

Eros Redeemed Sex and Forgiveness

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Preacher: Harry Robinson

- [0 : 0 0] that's self-control. Against these there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.
- If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us have no self-conceit, no provoking of one another, no envy of one another. Let's stand and sing our opening hymn, Praise to the Lord, ye heavens adore him.
- Praise to the Lord, ye heavens adore him. Amen. Praise to the Lord, ye, my soul.
- The world is my dream, my soul is my dream. The world is my dream, my soul is my dream.
- For ever I know, see and see. Praise to the Lord, ye, my soul is my dream.
- [1 : 3 6] Come on, see and see and see and see. Praise to the Lord, ye, my soul is my dream.
- Praise to the Lord, ye, my soul is my dream. Praise to the Lord, ye, my soul is my dream.
- Please be seated. Please turn with me to page 488 in the front section of your blue Bible in front of you.
- First reading tonight is Psalm 32, page 488 in the front section of your Bibles. Psalm 32.
- Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity and in whose spirit there is no deceit.
- [3 : 0 0] When I declared not my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me. My strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.
- I acknowledged my sin to thee, and I did not hide my iniquity. I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord. Then thou didst forgive the guilt of my sin.
- Therefore, let everyone who is godly offer prayer to thee. At a time of distress, in the rush of great waters, they will not reach him.
- Thou art a hiding place for me. Thou preservest me from trouble. Thou dost encompass me with deliverance. I will instruct and teach you the way you should go.
- I will counsel you with my eye upon you. Be not like a horse or a mule without understanding, which must be curbed with bit and bridle, else it will not keep with you.
- [4 : 0 0] Many are the pangs of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds him who trusts in the Lord. Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.
- This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. We have seen in that psalm a very openness about David's sin and also the joy of repentance and forgiveness.
- So let's confess together, kneeling, our sins before Almighty God. Amen. Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we have sinned against you and against our neighbor in thought, word, and deed.
- In the evil we have done and in the good we have not done. Through ignorance, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault, we are truly sorry and repent of all our sins.

For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, who died for us, forgive us all that is past and grant that we may serve you in newness of life to the glory of your name.

[5 : 19] Amen. Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sin, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you in life eternal.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. Together let's pray. Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come.

Your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever.

Amen. Please stand. Amen. O Lord, open our lips, and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

[6 : 18] Let us worship the Lord. All praise to his name. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was the beginning, is now, and shall be forever.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Open our eyes.

Your love beyond measure. Open our eyes.

[7 : 51] Open our eyes. Open our eyes.

Strength to the weary. Healing our eyes.

Your love beyond measure. Let's open our eyes.

Open our eyes. Open our eyes. Open our eyes.

Open your eyes. Open our eyes. Open our eyes. Open our eyes. Open our eyes.

[9 : 13] Open our eyes. Open our eyes. Open your eyes. Open their eyes. guitar solo The Lamb declares The glory of the risen Lord Who can compare With the beauty of the Lord Forever He will be The Lamb upon the throne

I gladly bow the knee And worship Him alone I will proclaim The glory of the risen Lord Who once was slain To reconcile man to God Forever You will be The Lamb upon the throne I gladly bow the knee And worship You alone Forever You will be The Lamb upon the throne

I gladly bow the knee And worship You alone Of and sell Form Oh gioES■■■ Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. To seek and save the lost.

[13 : 19] You did not wait for me to draw near to you. But you clothe yourself in frail humanity.

You did not wait for me to cry out to you. But you let me hear your voice calling me.

I'm forever grateful to you. I'm forever grateful for the cross.

I'm forever grateful to you. I knew that you came to seek and save the lost.

To seek and save the lost. I knew that you came to seek and save the lost.

[14 : 39] I knew that you came to seek and save the lost. Please be seated. Tonight we're going to have a baptism.

We're going to see little Kaya be baptized. And we are welcoming her into the church. And we are making a statement of faith. We are in faith hoping that one day she will receive all of these promises that are made for her today.

And so I invite Lori and Roar to come forward. And I just want to ask a question of each of you before we have our baptism as well. Now she's going to stay that way when I baptize her, right?

