

January 24th, 2021

You Are No Longer Just You

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

What God has joined together, let not man separate

When Jesus taught on marriage, he said this in **Matthew 19:6** “So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” That principle can be applied to the gospel. God has joined grace and obedience together in the gospel, and what do we so often do? We separate them. We can either fall into the camp that is *all about grace* which is a type of antinomianism. Or we are in the camp that is *all about obedience* which is a type of legalism. What does the antinomian say? “Grace works without asking anything from us.”¹ What does the legalist say: ‘Grace needs my effort, so I must run faster and try harder.’² The antinomian says: “Just believe the gospel...more.” The legalist says “Just obey your Lord...more.”³

What do you say?

Let’s put some flesh on this. Let’s say you are in the Church at Corinth in the 1st century, and men and women from your assembly are engaging in temple prostitution. That’s what’s happening here in chapter six. What do you say to them? How do you persuade them to stop? ‘Just believe the gospel...more?’ ‘Just obey your Lord...more.’ Do you emphasize grace or obedience? But then you say “Aha, that is false dilemma—I’m not going to separate what God has joined together, the person who engaging in prostitution needs to hear *both* grace *and* obedience.” Certainly that is what Paul does, *right*? In **v.19-20** Paul emphasizes *grace*: “You are not your own, for you were bought with a price.”

¹ Brennan Manning in Rankin Wilbourne’s *Union With Christ: The Way to Know and Enjoy God*, (Colorado Springs, CO.,: David C. Cook), pg. 67

² (?) The antinomian focuses *solely* on justification—how we are made right with God. The legalist focuses *solely* on sanctification—how we made more progressively holy.

³ *ibid*, pg. 71

The purchase is already complete. The debt already paid. You belong to God. Grace. *And* in v.18 Paul emphasizes *obedience*: “Flee from sexual immorality.” This is your responsibility, you must *run* from such sins. Obedience. Paul emphasizes both. So then, you would be right if you emphasized grace and obedience, right? Wrong. That is not the heart of Paul’s argument.

The deeper separation

You see it’s not just that grace and obedience have been separated from each other in the gospel—they have been separated from Jesus Christ *Himself*. Paul’s central argument to the Corinthians is this: you are no longer *merely* you. v.19 “He who is joined to the Lord becomes *one spirit with him*.” In other words, becoming a Christian is not *merely* about believing a set of historical facts that Jesus accomplished for you 2,000 years ago. Becoming a Christian means “... that Christ has *joined* His life to yours.”⁴ You are no longer *merely* you. **Colossians 3:3** says “For you have died, and *your life is hidden with Christ* in God.” What is the deepest mystery of the gospel? **Colossians 1:27** “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

Salvation is *not* receiving grace from God.

Salvation is receiving Christ, in whom all grace is found.

After salvation God does *not* give you power for obedience.

God gives you Christ, puts you in Christ, in whom you have all power to obey.⁵

Beloved, you are not longer just *you*. You are in union with the Son of God who loved you and gave Himself for You.⁶ How then could anyone of us continue to live in sin? We will join Christ with our sin? How could we do such a thing to Him? That’s where Paul is taking us this morning.

⁴ *ibid*

⁵ Paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 1:30

⁶ Galatians 2:21

The Big Idea...

Christian, you are no longer just you—you have been joined to the Lord by one Spirit, therefore flee sexual immorality

- ☆ The World's Old Autonomy (v.12-14)
- ☆ The Christian's New Identity (v.15-17)
- ☆ The Lord's Forever Property (v.18-20)

I. The World's Old Autonomy

Recognizing the back and forth: "I am mine?"

Autonomy just means self-law. The person who is autonomous is a law unto himself. And this is the oldest lie in the Bible. Satan told Adam and Eve: "...you will be like God" (**Genesis 3:5**). In other words, 'you can rule yourself.'⁷ The Corinthians fell subject to this. Please look at **v.12** "'All things are lawful for me,' but not all things are helpful." Let's stop. Notice the quotation marks. These are not in the Greek. But translators have inserted them because they believed this slogan "All things are lawful for me" was something the Corinthians were saying. Certainly Paul would *not* affirm that sexual immorality and prostitution were lawful. He just said in **v.9-10** that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. Therefore what we see in **v.12-13** is a back and forth between Paul and the Corinthians. So let's take it a phrase at a time.

