

Leviticus - Mary's Musings

by Mary Pearson

Most of you will know that many people use the Old Testament laws to discriminate against gays, specifically Lev 18:22.

"It is disgusting for a man to have sex with another man." Lev 18:22

That seems pretty straight forward doesn't it. But let's put it into context here. What are some of the verses surrounding this verse?

"So don't follow the customs of Egypt where you used to live or those of Canaan where I am bringing you." Lev 18:3

"Now don't do these sickening things that make the land filthy. Instead, obey my laws and teachings. Then the land won't become sick of you and vomit you up, just as it did them. If any of you do these vulgar, disgusting things, you will be unclean and no longer belong to my people. I am the Lord your God, and I forbid you to follow their sickening way of life." Lev 18: 26-30

WOW! That's strong language eh! And it comes in the middle of all the things that are forbidden, including

"You may eat any animal that has divided hoofs and chews the cud. But you must not eat animals such as camels, rock badgers, and rabbits that chew the cud but don't have divided hoofs. And you must not eat pigs - they have divided hoofs, but don't chew the cud. All of these animals are unclean, and you are forbidden even to touch their dead bodies.

You may eat anything that lives in water and has fins and scales. But it would be disgusting for you to eat anything else that lives in water, and you must not even touch their dead bodies." Lev 11:3-12

So having had a lovely seafood platter of scallops, shrimp and a lobster tail the other night (none of which have fins or scales), I had to put these verses into perspective this morning while doing my devotions.

Were I not under the blood of Jesus Christ, it would be necessary for me to obey all these dietary restrictions to be acceptable to God (ritually clean). If I were not under grace through the blood of my Saviour, I would be "disgusting" and considered to be following a "sickening way of life".

But THANK GOD! I am no longer under law, but under grace, so the verses about a man having sex with another man carries no more weight than the restrictive dietary rules. These passages of Holy Scripture were meant to keep the Jews separated from the customs of their neighbours while they were trying to increase their population and grow as a nation. They are no longer necessary.

So if anyone tries to use Leviticus against you, ask them if they've eaten shellfish or pork this week, and then please remind them that their job is to love you, not to judge you.

*Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?"
Matt 7:1-3*

Let love be your only debt! If you love others, you have done all that the Law demands. In the Law there are many commands, such as, "Be faithful in marriage. Do not murder. Do not steal. Do not want what belongs to others." But all of these are summed up in the command that says, "Love others as much as you love yourself." No one who loves others will harm them. So love is all that the Law demands. Rom 12:8-10