Well first I'd like to ask Lori, what does it mean to you to have this baptism take place? Well we've thought a lot about it.

And we think that Kaya's baptism is really a symbol of God's intention for her life. And then for us it's a response and an acknowledgement that she's born into God's family and belongs to Him.

[16:00] And that He really desires to have a relationship with her. And from that point then we hope and pray that as she grows she will have Christ as the center of her life.

And that she'll lead her life according to the beginning that she's getting this evening. And I think the other part of it for us is a recognition that to raise a child in a manner that encourages their growth in knowing the Lord.

That you really can't do it alone and you need the support of family and friends and the church. And that's also a part of the service tonight. And I think an important part. Thank you.

Thank you. And Roar, how does this baptism and Kaya in your life, how does this affect your life? I mean I think what's been quite clear you know when Kaya came to us is we have so much to be grateful for.

I mean what the Lord has done in our lives and now we've been given this opportunity to raise a child. So I mean that's the first thing you really feel that we have a lot to be grateful for.

[17:08] I also find that I've had to look at my prayer life and I find that I'm a lot more serious in my prayer life. And I really feel that I need to seek the Lord's guidance.

Kaya did not come with an instruction manual so I kind of need the Lord to help me out. And we're hoping that Kaya will grow up in God's family and you know I will probably be one of her role models.

And I better check out my role models so I know what I'm doing. Okay, as you stay up here let's have everybody stand together. And we are affirming the faith that we have in our Lord Jesus Christ in this baptism as well.

So let's say the baptismal covenant, this agreement between us and God and our belief together. Let us join with those who are committing themselves to Christ and renew our own baptismal covenant.

Do you believe in God the Father? I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

[18:17] I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day He rose again. He descended into heaven and He seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead. Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit? I believe in God the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.

Amen. Please be seated. And I'd like to invite the God parents to come forward. I'm going to move this. We'll go back.

Now I'm asking this question of all the godparents and the parents as well.

[19 : 43] Will you be responsible for seeing that the child you present, Kaya, is nurtured in the faith and life of the Christian community? I will, with God's help.

Will you, by your prayer and witness, help this child to grow into the full stature of Christ? I will, with God's help. Do you renounce them?

Do you renounce the false values of this world? I renounce them. Do you renounce all sinful desires that draw you from the love of God? I renounce them.

Do you renounce Satan and all his works? I renounce them. Do you turn to Jesus and accept him as your Savior? I do. Do you put your whole trust in his grace and love?

I do. Do you promise to obey him as your Lord? I do. Do you repent? These are questions that involve commitment to Jesus Christ. They're the questions that one day Kaya will be answering.

[20 : 45] Together, let's support Her and the parents. Will all of you who witness these vows do all in your power to support these persons in their life in Christ?

Amen. We pray a prayer of thanksgiving.

We thank you, almighty God, for the gift of Christ your Son who leads us through his death and resurrection, from the bondage of sin to everlasting life.

We thank you for the promise to be our God and the God and Father of our children. Fulfill your promise to us, good Lord. For Jesus Christ's sake, receive those who are to be baptized into your kingdom.

By this water grant that they might be buried with Christ in his death and receive the new birth from above. May they be cleansed from sin and continue forever in the risen life of Jesus Christ our Savior.

[21 : 53] To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit be all honor and glory, now and forever. Amen. Kaya, I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

I mark you with the sign of the cross and mark you as Christ's own forever. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. And if you would all please stand. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Heavenly Father, we give you thanks for the gift of your son, Jesus Christ. We thank you that by Him we are united to you.

[23 : 06] We thank you that we are united to Jesus in His death and resurrection, that you give us new life as this water signifies. And now we pray your blessing upon Kaia. We pray your blessing upon Lori and Rohr as well as they raise her.

We pray, Father, that you give them wisdom and strength, give them spiritual discernment, and bring Kaia into a living relationship with you, in Jesus' name, Amen.

And now I ask you to turn to one another, greet one another, and maybe tell the person next to you when you were baptized. Well, congratulations. Thank you.

Thank you. All right. Thanks. Congratulations. All right. Thank you for being godparents. Yeah. God bless. God bless. God bless. God bless.

God bless. God bless. God bless.

