

Sermon 1/15, 2012

Honor God with your body! I Corinthians 6:12-20

Dear Temples of the Holy Spirit:

Your body is the home of the Holy Spirit. Your body is a sacred place, the place of the Holy Spirit. Honor God with your body!

This is what the Apostle Paul says to you and me. This is what God told the Apostle Paul to say to you and me.

- our bodies belong to God
- what we do with our bodies is God's business

We have freedom in God but we don't have freedom from God.

The Apostle Paul says in v12 "I can do anything I want to if Christ has not said no, but some of these things aren't good for me. Even if I am allowed to do them, I will refuse to, if I think they might control me..." LAB

The Apostle Paul wants us to understand two things here.

- some actions are not sinful in and of themselves, but they are not appropriate because they can control our lives and may lead us away from God.
- anything we do that hurts others rather than helps them is not right --- even though the action itself may not be a sin.

Paul gives us an example regarding the issue of eating. v13

- eating is not a sin
- overeating is not necessarily a sin, but taken to the extreme it may lead to gluttony
- overeating at times may be lawful, but not always beneficial

There was a problem in the Christian church in Corinth with the believers attitude toward certain actions regarding their bodies.

Some of the believers taught that they were free to sin in regard to their bodies and certain actions because their sin was covered by God's grace.

- Yes, our sins are covered by God's blood. Ephesians 1:7
- But, the Apostle Paul says in Galatians 5:13 **"Do not use your liberty as an opportunity for the flesh."**

The price of abusing freedom and God's grace is always high.

- sin always produces a loss...nobody wins when sin occurs
- sin has power to master us if we don't take a stand and fight it
- no sin is more enslaving than sexual sin
- sexual sin for the believer will rob us of joy...peace...and usefulness to God
- I Thessalonians 4:3-5 "It is God's will that you should be holy; **that you should avoid sexual immorality;** that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God."
- I Corinthians 9:27 Paul says: "No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize."
- I Peter 2:11 "Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul."

Sexual sins seek to control us ---- we must not allow this!

The Apostle Paul was dealing with a teaching that was floating around Corinth which believed that the body did not matter. The body does not matter, so what one did physically was not of a concern because only the soul was important.

But, God says our body does matter. Our body is important. God says what we do with our body is very important. God Himself came to earth to take upon our flesh and blood, our body, to save us. God saves our body and our soul. God will give us a glorified physical body for all eternity.

Our spiritual lives affect our bodies, too, not just our souls. Our physical lives and the lifestyle we live will have an effect upon our souls. Sin does damage to both the body and the soul.

Some believers in Corinth were making this argument: Sexual immorality was justified because it was like eating...it was only biological...

- sexual activity like eating was a natural part of the body's actions
- sexual activity like eating was something that could not harm the soul

But, the Apostle Paul says: **Hold it...Stop...Think what your body is.** Paul says that our body belongs to the Holy Spirit. Yes, we have freedom but we are not to abuse the freedom we have in the Lord. We are to be careful how we use the freedom God gives us in regards to our body.

- We may be free to drink...but abusing alcohol leads to drunkenness which is a sin
- We may be free to eat...but eating too much leads to gluttony which is a sin
- sexual activity OUTSIDE OF MARRIAGE is either adultery or fornication which are sins
- God says: **“Marriage should be honored by all** and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.”
Hebrews 13:4

Sexual sin is a temptation we cannot escape.

- we are tempted by movies and television
- we are tempted by our society and culture
- we may be tempted by people we work with or live next to
- marriage is often portrayed as confining and joyless while sex outside of marriage is seen as normal
- sexual sin has the power to destroy us physically and spiritually...and God knows it.

Philip Yancey says: “But some might say, ‘Waiting for marriage is unbearable and aggravating!’ They are right. It’s very similar to other difficulties requiring patience that believers must face, such as fasting, imprisonment, cold, sickness and persecution. Lust is a serious burden. You must resist it and fight against it. But after you have overcome it through prayer, lust will have caused you to pray more and grow in faith.”

A Catholic nun taught her female students to say this to boys who might try to take advantage of them: “Stop! **I am a Temple of the Holy Spirit.**” The young ladies were taught to regard themselves as the dwelling place of God and that the gift of sexual relationships was a gift given to them by God to be used properly and seriously.

In verse 14 the Apostle Paul reminds us that our bodies have an eternal relationship with the Lord. Our bodies will be...

- changed at the 2nd Coming I Thessalonians 4
- raised to eternal life I Corinthians 15
- glorified like Jesus’ resurrection body I John 3

A body destined for resurrection should not be used for sexual immorality.

Sexual sin has devastated...

- individual lives
- families
- communities
- nations

God offers to fill our loneliness and our desires His way....the 10 Commandments way.

In the city of Corinth the temple of the goddess Aphrodite was the focal point of the community.

- it employed more than 1000 religious prostitutes

- sexual activity was part of the worship ritual

But Paul says in v15 that our body is a spiritual temple in which the Spirit of Christ lives.

When a believer commits a sexual sin it involves Christ within that sin.

- Paul uses the strongest negative in the Greek language in v15 “May it never be so” Never!
- the sexual union between a husband and a wife create one flesh. Genesis 2:21
- if one is joined to someone other than his or her spouse it is a one flesh experience that joins Christ in that sin ---- spiritually. vv16-17

All sex outside of marriage is a sin but illicit relationships by believers are especially harmful because they profane Jesus.

- we are free but not free from God’s will
- sex is God’s design within marriage
- sex outside of marriage always hurts someone
- sex outside of marriage violates the commandment of God
- sex outside of marriage may bring harm to us physically
- Read King David’s confession in Psalm 32 regarding his physical pain

Sexual sin destroys a person like no other because it is so....v18

- intimate
- entangling
- corrupting on the deepest human level
- “No sin has greater potential to destroy the body...”
- God owns our body...Romans 14:7-8

v19 We are not our own!

- Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit
- Our bodies are where God dwells in a spiritual and mysterious way

v20 What was God's price to redeem our body? I Peter 1:18-19 Christ's blood

Psalm 147 says: **He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.**

God is willing to forgive all.

- He's willing to wipe the slate completely clean
- He guides us to a pool of mercy and invites us to bathe
- Some plunge in but others just touch the surface

Plunge into the pool of God's mercy.

- embrace His forgiveness
- immerse yourself in His grace

Romans 14:8 Whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.