

All-of-Life Holiness

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Preacher: Mike Loosa

[0 : 00] The sermon text today is 1 Corinthians 6.! And at the conclusion of the reading, I will declare,! This is the word of the Lord, and you, the church in joyful response to his revelation given to us, will say, thanks be to God.

When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to the law before the unrighteous instead of the saints?

Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? Do you not know that we are to judge angels how much more than matters pertaining to this life?

So if you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church? I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers?

But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers. To have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you.

[1 : 21] Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded? But you yourselves wrong and defraud even your own brothers. Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?

Do not be deceived. Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

And such were some of you. But you were washed. You were sanctified. You were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

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.

[2 : 43] 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. This is the word of the Lord.

[3 : 45] Thanks be to God. Heavenly Father, this truly is your word. And so help us now to give attention to it.

To lean in to this text. And to see what it is that you want us to learn. Father, fill us with your spirit. Enlighten us by your spirit. Reveal this truth to us.

And apply it, God, to our hearts. That we might grow in holiness as you are holy. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Well, good morning again, church.

My name is Mike. One of the pastors here. And I just want to say, first of all, it's 11 o'clock. We're not going to stop at 1130 like normal this week. Because we've got a lot to work through.

So hang in there with me. There's a lot here in this text. And, you know, you might ask, why are we talking about this stuff? Like, why? Can't we talk about the gospel, the cross, and just focus on God's love?

[4 : 43] And I say, because this text is in God's word. And we're preaching through 1 Corinthians. And believe you, believe me, I would have preferred to not preach on chapter 5 last week, to not preach on chapter 6 this week, to not preach on chapter 7 in a couple weeks, and just skip to chapter 8, because it just seems a lot easier to talk about.

But we believe in the sufficiency of all of God's word. All of it. Every word in this Bible is God's breathed out word. This is not the words of men.

And we want to give ourselves to what it is that the Lord has to say in his word this morning. You know, we Americans love a good fairy tale with a happy ending, right? We all do.

You know, like Beauty and the Beast. You know, what a great happy ending. Now, it's a little weird with this attraction to a beast thing. But like, you know, the glorious ending to the story comes when the beast is transformed back into that handsome prince that he used to be, right?

But what if after that, Belle would every once in a while catch the beast, you know, chasing rabbits in the castle gardens, or roaring at strangers, or like licking himself to clean his skin?

[5 : 55] She'd probably say, stop that beastly behavior, right? That's not who you are anymore. You're not a beast. You're a prince for goodness sake. But this is basically what we do as Christians.

Every time we revert back to the sinful behaviors that once ruled our lives, you know, before we were saved by grace through faith in Christ, this is what the Corinthian church was doing in many ways, and into which Paul urges them, stop this unrighteous behavior.

Like, that's not who you are anymore. You're the holy ones of God, for goodness sake. And this is what we see here in 1 Corinthians 6. If you haven't turned it already, please turn there in your Bibles.

And if you don't have a Bible, there are Bibles available on the back table, bookmarked to today's passage. Feel free to grab one and keep it. And if you're not familiar with the Bible, the big numbers are the chapters.

The little numbers are the verses. We're in 1 Corinthians 6. And we're walking through this letter of 1 Corinthians together, seeing what makes for a healthy church.

[7 : 05] And at its core, a healthy church displays Christ in all things. In all things. That's the church's call. It's to live consistently with the gospel in all of life.

Now, last week in chapter 5, again this week in chapter 6, the emphasis is on displaying the holiness of Christ. So the title of today's sermon is All of Life Holiness.

All of Life Holiness. And the main point is that it is inconsistent for the saints, whom God has made holy in Christ, to engage in the unholy practices of the world.

And, you know, this is really just another way to say what we said last week, which was that the church is called to pursue and to preserve the holiness that Christ died to create.

In chapter 5, the focus was on the corporate temple that is the church and its need to remove those from within through church discipline who profess faith in Christ but persist in unrepentant sin.

[8 : 11] So chapter 5 focuses corporate. Chapter 6, the focus becomes on the individual temple that is each believer and the need for believers to remove sin from heart and life.

