Series: The Mystery and the Masterpiece

April 23, 2017

Message Six:

**The Property**

**Is It Really “My Body”?**

Ephesians 5:31-32; 1st Corinthians 6:12–20

**Intro:** “It’s my body! I can do with it what I want!”

That statement may be true for a person who is not in a relationship with Jesus Christ. But for people who have surrendered to Christ, that statement cannot be true.

1st Corinthians 6:12–20 - You say, “I am allowed to do anything”—but not everything is good for you. And even though “I am allowed to do anything,” I must not become a slave to anything. You say, “Food was made for the stomach, and the stomach for food.” (This is true, though someday God will do away with both of them.) But you can’t say that our bodies were made for sexual immorality. They were made for the Lord, and the Lord cares about our bodies. And God will raise us from the dead by his power, just as he raised our Lord from the dead.

Don’t you realize that your bodies are actually parts of Christ? Should a man take his body, which is part of Christ, and join it to a prostitute? Never! And don’t you realize that if a man joins himself to a prostitute, he becomes one body with her? For the Scriptures say, “The two are united into one.” But the person who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him.

Run from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does. For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body. Don’t you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.

This is a part of a letter to a church in the city of Corinth that was messed up in about every way it could be messed up.

In this passage he writes about the importance of their physical body. Some were saying that they could do anything with their body and it would not affect their Christian life. Some today still think anything they do with their body has no effect on their spiritual life. This line of thought is inconsistent with Scriptural teaching.

Their behavior was keeping other people from following Christ. This also happens today. When people profess to follow Christ yet live without following the guidelines of Scripture, many others are not drawn to follow Christ or to even consider following Him. Why should they? What is the difference?

God created you with your body. Your body is not all you are, but it is a big part of who you are!

God made man and woman naked. That’s the way you were born. You were naked and without shame. As a very young child, you most likely escaped from your mother’s towel after she had given you a bath and ran around your house naked, and you never thought anything about it!

As you grew, your view of your body changed. In most circles, even among those who don’t follow the teachings of Scripture, it’s not appropriate to run around naked! But we don’t hide our bodies because our bodies are sinful. We protect our bodies because they are Someone else’s property. Our bodies were made for the Lord.

The Bible tells us here that it is wrong for us to believe that we can do anything we want to with our bodies and still please the Lord, because our bodies were made for the Lord.

Some argue, “There are two great drives in the body, the hunger drive and the sex drive. The body was meant to eat. We must eat. The body was also meant for sex. God would not have put these drives in me if he didn’t intend for me to act on them. He would not allow me to have sexual urges if I were to always suppress them. I must act on them whether I’m married or not. God gave me the drive. Why, having sex is as natural as eating, and I don’t have to wait until I’m married to eat.”

Some say, “If I don’t get some release, it could be physically damaging for me.” That one is usually a lie from a desperate guy.

If you are a follower of Christ, no matter how you die, no matter what happens to your body, it will be reconstituted in the resurrection and transformed.

**Your body was made for the Lord to fulfill His purpose on this earth through your life.**

… and that’s a purpose far beyond just living to have sex.

Your sexual drives are not bad. They are not evil. Sex is not bad. It is not evil. That desire has been given to you by God to provide a closeness of relationship that can only be achieved in marriage as defined in the Bible. You will never be closer to anyone on earth without marriage and sex joining together. You cannot get the closeness by having one without the other. God gave us this gift so that we could experience such closeness, such intimacy, between husband and wife that our intimacy becomes an example to us and the world of the kind of relationship He wants with His people—the church.

“Then why do I have the desires outside of marriage? Why do I sometimes desire someone other than my spouse?” Have you thought about the idea of self-control? It is part of the fruit of the Spirit, - “When the Holy Spirit controls our lives …”

In life we face hundreds of things that we are to resist and say “No.” Be strong and have self-control! Be man enough and woman enough to follow God’s plan for your life! Anything less is not manly—or being a great lady. It is simply being weak.