⁷ Eddie Vedder sings "I Am Mine" which encapsulates the world's old autonomy:

I know I was born and I know that I'll die

The in between is mine

I am mine

Paul's first response: sexual immorality hurts the whole Church

First the Corinthians says “All things are lawful for me.” In other words, “I have the right to do anything.” Some Christians today think like this, they because they misinterpret what Paul says in **Romans 6:14** where he says “...you are not under law but under grace.” But what Paul means is that the Christian is not under the law *as a covenant of works*. God told Adam in the beginning “Do this and live.” Perfect obedience to the law is the requirement for life under the covenant of works. Since the Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled the law for us, and we have receive Him by faith, we are not under the law in that sense.⁸ But that doesn't mean that the Christian is free to disobey the law. Paul says in **Romans 3:31** “Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.” Now since Paul *already* addressed how this type of habitual unrepentant sin demonstrates that one is not a Christian in **v.9-11**, he now gives further reasons. Paul's first response “All things are lawful,” is “but not all things are *helpful*.” It means profitable or beneficial. Beneficial to who?⁹ Is Paul saying sexual immorality is *not* beneficial for the individual *or* for the corporate body? He's going to deal with the individual next. But first he wants us to see how sexual immorality hurts *the whole body*. Paul uses that word “helpful” in relation to the common good of everyone in **12:7** when he says “To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit *for the common good*” —συμφέρω sympherō—same Greek word here as “helpful” in **v.12**. Sexually immorality, even if it's private always hurts the whole body of believers. Why? Think about your physical body. When I used to install tile, every once in a while I would smash my finger with the hammer. How do you think the rest of my body reacted? When a person is engaging in sexual immorality, they are walking in the flesh *not* in the spirit. Does walking in the flesh help or hurt other Christians? In other words, if you are impatient, impure, angry, jealous, envious

⁸ Though the unbeliever is.

⁹ We tend to read this very individualistically. As if Paul is saying that sexual immorality is unhelpful to us personally. Which is true.

—all works of the flesh—will that impact the rest of the Church? There's no such thing as a private sin. Even looking at pornography by one's self *negatively* affects the whole Church. What could you be doing with that time instead of looking at porn? Who could you be praying for, who could you be discipling? What personal edification could you be receiving so that you could be a help to others? Don't you see that when one member is engaging in sin—even privately—the whole body suffers.¹⁰ That's Paul's **first response**: sexual immorality harms the whole Church.¹¹

Paul's second response: sexual immorality makes you a slave to misery

Paul's second response to the Corinthians slogan "All things are lawful for me," is "but I will not be dominated by anything." Meaning I will not be brought under the power of anything. Isn't that ironic? The person who says "I can do whatever I want" is a person who lives a life of bondage. Barry Schwartz, at the end of His TED talk, illustrate this with a fish in a fishbowl. He asked: "how free is that fish? Yes, of course the fish is confined, but to shatter the fishbowl, to remove all constraints, would not improve the fish's situation. In fact, it would destroy him."¹² Human beings cannot live free outside of God's law without destroying themselves. Jesus said in **John 8:34** "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin."¹³ That's Paul's **second response**: sexual immorality always makes you a slave to misery.

¹⁰ "Even if we have the right to do something (and in the case of using prostitutes, we don't), we must never forget the extent to which our behavior affects the lives of those to whom we are connected." Roy E. Ciampa & Brian S. Rosner, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The First Letter to the Corinthians*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), pg. 253

¹¹ Furthermore "if everyone claims unqualified autonomy, no one can be free, for everyone is threatened by the freedoms of the other." *ibid*

¹² Wibourne, pg. 144

¹³ cf. Romans 6:15-17 "What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?" (also see 2 Peter 2:19)

Paul's third response: your body is meant for the Lord!