And in this chapter, Paul addresses two different issues going on within the Corinthian church that at first glance appear to be very different issues but at a closer look have very much in common.

This is why we've chosen to keep them together. And the first issue is this, lawsuits among unbelievers. As we see this in verses 1 through 11. Now, if Paul was a bit amped up in addressing the sin of incest in the church last week, his elevated state only continues throughout chapter 6.

Look at verse 1. He says, When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? In the Greek, it actually starts with the word dare. Like, dare he? Does he dare go to law? Now, apparently, what's going on here? The Corinthian believers were suing one another in the civil courts. And we're not talking about criminal matters here.

[9 : 18] Paul calls them in verse 2 trivial cases. And in verse 5, he calls them disputes. And rather than resolve these trivial matters within the church, they pursued litigation in the pagan courts.

And you should know that in first century Roman culture, while criminal law was relatively fair, relatively objective, that was not the case for civil law. It was notoriously unjust. It favored those of higher social status, who could sway the judge and the jury with their wealth and their power. So this likely means that in these trivial cases, believers were, as one commentator writes, using superior economic or social power to manipulate a more vulnerable fellow believer into losing the dispute.

It's going on within the church. So for good reason, then, as with last week's case of incest, Paul's outrage is apparent, and it's deserved. Now, as Paul addresses this situation, he points out two primary tragedies in light of the truth of God's word in the gospel.

And so the first tragedy that we see here is right in verse 1, the holy going to the unholy. The saints, which literally means holy ones, are going before, he says, the unrighteous, the unholy ones for resolution in these trivial matters.

[10:43] Now, why is this such a tragedy? Because the saints, Paul says, are those who will both, verse 2, judge the world, and verse 3, judge angels.

Now, the exact meaning of this is a bit of a mystery. We don't see a lot of this kind of language in Scripture, but we do see consistently from Old Testament to New that the saints will one day rule and reign with Christ.

And we know that even now, Jesus is seated on high, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and above every name that is named. And we, the saints, are co-heirs with Christ. We are united to Christ forever. So in some glorious sense that we can't even fathom right now, we will take part with Christ in that rule.

But we don't need to get hung up on exactly what that will look like because the reason Paul inserts this into the text is clear. If the saints will rule and reign over the world and even over angels, then how much more, Paul says, Paul actually uses logic, how much more in matters pertaining to this life?

[11:52] It makes no sense. He's saying it's to lay trivial cases before the unrighteous, unholy world, those whom he says have no standing in the church.

And look at verse 5. He says, I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers? But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers.

Paul's question in verse 5, can it be that there's no one among you wise enough, that would be received as a hit to the pride of the Corinthians. They gloried in their supposed wisdom, which we've seen earlier in the book.

And we saw in chapter 2 that true spiritual wisdom is from God alone, right? And God gives that wisdom to the saints who possess the very mind of Christ through the Holy Spirit.

But just as in that case of divisions in the church, the Corinthians were not living according to that true spiritual wisdom that they had access to. They were living according to the false, counterfeit wisdom of this world.

[13:02] And this is evidenced here by their apparent inability to handle trivial matters themselves and their pursuit of litigation in the pagan courts. But let's stop for a second and consider, who are we turning to for wisdom and for counsel?

We might not be suing one another in the pagan courts, but there's all sorts of ways in which we are pursuing wisdom and counsel. And are we turning first to what the world has to say?

Are we turning first to the unholy world whose values differ tremendously from our values? Their wisdom often subverts and contradicts the gospel.

Or do we turn first to the holy word of God and to the holy saints whom he inhabits? You know, there is true wisdom resident in the hearts of every believer through the indwelling spirit.

And God intends for us then to be seeking out and offering wisdom from the spirit regularly. And doing this in our lives together. Applying the wisdom of the word.

[14:11] Bringing that to bear in real life situations, in real life struggles. Whether that's in situations with career, or finances, or marriage, or parenting, or time management, or whatever it is.

So that's the first tragedy. The holy going to the unholy. But then Paul points to another upstream tragedy in verses 7 and 8. So look at verse 7 in your Bibles.

He says, To have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded?

