



# The Healing Stream

Matthew 19:26 Ministries - May 2015



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## Power For the Journey

*"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

Galatians 2:20 ESV

## FACING THE "T" IN LGBT

BY BOB HONEYSETT

Our overly-sexualized feel-good culture has caused the church to be confronted with many diverse issues in years past. One cultural watershed moment still being felt by the church today took place with the Stonewall riots of 1969. It was then that a group of gay men, caught by police in a bar raid, decided to fight back, triggering what we've come to know as the gay rights movement. It was at that moment the gay community began fighting for a voice within government, culture, and public policy. Forty-six short years later, mission accomplished, and then some!

Sadly, through most of those years, the church adopted a passive-aggressive stance towards the issue, and the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ became nearly non-existent to this lost and hurting community. As a result, the church became divided and began to diminish in its influence and relevance to modern culture. Ironically, as the church became divided over the issue, the gay community united and became a tremendous example of what can be accomplished, and the mountains that can be moved, when people work together in unity of heart and mind. Disagree? Think for a moment about who has the most influential voice today. Please don't get me wrong, I'm not church bashing! It's simply the reality of where we are.

Yes, I know. That's a hard word! Here comes another!

The next issue to confront the church and hit the proverbial cultural fan will be the "T" in LGBT. If you watched Bruce Jenner's interview with Diane Sawyer on *20/20* recently, you know what I'm talking about. "For all intents and purposes, I am a woman," Bruce Jenner declared emotionally.

Whether you understand the issue or not, it is very important for all of us in the church community to note that his confession marks another watershed moment in our culture. Without a doubt, this issue will become the Stonewall movement of the 21st Century. How will we respond this time?

For years the transgender community has lived quietly in the background, right behind the gay community, waiting for their turn to be legitimized and accepted in our everyday lives. Their moment has come! The avalanche of transgender stories we'll be confronted with in the months and years ahead has begun. The media is chasing after stories to boost transgender awareness, including the story of 6-year old Ryland Whittington, born a girl, whose parents are allowing to live as a boy. If real-life stories aren't enough, the CBS soap-opera, *The Bold and the Beautiful*, is currently entrenched in a transgender storyline expected to reach 34 million viewers across the world. Get ready for a steady stream of sound bites from those who feel that nature or God created them incorrectly, and how they plan to surgically correct the mistake. God help us church, especially our young people.

It's sad that Bruce Jenner has endured 65 years of torment feeling like he was a woman trapped in a man's body. It is sadder that he probably won't reach out for the help that would restore him to who God truly created him to be. Instead, he'll be hailed as a hero by the

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transgender community, as one who had the courage and platform to bring his confusion out into the public square so we can all be enlightened.

At the risk of lacking political correctness, I'm going to jump into the argument and say what is probably on the minds of many people of faith. Bruce Jenner is not a hero, he should not be hailed as a hero, nor should he be looked to as a role model. He is a profoundly confused man who needs Jesus Christ. I have no animosity towards him or the transgender community, but truth is truth.

In plain English, Bruce Jenner is a man who suffers from a condition now known as gender dysphoria. Formerly known as gender identity disorder (GID), this diagnosable condition has stirred much controversy in the psychiatric community. This is similar to the controversy that arose in the 1970's when the condition of homosexuality was considered a sexual deviancy in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*; (DSM) used by clinicians and psychiatrists to diagnose psychiatric illnesses. In 1973, without any science to back up their decision, the American Psychiatric Association caved in to pressure from the gay community and removed homosexuality from future editions of DSM. As a result of this latest controversy, the criteria and name of gender identity disorder was changed to gender dysphoria in the new edition of DSM (DSM-5) published in 2013. The specifics of the DSM-5 changes are too comprehensive to cover in this space, but one can only assume that gender dysphoria will probably disappear from DSM at some point in the future with no proven science to warrant its omission.

I encourage everyone to pray for the transgender community regardless of what this condition may be called today or tomorrow. As always, the only answer we can provide is Jesus Christ. He is the only one who can reunite us with the true self that God the Father created us to be. We are all alienated from God and in need of a new birth from above. Rather than an infusion of opposite sex hormones, surgical procedures, and the elimination/addition of different body parts, the transgender community is in need of a Savior who can reunite them with the gender identity that they were born into, and have been alienated from.

### **A Holy Charge to the Church**

Our responsibility is still to show the risen Christ to a lost and dying world. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to keep a few principles in mind as changing cultural norms sweep past us and sensationalized sound bites seek to gain our attention.

- **This is not a laughing matter, nor should it be fodder for joking!**

The jokes have already started about Bruce Jenner. I've heard them, seen them on Facebook, and I don't think they're funny! Words hurt, especially when they come from Christians. We have not done well in this area when it comes to the issue of homosexuality, or some of the other issues we don't understand. I'm appalled when I hear Christians making homo jokes. There is nothing to laugh about! My hope is that we'll pray for people who struggle through sexuality and gender issues rather than ridicule or laugh at them.

- **Put yourself in their place and think before you speak!**

Before you say or do anything, take a moment to imagine what it would be like to walk a mile in the life of the person wrestling with this struggle. Try to imagine the pain and suffering they've had to endure, feeling as though their entire life was a mistake that needed to be surgically corrected. Imagine the hopelessness of parents who wake up into a day when their precious son or daughter has announced they are surgically transitioning to another sex. Let it all sink in before you say a word. You probably won't have an answer, but you do have Jesus, His compassion, and the power of prayer. Always remember that you are a representation of the living God. Let your words and actions speak well of the One you represent.

- **Remember where you came from!**

It's always good to remember that Jesus rescued all of us out of lies, perversion, and dysfunction. None of us is any better than anyone else, nor is our type of sin different from any other in God's eyes. Let the same love and compassion that drew you out of darkness be evident toward those whose sin you may not understand. Remember, it is *"the kindness of God that leads you to repentance."* (Romans 2:4)

Jesus Christ is the only answer to the events and practices of the unhinged world that we live in. Please join us in prayer for Bruce Jenner, Ryland Whittington and her parents, and the host of others we'll soon be hearing about. May the redeeming life of Christ transform each of them to be a testimony of God's saving grace to the next generation.