In v.13, Paul brings up the Corinthian's view of food. But what does food have to do with prostitution? Well the Corinthians basic claim was that they were free to go to prostitutes *and* to eat food sacrificed to idols. Paul deals first with sex and marriage in ch.6-7, and then in ch.8 he circles back to food. If you look at 8:1, it begins with the words "Now concerning food offered to idols." But Paul brings it in here *because* their justification for eating foods offered to idols is directly connected to their justification for prostitution. Look at v.13 "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food'—and God will destroy both one and the other." Now there's debate where the Corinthian's slogan ends *and* Paul's response begins. The ESV ends the quotations right after the word "food" which means Paul says the rest. But the NIV extends the quotations to the end of the sentence.¹⁴ In other words the Corinthians said the whole thing: "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food'—and God will destroy both one and the other." Now I believe the NIV is right.¹⁵ In the ancient world, gnosticism was a huge problem. The gnostics believed that God was only really concerned with the spirit or the soul, but the body wasn't important. Gnosticism was at play in Corinth. Food and sex didn't matter because, end of v.13 "God will destroy both on and the other." What really mattered was what survived death, not the body, but the spirit. So their logic basically went like this: "Just as food is meant for the stomach and vice versa, so also sexual activity is meant for the body and the body for sexual activity" and since God is going to destroy the body, none of this matters.¹⁶

So Paul gives two answers to this: **First** he says at the end of v.13 "The body is not *meant* for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body." Think about your body for a moment. Think about how each part of

¹⁴ See Ciampa & Rosner for a further defense of this, pg. 254, fn. 37

¹⁵ The NASB and the KJV don't have quotation marks at all.

¹⁶ "The nub of the dispute between Paul and the Corinthians concerns the value to be placed upon present bodily existence." Ciampa & Rosner, pg. 255

your body is *meant* for something. Your tongue was *meant* to taste food. Your fingers were *meant* to grab things. Your legs were *meant* to walk. Every part of your body was designed for a specific function. But what about your body as a whole? What is the whole of your body *meant* for? Paul says your whole body was *meant* for the Lord, that is the Lord Jesus Christ. Your body was given to you so that you could serve and fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁷

Romans 14:7-9 “For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s.” That’s Paul’s first answer to the Corinthians anti-body theology: Your body was given to you so that you could commune with Christ.¹⁸

Secondly, Paul says in **v.14** “And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power.” God the Father is not a gnostic. He loves the body, and He proved it when He raised up the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus rose bodily on the third day. And God will also raise our bodies. Life in the New Heavens and the New Earth will be *physical*. We will walk and swim and play music, and read, and travel, and talk with the angels and all the saints. The idea that God doesn’t care what we do with our bodies is not Christian theology.

Summary

So that’s our **first point**. We can not do whatever we want with our bodies. Sexual immorality, even if done privately, **1)** Hurts the whole Church **2)** It brings you into slavery and misery, and **3)** It undoes the design for which our bodies were made, *namely* to have communion with the Lord Jesus Christ both now and in the resurrection. But that is only the smallest tip of Paul’s argument.

¹⁷ Ciampa & Rosner, pg. 255

¹⁸ cf. Timothy Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism*, (New York, NY.,: Viking, 2015), pg. 128 for a chart on how gnosticism affected think before Christianity, and how the coming of Christ changed everything.

II. The Christian's New Identity

The 3rd greatest mystery

What is the Christian's identity? Do you realize that in Paul's writings, he never refers to us as Christians? The NT does call us "Christians" *but* only three times.¹⁹ But Paul describes our new identity as being "in Christ" around 165 times.²⁰ What this means is that *our union with Christ* is our most fundamental identity. And it is one of the most profound mysteries! **Ephesians 5:32** says the believer's union with Christ is a profound mystery. In fact it is the 3rd greatest mystery in the universe. Only **the Trinity**—three Divine Persons, one God; and **the Incarnation**—Jesus Christ: truly God and truly man *are* greater mysteries than our union with Christ. When Paul began writing about our union with Christ in the NT, he had to invent new words to describe it because there were no words in the Greek language that would work.²¹ He said we have been:

"...crucified *with Christ*" (**Galatians 2:20**)

"...buried...*with [Christ]*" (**Romans 6:4**)

"...raised *with Christ*" (**Colossians 3:1**)

"...seated...*with [Christ]* in the heavenly places" (**Ephesians 2:6**)

