

Title: Think Jesus!

Text: 1 Corinthians 6.18-20

Theme: Running from sin and to Christ.

Series: 1 Corinthians #24

Prop Stmt. Running from sin frees you to live as you are and as you are called.

Have you ever realized how much God loves grammar? Think of it! What is the Bible? It is God's written Word, which is communicated to us through the medium of language and a written language at that. Now this is fundamentally obvious and patently clear, but I confess that it took me more than halfway through my undergraduate training before that very basic concept actually bored its way into my brain, when I finally realized, wow – sentence structure matters! Now, I did not start diagramming the sentences in the articles in sports illustrated. I did something more exciting, I began to see what mattered to God because he revealed it using grammar. In the three verses that I am using as our text this morning there are 2 commands and 2 truths. Pick them out as I read this.

Read text:

Command 1 – Flee from sexual immorality (present active imperative) – run and never stop running.

Command 2 – Honor God with your body (aorist active imperative) – at all times, in every situation, honor God with your body.

Truth 1 – Sexual sin affects you differently than any other kind of sin.

Truth 2 – Your body is the temple where God lives.

1. **Take your body and Run from immorality.** (18-20a)

Joey was a young intern at a major corporation. He was in a large city, separated from his family and childhood friends. He was in a place where no one knew him or knew about his past. He really could be whatever he chose. On his job his hard work, people skills, integrity and good looks attracted the attention of the management and ultimately the president who mentored this young man through the ranks until in a remarkably short time, he was functioning like the number two man of the company. This rise in power also attracted the attention of others included the boss's wife, who made it her goal to seduce him. For days, she pursued him assuming that she could wear him down and win the game. He did not give in. So she arranged for the right place and the right time, she was powerful, he was vulnerable, it would be like giving candy to a kid if the circumstances were set. One day Joey was at her house and no one else was around when she set her trap, but Joey didn't go for it. In fact, he did not even stand there and debate with himself what he ought to do, or who would know, or if he could get away with it. Joey ran away from her because in his words, He could not do such a wicked thing and sin against God. Joey was not for sale. Joey's story is in reality the story of Joseph and that part that I have modernized a bit is found in Genesis 39. Where Joseph provides an excellent and literal example of this truth. Joseph was in a very difficult situation. Now, if Joseph had no care about God – then his situation would have been a great opportunity

for him to sleaze his way to the top. It was not convenient for him to do the right thing but he did it anyway. Immorality is not a sin that you have a discussion with. There is only one thing to do – run! Take your body and run away.

A. Immorality dishonors God’s Temple like nothing else.

Wait a minute? Isn’t all sin the same? In one sense – yes in another sense – no! e.g. speeding is speeding, going 5 over or 50 over makes you guilty; stealing .50 or \$50 million is stealing, but the consequences of your sin is different. Sin is sin, but not all sin has the same consequences.

Ok, but how can Paul say that sexual sin is a sin against one’s body, when is not drug abuse, or overeating, or anorexia or drunkenness or suicide a sin against one’s body too? You can only imagine how many people have accused Paul of being overboard on this issue and blame him and Christianity for advancing a negative, dirty, shameful view of sex, due to his obsessive view. Paul, is just over the top here. Wait a minute, not so fast. Of course, if you take that position, then you clearly do not think that the Spirit of God knew what He was doing when He directed Paul to write this letter, or you do not think that the Spirit of God had anything to do with it. That clearly is not a position that we embrace, but I grant you that on the surface, this phrase is a bit challenging, so let’s look a little closer.

Do you know what makes this sin different? Sexual sin involves another person and it involves that person on a very intimate level. Notice the word “against.” The word that is translated against is actually the preposition (eis) which means “into.” But because this preposition is used with what is called an accusative, it also carries the idea of against. The translators used that word “against” in the text, which is a good choice, but my point is, this word carries a double whammy – against and into. Therefore, we could read this, “he who sins sexually sins not only against his body, but also into his body because he is intimately uniting himself with another person. It is not just a body, it is a person. The very act of sex is one of giving and receiving with another. Therefore when this act is outside of the covenant of marriage, it is a destructive act, because one is to give of himself to somebody to whom he does not belong and one is trying to be one with someone with whom there is no true unity. There is no other sin that is like that. Instead of being obsessed and perverted, Paul is actually elevating this and as we will see in chapter 7, he clearly celebrates this act as a God-given, God-ordained, God-blessed picture of the covenantal relationship.

