

1 Corinthians 6:12-20 (The Message, A paraphrase by Eugene Peterson)

12 Just because something is technically legal doesn't mean that it's spiritually appropriate. If I went around doing whatever I thought I could get by with, I'd be a slave to my whims.

13 You know the old saying, "First you eat to live, and then you live to eat"? Well, it may be true that the body is only a temporary thing, but that's no excuse for stuffing your body with food, or indulging it with sex.

Since the Master honors you with a body, honor him with your body!

14-15 God honored the Master's body by raising it from the grave.

He'll treat yours with the same resurrection power.

Until that time, remember that your bodies are created with the same dignity as the Master's body. You wouldn't take the Master's body off to a whorehouse, would you? I should hope not.

16-20 There's more to sex than mere skin on skin. Sex is as much spiritual mystery as physical fact. As written in Scripture, "The two become one." Since we want to become spiritually one with the Master, we must not pursue the kind of sex that avoids commitment and intimacy, leaving us more lonely than ever—the kind of sex that can never "become one."

There is a sense in which sexual sins are different from all others. In sexual sin we violate the sacredness of our own bodies, these bodies that were made for God-given and God-modeled love, for "becoming one" with another.

Or didn't you realize that your body is a sacred place, the place of the Holy Spirit? Don't you see that you can't live however you please, squandering what God paid such a high price for?

The physical part of you is not some piece of property belonging to the spiritual part of you. God owns the whole works. So let people see God in and through your body.

Song of Solomon 3:2-5 (Passion, Emotion and Self Control)

2*"I will rise now and go about the city, in the streets and in the squares; I will seek him whom my soul loves."* I sought him, but found him not.

3The sentinels found me, as they went about in the city.

"Have you seen him whom my soul loves?"

4Scarcely had I passed them, when I found him whom my soul loves.

I held him, and would not let him go until I brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.

5I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the wild does: do not stir up or awaken love until it is ready!

SERMON NOTES

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What's So Sacred about Sex

Recommended Books:

Marriage and Sexuality

Loves Me, Loves Me Not: The Ethics of Unrequited Love (Baker, 2005), Laura Smit (professor at Calvin College). Superb exploration of relationships, sex, marriage and singleness.

The Meaning of Sex (Baker Academic, 2009), Dennis Hollinger (President, Gordon-Conwell Seminary; more academic)

Real Sex (Brazos/Baker 2005), Lauren Winner (Duke Divinity School)

Redeeming Sex (IVP, 2015), Debra Hirsch (sought-after speaker on popular culture and Christianity)

Divine Sex: A compelling Vision for Christian Relationships in a Hyper-Sexualized Age, (Brazos/Baker 2015), Jonathan Grant. (Episcopal minister in New Zealand; A Christianity Today Best Book award winner)

Mere Christianity by C.S. Lewis, Chapter 5 Sexual Morality

Lewis raises the parallel between eating and sexuality, and argues that what is normal and natural has been made out of control by our age of constant visual images (idols?).

On Same-Sex Marriage

(con) Scripture and Homosexuality (WJK, 1995) Marion Soards

(pro) Bible, Gender and Sexuality (Eerdmans, 2013), James Brownson

Dr. Renwick Previous Sermons and Teaching

Go To: www.nationalpres.org . Use the search box in the upper right corner

Search 1. 'Faithful marriage' -- two sermons on marriage in 2013

Search 2. 'sexuality' -- two talks on sexuality in general and same-sex marriage in particular in 2012.

Matthew 19: 4-6/ Genesis 2:24 (God's good creation and intent)

He answered, "Have you not read that the one who created them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' 5and said, '*For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh*'? 6So they are no longer two, but one flesh.

Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

Sermon Outline

1. Issues of the Day

- Biblical principles not political solutions
- “Habits of the heart” that undergird civil society (Alexis De Tocqueville)

2. The Growing Number of Issues relating to Sexuality

- same-sex marriage, gender identity,
- adultery, divorce, cohabitation, pre-marital sex
- abortion, rape, child abuse, domestic violence, human trafficking
- pornography – driven by the web, multi-billion dollar industry

3. The Overwhelming Present Ethos

Dominates the west.

Dominates youth growing up in the church

Pervades the media like the air we breath:

Sex is normal and natural and not sacred at all!

- With birth control, sex is now divorced from procreation
- It’s an essential ingredient in what it means to be modern, and is a necessary part of self-expression and self-fulfillment
- So that, if any adults
 consent to do whatever they want with their bodies,
 then there’s nothing wrong with it, nothing can be said,
 especially if the emotional moment feels right and good.
 To not be sexually engaged is abnormal

4. A Christian response

a. Not all is Bad!

- “Mutual Consent” is important and reflects ‘love of neighbor’ without it there would be (and has been) awful abuse.
- “Emotions and Feelings” can be gifts of God and have sometimes been neglected by the church – but see *Song of Solomon!*

b. Not all is True!

- Our society is by no means the first to endorse sexual license
 - e.g., see the Greeks and Romans in the time of Jesus
 - The Greeks and Romans saw themselves as modern and advanced
 - and saw Biblical views of sexuality as old and out-of-date.

Don’t be seduced! Present sexual morality is not a new step forward, but a return to the past

4b. Not all is true (contd.)

- Sexual activity is not vital for self-fulfillment
 - It wasn’t for Jesus -- who was fulfilled as someone who was single and celibate
 - it isn’t for us -- “The one who saves their life will lose it, the one who loses his life for my sake will find it” Matthew 10:39

c. Four Foundational Biblical/Christian Principles

that we must always keep in mind

whether society believes in them or not . . .

-- *Creation and Responsibility; Resurrection and Crucifixion*

1. Creation (Genesis 2:24)

God created us with bodies—not as disembodied spirits

God created us male and female: sex is God’s idea!

Sex is sacramental – it is not just for procreation, but for joyfully binding two persons into one.

2. Responsibility (Genesis 2:16, 1 Corinthians 6:12-20)

What we do with the bodies created by God and entrusted to us – matters to God

The first commandment given to Adam and Eve was to tell them to keep an appetite that was good (food) under discipline and control

Paul understands the sexual ‘appetite’ in the same way. (see C.S. Lewis)

3. Resurrection (1 Corinthians 6:14)

What we do with the bodies that God will raise from the dead -- matters to God. If Jesus was raised from the dead in the body, so shall we be too.

4. Crucifixion (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

When Jesus died, he bought us! He owns us! He lives within us! We belong to him! We are not free to give our bodies away to anyone outside of marriage.

Indeed, our true fulfillment comes from giving ourselves completely, intimately and without shame to Christ, body and spirit.