

“Glorify God in your body” 1Cor 6:12-20

“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. “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. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. 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! 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.” But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. 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, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

I once heard a joke, or maybe it wasn't a joke. If a pastor wants to get everyone's attention he just need to say one word during the sermon. Sex. It is quite likely that I will get quite a bit of your attention today, because this is exactly what we'll be talking about.

Our reading was from Paul's letter to Corinthians. You may think that our society has lost the ability to understand what is wise and what is foolish when it comes to sex. You should have seen what Corinth was like.

It will suffice to say that even if the Roman empire endorsed many sexual practices that are still prohibited by law in our society, they had to invent a new word to describe what was going on in Corinth. “To corinthianize”.

It was in that city, where Paul planted a new Christian congregation, and sure enough, he had to deal with all the problems related to sexual promiscuity. From what we know their situation wasn't that different from ours.

We could see from Paul's letter that people used almost the same arguments to justify their sexual promiscuity that are used today. For last half a century the society has been brainwashed that sex is not a big deal.

As we desire food, the same goes for sex. And as we eat what we desire and when we desire, we should be free to do the same when it comes to sex. Initially these lies were even promoted as a scientific fact, that every kind of sexual activity is good for our health, and that not to engage in them is harmful.

Then sex was promoted simply as recreational activity. Need rest, want to have fun? Go and have sex. It was also promoted as a way of freedom, especially for women. If you want to be free and equal with men, go and have a lot of sex. Don't hold back, be the man!

Now we finally have not only bitter experiences, but also a lot of research data that shows that all of this doesn't work, and that instead there are very painful consequences for everyone who is fooled by the empty promises of sexual freedom, but somehow our society shies away from this inconvenient truth.

And shame to churches! Too many churches wanted to please the world more than God, too many of them were too cowardly, or too stupid, and gave in to this foolishness.

The purpose of the so called sexual revolution was to destroy the family and to destroy the church. And it wasn't a secret. But so many churches instead of standing firm, grounded in the wisdom of God, chose to ignore it.

Paul explicitly commanded, as we read: "Flee from sexual immorality!" He didn't say it about any other sin. Why? Because he knew that we can't win against this one. We need to flee.

What were those churches thinking that believed that one can be sexually immoral and still a Christian? They obviously thought they are smarter than the apostle. Perhaps they thought that if we just let the sheep play with the wolves, it won't hurt anyone, right?

We are supposed to be the light to the world. To shine God's wisdom into this world, also when it comes to human sexuality. Have we been the light? Or have we embraced the sexual revolution with all its foolishness as a norm?

During these 50 years we are made numb to the things that should shock us. Premarital sex doesn't seem to be a big deal anymore. Everyone does it. In fact, it is not true. More and more young people begin to realize that this foolishness comes with a price. Sometimes the price is as high as infertility and broken life.

Abortion doesn't seem to be a big deal, for how else we can protect our 'freedom' to do whatever we want. But it is a huge deal, it is a murder of another human being.

Pornography doesn't seem to be a big deal, as we all can access it on our phones or computers. In fact, it is a big deal, for it rewires our brain and we may lose our very chances for happy and fulfilling relationships. Forever!

Living together without marriage doesn't seem to be a big deal. Even if it often ends in tears and broken hearts, that complicates future relationships. Being unfaithful doesn't seem to be such a big deal, as sex is just for fun. Even if such unfaithfulness often devastates and destroys the other person.

Divorce doesn't seem to be a big deal. Just do it well, and try to take as much as you can from your spouse, and leave them with nothing. Robbing children of both parents doesn't seem to be a big deal. They will survive. Somehow. We have good medicine and a lot of counselling available. As long, as we are free to do whatever we want with our bodies, as if we were some animals driven by

instincts and desires only. There is almost no need to talk about where it has lead the society. Within two generations we have forgotten, or we have been made to forget what marriage is, and what sex is for. Look around at so many in Barossa alone.

What do we see? Too many broken hearts, broken relationship, broken marriages, broken families, broken children, broken lives. And we could add ... broken and weakened church.

You probably know more about this from your own experience than I do. One needs to be blind not to see where this sexual freedom has led our society and the church.

And we as Christians haven't done too good a job to help the society. If we don't speak God's wisdom, who will? Too often we have been a part of the problem, not of the solution. Even as God's own wisdom is entrusted to us. But how many even among Christians want to understand it and to live accordingly?