For a young person who has not yet had sex, if you have the experience prior to your wedding day, you will be missing out on something great that God has designed to reveal the covenant He made with us.

Remember, your body is not yours to do with whatever you desire. Your body belongs to the Lord. Your body will be resurrected after death. Jesus was raised from the dead in the body in which He walked around in on this earth.

**God will preserve your body—so He expects you to preserve it!**

When a believer commits sexual immorality, they discount what Jesus did at the cross. They separate themselves from the Kingdom of God. When we have sex outside of marriage, it joins us to someone else other than Christ, so it actually separates us from Christ.

Joining with a spouse as God intended is the very picture God desires.

Paul says that we are to run away from sexual sin. I think of the story of Joseph in **Genesis 39**. His boss’s wife wanted him to have sex with her. She threw herself at him day after day. Joseph was a healthy young man! He had desires! She wanted it too! His story shows us we do have the power to resist. He resisted to the point of being falsely accused of attacking her and being thrown in jail. He preferred to pay the price of prison rather than enjoy the momentary pleasure of sex without covenant and pay a much higher price in his relationship with God.

Some say, “All sin is the same.” That is true in one sense, but not in another. All sin is the same in that all sin separates us from God and His plan for our life. However, all sin is not the same in its results and consequences. This is clearly the teaching of Scripture, as Paul said of sexual sin,

1 Corinthians 6:18 - “No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does.”

This is also proven true by life’s experiences. You cannot get an STD from stealing a car.

Sexual immorality is a sin against your own body. You end up hurting yourself, and your present and future relationships, for fleeting pleasure. It is like playing with fire. Try to get as close to it as you can without getting burned. That is a very dangerous game, with our bodies and with our souls.

Running from sexual sin means that we won’t let it entertain us. If we live according to God’s picture of sex as an illustration of the kind of relationship He wants to have with us, we won’t be entertained by depictions of sex in pornography or in crude comedy. That is degrading the holiness of what God designed to be the picture of His relationship with us.

In the first message I likened it to a Rembrandt … what would the painter of the masterpiece think if he found you using his painting in crudeness, in comedy, or simply laughing at his work?

Hebrews 13:4 - Give honor to marriage, and remain faithful to one another in marriage. God will surely judge people who are immoral and those who commit adultery.

This means we are to be free from anything that even comes close to being lewd. We are to avoid all acts and thoughts that incite any desire that is not in line with God’s plan. Jesus taught us to pray,

Matthew 6:13 - “Lead us not into temptation.”

If we are to pray that we are not led into temptation, then why do we so often freely walk into places where we will be tempted through our viewing of entertainment, or through our spending time with someone of the opposite sex who is not our spouse?

I am concerned for this masterpiece not to become marred. I am concerned for the play to be presented accurately for the world to see. I understand temptation. I understand its strength. I give this warning from one who has stood on the precipice. When we truly understand ourselves, we won’t trust the fallen nature that is within all of us!

I don’t spend any time alone with a woman other than my wife. ***RUN! Run from these scenarios!*** Don’t just pray that you will not be led into temptation. Make sure that you don’t willingly walk into places of temptation!

My policies …

1 Thessalonians 4:3–8 - God’s will is for you to be holy, so stay away from all sexual sin. Then each of you will control his own body and live in holiness and honor—not in lustful passion like the pagans who do not know God and his ways. Never harm or cheat a Christian brother in this matter by violating his wife, for the Lord avenges all such sins, as we have solemnly warned you before.

God has called us to live holy lives, not impure lives. Therefore, anyone who refuses to live by these rules is not disobeying human teaching but is rejecting God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

Is this only referring to taking a wife or a husband after they are married? Most today think they are completely free before marriage to do whatever they want to do – Here’s the truth: If you have sexual relations with someone you are not married to – you have stolen something that is not yours, whether you marry them or not – and especially if you end up not marrying them.

