

# Worshipping with redeemed and holy bodies

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Date: 30 April 2023

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Adam, thank you. With 1 Corinthians 6 open in front of us, I want to ask this morning, how then shall we live? In these bodies of ours, how shall we now live?

This is week three, final week in this short topical series thinking about the human body, about God and our bodies. For those who haven't been here, we've talked about these created good bodies of ours.

That our bodies aren't accidents, they're not junk, just packaging or bad. No. Your loving maker knitted you together in your mother's womb.

He personally designed and formed you, your body, which is who you are and good. It's a good gift from God. Such dignity we have today. I am fearfully and wonderfully made, I meant to say.

Give thanks to God for this body of mine. And yet at the same time, today we have fallen and broken bodies. And having turned away from our maker in sin, we live in a world now of darkened hearts and degraded bodies.

[ 1 : 1 1 ] Every human being scarred with guilt and shame. Things we've done in the body. Things done to us. We know that disease and disability mark us.

And decay and death will ravage us, these bodies of ours. We know that. At the same time today, we're created and so fallen.

And so how wonderful then that God sends to us a flesh and blood saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. Who took to himself a real human body.

And who died bearing our sins in his body on the cross. And who rose bodily, defeating death. That he might actually save people like us, body and soul.

At 1 Corinthians 6, the starts of the reading, describes so powerfully the real personal change that takes place in your life when you come to the Lord Jesus Christ. At 1 Corinthians 6, verse 9, Paul's talking to Christian believers here.

[ 2 : 1 7 ] Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Don't be deceived. Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who have sex with men, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkers, nor slanderers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

That's right. With the God denying sins I've committed in my body marking me, defiling me, almost defining me. I can't enter the presence of God.

But now listen to this. To people who've turned and put their faith in Jesus, verse 11. That is what some of you were. I love that.

That's in the past now. Those sins used to defile you and mark you on your body, but not now. Not any longer.

Because, verse 11, you were washed. You were sanctified. You were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. This is the one-off, once-for-all-time, personal work of God in us as we turn to Jesus Christ.

[ 3 : 3 3 ] You were washed. You were washed. Means the dirt and guilt and shame that stuck to your body has been washed away once for all through the blood of Jesus Christ.

So important to know this. As a Christian believer in this body of yours, with the memories you have. The stain of sin in you has been taken away.

It's gone. And by his grace, you're forgiven now and clean now, deep within you, before your God. You were washed.

You were sanctified. You have been set apart to belong to God. He has made you his very own.

You were justified. You have been made right with him for good.

And so on the day of judgment, you will certainly stand before your God, body and soul. You will be free from accusation and safe and accepted and clean.

[ 4 : 35 ] And all of that in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. His wonderful saving work in your life that has taken place.

So then, given all of that, how shall we live? In created bodies, fallen bodies, bodies now redeemed and restored by God.

How shall we live? Two things to say today. The first, the longest, from 1 Corinthians 6. As those who've been washed, sanctified, justified.

Point one, honour God with your bodies. And at the end of these verses, the end of verse 20, there is a straight command. You see it right at the bottom, verse 20.

Therefore, honour God with your bodies. Knowing all that God has done for you and in you. Don't use your body now to please yourself.

[ 5 : 41 ] And don't think it doesn't matter what you do with your body. No, no, no. Honour him. Obey and please him. Honour God with your body. And it's worth saying the Christians that Paul is writing to here in this letter lived in a very, very do-what-you-want-with-your-body culture.

Not unlike ours. Corinth in Greece in the first century was a brash, kind of pleasure-seeking, sexually adventurous place.

The temple of Aphrodite, the pagan goddess of love, housed sacred prostitutes. And in Corinth, if you want, walk past and go in and grab pleasure. And some in the church were tempted to slide into living the Corinthian way.

See how this is worked out. In verse 12, Paul writes to them, I have the right to do anything, you say, but not everything is beneficial. I have the right to do anything, but I will not be mastered by anything.

Such a catchy slogan, that. I have the right to do anything. It's very 21st century Britain, actually. My body, my life.

[ 6 : 57 ] Or Dua Lipa saying, I'm free to do what I want any old time. We do feel the pull of that in our lives, don't we? Catchy slogan number two, 2,000 years ago in verse 13.

You say, food for the stomach and the stomach for food and God will destroy them both. It means that eating is just a natural need, it's just a bodily function and God will destroy my body.

So what does it matter what goes into my body? Let me eat and drink for tomorrow I die. It doesn't matter. And as for the food, so for sex. If I feel the urge and get horny, I'll go for it.

Sex is for the body and the body is for sex. It's just a bodily function. My urge is met. God's not that interested in my body, really. So let's be free and do what we want with this body of ours.