Warriors of the sexual revolution have attacked the Church accusing Christians as being narrow minded with their 'strange morals'. And instead of responding by teaching God's wonderful design for human relationships, too often we have been silent, or, worse, we have embraced the way of the world.

Paul cared for his congregation in Corinth, not less than we care about ours, and he was very clear about how we should think about sex and how we should live. We can learn from the apostle, and by God's grace teach others as well.

First thing that we can learn is that sex is a big deal. It is something very important, because it is something we do in our body. "The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power."

Our God is not too restrictive when it comes to sex, the truth is, that He values our bodies more than we can imagine. Our bodies are not meant to be tools for meaningless sexual pleasures, they are for the Lord.

That's right. If you are a Christian, your body is for the Lord. Our union with Jesus is something that we can't fully understand. But in God's eyes, from His perspective, your bodies are members of Christ. Our union with God through Jesus runs much deeper than we can appreciate it.

We are united with the Triune God. He has welcomed us and included us in this mysterious fellowship with Him and all His saints, with our bodies. This is, why Paul asks this very penetrating question?

If you are a member in Christ's body, then how can you, by committing sexual sins, to drag the body of Christ into adultery? The Bible has a very high view on our bodies and on sexual relationships.

It views any sexual acts as two people becoming one body. Now, if you as a Christian are a member of Christ in your body, how can you engage in sexual activities that are against God's very good design?

Because it is not only your body, that is involved, you are also dragging Christ into your promiscuous behaviour. And Paul's reaction to this question is the most categorical "by no means!" You can't do that.

God's view on sexual relationships is indeed very high. It is one of His most precious gifts given to His human creatures. And as with every precious gift, you need to treat it as such.

You need to value it and you need to use it properly. And according to God's own instructions, sex is to be enjoyed only between a husband and a wife, in life-long, committed, faithful and loving relationships.

You see, God's teaching on human sexuality is not rooted in some restrictive prohibitions aimed to limit our freedom. It is the very opposite. It comes from God's wisdom, acknowledging how wonderful a gift it is.

And how great a power it possesses. It can do both, it can make people happy and their lives fulfilled, if received properly. And on the other hand, if misused and treated as not a big deal, this wonderful gift of sex has this terrifying potential to enslave people and to destroy their lives, to destroy families and even entire civilizations. The history is full of such examples. And we also witness it happening today.

Then Paul says something beautiful, that both helps us to appreciate the gift of our bodies and sexuality, and, also, gives good advice how to live as Christians so that our life would be pleasing to our Lord.

"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, for you were bought with a price. Glorify God in your body."

Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you. Whom you have from God. Think about these words! Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. God Himself dwells with you in your body.

You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. Remember the Small Catechism? The Son of God, "has redeemed you, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won you from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that you may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom."

You belong to God. Your body belongs to God. He dwells with you in your body. You are united with God in body, and He will raise you in body for life everlasting with Him in New Heavens and New Earth.

Therefore, Paul concludes, glorify God with your bodies! What a wonderful advice! Do you want to know, how to glorify your God? Do you want to know how to live God pleasing life?

Do it by glorifying God with your bodies. You glorify God when you appreciate how precious you and your body are for Him. You glorify God, when you appreciate His gifts of sexuality, when you receive and enjoy it properly, that is united in one body as a husband and a wife.

You glorify your God, when you take seriously the apostles' warning, when you flee from sexual immorality and strive to live chaste life, and when you teach those who haven't heard God's wisdom, how beautiful the gift of sexuality is, and how to receive it as a blessing, and not for our own destruction.

This is how we glorify our God. This is one way how we as Christians should bring God's wisdom and God's blessings into this world, and this world needs it so much. This sexual revolution has crippled too many lives, there are too many victims, and they all need healing.

We have the words that can help. We have the words of God's forgiveness that heal the heart. We have the words of God's love that wash away all uncleanness and shame. We have the words of God's wisdom, that bring light into this darkened world.

Besides, when we are conscious that we can glorify our Lord in our bodies, such life is indeed joyful and fulfilling. We can rejoice as we flee from sexual immorality towards our loving God, and help others to do the same.

We can rejoice as we enjoy the gift of sexuality with our spouse. We can rejoice as we teach God's wisdom to others. And we can rejoice knowing that we belong to the Holy God and that He Himself has glorified us by choosing our bodies to be His dwelling place.

Amen.