a dinner, don't invite your friends, brothers, relatives or rich neighbors; for they may well invite you in return, and that will be your repayment.

Luk 14:13 Instead, when you have a party, invite poor people, disfigured people, the crippled, the blind!

Luk 14:14 How blessed you will be that they have nothing with which to repay you! For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

What are your intentions when you do something?

Pray:

Through prayer, we recognize our dependency on Adonai and realize that every blessing, even life itself, is not earned but rather a generous and divine gift that has been given to us.

Prayer should express our deepest feelings with the one whom created us and redeemed us.

Abraham Joshua Heschel, a renowned 20th century Rabbi said this:

“To pray is to take notice of the wonder, to regain a sense of the mystery that animates all beings, the divine margin in all attainments”

Our prayer should convey these aspects of our life in relation with our creator Adonai and through our redeemer Yeshua.

How did Yeshua pray?

Mat 26:37 He took with him Kefa and Zavdai's two sons. Grief and anguish came over him,

Mat 26:38 and he said to them, "My heart is so filled with sadness that I could die! Remain here and stay awake with me."

The aspect of death, even for the Son of God was a stark reality. The pain and suffering He would endure would be real. Even with the knowledge that He had, Yeshua experienced real human emotions...

Grief
Anguish

Mat 26:39 Going on a little farther, he fell on his face, praying, "My Father, if possible, let this cup pass from me! Yet — not what I want, but what you want!"

For His Talmadim He instructed them to pray specifically:

Mat 26:41 Stay awake, and pray that you will not be put to the test — the spirit indeed is eager, but human nature is weak."

He knew what they would experience after this time. There would be many challenging tests of their trust that Yeshua had instilled in them. They would need every ounce of strength to preserve the tests that would be before them.

Yeshua went off to pray a second time...

Mat 26:42 A second time he went off and prayed. "My Father, if this cup cannot pass away unless I drink it, let what you want be done."

And a third time, the same words.

Knowing His fate as well as the purpose of His fate, ultimately the will of Adonai, His personal motives took a back seat to what was truly important.

How well do we know what the bigger picture of Adonai is?

Seek My Face:

Adonai says to seek His face, yet...

Exo 33:20 But my face," he continued, "you cannot see, because a human being cannot look at me and remain alive.

To seek means "to attempt to find"

Ultimately, we are to pursue, the one whom we are to follow.

Deu 4:29 However, from there you will seek Adonai your God; and you will find him if you search after him with all your heart and being.

How much are you willing to put into your pursuit?

There are promises associated with seeking and finding Him...

Mat 6:33 But seek first his Kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Mat 6:34 Don't worry about tomorrow — tomorrow will worry about itself! Today has enough tsuris already!

Go back and read Matthew 5 & 6 to find out what "these things" are.

Turn From Their Evil Ways:

We have talked about T'shuvah many times...

Meaning repentance.

Turn from the ways which are contrary to the Word of Adonai which are also the teachings of Messiah.

Return to me and follow me...

He Will Hear From Heaven:

He may appear to be silent, but Adonai hears and listens...

1Pe 3:10 For "Whoever wants to love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit,

1Pe 3:11 turn from evil and do good, seek peace and chase after it.

1Pe 3:12 For Adonai keeps his eyes on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers; but the face of Adonai is against those who do evil things."

The prayers of His people are as precious to Him as the pleasing aroma of a burnt offering.

Rev 8:1 When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for what seemed like half an hour.

Rev 8:2 Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and they were given seven shofars.

Rev 8:3 Another angel came and stood at the altar with a gold incense-bowl, and he was given a large quantity of incense to add to the prayers of all God's people

Rev 8:4 on the gold altar in front of the throne. The smoke of the incense went up with the prayers of God's people from the hand of the angel before God.

Sin Forgiven, Land Healed:

Conclusion:

We see all aspects found in David's prayer: Psalm 51

His sin was forgiven, but He still bore the consequences for his actions.

2Sa 12:10 Now therefore, the sword will never leave your house — because you have shown contempt for me and taken the wife of Uriyah the Hitti as your own wife.'

2Sa 12:11 Here is what Adonai says: 'I will generate evil against you out of your own household. I will take your wives before your very eyes and give them to your neighbor; he will go to bed with your wives, and everyone will know about it.

2Sa 12:12 For you did it secretly, but I will do this before all Isra'el in broad daylight.' "

2Sa 12:13 David said to Natan, "I have sinned against Adonai." Natan said to David, "Adonai also has taken away your sin. You will not die.

What is the penalty for adultery?