Excursus: Do you not know? (the 10 uses in 1 Corinthians)

- 3.16 – “Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you?”
- 5.6 – “Don’t you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough?”
- 6.2 – “Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?”
- 6.3 – “Do you not know that we will judge angels?”
- 6.9 – “Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God?”

- 6.15 – “Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself?”
- 6.16 - “Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body?”
- 6.19 – “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?”
- 9.13 – “Don’t you know that those who work in the temple get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar?”
- 9.24 – “Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize?”

B. Your Body is God’s Temple.

“your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you” (19a)

a. Who is in you

In Corinth, like many major cities of its day, there were large, prominent temples which housed massive images and usually, many, many images of a particular god or goddess. It was a very common thing. Each city or region had its god. These were the community centers of the city. This is where a lot of the life of the city took place. Everyone knew about these places. The greatest offense you could commit would be to desecrate these temples or deface the image of these gods. It was and still is such a major shift in thinking to understand that God does not live in museums or temples, shrines or cathedrals. Jesus did not die for buildings or architecture. Jesus lived and died for you. When you come to faith in Christ, you become part of God’s family because of what God’s Spirit does for you and to you. God’s Spirit becomes the chief resident in your body. Your body becomes God’s shrine. Your body becomes God’s temple. Your body becomes the place where God’s Spirit lives. That is what it means “who is in you.”

b. Whom you have received from God.

“whom you have received from God” (19b)

The Holy Spirit is an incredibly gracious gift to you from the Father. The Spirit lives within you to remind you of who you are, to empower you to live as you are called, to prepare you for your future, and to make you Holy. The Holy Spirit is God’s mark upon you that you belong to Him.

Often times, the things that we think that we want the most, are in reality some of our greatest curses. Today, so many people want their freedom, meaning, they want their space, they want to be left alone, they don’t want to be bothered by anyone, responsible for anyone, they just want to be free. Free to come and go. Free to be alone. And that is what they get. But one day they begin to realize how lonely they really are. The thing they wanted, is now the thing they hate. Our community is full of incredibly lonely people. They have no deep-abiding sense of identity or connection. But, look at this. If you are a follower of Christ....

c. You are not your own.

“you are not your own;”

Whose property is this anyway?

You belong to somebody. I belong to God. Actually, it is more than that. We belong to God. That is why you belong here. That is why, we belong together. That is why your life matters. That is why your life has value, worth, significance, purpose, meaning and a future. Your life matters, because your life is not your own to do your best or to try to find your way. You have a Creator. You have a Savior. You have a Father. You have a family. All of those privileges bring with them responsibilities. Those privileges cannot be taken lightly. You see what the text is saying now – don't you? You are in this family, step up to the plate and live like it.

d. You were bought with a price

“you were bought at a price” (20a)

We do not understand this phrase like the Corinthians understood this phrase. This is the language of business transactions that revolved around slavery. In the marketplace, slaves were bought and sold. We tend to think of slavery as the bottom rung of a two-step ladder (rich owners and poor slaves). But in Corinth, the social structure of slaves was rather complex. There were slaves, and then there were slaves. Some slaves were so prominent and powerful, they actually owned land, managed estates and owned other slaves as well.

If, for example, you were a slave to poor Mr. Z who paid a buck forty-nine for you, or was stuck with you and could not afford to feed you, clothe you, house you or in any decent way provide for you, but would constantly beat you, use you and berate you, that would be one thing. But, if you were owned by the Mayor of Corinth who paid \$250,000 for you, and provided you with lavish accommodations, scrumptious food, stunning clothes and a happy, wholesome place to live, well that was quite another. – copish? Your value was determined by your owner and by what he paid for you.

Everyone is a slave. Some are slaves to sin which will destroy them. That is the lowest level of slavery there is. Some are slaves to Christ, which is the highest honor that can be bestowed on any part of God's creation. You belong. You have an owner. You have someone who wants you, who paid for you by dying for you.

Whose slave are you?

2. Take your body and Serve. (20b)

We come to the end of chapter 6. Here we find the conclusion to a wonderful theology of the body. This is how you are supposed to think about the body that God has given to you. This is the body that God is talking about that sweats and is stinky, that wakes up with morning breath that will peel wallpaper off the wall, that grows tired and wears out, that bleeds, that gets out of shape, that loses hair and gains weight. This body that gets warts, bunions, zits, blemishes, rashes and infections. The affections of our hearts are expressed in the actions of our bodies. The focus our thinking is revealed in the habits of our hands and feet. Obedience and worship to God is expressed in our bodies, on Sunday and Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Saturday night. Disobedience and distrust of God is expressed in our bodies. Worship and faith-driven obedience is an activity of the body. Christianity is not theoretical, nor an abstract philosophical system, it is extremely practical, personal and very, very physical. As we see clearly, very clearly from this text, when Christ died for you, he redeemed all of you, soul and body! This is so important for you to understand. There are specific implications of this in relation to marriage and the physical union that expresses that marriage as we will see in the next chapter. The theology of intimacy in marriage is built in part on a proper theology of the body found here in chapter 6.