Do you hear about Paul is saying? Everything that is true about Christ is true about us. "All that is his becomes ours."²² Listen to how the Westminster Larger Catechism puts it in Q.66

Q. 66. What is that union which the elect have with Christ?

¹⁹ Acts 11:26; Acts 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16

²⁰ Wilbourne, pg. 13

²¹ Wilbourne notes "The phrases 'crucified with,' 'raised with,' 'buried with,' and 'seated with' are each a single word in Greek beginning with the prefix *syn*, meaning 'with.' Those words didn't exist before Paul coined them." *ibid*, pg. 45

²² *ibid*, pg. 45

A. The *union* which the elect have with Christ is the work of God's grace, whereby they are spiritually and mystically, yet really and inseparably, joined to Christ as their head and husband; which is done in their effectual calling.²³

You are no longer just you. You are a *we*. **Galatians 2:20** “It is no longer I who live, but *Christ who lives in me*.” And Christ is no longer *only* Christ. His fulness, His completeness comes from His union with the Church. **Ephesians 1:22-23** says that God gave him [Christ] as head over all things to the church, which is his body, *the fullness of him* who fills all in all.” As Jonathan Edwards says here:

“...the church is said to be the [fulness] of Christ...*as if* Christ were incomplete without the church...as man is incomplete without the woman (**Genesis 2:18**) so Christ is incomplete without his spouse [the Church]”²⁴

The heart of the argument

That’s the most fundamental identity of a Christian—we are united to Christ. And this is the *heart* of Paul’s argument against sexual immorality. Please look at v.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!” Notice Paul is incredulous that the Corinthians had forgotten who they were! He says “Do you not know...?” He mentions the word *members* three times to emphasize the reality of our union. It’s vivid imagery. One commentator said “For a Christian to commit sexual immorality...is to use a part of Christ’s own body in an act of fornication or adultery.”²⁵ In other words, “...a

²³ Q2. What is our union with Christ? A. An holy, spiritual conjunction unto Him as our head, husband, and foundation, whereby we are made partakers of the same Spirit with Him, and derive all good things from Him. —John Owen, Vol. 1, pg. 489

²⁴ <http://edwards.yale.edu/archive?path=aHR0cDovL2Vkd2FyZHMueWFsZS5lZHUvY2dpLWJpbi9uZXdwaGlzby9nZXRvYmpIY3QucGw/cC4xMjoyNzMud2plbw==>

²⁵ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 1 Corinthians*, (Chicago, IL.: Moody Publishers, 1984), pg. 151

Christian who commits sexual immorality involves his Lord.”²⁶ What does Paul say to that? ‘May it *never* be!’

The highest ethic of a Christian²⁷

You see, the Christian has an ethic that is a higher than anything the world offers. Right and wrong is determined by what it says about the Lord. It’s *not* that Jesus could be personally made a sinner by our committing sexual immorality “anymore than the sunbeam that shines on a garbage dump [could be] polluted. But His reputation is [harmed] because of the association.”²⁸ All Christian ethics are based on the Person of Christ. How can I say that? Because **Colossians 1:16** says that “...all things were created through him *and for him.*” Ethics exist for Christ. So why is lying wrong *mainly*? It is wrong *merely* because God said it was wrong? No. It is wrong because it contradicts Christ who is the way and *the truth* and the life (**John 14:6**). Why does God hate divorce *mainly*? (**Malachi 2:16**) Because the the union of man and wife displays Christ’s relationship with the Church, and Christ never divorces His bride. **Romans 8:39** says nothing will “...*separate* us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” That’s essentially Paul’s argument is here. Sexual immorality is wrong because we can make Christ a partner with impurity.

²⁶ *ibid*

²⁷ Nearly two decades ago, Monica and I were sitting in Church and the pastor had brought in Josh McDowell the famous apologist to be the guest preacher. He asked a question I’ll never forget. *Why* is lying wrong? He asked several people in the congregation, and no one got it right. *Why* is lying wrong? Is it wrong *simply* because God said in the ninth command “You shall not bear false witness?” It is wrong *merely* because God said it was wrong? No. It is wrong because it goes against the very nature of the Godhead, and more specifically Christ Himself. Who did Christ say He was? **John 14:6** “I am the way, and the truth, and the life.” Jesus is truth itself. Lying is wrong, because it contradicts Christ.