Both the man and woman are to be put to death by being stoned.

2Sa 12:14 However, because by this act you have so greatly blasphemed Adonai, the child born to you must die."

David's response...

2Sa 12:16 David prayed to God on behalf of the child; David fasted, then came and lay all night on the ground.

How he answered...

2Sa 12:22 He answered, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept; because I thought, 'Maybe Adonai will show his grace to me and let the child live.'

2Sa 12:23 But now that he's dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me."

How did he get there?

Psa 51:1 [*For the leader. A psalm of David, (51:2) when Natan the prophet came to him after his affair with Bat-Sheva:*] **(51:3)** God, in your grace, have mercy on me; in your great compassion, blot out my crimes.

Psa 51:2 (51:4) Wash me completely from my guilt, and cleanse me from my sin.

Psa 51:3 (51:5) For I know my crimes, my sin confronts me all the time.

Psa 51:4 (51:6) Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil from your perspective; so that you are right in accusing me and justified in passing sentence.

Psa 51:5 (51:7) True, I was born guilty, was a sinner from the moment my mother conceived me.

Psa 51:6 (51:8) Still, you want truth in the inner person; so make me know wisdom in my inmost heart.

Psa 51:7 (51:9) Sprinkle me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

Psa 51:8 (51:10) Let me hear the sound of joy and gladness, so that the bones you crushed can rejoice.

Psa 51:9 (51:11) Turn away your face from my sins, and blot out all my crimes.

Psa 51:10 (51:12) Create in me a clean heart, God; renew in me a resolute spirit.

Psa 51:11 (51:13) Don't thrust me away from your presence, don't take your Ruach Kodesh away from me.

Psa 51:12 (51:14) Restore my joy in your salvation, and let a willing spirit uphold me.

Psa 51:13 (51:15) Then I will teach the wicked your ways, and sinners will return to you.

Psa 51:14 (51:16) Rescue me from the guilt of shedding blood, God, God of my salvation! Then my tongue will sing about your righteousness -

Psa 51:15 (51:17) Adonai, open my lips; then my mouth will praise you.

Psa 51:16 (51:18) For you don't want sacrifices, or I would give them; you don't take pleasure in burnt offerings.

Psa 51:17 (51:19) My sacrifice to God is a broken spirit; God, you won't spurn a broken, chastened heart.

Psa 51:18 (51:20) In your good pleasure, make Tziyon prosper; rebuild the walls of Yerushalayim.

Psa 51:19 (51:21) Then you will delight in righteous sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings; then they will offer bulls on your altar.

Just because we have sinned, doesn't mean our life is over. Through a changed heart and recommitment to Adonai, life can go on...

2Sa 12:24 David comforted his wife Bat-Sheva, came to her and went to bed with her; she gave birth to a son and named him Shlomo. Adonai loved him

We will still experience the consequences for our transgressions, just as David did, but...

Adonai wasn't done with him, because he chose...

- To humble
- To seek
- To pray
- To repent

And doing so, Adonai...

- To hear from Heaven
- To forgive our sin

The first four are actions that are required of us. The last two are actions that are done in response to what we have first done.

The responsibility is first ours. We must first act first.

Mal 3:7 Since the days of your forefathers you have turned from my laws and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you," says Adonai-Tzva'ot. "But you ask, 'In respect to what are we supposed to return?'

Rev 3:19 As for me, I rebuke and discipline everyone I love; so exert yourselves, and turn from your sins!

Rev 3:20 Here, I'm standing at the door, knocking. If someone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he will eat with me.

Rev 3:21 I will let him who wins the victory sit with me on my throne, just as I myself also won the victory and sat down with my Father on his throne.

Rev 3:22 Those who have ears, let them hear what the Spirit is saying to the Messianic communities." ' "

The message is the same.

Top Ten Questions About Religious Liberty, Jesus and LGBT People

08/22/2016 04:22 pm ET

[Rev. Susan Russell](#) Episcopal priest and activist from Pasadena, Calif.

As the longest election cycle in the history of voting heads into the home stretch, it seemed like a good time to offer this refresher course on what the Bible actually says and doesn't say about LGBT people — along with a reminder about what religious liberty is and isn't.

1. Is being gay a sin?

No. Sins are acts that separate us from God and keep us from loving our neighbors as ourselves. Being gay is not a sin. Bullying is a sin. Being hateful to other people is a sin. Putting yourself in the place of God to judge others is a sin. Being gay is not.

Yet, acting upon it is.