To which God says, no, no. It really matters. It really matters what we do with our bodies.

[ 8 : 02 ] Because, well look, middle of verse 13. The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord.

And the Lord for the body. He's saying that our bodies, your body, has a built-in God-given purpose. Did you know that?

This is not meant for sexual immorality. And by the way, actually, what a kind of shamefully low and animal-like view of the body that would be.

I've got urges in my body and that's what I'm for. No, no, rather, this redeemed body is for the Lord. Your body's God-given purpose is to be devoted to the Lord.

That is actually what your body is for. It's for him. And it says here that he, the Lord Jesus Christ, is utterly for your body.

[ 9 : 10 ] Committed as your Lord to your body's good. You ask, is God interested in your body and what you do with it? He really is. He really is.

In verses 14 to 19, Paul goes very big and very deep. Because he wants to press on us how wonderfully and massively significant our bodies are to God.

Here's just the bullet points. First, verse 14. Know that God will raise your body from the dead. That is, your body that you're living in is not temporary.

And there's a strain of teaching all through Christian history that imagines your body is not good and will not last. And so when you die, your body simply rots and is destroyed.

And then off you go, released from your body to heaven. So it imagines your body is like, your body is kind of like the temporary throwaway cardboard box your Amazon delivery comes in.

[ 10 : 18 ] Chuck it in recycling and that's it. And if that's what our bodies are like, then for sure, just use them, abuse them, do what you want with them and then get rid.

But it's not like that. This isn't temporary wrapping. Because verse 14, by his power, God raised the Lord from the dead and he will raise us also.

On the first Easter Sunday morning, in his mighty power, God the Father raised the Lord Jesus from the dead. Not as a ghost. He raised him bodily. And because we belong to the Lord, God will raise us also.

Can you picture this going forward? Beyond your death, your perishable physical body will be raised and made new and glorious for all eternity.

Does your body matter? Massively. Second, in these verses, your body right now is united with Christ.

[ 11 : 30 ] That's verse 15. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? It's hard to get your head around this.

But by the power of the Holy Spirit, you are actually joined body and soul with Jesus. His body and soul. You are deeply, personally, bodily, bound to Jesus Christ.

Does it matter what we do with these bodies? It really does. Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Shall I do that?

Shall I do that? Never. You can't have sex in your body and leave Jesus Christ outside the bedroom. Because your body is united to him.

What you do with your body matters. It really does. Because third, your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. In verse 18, Paul commands starkly, flee from sexual immorality.

[ 12 : 53 ] He's talking about all sexual bodily intimacy outside of lifelong marriage between a man and a woman. And he's saying, flee from it. Run away as quickly as you can.

Don't look. Don't stop. Don't mull. Don't flee. For all other sins a person commits are outside the body, in a sense.

But whoever sins sexually sins against their own body. Kind of into their own body. Causing such deep scars and harm.

For do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you received from God? You are not your own.

I want to say that what Paul says here is stunning. Isn't it? Have you read this before? Your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit.

[ 13 : 55 ] We sometimes joke around at home, no more pudding for me. My body is a temple.

That's how we speak like that at home. And then I pack away a bit more cheese because my body is a temple.

When you become a Christian believer, the living God places the Holy Spirit in you. In your body. And so if you belong to Jesus Christ today, your body is now a temple.

Really. Truly. Your body is a holy, sacred space in which God the Holy Spirit has chosen to come and dwell.

Does your body matter to God? Does it matter what you do with your body? What do you think? Oh, I've moved pretty quickly through these verses.

Might we pause and think about ourselves and our own bodies just at this point? Imagine something with me.

[ 15 : 02 ] Say that later today you stand in front of the mirror in your hallway or your bedroom or your bathroom. Do it.

What do you see looking back at you? As you look at you? As you look at you, your body? Do you see a worthless evolutionary accident? Do you see the centre of the universe, you in all your glory? Do you see damaged goods? Do you see a piece of rubbish that nobody cares for? You shouldn't. You shouldn't. You shouldn't.

First, as you eyeball yourself in the mirror and look yourself up and down, first you see a handmade creature. complex and designed and quirky. You might not like the shape of your body, your moles and marks, but you can and should say to your creator, I praise you because I'm fearfully and wonderfully made.

One. At the same time as you eyeball yourself in the mirror, you will see someone scarred by sin and disease and decay. There'll be memories you can almost see that you can't erase.

[ 16 : 18 ] You'll see a body that keeps the score of trauma suffered and you're wrinkling and ageing and hurting and declining. You'll see that.

But what else do you see as you look in the mirror? With your faith in Jesus Christ, as you look in the mirror, you are looking at a person who has not just been made by God, but saved by God's grace.