²⁸ MacArthur, pg. 151

Do you have a depersonalized religion?²⁹

One of the reasons Christians continue to walk in sin is because they have removed the Person of Christ from their daily life. They have depersonalized their faith. Beloved test yourself: have you adopted a depersonalized view of the Christian faith? When you **sin**, do you see it as *merely breaking a rule* (depersonalization), or as *betraying Christ*? When you **repent**, do you see it as *merely admitting guilty* (depersonalization), or as sorrow over sinning against Him? Do you see **forgiveness** *merely* as having your unrighteousness cleansed (depersonalization), or as having your relationship with Christ renewed? Do you see **faith** *merely* as believing a set of propositions (depersonalization), or as committing yourself to the Person of Jesus? Do you see **the Christian life** *merely* as obeying rules (depersonalization), or a life lived to please the Lord? Beloved Jesus is a Person, a real Person, a Divine Person, who has called you to Himself. Everything we do in this life has a direct impact on our relationship with Him either positively or negatively.

The two shall become one flesh

Look how Paul continues *the personal nature* of his argument in v.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.” Paul is quoting **Genesis 2:24** at the very first human marriage between Adam and Eve. You see the

²⁹ James W. Sire provides an important comparison between a depersonalized and personalized view of the Christian faith.

	Depersonalized	Personalized
<i>Sin</i>	Breaking a rule	Betraying a relationship
<i>Repentance</i>	Admitting guilt	Sorrowing over personal betrayal
<i>Forgiveness</i>	Canceling a penalty	Renewing fellowship
<i>Faith</i>	Believing a set of propositions	Committing oneself to a Person
<i>Christian Life</i>	Obeying rules	Pleasing the Lord—a Person

world today treats sex as something causal and something insignificant.³⁰ But Paul is arguing that the Lord designed sex to beautifully exhibit the “real and enduring bond that is created in marriage.”³¹ “The two will become one flesh.” Paul’s argument is that sex with a prostitute is *coming into union with her*.

The lesser to greater argument

“But” Paul says in v.17 “But he who is joined to the Lord *becomes one spirit with him*.” Notice the “but.” That “but” is the hinge of his whole argument. Whenever someone says “but” they are setting two things against each other. On the one hand, in human marriage, the two will become *one flesh*, BUT on the other, in our marriage to Christ we become *one spirit*.

Husband and wife only become one flesh.

But Christ and the Christian become *one spirit*

So Paul is arguing from the lesser to the greater. Calvin says it like this: “The union of Christ with us is closer than that of husband and wife...For if a man is joined to a wife in marriage ought not to have union with a prostitute, it is far more serious in the case of believers, who are not...one flesh with Christ, but one Spirit.”³²

Isn’t this weird?

I’ve heard Christians (both men and women) say “I can’t think of being married to Christ. That’s weird. That’s unnatural.” But that’s exactly backward. Human marriage between man and woman is the copy. Human marriage is the clone. Marriage to Christ is the original, the autograph, the archetype after which human marriage was formed. Dear congregation this is what

³⁰ Like the Corinthians, the modern world has adopted a form of gnosticism—because they treat sex as no big deal, it shows they have a very low view of the human body.

³¹ Ciampa & Rosner, pg. 255

³² *ibid*, pg. 260

Christianity *is*. God the Father ordained all things, including the fall, so that Jesus Christ could come into the world and retrieve His beloved. The Puritan Richard Sibbes says it like this: “Christianity is essentially a love story in which Christ the bridegroom comes to win his bride, the Church.”³³

That’s our **second point**. The highest, most ultimate reason we should avoid sexual immorality is because we have been united Christ—that’s our new identity. No longer I, but we. And it is outrageous to join Christ with sin.

III. The Lord’s Forever Property

Is there something wrong with the law?