But you yourselves wrong and defraud even your own brothers. So here's the second tragedy. It's forsaking Christ-like humility and love. The upstream tragedy from the holy bringing their disputes to the unholy is that they even had disputes in the first place.

They were going to the pagan courts in an attempt to defeat their fellow believers. But Paul's saying, This greedy, vengeful mindset is already a defeat. You've already lost.

[15:17] Even if you go to the courts and win. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded? See, this would be the upside-down path.

Unthinkable to the world. Of Christ-like humility and love. Jesus forged this path. Jesus suffered the greatest wrong, the greatest injustice for the sake of sinners like us.

Now this would be the path of self-denial, dying to self to preserve the church unity that Christ died to create. And this would be imitating Paul's own example which he urged the Corinthians to do in chapter 4.

When reviled, we bless. When persecuted, we endure. When slandered, we entreat. How otherworldly is that? We have become and are still like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things.

No, instead, they're forsaking that difficult path. Blinded by their selfishness and their greed. They're extracting payment from fellow believers and that through the secular courts.

[16:27] And instead, they're grieving the one who for their sake died. They're tarnishing his name before the watching world. And that's yet another tragedy of this matter.

Now this principle of Christ-like self-denial, humility, and love, that's going to take center stage as we progress through the letter, especially chapters 8 through 10, culminating in chapter 13, the chapter on love.

But it's worth pressing into application for just a moment. Now we may not literally take our brothers and sisters to court. Though there are stories out there, unfortunately, of that happening in the church.

But how often do we take one another to court in a figurative sense? How often do we refuse to suffer wrong along with our Savior and instead fight tooth and nail, whether with a spouse or a sibling or a fellow believer, to either get even because they've wronged us, or ensure that they, and maybe everyone else listening, knows that we're right?

Or for those especially who avoid conflict, how often do we call the kangaroo court of our own minds into session, right? Playing both judge and prosecuting attorney.

[17:42] You know, in the court of my own mind, others are always guilty and I'm always squeaky clean. Every time. It's amazing. But you know, Jesus, he calls us to the holiness of self-denial, of humility, of love, to absorb wrongs and offenses committed like he did.

This is the painful, yet gloriously beautiful path that Jesus walked for our eternal sake. And in this way, church, when we do that, when we absorb the wrongs of others and let love cover a multitude of sins, we make the gospel visible.

Visible to one another, visible to the world, and visible, as Paul says in Ephesians 3.10, to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. We're going to talk more about that in a few chapters.

So Paul then moves from the tragedies of the matter to gospel warning and gospel reality. And we see this in verses 9 through 11. He says, Now the warning here is clear.

The unrighteous will not inherit God's kingdom. And I think this warning serves a dual function. Because first, it enforces Paul's earlier message.

[19:21] Why would you lay your trivial cases before people like that? That's the first function. But secondly, this is a warning for the Corinthian church. You know, this list in verses 9 through 10 is a list of vices evident within the church.

Like, you can take all of these and then map them on to the problems that Paul addresses throughout his letter. He's warning them, as he did back in chapter 3, that they are being people of the flesh and not spiritual people.

Their behavior is incompatible with their place in God's kingdom and family. Their prince is acting like beasts, right? If they continue in these sins, here's the warning for them.

If they continue on in these sins, meaning if these sins become characteristic of them, they might be showing that they don't actually belong in God's family, as in chapter 5, with a man who persisted in unrepentance.

But, immediately following this warning, Paul declares this, and such were some of you, but you were washed, you were sanctified, justified.

[20 : 32] You were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. And this is the gospel reality right here. Paul is saying, that's actually not who you are anymore.

That's who you used to be. But because you're in Christ, you've been radically transformed into a new creation. You were beasts, but now you're princes.

You were washed, meaning cleansed from sin. It's stained, removed by the blood of Jesus, as represented in baptism. We got to baptize Frank just last week.

You were sanctified, meaning once for all made holy, set apart to be like Christ, now and forever.

You were justified, meaning that as a result of Christ's atoning death on the cross, you were given His righteousness.

That is now your eternal, legal standing before God, justified. This, this is your glorious identity in Christ.

[21 : 34] And by the Holy Spirit, who has applied the saving work of Christ to your heart. And this is the gospel reality of your heart. So therefore, live like it. That's the implication here.

