

Our Union With Jesus Informs the Grievousness of Sexual Immorality

1 Corinthians 6:15-20

This portion comes at the following point in the outline.

- II. Paul's response to reports of division (1:10-6:20).
 - A. A church divided, internally and against Paul (1:10-4:21).
 - B. Sexual immorality and litigation: how Paul's authority, the gospel, and the wisdom of God apply to real issues (5:1-6:20).
 1. The incestuous man (5:1-13).
 2. Lawsuits against each other (6:1-11).
 3. **Sexual immorality and who we are in Christ (6:12-20).**

Introduction

Verses 12-20 deal with how who we are in Christ informs sexual immorality. From what Paul says, it seems that some of the Corinthians were using prostitutes, possibly justifying it by believing that since we are free in Christ, any sort of behavior is permissible. Paul's emphasis in these verses is that our union with Jesus includes our bodies, and that reality informs how we view the whole of our physical and spiritual being. Therefore, we must, instead of taking what is Christ's and joining it to someone else in sin, seek to glorify God with our bodies in sexual purity.

Verses

¹² "All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything. ¹³ "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food" - and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴ And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power.

¹⁵ Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶ Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh." ¹⁷ But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. ¹⁸ Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin 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? You are not your own, ²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

Questions

1. General.
 - a. What are your initial observations, thoughts, or questions about the passage?
 - b. How would you briefly describe the passage?
 - Because of who we are in Christ, the sin of sexual immorality is particularly grievous. Rather than sinning against him in sexual immorality, we must seek to glorify God in our bodies.
2. Specific Verses.
 - a. What does Paul mean when he says in verse 15 that "your bodies are the members of Christ (see 12:12-13)," and what is the implication in the verse, and even in other areas?
 - When we trust Jesus as Savior, we are united to him. We become a part of a group of believers, both universally and locally, that constitute Jesus's "body."

- So when a believer engages in sexual immorality with someone else, contextually prostitutes, they are taking what belongs to Jesus, their bodies, and in a sense “uniting” them to someone else in sin. Paul proclaims that this is awful.
 - Another implication beyond the context is the importance of remembering in every way the magnitude of being united to Jesus and each other in the reality of the body of Christ.
- b. What is Paul saying in verse 16?
- He quotes Genesis 2:24 and Jesus’s affirmation of this in Matthew 19:5. In marriage, two individuals become one - comprehensively, but also particularly physically. He applies this truth to sexual immorality to emphasize the magnitude of how sinful it is.
- c. How does Paul apply the reality of marriage and oneness to our union with Jesus in verse 17?
- Just as in marriage two come together and become one, when we believe and are united to Jesus, there is an element of being “one” spiritually. Therefore, looking back to verse 16, he is saying that there is a sense in which when a believer engages in sexual immorality they are including the Spirit of Christ in it!
- d. As Paul commands the Corinthians to flee from all sexual immorality in verse 18, what is another reason he uses?
- He says that other sins we commit are “outside the body.” This is a hard comment to interpret. It may mean that unlike other sins, there is an aspect of anything sexual that is inextricably connected to our whole being on a deep level, and has profound effects emotionally and physically. He will use principle in the next verse.
- e. What is the main meaning, and then some other implications, of what Paul says in verse 19?
- His main point is in that sexual sin is against our own bodies, and our bodies are not our own, but belong to God and are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, it magnifies the dreadfulness of sexual sin, comparing it to sinning in the temple!
 - Some other implications are: 1) God has given us the gift of God himself dwelling in us by his Spirit, and this is a very big deal. 2) Paul emphasizes the physical aspect of the Holy Spirit’s indwelling. 3) There is a connection between the way God dwelt in the temple and in us. 4) We do not belong to ourselves.
- f. What does Paul emphasize in the first part of verse 20, which really belongs with the last phrase of verse 19? What then does he exhort the Corinthians and us to do as a summarizing statement?
- We are not our own (Vs. 19), because of the depth of the cost of “purchasing” or “redeeming from slavery” that Jesus paid when he died. The cost is incalculable and infinitely compelling.
 - Therefore, in the area of sexual sin and purity, and in all life, we must strive to glorify God with our bodies.