

Victory for religious liberty in Supreme Court cake case

In a 7-2 ruling handed down today, the U.S. Supreme Court defended religious liberty from blatant, government hostility in the case of *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission*.

The case surrounded Jack Phillips, a custom cake baker and devout Christian, who ran afoul of the State of Colorado after he declined to make a wedding cake for a same-sex ceremony, citing his religious beliefs.

The Supreme Court overturned lower court rulings and decided in favor of Jack.

“This is a victory for the Constitution and for the free exercise rights of all Americans,” commented The FAMIly LEADER’s Chief Legal Counsel Chuck Hurley. “The ruling clearly states the government cannot decide what is and isn’t ‘acceptable’ for you to believe or think. And the government can’t be hostile toward your faith.”

Hurley called the ruling a “landmark decision” that is “rescuing freedom of religion from hostile activists in government across America. It helps ensure people of all faiths – or no faith – will get a fair hearing in court.”

Justice Kennedy’s majority opinion is limited in scope, as it specifically addresses the deliberately slanted and even hostile way the Colorado Civil Rights Commission handled Jack Phillip’s case, without necessarily answering how all Christian bakers, florists, and other businesspeople should handle same-sex weddings.

“This ruling didn’t determine what happens in every conflict in the marketplace,” Hurley continued. “But it did ensure that

when those conflicts arise, the government must give people of faith, or no faith, a fair hearing and can't be hostile towards you because of your religious beliefs."

[Click here to read Justice Kennedy's majority opinion in the Masterpiece Cakeshop case.](#)

[Click here to read more from our friends at Alliance Defending Freedom, who represented Jack.](#)

Jack Phillips released the following statement after the ruling was announced:

"I serve all who walk through my doors, people from all walks of life. I've spent many years honing my craft as a cake artist, combining baking with my love of sculpting, painting, and sketching. And I love my work because a cake is a canvas on which I express ideas, celebrate events, and bring joy to people's lives.

"It was shocking to me that the government would try to take away my freedoms and force me to create something that went against my faith. The government's hostility directly impacted my family's shop. We faced death threats and harassment, all for choosing not to design a cake that celebrates one particular event.

"I'm profoundly thankful that the Court saw the injustice that the government inflicted on me. This is a great day for our family, our shop, and for people of all faiths who should not fear government hostility or unjust punishment.

"Today's decision makes clear that tolerance is a two-way street. If we want to have freedom for ourselves, we have to extend it to others with whom we disagree about important issues like the meaning of marriage."

Thoughts from Iowa's Dick and Betty Odgaard:

Dick and Betty Odgaard, former owners of the Gortz Haus

Gallery in Grimes, Iowa, faced a similar crisis of conscience when a same-sex couple wanted to use their facility for their wedding ceremony. The Odgaards stood on their faith, and consequently faced a lawsuit and were subjected to harassment and threats. Eventually, they were forced out of business.

Dick and Betty spoke to The FAMiLY LEADER about the Masterpiece Cakeshop victory at the Supreme Court.

“We are trilled and delighted for Jack & Debi Phillips! We were privileged to be in the chambers of the SCOTUS in December when this case was argued, and the decision is far beyond our expectations,” the Odgaards told The FAMiLY LEADER.

“This is truly a big step in the right direction for our society, but it is only a one step,” they continued. “While those who oppose this decision are predictably prophesying rampant discrimination, those in favor should be reminded there will still be false accusations to battle. Hopefully this decision will change the legal process for the better.”