Live like it. You've been made holy in Christ, so be the holy ones, church, that you've, that you already are in Him. You know, so once again, we've seen this time and again.

We're going to keep seeing this in this letter. Paul makes a beeline for the gospel in addressing these real life issues. This, this relentless, unwavering focus on the gospel.

And then, and then bringing it to bear on our real life circumstances. This is what we need to be doing day in and day out, week in and week out. The gospel church. The gospel is not just theory.

This isn't some irrelevant religious speak that we only talk about on Sunday. It is the glorious, unchanging, life-transforming truth that it affects and informs everything that we think, say, and do.

[22 : 37] Now, as we move to the second issue that Paul addresses, we're going to see him do the same thing. He's going to address the issue and then he's going to make a beeline for the gospel.

And here's the second issue. Sexual immorality.

You know, the city of Corinth, they were so well known for their decadent, morally corrupt lifestyle, particularly in the area of sexual indulgence, that the verb to Corinthianize was actually coined.

To Corinthianize meant to live a lifestyle of sensuality and self-indulgence. And this culture had infected the church such that some believers were regularly going to prostitutes to fulfill their sexual desires.

That's what Paul is addressing here in verses 12 through 20. Now, before he explicitly names the issue, he begins first by correcting the Corinthians' distorted thinking that was underlying these issues.

They apparently had these misguided catchphrases or slogans adopted from culture that they were using to justify their sin. So that's what we see here. Misguided catchphrases.

[23 : 47] Verse 12. Here's the first one. All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful. Now, you notice that your Bible has quotes.

So the translations, the quotes aren't in the original Greek text but they help us to see where commentators think the quotes begin and end. All things are lawful for me, they say, but Paul says, not all things are helpful.

All things are lawful for me but I will not be dominated by anything. Now, apparently the Corinthian church had an improper understanding of their freedom in Christ as if because they've been forgiven of their sin eternally, they can then use their bodies however they want.

Now, Paul upholds the fact that Christians are freed from the demands of the law because Christ fulfilled them all. Amen? But he clarifies this freedom is not to indulge the flesh.

See, Christ calls us to live in ways that are helpful, that are beneficial to God's purposes for us which means living in holiness as he's called us.

[24 : 53] In chapter 10 he's going to use these, refer to these slogans again and say that living beneficially is living in a way that builds up the church in love. And he's saying here Christ calls us to be mastered by nothing except him alone.

So, therefore, to use this slogan to justify sin is just, it's unthinkable. Now, here's the second in verse 13. Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food and God will destroy both one and the other.

Now, some think the quotes should actually end at the end of the verse. We won't go into the details there. But the Corinthians were viewing the body as the Greeks did, as unimportant, as temporary. All that matters in their thinking is the spirit which is eternal and therefore one can do whatever one wants with the body. If I have desires for food, I eat. If I have desires for sex, then I have sex. But Paul says the body is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord and the Lord for the body. God created not just our spirits but our bodies.

[26 : 01] He is Lord over our bodies. They're His. They're His. And therefore, they're meant to be used for His honor and glory.

That is so counter-cultural right now. Right? My body, I can do what I want. No, no, no. Christians, the Lord's. The Lord's. Not only that, but Paul says the Lord is for the body.

The body, after all, with its desires for both food and sex was His design. He is for our human flourishing. He is for human joy.

He died to prove that, by the way. He's for our joy and as embodied individuals. And that's not just true now.

Paul adds to the argument and, verse 14, and God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by His power. Here's an eternal perspective.

[27 : 05] And Paul's going to expound on this in amazing glory in chapter 15 on the resurrection. Christians believe, and we sang about this, that Jesus was raised bodily from the grave, becoming the firstborn of a new and redeemed humanity.

And our great hope, church, is that one day, so Christ is up there, He's preparing a heavenly dwelling place for us, but one day He's going to come back and He's going to take all of His children home with Him forevermore.

And that day, the Bible teaches, our bodies, like His, will be raised up in glory and power, imperishable. And therefore, Paul is arguing here, the bodies of great importance.