Lev 18:22 " 'You are not to go to bed with a man as with a woman; it is an abomination.

Lev 20:13 If a man goes to bed with a man as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they must be put to death; their blood is on them.

2. What did Jesus say about gay people?

Jesus said the same thing about gay people that he said about all people: God loves you beyond your wildest imagining and calls you to walk in love with God and with each other. He also said a whole lot about loving your neighbor, welcoming the stranger, embracing the outcast and ministering to the marginalized.

This is true, however, Yeshua does say...

Joh 14:15 "If you love me, you will keep my commands;

If we are to truly walk in love with God, then we cannot ignore this verse.

He didn't need to say anything further, because Torah speaks for itself.

3. Does the Bible really condemn homosexuality?

The short answer is no, it does not. The handful of passages in the Old and New Testaments that talk about

God condemning specific sexual acts have nothing whatsoever to do with sexual orientation and everything to do with contexts such as cultic prostitution or gang rape. To put it another way, using the Bible as a handbook on human sexuality makes as much sense as using it as a handbook on astronomy. Just as those who wrote the Biblical texts had no concept of the science that would prove the earth actually revolves around the sun they had no concept of homosexuality (which wasn't defined until the 19th century).

Rev. Russell's interpretation of sexual acts being based on cultic prostitution or gang rape are extremely narrow, whereas the message conveyed to Israel in Leviticus 18, is more expansive.

Lev 18:3 You are not to engage in the activities found in the land of Egypt, where you used to live; and you are not to engage in the activities found in the land of Kena'an, where I am bringing you; nor are you to live by their laws.

These are identified as activities, both in the land of Egypt and in the land of Kena'an, for which Adonai says Israel is not to partake in whatsoever. Of the many activities forbidden by Adonai the aspect of sexual relations with the same sex is considered to be an abomination to Adonai.

Lev 18:22 " You are not to go to bed with a man as with a woman; it is an abomination.

Sexual relations with the same sex is forbidden by Adonai.

4. **So are you saying the church has been wrong for 2000 years?**

Yes. I am saying there is a really long list of things the church has continued to figure out over the last 2000 years — including how it has marginalized women, supported slavery, denied science and treated LGBT people.

Based upon Rev. Russell's position, this is no surprise that she believes the body of Messiah has been wrong and is using other, non-related areas to support her premise.

5. **How do I respond when people say “God hates f—s”?**

First of all, God's nature is to love, not to hate. We believe that what God cares about is not our sexual orientation but our theological orientation — and that the question that matters is not “who do you love?” but “do you love?” Recognizing that homophobia causes some folks to project onto God their own fears, prejudices and biases against LGBT people, sometimes the best response is simply no response. It can be a challenge, but getting triggered by hate-mongers prevents us from being the change we want to see.

Adonai cares about His creation, but when His creation ignores Him and ultimately rebels against His Word, He has no alternative, for He cannot go against His very word.

Adonai is love and affords us every opportunity to return to Him through t'shuvah (repentance). Returning to Him, means turning from our lifestyle that is contrary to what He commands. This means, coming to know that Yeshua is the one who has interceded for us, providing an atoning sacrifice. His atonement is only beneficial to those who not only accept it, but turn from the ways of the world and accept the ways of Adonai. Until we do this as Sha'ul says...

Rom 2:8 But to those who are self-seeking, who disobey the truth and obey evil, he will pay back wrath and anger.

Rom 2:9 Yes, he will pay back misery and anguish to every human being who does evil, to the Jew first, then to the Gentile;

Rom 2:10 but glory and honor and shalom to everyone who keeps doing what is good, to the Jew first, then to the Gentile.

Rom 2:11 For God does not show favoritism.

6. **What do I tell people when they say being gay is a sin and a choice?**

Tell them that Jesus said absolutely nothing about being gay, but he said a lot of things about judging other people. Then tell them that while there is no consensus among scientists about the exact reasons that an individual develops a heterosexual, bisexual, gay, or lesbian orientation, there is consensus that sexuality is a

continuum. So the “choice” is not to be gay, straight or somewhere in between; the “choice” is to build our own healthy relationships — and give other people the grace to build theirs.

The choice to have relations with the same sex has been already addressed in Leviticus. Yeshua didn't need to say anything further. Sha'ul, however, speaking to gentile communities where these practices were common, continued to reiterate the position found in Torah.

Rom 1:26 This is why God has given them up to degrading passions; so that their women exchange natural sexual relations for unnatural;

Rom 1:27 and likewise the men, giving up natural relations with the opposite sex, burn with passion for one another, men committing shameful acts with other men and receiving in their own persons the penalty appropriate to their perversion.

