Some reasons why we must affirm marriage between a man and a woman as well as affirm that same-sex intimacy is ruled out of bounds for Christian believers:

- When the Bible speaks about marriage, it always assumes sex difference (rather than sex sameness) as part of God's design. (How does Ephesians 5 apply to the same-sex couple? How do I do premarital counseling with Genesis 2, Matthew 19, and Ephesians 5 if I'm addressing a same-sex couple?)

- Moreover, it is a primary metaphor for Christ and church, which also assumes difference. (See the attached two-page synopsis of this pattern in Scripture)

- When the Bible addresses same sex behavior, it always prohibits it (see the attached of those verses). The same cannot be said about other topics like slaves, women, baptism, tongues, etc.

- Over the 2000 years of the church, across all denominations and all nations, without exception, every Christian church has affirmed this view of marriage. Never has any church until now affirmed same-sex relationships as part of God's design. (The same cannot be said about other matters, including slavery or women)

This is a Great Mystery:
Bridegroom (God) and Bride (God's people) in the Scriptures

In Ephesians 5, Paul's talking about how the relationship between Christ and the church is the relationship between a husband and wife. Marriage is designed to mirror a prior and more prominent relationship: Christ and his Church.

Christ makes this comparison in Mark 2:18-20 (Mt 9:14-17 & Lk 5:33-38), when he's asked about fasting, and he says:

> "How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? They cannot, so long as they have him with them. **20** But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and on that day they will fast."

So, the relationship between Christ and the people is a relationship between a bridegroom and a bride.

The Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids in **Matthew 25** assumes the same — It's a parable about waiting for the bridegroom to return.

In **John 3:27-30**, John the Baptist refers to Jesus as the bridegroom and to himself as the attendant to the bridegroom—kinda like a best man. He calls the people of God the bride.

This connection is reflected throughout the Bible.

- **Song of Songs** uses the mutual delight and intimacy of a husband and wife to reflect the delight of Christ in his people.

- The prophets frequently use marital language to describe God's relationship with his people; he is the groom, and they are the (frequently wayward, adulterous) bride.
    - **Hosea** might be the most prominent example of this. If you're a man and you've ever been cheated on by a girlfriend or wife, then you'll understand the book of Hosea, one of the minor prophets toward the end of the Old Testament. It's the outrage of someone who's been cheated on. Throughout the book, Hosea's marriage to Gomer

(great name!) serves as a symbol of Israel's relationship with the Lord. Just as Gomer is unfaithful to Hosea, so too the people of God have been unfaithful to the Lord. Hosea's family life reflects the "adulterous" relationship which Israel had built with other gods

- We also see this comparison in “wife” (**Ezek. 16:8, 32; 23:4, Isa. 54:6; cp. Jer. 3:1-14;**),

We see it in the Gospels. We see it in the Old Testament.

We also see it in **Revelation**, the last book of the Bible. In **Revelation 19, 21, and 22**—the very end of the Bible—we find references to a wedding feast in which, the bridegroom (God in Jesus) is finally united with his bride (God’s people).

What Paul’s saying is that the marriage between a man and a woman is related to this ultimate cosmic reality. For instance, just as the Messiah left his home in search of a bride, so too the man will leave father and mother in search of a bride.

The architecture of the Bible points us to the purpose of why we’re sexual beings. Scripture begins with a marriage (Adam and Eve), and it ends with a marriage (Christ and his church)—and the former is the trailer for the latter. The joining together of the man and woman is a picture of how heaven and earth will one day be joined together through the union of Jesus and his people.

Human marriage, then, reflects the big story of the Bible—the big thing God is doing in the universe: making a people for his Son.

For marriage to be a parable of Christ and the church, it must be between like and unlike, male and female. Change this arrangement, and you end up distorting the spiritual reality to which it points. Alter marriage, and you end up distorting a picture of the gospel itself.

Many cultural forces want to say 'you Christians are terrible for the LGBTQ community,' but those same people seem to have no empathy for the predicament we're in ==> our sacred text uses the marriage between a man and a woman as the one of the defining metaphors by which we understand ALL things.

Verses that prohibit same-sex relations
(the so-called "Clobber Passages"**)**

Genesis 19:1-10
19 The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and bowed down with his face to the ground. **2** He said, "Please, my lords, turn aside to your servant's house and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you can rise early and go on your way." They said, "No; we will spend the night in the square." **3** But he urged them strongly; so they turned aside to him and entered his house; and he made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate. **4** But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house; **5** and they called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, so that we may know them." **6** Lot went out of the door to the men, shut the door after him, **7** and said, "I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. **8** Look, I have two daughters who have not known a man; let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please; only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof." **9** But they replied, "Stand back!" And they said, "This fellow came here as an alien, and he would play the judge! Now we will deal worse with you than with them." Then they pressed hard against the man Lot, and came near the door to break it down. **10** But the men inside reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them, and shut the door. (*See also Ezekiel 16:49*)

Leviticus 18:22
22 You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.

Leviticus 20:13
13 If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death; their blood is upon them.

Romans 1:26-27
26 For this reason God gave them up to degrading passions. Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, **27** and in the same way also the men, giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the due penalty for their error.

1 Corinthians 6:9
9 Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites,

1 Timothy 1:9-10
9 This means understanding that the law is laid down not for the innocent but for the lawless and disobedient, for the godless and sinful, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their father or mother, for murderers, **10** fornicators, sodomites, slave traders, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to the sound teaching.