

Series: A Missional Church for a Pagan Culture

VBC

Pastor John Johnson

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

November 3-4, 2007

“Is It Really My Body?”

INTRO

We live in an over-sexualized culture

- sexual intercourse, oral sex have become more and more the norm – even on HS campuses
- choosing to live together rather than marry is more and more the preferred way to live in a relationship
- internet pornography is seemingly out of control

-and while there are many reasons

-one being that when God is not at the center – lesser powers rise to take God’s place

-could it be that one reason is this – we have never developed a clear understanding of God’s design, God’s intention for our bodies?

-I say this because Paul – in addressing the sexual mess in Corinth – began here

-confronting their thinking about the body

-for – as Dallas Willard notes – the first movements towards heart change begin with our thoughts

Corinth was a culture that was seductive, hedonistic, and narcissistic

- where, as I mentioned – genitalia was prevalent in much of the art – often exaggerated – because sex was inflated in their minds
- the temple was associated with sexual activity

And all of this seeped into the attitudes and practices of believers

- there were four prevailing myths
- destructive untruths that hang around to this day –

1. MYTH ONE – I CAN DO WHATEVER I WANT WITH MY BODY

- in a licentious culture – “anything goes” was the prevalent attitude
- and coming to Christ only underscored this attitude
- for coming to Christ means freedom from the law
- freedom to do whatever we want

RESPONSE – (read verse 12)

One can hear Paul saying – you’re right

- the law is no longer binding
- Jesus said – if you know the truth – the truth will set you free
- so-a Christian is the most liberated person in the world

But bodily freedom respects two guidelines

- it is a freedom to use our bodies to do what is beneficial, useful – verse 12a
 - freedom to live for God – serve God – serve one another
- it is a freedom that is discerning
 - for liberty can subtly turn into license – and license can lead to enslavement

- especially when it comes to the body-freedom can quickly turn into disabling attachment
- undisciplined – the body is easily driven by its appetites
- freedom can lead us into all sorts traps and self-destruction

2. MYTH TWO – IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW I TREAT MY BODY—IT'S THE SPIRIT THAT MATTERS

- in Greek culture – they held to a dualism that glorified the soul – denigrated the body
- the soul is eternal – the body is temporal
- a disposable outer shell that will slough off at death and set us free
- free of this physical prison that constrains the soul

- and that view of the body had a huge effect on sexual attitudes – sex is merely physical
- the body is for the gratification of desires

RESPONSE – (read verse 13)

- Again – in one sense – Paul agrees – food is for the belly – the stomach is for food – and God will do away with
- but then – 13b must have shocked their assumptions about the body
 - for here's what the body is for – not for the gratification of its desires
 - it is for God – for His purposes – purposes that in fact transcend this life (read vs 14)

It turns out the grave is merely a transit point

Illustration – Amman

- our bodies have been redeemed as well as our souls

- and they will eventually be raised, transformed, and reintegrated with the soul
- for spiritual life in God's kingdom
- a process Paul likens in I Cor 15 to a seed that is planted in the ground – seed that dies and then germinates and comes to life in a much more glorious form

- pt-there is a continuity with this present physical body and our heavenly body
- which tells us that these bodies were made for a purpose that far exceeds the satisfaction of appetites

3. MYTH THREE – INVOLVING THE BODY IN CASUAL SEX IS NOT A BIG DEAL-verses 15-18

- given their limited view of the body, the Corinthians reduced sex to something merely physical

- as we continue to do today
- the prevailing message you get is that if you are normal and healthy – you will have sex
- it is simply another physical appetite to gratify
- something to engage in spontaneously-without forethought or consequences

RESPONSE – There is nothing casual about sex –

- a. There is a union that occurs in coming to Christ
 - when you join the parts of your body with anyone – you are joining Christ with him/her-(read vs 15)

 - what you do sexually—you do with your whole self
 - illicit sex touches more than the body – it reaches to the citadel of the soul

- b. There is a profound union that occurs with the one you engage with sexually-(read vs 16)
 - sexual intercourse is more than mere coupling of two bodies physically
 - the act joins a person mentally, emotionally, and spiritually
 - meaning that something is etched permanently in the soul, as if a fusion of sorts occurred

Mason puts it this way –

-“there is a union of hormones, particles of personality, molecules of memory, brain bits and soul scrapings, to say nothing of the whole cloud of emotions”

-and this is why – when the relationship is broken off-we feel something tear from the soul God never intended to be torn
-and if this happens too many times – we no longer know how to become one with anyone, let alone God

-the third reason there is nothing casual –

- c. Sexual sin leaves a more profound stain than other sins – (read verse 18)

-sexual sin is not the unpardonable sin – but there is a distinctive character to it

-there is a greater directness in its assault

-which may not make sense – given that gluttony and drunkenness and suicide are their own assaults on the body

-but what distinguishes sexual sin is that it involves a one flesh union – which is something far more internal and eternal in consequence

-something is aligned—leaving a deeper legacy of alienation and guilt

Point – outside of marriage – there is no such thing as safe sex

4. MYTH FOUR-IT'S MY BODY—WHAT I DO WITH IT IS MY PRIVATE BUSINESS – verses 19-20

-nowhere does our self centeredness act out more than in our claim that our body is our own

-that we alone have exclusive say

RESPONSE

- a. Our bodies are inhabited by the real presence of Christ (read vs 19)

-our bodies have been taken over – God is now in residence

-where something holy, sacred is going on

-to sin against our bodies is to sin against the indwelling Spirit

-to indulge in illicit sex is to bring Him into the act

- b. Our bodies no longer belong to us – they have been purchased—
God has title – (read vs 20)

-He died to purchase us

-He paid with the price of His blood—to rescue us

-He therefore has powerful claims on them

-our bodies are His to do with as He pleases

No wonder Paul to the Romans said –

“Present your bodies to God – a living sacrifice”
-yield every part

But here – to the Corinthians –

1. RUN FROM SIN – verse 18

-there is a power to be respected—there is no wisdom in hanging around—cut and run like Joseph

2. GLORIFY GOD IN THE BODY – verse 20

-for this is why we were created (Rom 9:23)
-and here’s how – with your bodies
-for the body is what makes the spiritual visible
-what makes our obedience tangible
-it’s what God uses to show Himself