

1 Corinthians 6:14-20 "Honor God with Your Body"

**1 Corinthians 6:14-20** <sup>14</sup> Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power. <sup>15</sup> Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be! <sup>16</sup> Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body *with her*? For He says, "THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH." <sup>17</sup> But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit *with Him*. <sup>18</sup> Flee immorality. Every *other* sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. <sup>19</sup> Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? <sup>20</sup> For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

As we continue our study in this portion of Paul's letter to the Corinthian church he tries to put into perspective the difference between being of the world and demonstrating the fruit of this world, and what it means to be a child of God as we faithfully represent the Lord in the fruit of the Spirit.

And I guess what amazes Paul, and really should amaze any true believer, is how someone, on the one hand, can claim to know Christ and His forgiveness and mercy, and yet on the other hand, treat that gift with such contempt where they don't show the kind of gratitude and thankfulness which should accompany such a gift of life eternal.

It really is a paradox or a contradiction of what this new life is really all about, because if we have been given life in Christ, as these Corinthians had, then why is it that that life doesn't seem to take precedence in the lives of those who have been brought from death to life?

How can these Corinthians claim to be new creatures in Christ, and yet walk in the ways of this world as though they had never been redeemed? Paul is trying to teach them, or really remind them of what they had already been taught, and urge them to reconsider the teachings which conform to the will of God who bought them.

One of the ways Paul does this in our text is to show them the difference between that which is worldly and that which is eternal, that which will perish and that which will never die. And in doing

this he is reminding them of where they should place their emphasis.

In fact, in his second letter to these Corinthians he puts it quite succinctly when he reminds them that we need to live by faith and not by sight with the understanding that though what we see is easier to grasp, what is unseen is much richer and more satisfying in the eternal scheme of things.

2CO 4:18 "So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."

Later in that same letter he puts it this way.

2CO 5:7-10 "We live by faith, not by sight. 8 We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. 9 So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad."

And in our text there doesn't seem to be much in the way of good coming out of this church in Corinth at this particular time and Paul wants them to realize that they have an obligation to please God, not self, as they go forward with the will of God found in His word.

And as we ended last week with Paul showing them how this physical world, and all who are designed to live in it, is important, it is ultimately for us to bring glory to God with the understanding that the very reason we were created was not to live unto ourselves, as though we were some sort of island, but to understand that God made us for Himself that we might enjoy Him forever as we demonstrate godliness through Christ in the power of the Spirit.

1CO 6:13 "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."

In other words, use your bodies for that which they were intended, not for rebelling against God, as Paul points out with the example of sexual immorality, which is self-centered, but rather live for the Lord, as we are God-centered.

In fact, as we come to our text this morning, Paul elevates the use of our bodies, by God's design, in a way that is meant to show the eternal and glorious future of our place with our God and Creator.

1CO 6:14 "By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also."

Why does Paul bring the resurrection of Christ into the picture at this point? I mean he's been talking about carnality and moral unrighteousness. What does this have to do with any of that?

Well, it has everything to do with it. He is saying that our salvation in our present bodies is meant to be viewed in such a way that we see its true function now and forever. What Jesus Christ did in defeating the grave not only secured our eternal life with Him, it was also a demonstration in power of Him being the first-fruits and how we too would be resurrected in His power.

In fact, this is the reason I spent some time at the end of the message last week showing the misconception among some who suggest that Paul was teaching that the stomach and food have no place on the new earth, as some contend that the Lord will destroy them both.

But, just the opposite is true, as Paul was explaining how earthly appetites, approached in a sinful way, be it eating, drinking or sexual relations on this present cursed world, are not ends in themselves, as they all come to an end in this present world, what Paul calls being sown in dishonor.

We are to honor God with our present bodies because they belong to Him. And as we'll see today there will be a day when our bodies will be resurrected and carry on their true functions of glorifying the Lord as Christ is the first fruits of our resurrection, what Paul calls being raised in glory.

Christ's bodily resurrection shows us the true and final state in which we will find ourselves. This is the hope we have in Christ.

We often hear the expression that we are called to be like Christ. Well, how much more like Christ will we be when we receive our glorified bodies which are like our Lord's?

This was the point Paul was making when writing to the Thessalonians.

1TH 4:16-18 "For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the

trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 18 Therefore encourage each other with these words."

Here Paul is talking about the resurrection/rapture of the church on the last day, that day when Christ comes back for His bride to gather her to Himself, but it is also that day when the unbeliever will be raised to a judgment of wrath.

Only as we see how we have been graced by God to have been chosen before the foundations of the earth, destined to spend eternity with Him, when in fact we only deserved what the rest of the world deserves on that last day, will we begin to appreciate what we have in Christ and how we should be living unto His glory until that day.

1CO 6:15-17 "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! 16 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." (Gen. 2:24) 17 But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit."