In his book, *I Kissed Dating Goodbye,* Joshua Harris tells of a letter he received from a young girl in which she relayed a dream:

*It was finally here—Anna’s wedding day, the day she had dreamed about and planned for months. The small, picturesque church was crowded with friends and family. Sunlight poured through the stained-glass windows, and the gentle music of a stringed quartet filled the air. Anna walked down the aisle toward David. Joy surged within her. This was the moment for which she had waited so long. He gently took her hand, and they turned toward the altar.*

*But as the minister began to lead Anna and David through their vows, the unthinkable happened. A girl stood up in the middle of the congregation, walked quietly to the altar, and took David’s other hand. Another girl approached and stood next to the first, followed by another. Soon, a chain of six girls stood by him as he repeated his vows to Anna.*

*Anna felt her lip beginning to quiver as tears welled up in her eyes. “Is this some kind of joke?” she whispered to David.*

*“I’m…I’m sorry, Anna,” he said, staring at the floor.*

*“Who are these girls, David? What is going on?”*

*“They’re girls from my past,” he answered sadly. “Anna, they don’t mean anything to me now…but I’ve given part of my heart to each of them.”*

*“I thought your heart was mine,” she said.*

*“It is, it is,” he pleaded. “Everything that’s left is yours.”*

*A tear rolled down Anna’s cheek. Then she woke up.*

*Anna told me about her dream in a letter. “When I awoke I felt so betrayed,” she wrote. “But then I was struck with this sickening thought: How many men could line up next to me on my wedding day? How many times have I given my heart away in short-term relationships? Will I have anything left to give my husband?”[[1]](#endnote-1)*

There are people who live by a code that says they can do anything they want. Here’s what happens to them:

Romans 1:24–32 - So God abandoned them to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired. As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other’s bodies. They traded the truth about God for a lie. So they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator himself, who is worthy of eternal praise! Amen. That is why God abandoned them to their shameful desires. Even the women turned against the natural way to have sex and instead indulged in sex with each other. And the men, instead of having normal sexual relations with women, burned with lust for each other. Men did shameful things with other men, and as a result of this sin, they suffered within themselves the penalty they deserved.

Since they thought it foolish to acknowledge God, he abandoned them to their foolish thinking and let them do things that should never be done. Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip. They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent, proud, and boastful. They invent new ways of sinning, and they disobey their parents. They refuse to understand, break their promises, are heartless, and have no mercy. They know God’s justice requires that those who do these things deserve to die, yet they do them anyway. Worse yet, they encourage others to do them, too.

1 Corinthians 6:9–10 - Don’t you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don’t fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery, or are male prostitutes, or practice homosexuality, or are thieves, or greedy people, or drunkards, or are abusive, or cheat people—none of these will inherit the Kingdom of God.

Galatians 5:19–21 - When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

What an awesome marriage we can have if we follow God’s design. What awesome regrets we could have if we don’t. Even a blatantly open non-Christian such as Naomi Wolf has lamented the results of the “sexual revolution” in American culture:

*“…we’ve raised a generation of young women—and men—who don’t understand sexual ethics like: Don’t sleep with a married man; don’t sleep with a married woman… They don’t see sex as sacred or even very important anymore. That’s been lost. Sex has been commodified and drained of its deeper meaning.”*[[2]](#endnote-2)

Wow! Even an extremely well-known non-Christian public figure, who has been a change agent in leading where our culture has gone - realizes that there is sacredness and a deeper meaning to sexual relationships than what our culture is foisting on us!

Sexual immorality includes not only intercourse outside of marriage, but sexual immorality the Bible speaks of includes any act of sexual gratification with another person other than one’s marriage partner achieved by uncovering or exploring the nakedness of that person. The idea that anyone can have sexual intimacy, or sexual gratification, as long as it is not consummated or as long as it is not intercourse is absolutely wrong. Why? Because it misses the picture God created! It doesn’t convey the message!

This rules out much of the sexual activity that is short of intercourse—and it rules out pornography. Any sexual gratification outside the marriage relationship, whether it is intercourse, viewing nakedness, touching body parts, or anything close to these things is sin that will separate you from your relationship with Christ. If I love you, I have to tell you this!

Galatians 6:7–8 - Don’t be misled—you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant. Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit.

