

Concerning the Body

1 Corinthians 6:18-20 (New American Standard Bible)

¹⁸ *Flee sexual immorality. Every other sin that a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.* ¹⁹ *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?* ²⁰ *For you have been bought for a price: therefore glorify God in your body.*

Introduction

Although this morning's sermon was planned several months ago, it is very poignant to us, especially today, when so many people fail to show kindness to each other so as to sin against God and their neighbors with their tongues. E.g. By hating or speaking evil of political leaders we fill our land with murder. Such a sin must stop. May the Lord have mercy on us and help us to offer our bodies, including our tongue, as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to Him (Romans 12:1).

Content

In today's text, Paul says that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who dwells in you and that you are not our own (v. 19).

You are not your own (1 Corinthians 6:19). If we do not own our body, who owns it, then? Christ does. *"You belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God"* (1 Corinthians 3:23). You may wonder why. Here's why.

First, God created you. In His image and likeness (Genesis 1:27). As the Creator, God rightfully claims the ownership. You are His creation, and you are His. In your DNA, you carry the divine image and character such as love, grace, and creativity. His fingerprints are all over you and in you. You are an awesome creation of God. Never believe in the lie that you came into existence by evolution. You are not the byproduct of a random combination of matter, time, and chance. I emphatically renounce such a lie! *It is I the LORD God Almighty who created you*, He declares. More than 40 times in the Bible.

The Psalmist, looking at his own body, praises God the Creator as follows: *"I will give thanks to You, because I am awesomely and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well"* (Psalm 139:14). As the potter claims all his pottery works as his own, so does God. He declares that you are His. Unashamedly and unapologetically. You

belong to Him. Listen: Unless you have this understanding and conviction, you will never be able to understand what your body means to God and to you.

Next, as loving Creator, God sustains you. He takes care of you, His very own creation, by providing all your needs. From life to health, from food to clothing. He meets all your needs. *You may say, “No, it is I who take care of myself.”* But, listen to the Lord: *“You may say in your heart, ‘My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.’”*¹⁸ *But you are to remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth”* (Deuteronomy 8:17-18).

Finally, Christ has bought you for a price in exchange of His own body. He claims, *“you have been bought for a price”* (1 Corinthians 6:19), therefore, *“You are Mine.”*

When Christ died on the cross, your old self also has died. When He rose from the dead, you were born into a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). That’s what the baptism is all about: dying to self and alive to God. Paul the Apostle declares: *“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me”* (Galatians 2:20).

How is that you are His own, not yours? Because *“our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin”* (Romans 6:6). At the cross, the ownership of your body has been transferred: from you to Christ once and for all as He died on the cross on your behalf.

Such ownership transfer already took place on the cross two thousand years ago. However, we don’t realize such a truth right away. It, rather, happens at some point of time of our walk with Jesus. The sooner is the better.

When I first believed in Jesus, I didn’t realize who actually owns my body. I simply assumed that I still did. I would claim that *I am the owner of my body. This is my body. I do whatever I want to do with it and to it.* But such a misunderstanding was gradually replaced with a new and right understanding that God owns me, my body, and my life through Christ’s death on the cross. *“and He Himself brought our sins in His body up on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness”* (1 Peter 2:24).

Who are we, then? Now, if we are not the owner of our body, who are we, then? We are **stewards** called to take care of the body that belongs to God.

The number one priority for God’s steward is to understand God’s expectations on the body. First, *the Lord is for the body not against it: “But **the body is not for sexual***

*immorality, but **for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body***” (1 Corinthians 6:13). It is never His will for us to submit our body to sexual immorality. He never wants us, either, to hate our body or mistreat it. If we ever damage our body intentionally, He will hold us accountable for the damage.

Next, as steward, we must understand **God’s sanctification plan** for our body. We may think our body is just a body that houses our soul and spirit, but God says, *No, your body will be my abode on earth. I have a plan to make your body a suitable place for Me to stay.* He calls our body the temple of the Holy Spirit: *“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you?”* (1 Corinthians 6:19). He expects us to keep our body as holy and pleasing place to Him.

As God’s sanctuary needs a regular cleanup, so does our body, soul, and spirit through sanctification—the purification of our spirit, soul, and body. Sanctification is a life-long process. And, God is committed to the work of sanctification in us: *“Now may the God of peace Himself **sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ**”* (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

Glorify God in your body (1 Corinthians 6:20). In the past, when we were in darkness, outside salvation, we would offer the parts of our body as slaves to lusts, impurity, and lawlessness *“resulting in further lawlessness”* (Romans 6:19) and destruction.

But, now, God wants us to present the same parts of our body as slaves to righteousness resulting in sanctification—the opposite of lawlessness (Romans 6:19). Paul the Apostle gives us a clue how to do it: Treat the parts of our earthly body *“as dead to sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry”* (Colossians 3:5) and *“present yourselves to God as those who are alive from the dead, and **your body’s parts as instruments of righteousness for God**”* (Romans 6:13). Consider dead to sin and alive to God.

Action Points. Here’s a practical application for what we can do with three parts of the body.

With heart. Why heart? Because that’s where life lies. What’s going on in our heart surely affects our body condition. Both positively and negatively. E.g. The peace in heart brings good sleep and health, but the grudge against someone without forgiveness can trigger cancer. E.g. 2. The lusts in heart wage war against our own soul and later hurt the body (1 Peter 2:11). *“What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is the source not **your pleasures that wage war in your body’s parts?**”* (James 4:1). Take good care of your heart.

With tongue. Why tongue? Because what we say with it may have eternal consequences on our body. *“And **the tongue is a fire**, the very world of unrighteousness; the tongue is set among our body’s parts as that which **defiles the whole body** and **sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell**”*(James 3:6).

Therefore, say the words of peace, kindness, thanksgiving, and grace to each other: *“Let no unwholesome word come out of your mouth, but if there is any good word for edification according to the need of the moment, say that, so that it will give grace to those who hear”* (Ephesians 4:29). *Speak evil of no one. Speak no words of “filthiness or foolish talk, or vulgar joking, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks”* (Ephesians 5:4).

With eyes and hands. Whatever we do with our eyes and hands will also affect our eternal destination. *“Now if your right eye is causing you to sin, tear it out and throw it away from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell”* (Matthew 5:29). E.g. Pornography.

“And if your right hand is causing you to sin, cut it off and throw it away from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell” (Matthew 5:30). E.g. Physical abuse. Violence.

Conclusion

Flee sexual immorality, the Lord commands us. Do not sin against the body that belongs to Me, He says. Do not harbor grudge or greed in your heart. Speak evil of no one. Use eyes and hands to help, not hurt, others. Amen.