

California Controversy

Dan Nelson – pastor

Calvary Chapel of the Ojai Valley

Ojai Valley News

It's been a tumultuous week of weird weather and death defying heroics as our nation has battled against more hurricane brutality. With eyes glued to the news, we saw that the political front has had its own share of Category 5 storm winds. And caught somewhere in the middle are America's citizens struggling to stay abreast of the issues, discern through the speech writer's rhetoric, pray for the safety of her people, while avoiding becoming disgruntled with the prices at the pumps.

Amidst the myriad of issues that bombard us everyday, it can be difficult to wade through the murky waters of bias and half-truths to land on what is really important and requiring of our attention. As a result, many people are walking around seemingly completely unaware that we are in pivotal and transitional times of supreme importance in our nation. Few seem to realize that what happens in November will have dire impact on our society, the effects of which probably won't be apparent for years. Specifically, I am referring to our controversy in California over the re-definition of "marriage".

The Bible records a brief chronicle of God's intentions and interventions regarding his creation. It starts with a short summary on how the world came into existence and man's subsequent fall from goodness, and concludes with a prophetic message of a redeemed people that had been bought back, out of spiritual slavery to abundant life. Jesus is the hero of the story and we are the benefactors. The truths that flow from every page are power packed and are as sweet as honey to those who seek wisdom from heaven. Significantly, the whole adventure unfolds from the foundation laid in the first few chapters. In fact, it has been said that if one has a problem believing the very first line in the whole Bible, they won't get very far with the rest of it. "In the beginning, God....."

Traveling just a bit further, we are given God's purposes with mankind. He made Adam and didn't want him alone so God interjected by creating a helpmate appropriate for him. He made Eve, brought them together, officiated the first wedding, and instructed them to multiply. Thus the institution of marriage begins "in the beginning". Although throughout history we have seen various forms of deviancy regarding the basic concepts of one man and one woman joined together in marriage, there has never been a situation that dares to redefine this most basic building block of family and society in such a radical and sweeping, culture influencing, irreversible way.

As a Christian, my primary influencer in how I think is the Word of God. But the fact is that intelligent and rational people of various backgrounds understand that there is a lot at stake. There are commercials on television that are attempting to influence voters by playing a sympathy position on people who just want to marry whom ever they like. Sounds good. But there is very little honesty as to the ramifications of what is being presented. There are already many

laws on the books regarding marriage and if this term is redefined, every single one of these will be affected.

California education code requires health teachers to instruct on marriage starting as low as Kindergarten. Did you realize that your vote would impact what is taught in elementary school regarding homosexuality? Adoption laws speak to who is qualified to adopt a child? Were you aware that November's result will affect whether a pregnant teen choosing adoption for her baby can know if the child will ever have a father and a mother, two dads, two moms, or whatever? Those seeking careers in healthcare, education, public service, or any field requiring state licensing will be affected. Freedom to worship will be severely limited and freedom of speech will be impacted. I could go on and on but space doesn't allow. Some of the greatest concerns involve the reality that this great "social experiment" uses our kids and future generations as its guinea pigs. We really don't know the total impact of what will happen.

As Christians, we are called to love all humanity; this includes people of all backgrounds and lifestyles. We must approach everyone with a heart of respect. The struggle that California is grappling with is not one of moral supremacy or judgmentalism, and it is not invading into the private lives and choices of other people. It doesn't even have to do with Domestic Partnerships of various kinds and health benefits. It is about the definition of "marriage" which goes back to the beginning of humanity and is the building block of family and society around the world. You mess with the foundation, and everything else is shaky ground. Let's walk in the light without the confusion that pervades in darkness. We can speak truth and stand for what is right, while loving everybody, even those who disagree.

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Dan Nelson is a frequent contributor to the Ojai Valley News and currently serves the Ojai Valley Ministerial Association and community as editor of the Religion Column. Permission is freely granted to reprint the article in its entirety. Dan Nelson is pastor of Calvary Chapel Christian Church of the Ojai Valley.



P.O. Box 1443
Ojai, CA 93024
(805) 640-9498
www.calvaryojai.org

Sunday Worship:

9:00 & 10:45am
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley
195 Mahoney Ave., Oak View

Mid-Week Study:

7:00pm Thursday
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley
195 Mahoney Ave., Oak View