

## “Glorify God with Your Body”

### 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Last week in 1 Cor. 6:1-11, Paul confronted the sad scenario where Christians were taking other Christians to court, probably over land disputes. Or more simply, material possessions. In his biblical argument, Paul made the point that people who have been washed, sanctified, and are justified by faith in Jesus Christ, making Him Lord and Saviour of their life, should not fight over things that have no eternal value. We are secure in Christ and have an eternal inheritance, why fight over earthly things or argue incessantly to prove we're right and others are wrong?

Paul has another issue to confront them on in 6:12-20. Using 6:10-11 also as a foundation for what he's about to say, Paul says why should people who have been washed, sanctified and are justified by faith in Jesus Christ, who were saved from all kinds of sexual immorality [listed in vv.9-10] continue to practice sexual immorality?

The Greek culture that these people lived in was so immoral, that they even had their own term to describe how bad it was; corinthianize. To corinthianize meant one lived a sexual promiscuous life. Sadly, many of these new Christians had not left that part of their life behind. The background of these verses is that many of the upper crust of society, attended many banquets and indulged themselves with food, drink and finished the evening with a prostitute. It was part of Corinth. And the reason was rooted in Plato's philosophy that the body is separate from the soul, so what you do with your body has nothing to do with your soul, your mental or religious self. The two are separate.

And this philosophy continues today. Our bodies are our own and we can do whatever it is we want with them because its just the material part of me. So today any form of sexual activity is encouraged. Paul wrote 2000 years ago and said, no, your body is intrinsically united to your soul, your conscience. God made you that way. Everything you do with your body affects who you are, especially if you are in Christ.

Our passage this morning is very relevant to our times today. As believers, we are inundated with the message of sexual freedom, and it has infiltrated the church as well. Yet God's standards haven't changed. God hasn't moved, but we have. So how does Paul steer us back to God's perspective on the choices we make with our bodies – and that's not just relegated to sex but our mouths, our hands and our mind as well. How can we glorify God with every part of our body?

Paul uses familiar Corinthian cultural phrases of his day in,

(v.12) “Everything is permissible for me”

(v.13) “Food for the stomach and the stomach for food but God will destroy them both”

(v.18) “All other sins a man commits are outside his body”

That he destroys with concrete biblical arguments. Three times he confronts the believers with the rhetorical expression “Do you not know ...” (vv.15, 16, 19) and then issues two practical commands “Flee sexual immorality” (v.18) which is one way we “glorify God with our bodies” (v.20).

<sup>12</sup> “Everything is permissible for me” was a cultural statement that said I can do anything I want. It may have even been something Paul used himself to show that the Jewish believers are no longer bound to the dietary laws, the sacrificial system and the observance of days. But as Christians do, we often swing the pendulum too far towards liberty or legalism. And while believers are washed, sanctified and justified, Paul argues,

## **Freedom in Christ Does Not Mean Freedom to Sin** **(6:12-17)**

Listen to what Paul says about this,

*<sup>12</sup> “Everything is permissible for me”—but not everything is beneficial. “Everything is permissible for me”—but I will not be mastered by anything. <sup>13</sup> “Food for the stomach and the stomach for food”—but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. <sup>14</sup> By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also.*

True freedom is not to do whatever you want because inevitably whatever you want to do will end up hurting someone. And this is the opinion of those in more enviable economic situations. They feel they can do anything because they have the resources to do almost anything. The poor can't say this. This is arrogance plain and simple.

Paul taught that we are free in Christ meaning freedom from our sin nature to try to earn our salvation. Free now from the penalty of sin and its power to control us when we obey God. Obedience to God brings about true freedom because God only wants what's beneficial for us, that which builds us up for eternal purposes.

The culture Paul addressed here believed (wrongly) that if my body is separate from my conscience, I am free to do whatever I want since the one has no impact on the other. Paul says no! When we sin we make sin our master and we hurt everything about us. So if you want true freedom

### ***Let Jesus be your master (v.12)***

Not the appetites of the flesh and the desires of temptation – all of which are not beneficial. Unhealthy Christian thinking leads to unhealthy Christian living. Paul says he will not be mastered by anything meaning sinful temptations. Doesn't mean he never sinned but it means when he did sin, he confessed his sin and reminded himself that sin doesn't have power over him unless he gives in to it.

*Rom. 6:5 If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. <sup>6</sup> For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— <sup>7</sup> because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.*

But some argued, the physical part of me is separate, like food. So the saying, 'Food is for the stomach and the stomach for food' was a coy way of saying well I have sexual appetites for which I have sexual parts for. That's why I have them, to satisfy those appetites; nothing more. God destroys the physical at some point.

