

Thorsten Evans / General

The Church Built Up / Sex; Body; Body of Christ / 1 Corinthians 6:12–20

Today is week 9 in the book of 1 Corinthians. If you've missed any of the messages in this series, you can catch them all on our Youtube channel. Over the next few weeks, we are going to be making it easier to catch up by changing our website and adding a podcast channel to be able to listen to past messages.

We've been dealing with some topics that was plaguing the Corinthian church, but not just that church at that time, but these topics also effect our church in this time. The overriding issue was that the church was allowing the morality and the values of the culture dictate the decisions made within the church.

Let's read the entire passage...

1 Corinthians 6:12–20 NIV

¹² "I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but I will not be mastered by anything. ¹³ You say, "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both." The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴ By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. ¹⁵ 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." ¹⁷ But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit.

¹⁸ Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. ¹⁹ Do you not know that your bodies are temples 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 bodies.

At this time, prostitution was very common. In fact at some gatherings, it was expected that the host would provide them for their guests. After the pleasure of eating food, they would enjoy the pleasure of sex with prostitutes. There was this idea that sex and food we necessary for the body and when eating for pleasure at a party, the party would include sex as well.

Paul is for obvious reasons to us speaking against it, but there were some in the Corinthian church that thought nothing of it. It was ok in the culture, why isn't it ok in the church? There might even be some good reasons given why it might be ok, but we must be ready to speak truth in love.

I believe that is what Paul is doing here with the church. Let's go back through the passage...

Here is the first argument from the church, and really from the culture...

1 Corinthians 6:12 NIV

¹² "I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but I will not be mastered by anything.

Paul has 2 response to this: Not everything is beneficial. I've heard it said this way...You could do it, but should you? What will be the benefit? Will it benefit your walk with Jesus? Will it improve that relationship, or draw away? What are you really getting out of this?

His second response is that he, Paul, chooses not to be mastered by anything. In John 8, Jesus says that the one who sins is a slave to sin.

Sin unchecked and not repented of becomes our master. Think about that for a moment. We'll come back to this thought at the end.

Here's their next argument:

1 Corinthians 6:13–14 NIV

¹³ You say, "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both." The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴ By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also.

Just as food and the stomach provide purpose for each other, our bodies and sex provide purpose for each other. This was the logic they used. Our stomach and body are useless without food and sex. It's just a natural process and need that has no moral consequence.

Not only that, but since when we die, our body and stomach will be destroyed, why worry about what we do with them? They carry no eternal significance. These are dangerous thoughts.

These statements go back to the dependence on worldly wisdom. If someone tries hard enough, they'll be able to convince someone that pretty much anything is ok.

Paul tells them that they are missing something...our bodies were created for the Lord and the Lord in the form of the Holy Spirit inhabits our body as the temple. More on that later.

1 Corinthians 6:15 NIV

¹⁵ 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!

Here Paul tells that our bodies are part of Christ. They are like limbs in the overall body

of Christ. When we think of our body in that way, aren't we going to treat it better? Aren't we going to be a little more careful?

The second question has the verbs take and unite. A deeper look at those verbs, implies not just taking, but forcibly removing or tearing and then grafting in and giving them to. A commentary has it translated like this: "Shall I then tear from Christ his limbs and organs and make them the limbs and organs of a prostitute?" PNTC

He continues:

1 Corinthians 6:16–17 NIV

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." ¹⁷ But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit.

The act of sex unites the two together in body. This is a concept from way back in Genesis 2 when a man and a woman are united as one in flesh.

Likewise, there is a uniting that happens in spirit when we trust Jesus as Lord. We are united with Him in our Spirit. As we'll read in just a moment, our body becomes that place where our spirits are united.

1 Corinthians 6:18 NIV

¹⁸ Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body.

Paul says to run. Not just run, but flee. There is no grey area in this statement. Paul does this intentionally. It's not just ignore it, avoid it if you can...no RUN!

They would have likely remembered the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife with the wording Paul chose. This is in Genesis 39...Joseph was working for Potiphar and doing a good job. Potiphar's wife got the idea that she wanted to be with Joseph and came on to him.

He politely refused, but she continued her advances. One day she get a hold of his cloak and grabs it and says: Come to bed with me! Joseph did a little shimmy-shake out of his cloak and he ran.

That is Paul's command to the church at Corinth and to us. We are to flee from sexual immorality. He then tells us why.

When we sin sexually, we sin with and against our own body. It is the only sin that tears the union between a husband and wife as well as the union between the person and the Lord.

This verse is not elevating sexual sin as being worse, it just has a different effect on the person than any other sin.

1 Corinthians 6:19–20 NIV

¹⁹ Do you not know that your bodies are temples 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 bodies.

Did you know that this one of 10 times that Paul asks "Do you not know..." There are concepts they clearly had been taught before, but Paul is applying those concepts for them in this situation.

What does it mean that our bodies are the temple?

The temple had several purposes:

A place where God would reside.

A place where God would speak.

A place where people came to worship and offer sacrifices.

Now that temple is each of us. We have God in us. God speaks through his Holy Spirit in us. We are able to worship Him no matter where we are because He is in us.

Paul says to honor God with our bodies.

As I was preparing to write this message down, God brought to mind this idea of revival. My first response to that thought was BRING IT!

But then He told me that before something or someone can be revived, they must die first. I'm not sure I ever thought about it in those terms before. In order for me to be revived, I have to die first. In order for you to experience revival, you have to die first.

He then said that this death had to be a death of self - a death of selfishness - a death of what my 'self' desires that is contrary to what God desires for me.

He then showed me the way to this death of self is repentance.

Repentance usually starts when we are confronted with our sin and conviction sets in.

Hopefully that conviction turns to sorrow and confession, but often it turns into excuses and an attempt at justification. If you go that path, you will likely be confronted again.

Sorrow and confession turn into a desire to change. Not just try to not do it again or to do better next time, but to earnestly change. To make his desires our desires. That is when repentance has completed it's work and revival happens.

I've had this idea in my mind what revival looks like and God has challenged me on this. I thought that revival meant lots of people and amazing outward signs...

Revival happens when a single person dies to self and is revived to look more like Jesus. Revival doesn't just happen in building on Sunday or in a tent, revival can

happen anywhere and anytime.

Today's passage challenged us specifically about sexual sin, and while we definitely need to get that right, that may not be everyone's struggle. Whatever the struggle is, whatever sin is being confronted, would you be willing to respond with sorrow and confession?

Allow time for a response