

You Do Not Own You – 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Introduction – “*You were sanctified*” in verse 11, as we said, means that you were selected and set aside for God’s holy purposes (1:2). You were on the rack of unclean, condemned humanity and God came and purchased you with the blood of His Son. He washed you, He sanctified you, He justified you. And nothing you were and nothing you did has any ownership over you anymore. Your identity/ownership is in Christ. And that includes your soul and your body.

Paul continues his argument, addressing the rampant sexual immorality in Corinth. Many, both today and in Paul’s day, think of sexual immorality as casual and passing. Paul’s view could hardly be more different. To “*Corinthianize*” had come to mean to engage in *porneia* of various kinds; prostitution and pederasty were commonly tolerated and virtually unrestricted. Our present sexual revolution is horrible; it is attempting to descend even to the norms of Corinth – and so we can learn from Paul’s teachings.

The Future Resurrection of the Body (vv12-14) – There was a slogan, possibly even from Paul’s teachings that “*All things are lawful for me.*” The old covenantal defilement laws did not apply as they did (Rom 14:14, Col 2:20-23), but as always, there is a way to take your liberty and swing it around like a club. Liberty is to be enjoyed as an adult in Christ and so Paul has two replies. First, while lawful, many things may not be helpful or beneficial, and second, while lawful, we may not be mastered by any of it.

In v13, there is apparently another slogan, “*Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them.*” This view of the body through Greek philosophy, taught that the body was simply a husk to be cast off in the next life – and this led to a belief that it did not matter what the body did. And in the middle of v13, we can see what exactly Paul is aiming at. “*Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.*” He’s already taught us that sexual immorality is a sin (v9), and that it could be forgiven (v11). But having been forgiven, your body is now the Lord’s and is not for *porneia* and here is why: “*And God raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power*” (v14).

The doctrine of the sanctity of the body and the resurrection of the body is part and parcel to fighting the personal temptations of sexual sins as well as the cultural perversions and abominations of our day. Our bodies belong to God through the redemption of the cross and they are destined for resurrection (Paul will deal with this extensively in chapter 15). The resurrection of the body remains a mystery (15:51, 1 John 3:2-3); we don’t have words to describe it. But we do know there is a continuity between the present body, which the Lord died for, and the future, resurrected body to come.

Your Body United to Christ (vv15-17) – The Lord died for your body. Does that sound weird? It gets weirder. Your body is united to Christ in a more real way than a man and a woman’s bodies unite in sexual union. It is not just about your thoughts, your emotions, even your soul. You are joined to Christ life and limb. How then, Paul asks in v15, could you join those limbs which are Christ’s to a harlot?

This doesn’t mean that, as individuals, we are brides of Christ; that is only true of the church corporately (Eph 5:32-33). Verse 16 also does not mean that sleeping with a woman outside of marriage constitutes a marriage (because there were no covenant vows). But it does mean that both relationships are bodily relationships that imply a form of union, the one with Christ through His resurrection; the other with the harlot through physical union. There is no way to fornicate without violating the union you have with Christ and, if you are married, with your spouse. We are “*joined*” (v17), or “*glued, cemented*” to the Lord and our bodies are to reflect that in faithfulness when we are single and in devotion to our spouse when married.

There is a wonderful, inescapable connectedness between spirit and body that is revealed in the sexual union that God has given to us to enjoy. And when we violate this with our bodies, the effect upon the body and the spirit is devastating. Why are there so many STDs creeping throughout the world of immorality while a man can make love to his wife for a lifetime and not pick up a single one? We are being taught profound truths here.

Not Who You Are but Whose You Are (vv18-20) – The result is that, when faced with sexual temptation, you should cut and run (v18), just like Joseph did in Gen 39:6-12. We are to flee immediately. Jesus says to cut off your hand if it causes you to sin (Matt 18:8), so an application of this might be to get rid of your computer, your smartphone, cancel your Netflix subscription, whatever it takes, all the while

knowing that the core problem is your heart (Matt 15:19). Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit (as the corporate church is as well – 3:16). Because our bodies are going to be resurrected, then our union with the Holy Spirit is likened to His dwelling in us – that is, in our bodies. Don't think of the body as having a cavity where you can find the Holy Spirit sitting. He is indwelling, united to, our bodies.

Now, these verses contain some of the most abused verses in Scripture, completely missing the argument Paul is making about the peculiar sin of sexual immorality, the only sin which is “*against his own body*” (v18). What Paul says, explicitly limiting to the sin of fornication, has come to be applied to refined sugar, cigars, whiskey, and how much time you spend on a treadmill.

Your identity is wrapped up in who owns you (like your last name, even more like your master's last name). You were bought at a price, and you never stop being someone who has been bought at a high price. God did this so that, indwelt, owned, sealed, cemented, with the Holy Spirit, we would glorify God – and do so with our bodies. And we are taught that being Christ's possession is the answer to what is our only comfort (hope) in life and in death – “...that I...belong, both *body and soul*...to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ...”

Dave Hatcher – October 7, 2018

Notes for Little Saints

Today's sermon is sort of connected to Heidelberg Catechism Question 1 – Have you been able to memorize it?

What is your only comfort in life and in death? (Try to write it out – you can check your answer by looking in the bulletin – and then correct it as you go).