[24 : 25] Please be seated. God bless. God bless. God bless. Number one. There's just a couple of announcements that I have to give.

The first is that Harry Robinson is going to be preaching in just a few minutes the last of a series of The Sex Files, God's Truth on Sexuality. And he's preaching on Eros redeemed, sexuality and forgiveness.

This has been a very good series. It's been a series that has been very relevant, and God has worked through it. Now, as part of this series, we are also having Wednesday night video of the subject of homosexuality, and it's the last one this Wednesday.

They've been excellent videos. The one this Wednesday will be examining pro-gay theology. All are welcome to come 7.30 in the Trendle Lounge, and there will be a time for question and answer afterwards with clergy from this church.

And my last announcement is that there is a great social thing called Guess Who's Coming to Dinner. And this is a great way to get to know people.

[25 : 32] It's a progressive dinner. You start with hors d'oeuvres here at the Trendle Lounge and go to various homes and have dinner with people that you probably don't know, and then afterwards come back for dessert as well.

It costs \$7, and anyone interested can sign up at the welcome table at the back. It's a great time to exercise the gift of hospitality and friendship. And it's \$7 at the Trendle Lounge table.

And I'll invite Carly and Adair to come forward for an interview. Hi, Adair.

Thank you. Question 13, of food?

Thank you.

[27 : 06] His work is perfect and all His ways are just. Ascribe greatness to our God the Rock.
His work is perfect and all His ways are just. A God of faithfulness and without injustice.
Good and upright is He. A God of faithfulness and without injustice.
Good and upright is He. Ascribe greatness to our God the Rock.

His work is perfect and all His ways are just. Ascribe greatness to our God the Rock.
[28 : 24] His work is perfect and all His ways are just. A God of faithfulness and without injustice.
Good and upright is He. A God of faithfulness and without injustice.
Good and upright is He. Good and upright is He.

As the tear pass for the water. So my soul longs after you.
You alone are my heart's desire and I long to worship you.

[30 : 02] You alone are my heart's desire and I long to worship you.
You alone are my heart's desire and I long to worship you. You alone are my heart's desire and I long to worship you. You alone are my heart's desire and I long to worship you.

But I want you to beal away because I have no love you. Hyatt ■■■ens and without haste. guitar solo guitar solo

You alone are my heart's desire And I long to worship You You alone are my strength, my shield To You alone may my spirit yield You alone are my heart's desire And I long to worship You Heavenly Father, we thank You for giving this desire to worship You.

We pray that these gifts given tonight might be a symbol of our worship and our giving of ourselves to You. Bless these gifts for Your service, that they might be used to extend Your kingdom, to draw people into relationship with You.

[33 : 12] In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen. Please be seated. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Tonight's second reading is taken from the back section of the Blue Pew Bibles and is found on page 159, 159.

The reading is 1 Corinthians 6, 9-20. That's 1 Corinthians 6, beginning at verse 9.

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived, neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor sexual perverts, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers 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 in the spirit of our God.

[34 : 29] All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be enslaved 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 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 therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never. Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her?

For as it is written, the two shall become one flesh. But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Shun immorality.

Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God?

[35 : 38] You are not your own. You are bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. This is the word of the Lord. Shun immorality. Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord.

It's just I'm getting old and my eyes are weak, so I thought this big print would be helpful. Let's pray. Our God and Father, thank you for this lovely summer evening.

Thank you for this wonderful and mixed crowd of people that are gathered together. Father, thank you that it is your purpose that we should hear your word as from you, and that your Holy Spirit would give us ears to hear it, hearts to obey it, and that by it you would accomplish in us that which is your purpose for us.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. And then you look at 1 Corinthians that was just read for you, chapter 6 and verse 9.

I was intrigued to read this week in the paper about the Amish people down in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

[37 : 44] The Manchester Guardian put a big article on it in their weekly paper. And it was telling about how among the young people who belong to the Amish community, and that's the community that drive buggies and use horses and don't use electricity, and are by modern technological standards, they're very backward.

By modern farming standards, they're very advanced. So they're an interesting group of people. And they've started, the young people there were arrested and accused of pushing drugs among the young people in that community.

