



# YOUR CHURCH & THE SUPREME COURT MARRIAGE DECISION

## What did the Supreme Court do?

In June 2015, the Supreme Court ruled on the basis of the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution that each state must issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples. In issuing this ruling, the Supreme Court didn't merely expand marriage's definition; it fundamentally redefined marriage by making it no longer based on the complementarity of the sexes and its fundamental orientation toward children.

## What has changed

1. Same-sex persons will now be eligible to marry under United States law.
2. Marriage in the eyes of the state is now a genderless institution that discards the important, unchangeable, and unique roles that mothers and fathers play in parenting.
3. The disagreements about marriage and sexuality might pose enormous risks to the future of religious liberty in our country.
4. This ruling will set a new and profound context for gospel ministry in the United States for generations to come as same-sex marriage becomes commonplace.

## What hasn't changed

1. Jesus Christ is alive and ultimately will bend history toward his kingdom.
2. God, as Creator and Judge, determines the goal of human sexuality and the boundaries of marriage. Marriage is still, in God's eyes, between a man and woman. Just because the Supreme Court believes it can redefine marriage does not make it so before God.
3. The Bible addresses all of us as sexual sinners (1 Cor. 6:18). We do not stand in judgment over others, as though only Christians are righteous.
4. The gospel offers full reconciliation and forgiveness to anyone who repents and believes in Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:16).
5. Our consciences and our churches are answerable to "another king, Jesus" (Acts 17:7) when it comes to matters of sexual morality and marital accountability.

## What should your church do?

### Teach your congregation to resist anger, outrage, or despair.

Jesus tells us marriage has existed as a male/female one-flesh union “from the beginning” (Matt. 19:4-6). This means marriage is resilient, regardless of what any culture does to minimize or redefine it.

### Love your gay and lesbian neighbors.

Remember that all people are made in God’s image. Those who engage in homosexuality and do so unrepentantly, are, like all of us once were, separated from Christ and seeking a way that seems best to them. Speak truth about God’s design for sexuality, but show respect and kindness to all persons.

### Preach and teach on the integrity of biblical marriage.

Don’t assume people understand the gospel foundations of marriage; nor the centrality of marriage to the social order and human flourishing. Take this opportunity to point to the formation of healthy, gospel-shaped marriage cultures within your local congregation.

### Repent of the ways our own congregational cultures have downgraded marriage.

Sadly, churches have often turned a blind eye to divorce and have accommodated to the spirit of the age. If your church refuses to address the epidemics of divorce, cohabitation, and fornication through proclamation and discipline, now is the time to repent and work to restore a biblical sexual ethic throughout your church.

### Make your marriage convictions clear in your confession of faith.

If your church assumes a definition of marriage, your confession of faith is now out-of-date. Defend your religious liberty by making your congregational conviction clear in your statement of faith.



**equip**

More resources on homosexuality  
and same-sex marriage at  
[ERLC.com/equip](http://ERLC.com/equip)



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