Rom 1:28 In other words, since they have not considered God worth knowing, God has given them up to worthless ways of thinking; so that they do improper things.

Rom 1:29 They are filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and vice; stuffed with jealousy, murder, quarreling, dishonesty and ill-will; they are gossips,

Rom 1:30 slanderers, haters of God; they are insolent, arrogant and boastful; they plan evil schemes; they disobey their parents;

Rom 1:31 they are brainless, faithless, heartless and ruthless.

Rom 1:32 They know well enough God's righteous decree that people who do such things deserve to die; yet not only do they keep doing them, but they applaud others who do the same.

7. **How about transgender people? Where do they fit in?**

The same place all God's beloved children fit in: smack dab in the center of God's care, love and desire for health and wholeness for every single human being.

To convey, from a transgender point of view that they are the wrong gender in essence conveys that Adonai is imperfect. From the very moment of conception, Adonai was involved and is involved in every aspect up until the moment we are born.

Psa 139:13 For you fashioned my inmost being, you knit me together in my mother's womb.

Psa 139:14 I thank you because I am awesomely made, wonderfully; your works are wonders - I know this very well.

Psa 139:15 My bones were not hidden from you when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

Psa 139:16 Your eyes could see me as an embryo, but in your book all my days were already written; my days had been shaped before any of them existed.

Do things happen during pregnancy that can lead to birth defects, abnormalities and stillborn, unfortunately, yes. However this does not mean this was ultimately intended by Adonai.

8. **How do I respond when politicians condemn my sexuality, citing their belief in the Bible?**

Remind them that the First Amendment protects them in believing whatever they want to about what God does or does not bless, but it also prohibits them from using those beliefs to decide who the Constitution protects or doesn't protect. Tell them to stop confusing their theology with our democracy. And then campaign for and donate to their opponent.

One's first amendment rights protect your speech, yet does not alter the authority of Adonai's Word. To consider this view an aspect of theology, diminishes the very Word of Adonai. Theology is man's interpretation of Adonai's Word, while Adonai's position on such practices requires no further interpretation. This understanding of Deuteronomy 18:22, would fall under the P'shat – the plain and simple understanding of what is written. In other words, what it says is what it means.

9. **But doesn't “religious liberty” protect discriminating against LGBT people?**

No. Religious liberty protects the freedom to believe or to not believe whatever you choose to about God - not the freedom to use your religion as an excuse to discriminate against other Americans. The 14th Amendment guarantees equal protection for all Americans - and equal protection isn't equal protection unless it protects all

Americans equally. There was no asterisk in 1960 that said “unless you’re an African American who wants to eat at a lunch counter” and there is no asterisk in 2016 that says “unless you are a same-sex couple who wants to get married or a transgender student who wants to use the bathroom.” So called “Religious Freedom Acts” are nothing less than unconstitutional smokescreens for bigotry against LGBT people. Period.

What is legislated by the government, does not ultimately replace or change the Word of Adonai. As laws are made in this country and ultimately tested against the Constitution has no standing in relation to the Word of Adonai. It merely makes something legal in this country. Just because something is legal in America doesn't mean it is moral in the eyes of Adonai. There is an enormous difference.

10. **Should I try to “pray away the gay”?**

No. If you need to pray away something, pray away homophobia. Homosexuality doesn't need healing. Homophobia does.

I find it interesting when believers are not in agreement with a homosexual lifestyle, which is contrary to the Word of Adonai, are labeled as being homophobic - “dislike of or prejudice against homosexual people.” I certainly hope we, as believers we continue to pray for those who have chosen a lifestyle contrary to that of Adonai, and will ultimately turn to the God of Abraham, Issac and Jacob, the One who created all. This is the prayer that should be happening on both sides of the fence.

To those who believe they are attracted to the same sex, yet do not act upon it, remaining celibate, thus not acting upon the desire conveys a love for God that Rev. Russell does not acknowledge. To sacrifice your own desires and impulses in order to follow Adonai's Word, is a truly sacrificial love that ultimately aligns with Yeshua's love...

Eph 5:25 As for husbands, love your wives, **just as the Messiah loved the Messianic Community, indeed, gave himself up on its behalf,**

Eph 5:26 **in order to set it apart for God, making it clean through immersion in the mikveh, so to speak,**

Eph 5:27 **in order to present the Messianic Community to himself as a bride to be proud of, without a spot, wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without defect.**

Changes that are happening from 2007 to 2014

<http://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/>