If you are viewing pornography, you are living to satisfy your sinful nature. You have a choice to feed and grow your sinful nature or feed and grow your spiritual life. That’s how you decide what to watch and what activities in which to participate.

Pornography is anything you view that incites you to sexual arousal. It is not just physical nakedness in a skin magazine or online. It could be on a billboard, on television, or even in a catalog. Don’t let the lack of a biblical worldview in our culture bring you down below the level of God’s plan. Swim against the stream. Be different. Stand apart.

When the Bible uses the words *sexual relations with*, they can also be translated as *uncovering the nakedness of*. We get the word *pornography* from the Greek word *porneia,* which is translated to *sexual immorality* in the Scriptures.

When we start to try to decide how far we can go in sexual exploration without sinning, the Scripture is not that complicated. We make it complicated because we desire a level of freedom for our sexuality that goes beyond a biblical marriage covenant. The Bible tells us to run from everything that comes close to sexual immorality, because sexual immorality mars the picture God has painted of His desired relationship with us. In addition, sexual immorality is not healthy for our personal lives or our interpersonal relationships.

I think this is also the reason the Bible addresses the issue of modesty, such as in the words of Paul to Timothy.

1 Timothy 2:9 - And I want women to be modest in their appearance. They should wear decent and appropriate clothing and not draw attention to themselves …

A female doesn’t have to use clothing to hide the fact that she is a female. But if her goal in dressing is to create arousal, she is missing the picture. As we have mentioned before, men are more driven by sight, as we (the bride) are the apple of God’s eye! It doesn’t take much to get a guy going! Men and women both have responsibilities in this area. Men are responsible to exercise control over their thought-life. In Christian love, a sister will want to lessen the temptations to her brothers. She keeps herself pure by honoring God through the way she dresses rather than bringing glory to her own body.

Jesus told men not to lust. As a man, I’m asking for help!

Lust is not just a fleeting thought. It is entertaining thoughts that you would fulfill if you had the chance.

***In addition to my book recommend Every Man’s Battle and others from the series …***

Your body is not your property. It is the property of God.

God’s Word doesn’t just tell us how to live—it tells us why. If we follow God’s plan, it will keep us alive, it will give us a great life—a life we can’t have any other way. It will help us bring others to Christ by living out the play and portraying the ultimate message of relationship. If we don’t do what God says, our lives will be harder and no one else will want to follow Christ.

Mick Jagger, the lead singer of the Rolling Stones sang, “I can’t get no satisfaction.” It’s pretty much historical fact that he has had plenty of women and plenty of sex, but he hasn’t lived according to God’s design - that’s why he’s missed the satisfaction.

Jesus went to the cross and bought your body. He used His blood to buy your body. It belongs to Him! It must be used for His purpose, not ours.

Since the Holy Spirit lives in Christ’s followers, we take Him with us everywhere we go. He is with us when we entertain ourselves. He is with us at our computers and on our smartphones. He is with us because He bought us with His blood.

Ephesians 4:30 - And do not bring sorrow to God’s Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.

Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. There are those who claim to follow Christ who would never think of having sex in the church sanctuary, yet if they are joining themselves sexually to others outside of a covenant marriage relationship, what is the difference? Their bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit.

When Paul talks about us being bought, he is thinking of the slave market of his day. There was a process called redemption. The slave could save his money, up to the price of his freedom. It would take a long time. He would make many sacrifices. The price could continue to change. But when he had saved enough money, he would go to the pagan temple, put the price in the temple treasury, and become a slave of the god. He was free from the human master, but he was the slave of the god.

The same was true for a slave in America – few could do it, but if they could, they could buy their freedom.

You can be free from slavery to a sinful lifestyle that destroys and become a slave to Christ and receive life to the full! He has purchased you with His blood—that includes your body.

**Salvation**

**Pray for those struggling with sexual temptation …**

***Growth Track 4 or 3 & 4 today …***

1. (Harris, 1997,2003) [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. (Piper, 2005, p. 184) [↑](#endnote-ref-2)