See, we're meant to live as embodied creatures using our bodies for the glory of God in this life and the next. So with biblical truth, Paul dismantles these misguided catchphrases, right?

They were using these to justify sin and He just dismantles them. Now, we might not wield these slogans today. I don't hear people using these.

[28 : 18] We have a bunch of our own, don't we? We have a whole bunch of our own. We use these to deny and to minimize and to justify sin. How about this one?

You only live once. You only live once. Well, God says, and just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment.

Like, there's an eternity awaiting us. And before we get there, there's a judgment. So how about, will this count for eternity? Maybe that's a better frame of mind to have. How about this one?

It's only wrong if you get caught. And God says, and no creature is hidden from his sight. But all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

How about, it's wrong if God says it's wrong. I've heard Dave say, if God says it, that settles it.

Right? That's great. If God says it, that settles it. Now, we could do the same exercise with all sorts of slogans, like, why ask for forgiveness now when you can ask for permission later?

[29 : 22] I mixed that up. Why ask for permission now when you can ask for forgiveness later?

Why ask for forgiveness? Everybody's doing it. It's my life. I can do what I want. So many of these.

Now, with these catchphrases and so many more, we deny, we justify, we minimize our sin. But God calls us to see our sin for what it really is in the light of his word.

And that is namely offensive to him. Offensive to a holy God. Inconsistent with our identity in Christ. And then he calls us in godly sorrow to confess that sin before him who has already forgiven us by the blood of Christ.

He's not going to slap us. He's going to welcome us in mercy. And then he calls us to turn from that sin. That's repentance. It's turning away. And live in holiness by the power of the Spirit.

That is to be an ongoing rhythm every single day, probably multiple times a day, in which we kill sin and grow in holiness. holiness. Now I want to mention one more catchphrase that speaks to our culture's current sexual and gender confusion.

[30 : 31] I was born this way. There's a lot to be said on this topic. So this is not covering it. But God's design, and we talked about this last week, is that marriage is the uniting of one biological man and one biological woman in an exclusive lifetime covenant.

This is God's design. And he's ordained marriage to be the only biblical and righteous means of sexual expression. So to use the phrase, I was born this way, as justification for behaviors or a lifestyle that defies God's clear instruction is sin.

It's sin. Now as I say that, I want to acknowledge that some are born with a proclivity to same-sex attraction, some experience gender dysphoria, I am not at all saying that these things are not real. These are real struggles for some people. I'm not denying that. And I'm not at all saying that it should be easy to submit to God's word in this area.

That is a hard road to walk. What I am saying is that Christians who experience same-sex attraction, Christians who experience gender dysphoria are called to and can honor God in the Spirit's power by daily choosing to deny the flesh, submit to His word, and live in holiness.

[31 : 58] And you know, those who don't experience these things may never understand the cross that they have to bear to uphold Christ is more important than temporary fleshly desires.

But church, Christ is so worth it. And I want to also say that if that's you, you don't actually have to bear that burden alone. You don't have to.

The saints are called to bear each other's burdens and we gladly do so. Don't carry that burden alone. Tell a trusted brother or sister that can then fight with you for godliness and for the glory of Christ.

So after dismantling these catchphrases, Paul moves to address the issue explicitly and he offers the Corinthian church four compelling gospel truths to urge them to flee sexual immorality.

Four compelling gospel truths. Look at verse 15. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make the members of a prostitute?

[33 : 05] Never. So here, Paul, he calls out the specific sin of sleeping with prostitutes. Now, unlike the sin of incest in chapter 5, which the culture actually condemned, going to prostitutes to satisfy sexual desires was a normal and even celebrated feature of first century Roman culture.

But Paul says, the bodies of believers are first and foremost members of Christ. And that's the first truth. You are members of Christ. Believers belong to, believers are joined to, united with Christ.

So how discordant then to be joined to Christ and then at the same time joined to prostitutes. Paul develops his argument by appealing to the first marriage in Genesis 2.24.

He says, Or do you not know, in verse 16, 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.

One commentator writes, Paul is not claiming that every sexual union constitutes marriage, but he does suggest that sexual relations forge a profound relationship between two people.

