



The Good News

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Can God's Law be changed arbitrarily?

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On Nov. 16th, 2006 the former Pope Benedict met with more than 20 heads of Vatican departments to discuss the status of celibacy among Roman Catholic clergy and requests by married priests who want to return to the active ministry. The meeting occurred after a renegade African archbishop, Emanuel Milingo, founded a movement of men who left the active ministry to marry and who then wanted to return as married men. He was excommunicated for ordaining four married men as priests in Washington D.C. According to Catholic history, priests were permitted to marry during the first millennium, but the Catholic Church at the Second Lateran Council in 1139 condemned marriage for priests.

Brethren, consider this: according to "Catholic history", priests were allowed to marry in the first millennium, and then it was condemned. For the last 900 years, priests have been forbidden to marry, and then the Catholic Church decided to "reflect" on the concept of lifting the law. (Ultimately, in 2007 the Catholic church decided not to change the law forbidding priests to marry.) Would this work in the church that belongs to Christ? If God had given us a law concerning the celibacy of preachers, would we be willing to lift it? The Catholic Church, who claims the infallibility of the church, and its law, is willing to "modernize". In an open letter to the Pope, Milingo said "over 150,000 married priests stand waiting and willing to serve" the church. Is this a valid reason to change the "law"? Just because 150,000 priests are waiting to join does not give sufficient reason for a "church" that is to be established on "law" and "precept" to change.

As Christians, we realize that God's law cannot be arbitrarily lifted or changed, just to suit our fancy, or to "catch up" with societal mentality. Jesus told the Jews that "Scripture cannot be broken", in reference to words God had spoken. (Jn. 10:35). Scripture cannot just be changed. We also realize that binding laws on men that God never bound, such as an oath of celibacy for priests, is not the law of God. "But in vain they do worship me, teaching as doctrine the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:9). Jude says, in vs. 3, that the faith was once delivered unto the saints. Thus, there should be no new commandments to bind.

A synonymous situation for us in the church, would be for a church's elders to gather to consider whether to allow a gay elder. Is this something that can be arbitrarily decided, against the law of God, to bring more people to the church, or to increase the ranks of elders? Are we truly that "behind the times" that we would be willing to compromise God's law?

Brethren, we must realize that God's law cannot be changed by us, or by anyone else, for any reason. We cannot compromise God's law just because "times are changing".