The imagery Paul is painting here is that of a husband and wife. And the point he is making is that it makes no sense to marry the love of your life and then turn around and invite a prostitute into your bedroom on your wedding night.

I mean, he's trying to get their attention here. Essentially he's saying that like a wife being united to her husband in a most intimate way, we are united to Christ and our bodies are now members of Christ in a most intimate way.

Now the analogy is not meant to be taken so far as to be confused with the idea that somehow we are sexually united to Christ. Rather we are united to Him in a way that is so intimate and so loving that He would die for us.

And if we have accepted that intimate relationship by faith then how could we ever conceive of inviting anything or anyone into our life that would take His place?

John MacArthur raises an interesting point in his commentary when he says, "all sex outside of marriage is sin, but when it is committed by believers it is especially reprehensible, because it

profanes Jesus Christ with whom the believer is one. Since we are one with Christ, and the sex sinner is one with his partner, Christ is placed in an unthinkable position in Paul's reasoning.....

..... Christ is not personally tainted with the sin, any more than the sunbeam that shines on a garbage dump is polluted. But His reputation is dirtied because of the association."

And the reason Paul uses the analogy of a prostitute is because a prostitute is not a person you ever have any intention of being close to in a relationship sense. They are a toy, they are cheap a thrill, they are being used for your own pleasure.

And now, you go back to your spouse and are reunited to her and carry on the same relationship with her as if nothing ever happened? It cheapens the covenant relationship and profanes that holy union.

But here's where Paul's analogy is a quantum leap forward. Because you see, the spouse who is thought to be left home, while the one goes into the prostitute, actually knows everything he's doing, because the spouse is not left home but is invited along. And now you go to her as though everything is all right. How can you do that?, Paul says.

How can you treat this most sacred of relationships as though your spouse means nothing to you? How can you dishonor your spouse by being united to anyone you want to use as some sort of self-serving plaything?

By the way, Paul does not mean to infer that the basis for a marriage relationship is the sexual aspect of it. When he borrows from that passage found in Gen. 2:24 that "the two will become one flesh.", he speaks of how that marriage union is consummated in its most intimate sense of devotion and commitment.

If simply uniting with other women, in the sexual sense, is the basis for a marriage then anyone who has sexual relations would automatically become husband and wife.

No. The basis for a marriage is that both come together in a covenantal sense by vowing to be devoted to each other for life, to be help mates to one another. That's what the relationship with Adam and Eve was designed by God to do.

And our union with Christ is meant to be similar in the sense that we are to be devoted to our Lord and Savior and not enter into

other relationships, or other behavior which would dishonor our Lord.

ROM 6:2-5 "...We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? 3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. 5 If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection."

And that's what Paul means in our text when he says, that "he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit." (1CO 6:17)

In Christ, we are no longer united to this world. We are no longer united to a life which prostitutes itself to gain any advantage while thinking that we are the ones in control of our own destiny and that we choose the relationship we will have with our God on our own terms.

Jesus says, 'if you have come to me for life then you must follow Me. I am your Lord and Master and the one who loves you with an everlasting love. Don't drag that love through the mud of this world.'

And I might add that if we have been united to Christ by faith in Him then we do belong to Him and He is jealous for our love in a biblical sense.

EXO 34:14 "Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God."

We get a glimpse of our jealous God when He dealt with Israel. He did not want to share them with the ungodly of this world.

ZEC 8:2-3 "This is what the LORD Almighty says: "I am very jealous for Zion; I am burning with jealousy for her." 3 This is what the LORD says: "I will return to Zion and dwell in Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the LORD Almighty will be called the Holy Mountain."

Do you think that our Lord and God is any less jealous for the love of His people today? Do you think it hurts Him any less when His people, like Israel, has whored after other gods or things that take our Lord's place? I don't think so.

In fact, Paul himself conveys this same sort of godly jealousy for Christ's people as he wrote to these same Corinthians in his second letter.

2CO 11:2-3 "I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. 3 But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ."

You see, Paul understood what it meant to be united with the Lord. He knew that the church is the bride of Christ and that we are to represent Him and love and serve Him as those virgins who have been betrothed to Him, one day to find the consummation of our relationship as we will be made like Him in the resurrection of our bodies.

It is with this understanding that he said to these Corinthians that they are to "flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body." (1Cor.6:18)

The word flee in the Greek is in the present tense and carries with it the idea of "keep on fleeing or make it your habit to flee." (Robert G. Gromacki)

The reason for this is because the temptations will always be there to run to immorality. Like Joseph, who literally fled from the presence of Potiphar's wife, we too must not only recognize the allurements of sin, but we must also make the conscious choice not to run after it.

And by the grace of God, we can flee from it and in the process bring honor to the one to whom we have been united, our Lord Jesus Christ.

In regards to sexual sin specifically Paul says, "All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body."