What’s interesting here is that Paul could have quoted several OT Scriptures showing that the law prohibited prostitution.³⁴ But he doesn’t. Nothing is wrong with the law. Paul said the law is holy, righteous, and good in **Romans 7:12**. But he doesn’t quote it here. Why? I believe that Paul was concerned that the Corinthians had *already* de-personalized the faith. They had disconnected themselves from Jesus. And so his entire rebuke is framed in personal terms, setting Jesus continually before them, showing them how their sin drags Jesus through the mud.

Joseph flees for his Lord!

Therefore even Paul’s first call to obedience was meant to bring to mind a very personal event. Paul says in **v.18** “Flee from sexual immorality.” Sexual immorality includes far more than just prostitution. It includes any sexual relations outside of marriage. He say *flee* from it. Not merely avoid it, but flee. It’s urgent. What do people flee from? Snakes, enemies, danger, death. When

³³ Richard Sibbes, *The Love of Christ*, (Carlisle, PA.: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2011), Sibbes viii

³⁴ cf Leviticus 21:7-9; Deuteronomy 22:21; 23:17

Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery, he ended up in Potiphar's house. And he quickly advanced to the chief servant. One day Potiphar's wife decided that she wanted to sleep with Joseph while her husband was away, so she enticed him "lie with me" she said. What did Joseph had to lose? His family had rejected him, he was in a foreign land. Nobody would have found out. This was a normal practice, masters having sex with their servants. No big deal. How did Joseph answer? "How then can I do this great wickedness and sin *against God?*" (**Genesis 39:9**). Joseph saw that it was against his Lord. But Potiphar's wife didn't give up. The devil will not give up trying to entice you loved one. She waited until one day everyone was out of the house and she grabbed him by his clothing and again said "Lie with me." What did Joseph do? It says "he left his garment in her hand and *fled* and got out of the house" (**Genesis 39:12**). He fled as if he were running for his life.

A sin against the body

Why must we flee? **v.18** "Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body." We must flee from sexually immorality because in *some sense* it is worse than other sins. It is sin against your body. Now Paul uses the word "body" interchangeably with the word "you" in **v.19** and **v.20** so clearly he's referring to the whole person. But we must ask: why is Paul distinguishing this from other sins like drunkenness or things ruinous to your health. Let's get his argument clear in our mind. He is *not* saying that sexual immorality *alone* hurts the body. No. He's saying that "... sexual immorality [alone] establishes a 'one-flesh' union that is 'against the body.'"³⁵ Sexual immorality alone is a uniquely body joining and therefore body-defiling sin.³⁶

³⁵ Ciampa & Rosner, pg. 264

³⁶ *ibid*

The rightful ownership of the body

But Paul again adds another layer. Sexual immorality “is a sin against the body’s rightful ownership.”³⁷ Look at v.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.” Now we know what v.17 means by saying we are ‘one spirit with Christ.’ The believer shares one spirit—the Holy Spirit—with Jesus. **1 John 4:13** “By this we know that we abide in him and he in us [union], because he has given us of *his Spirit*.”³⁸ Beloved Christ and you drink from the same Spirit, you partake from the same Spirit, you are indwelt by the same Spirit, the same Spirit who delights in Christ delights in You. The Holy Spirit is the bond that you and Christ share. And Paul says that your body is the temple of the Spirit. What do you do in temples? You worship. In the OT, the ultimate purpose of the temple was to meet with God, to serve Him, to commune with Him, to glorify Him. You are that temple now. You don’t have to travel thousands of miles. God has made you the new temple and has given You His Spirit. Therefore, end of v.20 “...glorify God in your body.” Your body was given to you as an instrument of worship, not an instrument of sin. Grace and obedience. Paul speaks of both.

You were bought with a price

But grace and obedience *by themselves* is not Paul’s argument. He says in v. 19-20 “You are not your own, for you were bought with a price.” In the OT book of Hosea, the Lord told Hosea the prophet to take a wife for himself from among the prostitutes. A most scandalous command which has commentators to this day scratching their heads. Was this just metaphorical, or did Hosea actually do this? We’ll come back to that. So the book begins by Hosea the prophet marrying Gomer the prostitute. Imagine the degrading life this woman

