

CPYU 3(D) REVIEW

Song/Video: "Same Love" - Macklemore/Ryan Lewis feat. Mary Lambert
By Walt Mueller

Background/summary: This song is featured on the debut full-length album, *The Heist* (released October 9, 2012), from Seattle-based rapper Macklemore (29-year-old Ben Haggerty) and producer Ryan Lewis. This single was released in July 2012 and has been picking up steam globally even though it's a localized call to vote in support of Washington state's Referendum 74, that would legalize same-sex marriage. The song features a chorus sung by guest artist, Mary Lambert, who is a lesbian. While not a homosexual himself, Macklemore is deeply sympathetic to his two gay uncles.

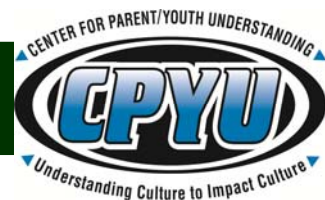
Discover: What is the message/worldview?:

- The song lyrically unfolds in biopic form as Macklemore begins by telling his own story. As a young boy he fearfully questioned his sexuality due to his interests in drawing and neatness, but his mother told him otherwise: "When I was in the third grade I thought I was gay/'Cause I could draw, an' my uncle was/And I kept my room straight/I told my mom tears rushing down my face/She's like 'Ben you've loved girls since before pre-k.'" He goes on to lament his acceptance of culturally-defined sexual stereotypes.
- The video offers a five-and-a-half minute birth-to-death look into the life of a homosexual. The infant is seen growing through boyhood into a sexually-confused adolescence. Knowing he is gay, he struggles to understand and accept himself, including feeling out-of-place at a party (spin-the-bottle) and at a school dance. He eventually embraces and lives out his homosexuality. Included are scenes where he introduces his partner to his parents (who are less than accepting), a marriage proposal, and a church wedding where the newly married couple receive a standing-ovation.
- The video ends in a scene where the men are now elderly, one on his hospital deathbed and the other keeping vigil. The camera moves in to a close-up of their hands locked in an embrace, their life-long faithful commitment signified by their still-shiny wedding rings.
- The church is called to task for antiquated judgementalism: "The right wing conservatives think it's a decision/And you can be cured with some treatment and religion. . . Playing God, aw, nah here we go. . . And God loves all his children is somehow forgotten/But we paraphrase a book written thirty-five-hundred years ago. . . I don't know." In the chorus, Lambert chants, "And I can't change/Even if I tried/Even if I wanted to/My love, she keeps me warm."
- After criticizing the hip-hop community and others who use "gay" as a negative slang term, Macklemore compares gay rights issues with the civil rights issues of the turbulent 50's and 60's, equating anti-gay sentiments with the "same hate that's caused wars from religion."
- In the song's last verse, Macklemore calls listeners to keep fighting the fight: "Progress, march on/Until the day my uncles can be united by law. . . Whatever god we believe in we come from the same one/Strip away all the fear/Underneath it's all the same love." The video ends with a visual call to "Support marriage equality" by approving Referendum 74.



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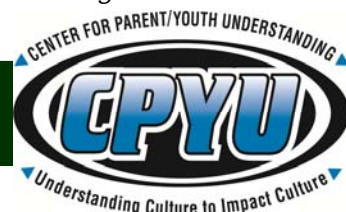
Discern: How does it stand in light of the biblical message/worldview?

- Perhaps there isn't a more explosive or emotionally-charged faith-life issue than the debates raging both within and against the church on matters of homosexuality and gay-marriage. Because the Scriptures are to be our guide for every square inch of faith and life (Psalm 1, Psalm 119, II Tim. 3:16), we must defer to God's Word over-and-above personal opinion, emotion, or cultural standards. The Scriptures are clear that same-sex sexual activity (Romans 1, I Corinthians 6, I Timothy 1) and pre-marital sexual activity are immoral, and that marriage is a creation institution created by God as a monogamous, lifetime covenantal union between one man and one woman.
- Jesus was clear in his exclusive claim to being "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). As God-incarnate, Jesus is the only way to life. From beginning to end the Scriptures affirm what John wrote in his Gospel. . . That in Jesus is life (1:4) and that those who believe in Christ enter into the Kingdom both here on earth and eternally (3:15, 16). As the Way, Christ offers forgiveness, redemption, and eternal life to *all* repentant sinners, regardless of the type or severity of their sin.
- The church is to be repulsed by and avoid the judgementalist legalism of the Pharisees (Matthew 5:20; 16:6; 23:13). Macklemore is correct in calling out the church for self-righteous and graceless attitudes that make Jesus weep and the enemy jump for joy. Christians must balance a knowledge of God's will and way as revealed in the Scriptures with an equally serious understanding of brokenness (in themselves, others, and the entire world), along with a growing knowledge of what it means to be Christ-like/Christ-representing agents of redemption, including to the same-sex attracted. This issue and how we address it deserves deep thought, study, and discussion.

Decide: What do I do with it?

- At the very least, "Same Love" should open our eyes to the reality and depth of the debates related to same-sex attraction and gay marriage. We are living in a cultural watershed moment where values, attitudes, and behaviors are shifting rapidly. While we must stand for truth, our stand should never be vitriolic or characterized by finger-pointing and condemnation. Rather, we must seize the moment, talk about the issues, teach God's Word on the issues, and encourage deep wrestling over the issues among our students. Their cultural situation and age will most likely lead them to adopt a laissez-faire attitude of acceptance, tolerance, or hands-on activist support. . . even among our professing Christian kids.
- "Same Love" is a perfect song to dissect and discuss with your youth group. It affords kids an opportunity to think critically and Christianly about music and its messages. Students should be challenged to view the video, then look for elements that can be celebrated and affirmed from a biblical perspective, and elements that should be challenged and corrected according to God's order and design. Note: parents should *always* be consulted before discussing the song so that they have an opportunity to take the lead in the process of discussing these issues with their children and teens.
- While many will view "Same Love" as extremely edgy, the song and video depict nothing that our students haven't seen and heard countless times before. In fact, what is depicted has been socially normed and accepted as a "you have heard it said. . ." reality. That's why "Same Love" should be viewed and discussed with students. Watch it. Solicit opinions. Then, gracefully and lovingly respond with Jesus's "but I tell you. . .", laying out His will and way on love, sex, and marriage.

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