I conclude with five points that you need to put into the hard drive of your thinking. These five points need to be part of your operating system.

- The purpose of your body is for the Lord (13)

This means that what you do with your body is very, very important to God. It matters what you do with your body. God's purpose for your body is not sexual immorality. Do not degrade your sacred body, nor dehumanize yourself by treating yourself or others as a piece of meat. But doesn't the body just end up dying? Yes, the body dies, but no, it doesn't just end up dying, it ends up being resurrected.

How do you treat a car that is going to be scrapped in a junk-yard? How do you treat a car that is going to be given to your daughter to drive? What is the difference? The future use is the difference.

- Your body will be resurrected by God (14)

Death does not change God's plan for your body. In fact, in order for you to have a glorified body, your body has to be changed. The resurrection of Christ gives you a sneak peak of what is in store for you. When you trace the life and the lifestyle of the apostle Paul, I think it is safe to assume that this guy did not spend too much time in the day spas of Rome and Corinth. I imagine that this guy was in many ways, one roughed up looking dude. He was "weather-beaten, whip-lashed, fever-wracked, stoned¹" and beaten, roughed up by shipwrecks, worn out by imprisonments, and stretched to the point

¹ David Prior, *The Message of 1 Corinthians*, The Bible Speaks Today Series, Intervarsity Press, 1985, p.101. These five points in conclusion are adapted from this work that Prior may have included from a sermon that Os Guinness preached in St. Aldate's church in Oxford, December 1979.

of breaking. It had to be wondrously encouraging to Paul and it is to us to know that God has an eternal plan for this body. Do not abuse it or misuse it.

- Your body is intimately connected to Christ (15-17)

If you will consistently think of your physical body and all of its limbs and parts as being the limbs and parts of Christ, then you can begin to understand why it is completely out of the question for you to be involved in sexual immorality. This is also one of the strongest reasons why a believer should never marry an unbeliever. This action puts the believer in the position of living what amounts to be a disintegrated life. If you are married to someone who is not a follower of Christ, God wants your marriage to thrive and for your spouse to come to Christ. But, if you are considering marrying someone who is not a follower of Christ, then you are moving toward an intentional ripping and separating of your life.

This union with Christ (17), this deeply spiritual oneness is the reason behind our theology of sexual ethics. What is wrong with bestiality, homosexuality, pre-marital or extra-marital sex? What is wrong with consenting adults? What is wrong is that there is no way that in any of these relationships there can be a true oneness. So, to pursue a one-flesh experience without the true oneness is wrong. When you pursue bodily communion without marriage commitment, intimacy apart from the intentional covenant of marriage, you are splitting yourself apart. The very thing that so many people pursue (a sense of being loved and wanted) is the very thing they lose because it is not real at the level where it really matters.

- Your body is indwelt by God (19)

I told someone this week that this truth has to at once be one of the most comforting and the most terrifying truths that I know. On the one hand, it is a tremendous relief and help to pray with someone before surgery, to know that the Spirit of God is indwelling them and is with them. It is terrifying to realize that I am disgracing the person of God when I subject His body to dishonorable activities.

- Your body has been redeemed by Christ. (20)

Everybody has a price. The only way that you cannot be bought is if you have already been purchased. Do you know what this final verse means? It means that you are not for sale. Girls, if you are a follower of Christ, and some guy wants to use you for himself and he starts telling you things that you like to hear because he knows that you like to hear those things because they will break down your defenses, remember, he is using those strategies in order to buy you. That is when you have to remember who you are and whose you are, which means – you are not up for sale because you have already been purchased. There is no higher bidder.

Guys, if you are follower of Christ, there are plenty of opportunities that you have to sell yourself out, even when you are being told that you are the one who is using, you are

being used. Often times temptation comes in little pieces. Here look at this, one little look will not hurt, it's just a little bit of lust. Here try this, everybody does it. By the way, there is no such thing as a little bit of lust. At times like this, you have to remember that you are not up for sale. Run!! Take your body and run, and run to Christ by realizing that every room of your body has been purchased for Him. There hangs on your life a sign – No Vacancy, no exceptions! Think Jesus!