[34 : 25] And so the Corinthians were treating sex as casual, which is not at all how God treats it throughout his word, from beginning to end. And this casual treatment, it runs contrary, not only to God's design for human marriages, but here he's saying, to our spiritual union with Christ.

That's the most important marriage. If you remember in Ephesians 5 where Paul talks about marriage, he lays out this beautiful picture of marriage and said, this is profound, this is a mystery, but I'm talking about Christ and the church.

That's the spiritual union above all. Sexual immorality of any kind, of any kind, is first and foremost adultery against Jesus Christ.

If we're joined to Christ who is holy, then let us not join ourselves in unholiness to the wicked ways of this world. So Paul says in verse 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. Now here's truth number two. Sexual sin is serious.

[35 : 32] Now I'm sorry, this isn't so much a gospel truth. The other three or four truths were so gospel focused that I kept gospel in the title. This is just a truth that we see. Now without going into detail about this phrase, it's another difficult one for translators.

Paul is not necessarily creating a hierarchy of sin in which sexual sin is the foremost sin. Now at the same time, history and experience and even science all demonstrate how profound the effect of sexual intimacy is on a person, both physically and psychologically, and then how intimate the bond that is formed between two people.

And for that reason, as another commentator writes, there is a sense in which sexual sin destroys a person like no other because it is so intimate and entangling, corrupting on the deepest human level.

And then, for those that like some numbers here, for the 13th time in 19 verses, Paul asks another rhetorical question. He just loves this line of questioning with his favorite, do you not know? Six times, do you not know? Do you not know? Verse 19, do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you whom you have from God?

[36 : 51] Here's the third truth. You are temples of the Holy Spirit. Now only three chapters earlier, speaking to the whole church, Paul had said, do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

So now he's saying, not only does God's Spirit reside in the corporate church, but in individual believers. You know, Jesus had told his disciples in the upper room that it would be to their advantage that he go away.

Why? Because then he would send to them another helper, even the Spirit of Truth, to be with them forever. So whereas Jesus goes to heaven to prepare a dwelling place for us, the Holy Spirit comes from heaven and he prepares a dwelling place in us for the Father and Son.

That's amazing. This is radical. God is described in Scripture. We were singing about God's holiness. God is described as an all-consuming fire. He is holy, holy, holy, infinite in perfection. And just like the burning bush before Moses that was burning yet not consumed, individual Christians become dwelling places for God's holy presence yet without being consumed.

[38 : 12] That's amazing. God's presence in us. The implication here is how then can you Corinthians go on defiling your bodies in sexual immorality while at the same time housing the very presence of God?

If we only lived, saints, if we only lived in the conscious moment-by-moment awareness of God's holy presence in us, surely we would flee from temptations of every kind.

But I want to ask, how could sinners like us ever house the holy presence of God? Paul says, you are not your own.

for you were bought with a price. So here's the fourth truth. You were bought at the price of Jesus' life.

How could sinners like us become temples of the Holy Spirit? Because Jesus purchased us by his blood. You know, when the Corinthians heard this, they would be thinking of first century slaves who were sold and purchased.

[39 : 24] these slaves belonged to a master. And Christians, we also belong to a master who is both savior and lord of our lives.

You know, in chapter 4, Paul had asked, what do you have that you did not receive? And why do you boast as if you did not receive it? And now we see here, Paul's not only speaking about the things that we've received, but about ourselves.

We are not our own. And not only did God create us first and foremost, or in the first place, but Christ also redeemed us through his once for all atoning sacrifice on the cross.

And he redeemed us saints. He redeemed us to make us holy as he is holy. That's what we see from beginning the scripture to the end. You know, Andrew Murray writes in his devotional entitled Holy in Christ that the purpose of redemption is possession.

And the purpose of possession is likeness to him who is redeemer and owner, who is holiness. That's what God's been doing from the beginning, creating a holy people for his own possession and glory, for them to be like him, to image, to reflect his holiness, to know him and make him known to the world.

[40 : 45] It's all these truths that we need to be continually bringing to mind, continually praying into our hearts. These gospel truths, they fuel a life of holiness that's consistent with the gospel, that's consistent with our identity as holy in Christ.