³⁷ *Ibid*

³⁸ Romans 8:9-10 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. **10** But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

endured. Forced to do things she didn't want. Subject to disease, and abuse—no longer seen as a person, but merely object of desire. But Gomer wasn't *merely* a victim. She loved her wickedness. She reveled in it. In fact, after Hosea brought Gomer home and had children with her, she left him to go back to her whoring. She traded in a life of dignity and protection and love for misery and bondage. When you read that Gomer left Hosea in the book, it's unbelievable that she would do such a thing. What did Lord tell Hosea? 'Go and get her back.' But this time, Hosea had to purchase her. Now she was a slave. Hosea had to pay off her pimp. **Hosea 3:2** says "So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver..." And he brought her to his house and he pledged his absolute faithfulness to her and promised that she will dwell with him always. Gomer was no longer her own, she was bought with a price.

The true and better Hosea

Do you know why I think this story is true and not a *mere* metaphor? Because this story tells of another Prophet who was sent by God to retrieve a whore for His wife. Hosea is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Church is was the former prostitute. Beloved, you weren't looking for the Lord. You were content prostituting yourself out to everything and anything but Him. But Christ purchased you. Not with shekels of silver, but with His own blood. **1 Peter 1:18-19** "...you were ransomed...not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ." And now you belong to Him, body and soul, both in life and death. Not as piece of property, but as His wife. You are the wife of Christ.

What does that mean? It means that just as a wife loses her old name to be called by her husband's, so now you have lost your old name. You are now called Christian, after your husband Christ. It also means that the most blessed exchange has taken place. In marriage whatever the husband has is also the wife's and whatever the wife's has is the husband's. Christ has given you all his honors, all his riches. "To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father" (**Revelation**

1:5-6) What have you given to Christ? All your debt. All your wickedness. All your sin. “What did Christ ever see in [you] to make [you] the object of His love?”³⁹ Nothing. In fact you gave Him ample reasons to hate you and loathe you. But this Jesus chose to love you freely, willingly, without reserve, and was willing to give His own life for yours. And now you belong to Him. You are no longer your own, but you were bought with a price.

Jesus, friend of sinners
 Loved me 'ere I knew Him
 Drew me with His cords of love
 Tightly bound me to Him
 'Round my heart still closely twined
 The ties that none can sever
 For I am His and He is mine
 Forever and forever⁴⁰

Practical application

So what if you caught in sexually immorality? What should you do? “How does your union with Christ break the cycle?”⁴¹ First you must realize that you are not fighting this sin by yourself. Tell yourself “I am in Christ, I am one for whom he died.”⁴² You are not left alone to rely on your own strength. Because Christ is in you, **1 John 4:4** says greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. Trust your Husband, and He will give you the power to flee. Don't rely on your own strength, lean into His, and you will find the strength you need. **1 Corinthians 10:13** “No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to

³⁹ Timothy S. Lane & Paul David Tripp, *How People Change*, (Greensboro, NC,: New Growth Press, 2008), pg. 54

⁴⁰ Source: <https://sovereigngracemusic.org/music/songs/his-forever/> Accessed January 24, 2021

⁴¹ Wilbourne, pg. 76

⁴² *ibid*, pg. 77

man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”

Secondly, what if you have already confessed your sexual immorality but the devil will not stop accusing you? The Puritan Richard Sibbes says that this is how we should answer all accusations: “‘Go to Christ.’ If you have anything to say to me, go to my Husband. God is just, but he will not have his justice twice satisfied, seeing whatsoever is due...has been satisfied by Christ our husband.”⁴³

Lastly, how do I know if I belong to Jesus Christ? How do I know if I have actually been united to Him? Are you willing to be ruled by Him? When a woman gets married, she surrendering herself to her husband submitting to Him. That’s what saving faith looks like. It is receiving Christ as a bride receives here bridegroom. It’s receiving all of Him, without any condition or exception. Saving faith is a desiring after Him, not *merely* the benefits he gives. Any wife who only receives her husband because of his money, or name, or security doesn’t truly love her husband. Likewise we know that Jesus gives us many benefits—everlasting life, infinite joy and peace—but true saving faith receives Jesus *Himself* as the prize. Not only as a Redeemer to forgive me, but as a King and Lord to rule me. If you have received Him *like that* the Scripture says “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.”

⁴³ Sibbes, pg. 37-38