You, in this body of yours, you've been washed and sanctified and justified. As you look at your body, you see someone whose body is designed, purposed for the Lord, and he is for your body. Your body, as you look at it, is a holy, sacred temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you. You're looking at a temple. You are seeing a body that will be raised on the final day by God the Father.

That is true for you. In this actual body of yours. I wonder if you might do this.

[17:30] I'm going to try and do this this week. I wonder if you might write verses 19 and 20 out on a bit of paper and blue tack it to the mirror and then look at those verses and then look at yourself.

So you might do that. It could move you to tears. Or maybe you'll sigh. Or maybe you'll stand up straighter. As you look in the mirror, who am I?

What am I going to do with this body of mine from now on? Blue tacked to your mirror, do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you've received from God? You are not your own. You were bought at a price. How stunning is that? Therefore, honour God with your bodies. You look at that.

You look at your body, which is the body belonging to God because you're no longer your own. I will honour God in this made, fallen, redeemed body of mine.

[18:38] This honouring of God going forward for sure in 1 Corinthians 6, it means in the sexual arena. That's what 1 Corinthians 6 is talking about particularly.

In our free-for-all culture, don't say, I have the right to do anything with this body of mine as though it's up to you. Rather, from this point forward, give yourself to the radical sexual purity that pleases the God you belong to.

But of course, honouring God with our bodies stretches way beyond that to all of life, to absolutely everything.

And so this morning, I just want to finish with this, one more verse in this little series. Romans chapter 12 and verse 1, which we read first of all on page 1139.

I just want to read this verse and make a few comments. Firstly, honour God with your bodies. Now secondly, briefly, finally, offer your bodies as a living sacrifice.

[19:43] Listen to this, Romans 12, verse 1, therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God.

This is your true and proper worship. What a strong call that is to us, isn't it? Offer your body as a living sacrifice.

And there's an old story told of a little boy in church who heard the message of God's love and as the offering plate was passed round, which some churches do, to put collection money in, he looked in his pockets to see what he could find.

He found a dirty hanky, a sweet wrapper, a rusty old toy. And he didn't think any of the stuff in his pockets was really enough to give to his God. And so when the plate was passed to him where he was sitting, he thought and paused for a moment and then he put the collection plate on the floor and he stepped onto it himself.

That's the New Testament call to us. To us who've received God's mercy and been cleansed of our sins and have the Holy Spirit in us. I step onto the plate.

[21:00] I offer this body of mine entirely in glad obedience to you to please you, my merciful Lord. So I just want to ask, will we with these created, fallen, redeemed bodies of ours?

Lord, here are my eyes. Help me see the world as you see it. May I never look and lust or covet ever again.

Lord, I offer you my tongue and my mouth. May my words never break people down. May they always serve others and build them up.

Lord, would you take my hands. May every touch be full of love. I will not use my fists in anger.

I will lift up my hands in prayer. All I do, I will do it for you. Lord, here are my feet. I will walk in your ways.

[22:08] I will go where you want. I will speak good news. Take my mind. Take my energy. Take everything that is mine. I was bought at a price and I belong to you.

With my body, Lord, I honour you and all that I am I give to you. I offer my body in full surrender and total obedience that I might please you, my Father.

May I live and work in this body which you have redeemed to your praise and glory. Do you sense the all-in-ness of it? It's not harsh, it's not bad, it's good, it's what God's created us for.

He created us to know and love him and serve him in the body. We fell so far. We've been redeemed through Christ, we're being restored into the image of Jesus and to live a fully pleasing obedient life in the body is what I'm made for.

It's what brings him glory, this God of ours. So will we? May we as a church moving forward over these weeks and months, may we do that together.

[ 23 : 19 ] Be so serious about obedience in the body that pleases our Father and carry on encouraging one another to live to please him in the body and do that and do that until that wonderful day, certainly in the future, when our God raises us from the dead and after a lifetime of struggling in the body and living to please him in the body, the Son of God will change us and transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body for all eternity.

Let me lead us in a prayer and then we're going to sing together. you are not your own.

You were bought at a price. Therefore, honour God with your bodies. our Father, you know every thought, word and deed of ours.

You number every hair on our heads. You know our past, what we have lived through and endured and done and felt. You sent your Son into the world to redeem us and restore us.

You have placed your Holy Spirit in us, made our bodies temples. You have bought us for yourself that we might now live in the body with the bodies you have made for us.

[ 25 : 02 ] May we be those who honour you and offer our bodies in living sacrifices to you. Please take our lives and may they be consecrated and holy and all that you would have them to be.

in Jesus' name. Amen.