I want to close with some points of application here. Lamentably, sex trafficking and prostitution remain a pervasive reality throughout our country and our world.

And while going to prostitutes might not be our struggle here, the statistics on pornography are staggering, even within the church. And pornography usage actually propels that industry, that sex trafficking industry, and it's important that we understand that link.

Now, I don't need to convince anyone in this church here that pornography is sin, but what I want to do is urge you that if you're struggling with pornography addiction to no longer keep that sin hidden. Expose it to the light. Sin holds tremendous power when it is in the darkness, but when it's exposed to the light, it's defanged. Its power is removed.

[42 : 02] Confess that sin. Awkward as it might be, confess that sin to your spouse. There will be power there to break that sin. Confess that sin to a trusted believer in the church and let us come alongside you.

Let us help you fight against that sin and pursue holiness in Christ. And I also want to highlight that our culture's use of sensual advertising presents another great challenge.

We need to be vigilant in our fight against pornography by turning from any and all indulgences in this area, even ones that are culturally normal, like sensuality in movies and in shows, like all that clickbait that's on social media platforms and in YouTube videos and in internet ads.

We cannot grow complacent in our fight against these temptations. Proverbs 627 says, Can a man carry fire next to his chest and his clothes not be burned?

This is playing with fire. If you've been entertaining this kind of lower tier pornography, you're also called to repentance, to turn from that.

[43 : 13] See, sin always wants more. And we talked about that principle last week. It's always striving for more. It's always seeking for control. But we've been freed in Christ to turn from that sin so that it no longer holds sway over our lives.

And saints, the church has been given to you, given to one another as a resource. So use the church. We can be a strong support for one another in fighting against these kinds of sins and in pursuing holiness.

Use the resource of the church so we can do battle together. And I want you to know, friends, that whether you have been in the past or are currently now mired in the sin of pornography or sexual immorality of some kind or any other addictive behavior or any sin of any kind, there is grace and forgiveness to be found at the foot of the cross when you go there in repentance.

repentance. The repentant are met with God's boundless mercy because of what Christ already did on the cross. He paid for the sins of the world by His blood.

And when you expose those sins to your brothers and sisters in the church, you will be met not with shame, not with judgment, but with reflection of that same mercy.

[44 : 41] That's what we're called to, church, to reflect that same mercy towards one another. Because listen, all of us, all of us, but for the grace of God would still be dead in our trespasses.

We have no standing before God apart from Christ. We have no boast apart from Christ. As a final word of application, we've seen in this section on sexual immorality how Paul, once again, addresses a practical matter by going straight to the gospel.

And why is that? Because gospel doctrine, what we profess with our lips, gospel doctrine, is meant to produce a gospel culture, what we practice with our lives.

Gospel doctrine is meant to produce gospel culture. So may Shoreline be, may we be a church that increasingly manifests a gospel culture that matches the doctrine that we profess.

May we increasingly live out the holiness that Christ died to produce in us. Paul concludes the chapter with one summary exhortation.

[45 : 49] So glorify God in your body. this is the conclusion of the matter. This is the ultimate purpose of our existence. You know, in the final analysis, this chapter isn't really about lawsuits against believers.

It's not really about sexual immorality. It's about holiness in all of life, in everything that we do in the body, that we might please and honor and glorify the God who made us and then made us holy by the blood of his son.

It's what Paul says in Romans 12, verse 1. Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God.

This is your true worship. It's inconsistent for the saints whom God has made holy in Christ to engage in the unholy practices of the world.

But, church, when we live holy lives consistent with our identity in Christ, then God is glorified in and through us. And there's no higher purpose.

[46 : 58] So let it be so. I want to close in prayer using a prayer from this book, Holy in Christ. So please go with me in prayer.

Oh my God, with a love and a joy and a thanksgiving that cannot be uttered. I praise thee for Christ, who has been made unto us of thee sanctification and redemption.

In him, thou art my redeemer, my holy one. In him, I am thy redeemed, thy holy one.

Oh God, in speechless adoration, I fall down to worship the love that passeth knowledge that hath done this for us and to believe that in one who is now before thee, holy in Christ, thou wilt fulfill all thy glorious purposes according to the greatness of thy power.
Amen. Thank you.