It's pretty hard to escape your own body. And here Paul is not just dealing with the sin of lusting after sex, but the actual act itself. And with sexual sin the lust starts and ends with the body.

The act of drunkenness needs the booze, the act of murder needs a victim, the act of theft needs an object, but sexual sin is satisfied with your own body. In a special way, especially for the believer

whom Paul is writing to, it is a defiling of that temple in which the Holy Spirit resides. And in a way it is hating your own body which was not designed for such things.

EPH 5:29-30 "After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church - 30 for we are members of his body."

To seek after such sin is to hate and defile our bodies in a way that doesn't take into consideration the One who purchased us, body, soul and spirit.

ROM 6:13-14,19 "Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. 14 For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace. 19 I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness."

This is what Paul writes to the Corinthians as well in the last part of our text.

1CO 6:19-20 "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; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body."

There is a tendency among many Christians to feel that we have been saved unto ourselves as though we've been given freedom from honoring Christ instead of understanding that we've been given freedom to serve Christ.

Now, most believers would never come right out and put it in those terms, but their actions certainly say that. It's like, "yeah I'm forgiven and now I've been set free; free to do whatever, without taking Christ along with me."

"I'm free to choose whether I will obey the Lord or not. I'm free to decide how I will follow the Lord and how far behind Him I'll travel. I'm free to dabble in this sin or that sin, since He'll forgive me anyhow. I'm free, I'm free."

Does that sound like freedom or bondage to the things we've been delivered from?, is Paul's point.



"Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God. You are not your own...."

All throughout the O.T. Scriptures we read of the temple of God. We see it in all its splendor in the temple Solomon constructed for the Lord. And it was in the temple where the Ark of the Covenant resided. It was this place which symbolized the very presence of God.

And now, in Christ, the very presence of God is within this temple of our bodies. How much more we should be careful to keep this temple pure as we honor the Lord with this temple.

But you know, this temple of our bodies is also meant to show the closeness and intimacy we have with our God. He is always with us. David praised God and proclaimed his praise to the Lord in 2Samuel.

2SA 22:7 "In my distress I called to the LORD; I called out to my God. From his *temple* he heard my voice; my cry came to his ears."

And now, that temple is every person who is in Christ and He hears our voice and our cry comes to His ears, as He is right here with us as He resides in us; this temple He has chosen to dwell in. What an awesome thing to consider. And that's why Paul could also say in his second letter to the Corinthians:

2CO 6:16 "What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."

We are not our own, we are the very people of God. And the reason we are the people of God is because we were bought at a price. When people consider the "things" of this world they always understand it to have a price tag. And they always place a value on things according to its price.

They never look at a Rolls Royce in the same way they look at a Ford Escort. Not only is the price tag quite different, but the quality of the craftsmanship is miles apart. To think that our purchase price is infinitely higher than anything of this world, in the very life of Christ, is to put into perspective the worth the Lord has placed on us; not because we were worthy of such a price, but because the Lord set the price as He chose to love us despite our unworthiness.

The price is death. The wages of sin is death. And He gladly went to the cross to purchase us; to buy us back so that we might spend eternity with Him and share in His love and future.

We have been redeemed by the blood of the lamb. So, how do we show our gratefulness? How do we show our thankfulness and love? Do we have to make pilgrimages to lands far away? Do we have to do some great feat of strength, or build huge monuments to God and then crawl on our hands and knees up the steps to such monuments?

Many religions of the world actually use such prescriptions, but God makes it very simple. Maybe not always easy, but still quite simple.

"Therefore honor God with your body." How do we honor God with our bodies?

Do we take the time to meet with the Lord throughout the day in prayer? Do we take the time to hear from Him in His word? Do we consider what His word has to say about life in general and then choose to obey His will instead of seeking after self and its lusts? Do we flee immorality?

Do we truly desire to follow His command to go out into all the world, starting right here in Port Charlotte, and bring the gospel to everyone? Are we desiring to be conformed into His image as we flee from the things of this world that would dishonor Him?

But you know, it's not a matter of making lists of do's and don'ts. It's a matter of knowing in our hearts, our very heart in which the Spirit of God resides, that those things which please Him are the things we should be spending our time in.

If we spent as much time seeking the Lord as we do with most of the other things we participate in daily living, how much further along we might be in wanting to actually do the will of God instead of only talking about the will of God.

All Christians everywhere could stand to draw closer to the Lord. And this is why we gather like this; to encourage each other to love and good deeds, not for our own sakes, but for the sake of our Lord that we might honor Him with our lives, knowing that His Son gave His life for us.

We are His bride and His love for us is seen clearly at the cross. But as we await for the return of our Lord may we make ourselves

ready as we walk in the life we've been given in Christ as we await that day when our marriage to the Lamb of God will be consummated.

REV 19:7-9 "Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. 8 Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." 9 Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!'" And he added, "These are the true words of God."