Hang on Paul says. God restores the body. God resurrects the body. Just as Jesus was resurrected so will you be; bodily resurrected. The two are not separate, but united. Paul counters their argument:

*The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. <sup>14</sup> By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also.*

Paul argues

### ***We are physically and spiritually united to Christ (vv.15-17)***

Here's Paul's first rhetorical question:

*<sup>15</sup> Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never!*

If we are united to Christ completely, Paul says, then

### **We are accountable to God for how we use our bodies (v.13-14)**

If you're united to Christ and you commit sexual immorality, you take Christ with you in that sin. The physical appetites are fed by our mind. I only do physically what I decide to do mentally. Jesus dwells in us. We take Him wherever we go. Every sin we commit, we bring Him with us. He sees and we'll now be accountable for. Paul makes the point that sadly these people hadn't realized:

*<sup>16</sup> Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh." <sup>17</sup> But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit.*

### **Sexual immorality is a physical & spiritual sin [15-17]**

These principles apply when we break the oneness of our relationship with our spouses before we're married or while we're married if we are intimate with someone not our spouse. When husband and wife come together, the two become one. It's not just a physical union but an emotional attachment. You are giving something of yourself to them. We are not just physical beings. There are consequences when we go against that but great blessings when we maintain our oneness with our spouse. Warren Wiersbe used this analogy to explain the difference:

*Sex outside of marriage is like a man robbing a bank: he gets something, but it is not his and he will one day pay for it. Sex within marriage can be like a person putting money into a bank: there is safety, security, and he will collect dividends.*

So, what should be done to prevent this from happening?

*<sup>18</sup> Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. <sup>19</sup> Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; <sup>20</sup> you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.*

Flee from temptation when it comes upon you. Put distance between yourself and the temptation so that you will not fall.

## **Flee from the Danger Immorality Brings** **(6:18-20)**

Flee – run, escape, turn off – anything sexual immoral. Here Paul probably refers to another familiar phrase to the audience. Another Corinthianism that essentially said sin is on the outside. It's what your body does, not who you are inside. Not of the conscience or soul. No, no, no. Paul says

### **Immorality hurts you, *others* & *Christ* (vv.18)**

Sin disrupts every relationship. Yourself, the people you hurt and we hurt the Lord Himself. We sin against ourselves because it's not who we're supposed to be. We are washed, sanctified and justified positionally, but not completely yet. So we are still tempted but when we say 'I'm not that person anymore. I repented of my sin and asked Jesus to be my Lord and Master. Sin no longer has dominion over me. Jesus dwells in me by His Spirit and now He gives me assurance of His presence and power to overcome sin. This sin will not give me joy and satisfaction like obeying Jesus does. I will remove myself from this temptation by turning the remote off, directing my eyes elsewhere, focusing my mind on the blessings I already have and the healthy relationship God has given me for us to enjoy God's design for us in a way that glorifies Him.

Intimate union with the opposite sex was designed by God to be enjoyed in the context of a monogamous relationship with our married partner. God planned this before sin entered the world. Sex is not part of the fall. Sex is twisted because of the fall.

The reason why this is so wrong for the believer is because our body houses the presence of God. Once saved our body becomes a mini house of worship. We take Jesus where-ever we go. Therefore, Paul says

### **Immorality has no place in God's temple (v.19)**

We are not our own. Jesus has come to live in us. He wants to be the center of our life. He wants us to pursue living in oneness with Him through obeying His Words. The unbeliever does not have God's presence with him. They have not accepted Jesus as their Lord therefore Jesus has not come to dwell in them. They do as they please.

But we are not our own now, and that's better. We are better off now with Jesus dwelling in us. We can now find true joy and purpose in life through Him because now life makes sense. We understand why the world is like it is. We know why pursuing our own agendas and appetites only hurts ourselves and others. That's the only purpose people have – live for themselves – and they are never satisfied. But once Jesus comes to live in us, our life changes and we now have meaning and hope. We are and always will be washed. We are and always will be sanctified. We are and always will be justified. Therefore,

### **Glorify God who paid for your freedom through Jesus' death (v.20)**

We've been freed from the final penalty of sin and sin's power over us. One refers to the future hope we have, the other gives us present power to have victory when tempted. And temptations will never end until we are completely washed, sanctified and justified. Therefore – because we've been saved – honour/glorify God with our bodies.

By:  
Remaining sexually pure for the one you will marry one day. And if you haven't, repent, ask forgiveness and abstain until you are married (Heb. 13:4)

Glorify God with your eyes. Job said in Job 31:1

*I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a woman.*

Turn away, flee, and escape the danger that temptation lures you with.

Glorify God with your mouth. Eph. 5:1-4

*Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children <sup>2</sup> and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

*<sup>3</sup> But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. <sup>4</sup> Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.*

Last week we learned from Paul that nothing good ever results from a believer taking another believer to court. No one wins. God's testimony doesn't.

Similarly here; Paul says nothing good ever results from an immoral relationship outside marriage. The word for sexual immorality is porneia which generally is defined as finding sexual pleasure outside of the marriage. Maybe you're patting yourself on the back by saying you've always been physically faithful, yet you read stuff you shouldn't watch things you shouldn't and think about people inappropriately. Late on in 1 Cor. 10 Paul will say,

*<sup>12</sup> So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! <sup>13</sup> No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

We are in Christ if we know Jesus as our Saviour. He is in us. We take Him wherever we go. Again we're washed, sanctified and justified. Let's live like we are. Let's live as if Jesus were visibly beside us all the time.

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