And the thing that really helped me about the article was that a woman who's been herself a lifetime member of the community said, we're no different than anybody else.

And so, if you think your religion is to protect you and make you different from other people, it ain't. And you have, we all have exactly the same struggle.

Now, I'd like to make one or two scandalous statements. One is that I think celibacy is the most appropriate response to the announcement of the kingdom.

- [39 : 21] A lot of people have celibacy forced on them, perhaps. But celibacy is also a wholehearted and wonderful response to the reality of the kingdom.
- And everybody should consider it. Shall I move on? All right. The next thing I'd like to tell you is that we live in a culture.
- It's very different from the culture I was brought up in, but it's the one we live in now, where our sexuality is treated as though we were human animals with political rights.
- All the debate about sexuality has to do with political rights. And that our responsibility is that we are animals and just do what we're made to do.
- And so, it's different. Because for Christians and for people who like the baby that was baptized tonight, they have a hard life in front of them.
- [40 : 33] Because they are asked to be morally accountable children of God with respect to their sexuality.
- You can't just dissolve into the culture which says it's your political right to be whatever you want to be and do whatever you want to do. That no longer is something that belongs to you as a Christian.
- You have to be counter-cultural in that regard. Now, the accumulation of wealth, material possessions, heroic medical technology has relieved us of the necessity of moral and sexual maturity and accountability, or so we imagine.
- Our world is desperately in search of a great breakthrough in our human sexuality so that we are all totally promiscuous and totally bisexual.
- What glorious freedom that is. And that's the vision our society has. You're welcome to it. I'm glad I'm older. I want to say, then, three things about this.
- [41 : 58] First, I want to rehearse before you the story of where it all began. I want to take you back, at least momentarily, to chapter 3 of the book of Genesis.
- The second thing I want to do is to show you an exemplary city of the ancient world where emancipation from moral accountability, especially sexual accountability, was the spiritual, religious, and cultural agenda of the city.
- And in the midst of that city, the church of Jesus Christ came into being to claim the reality of another kind of kingdom.
- In other words, into that transient city came an eternal dimension, which was the landmark of a new creation.
- That's a very significant line, but you won't understand it for a while, but be patient. The third thing, then, that I want to talk to you about is the process of forgiveness by which God takes hold of the members of a fallen, lost culture and begins the work in them of establishing a new creation.
- [43 : 32] So first, let's look at Genesis chapter 3. It begins with meeting humanity without gender in the person of Adam, created in the image of God from the dust of the earth, and subsequently created male and female.
- This Adam was the one through whom the whole of creation was to relate to God, and God was to relate to the whole of his creation.
- That was the peculiar and particular responsibility of the whole of human society would be that God would relate, God the creator would relate to his whole creation through humanity, and the creation would be made responsible to God in the same way.
- Well, humanity is then the medium through which the primary relationship to God in this world has its being.
- Well, then the problem of gender breaks in on this humanity, which is in Adam. And God says, it's not good for man to be alone.

[45 : 06] And Adam says, I need someone who is flesh of my flesh and bone of my bone. And God, as you know, Adam was put into a deep sleep, and a rib was taken out of his side, his flesh and his bone, and out of that woman was created.

And with the creation of that woman, a dynamic alternative to primary and an exclusive relationship to God emerges.

You see, what I'm saying is that now God, who apparently was in the habit of coming and walking in the garden in the cool of the day, to have communion and fellowship with humanity, with his creature, now there is an alternative.

And the alternative is the possibility of a dynamic and exclusive relationship to God independent of that.

Now, God anticipated this, and so he said to the man, he, in effect, established this reality.

[46 : 37] He said to him, in our relationship, there's got to be a no clause in order that we understand each other better.

And so he said, you can take all the trees of the garden, the lemon trees and the apple trees and the orange trees and the banana trees and the walnut trees, and all the trees.

And so he said, you can take all the trees of the garden, and you can eat of the fruit of all of those trees without restraint.

You can indulge yourself. But he said, of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you must not eat.

That was where the no clause was introduced. Well, humanity suffers from this ever since, because there is an irresistible attraction to doing what you are told you're not to do.

[48 : 08] When someone says no to you, then all your humanity rises up and says, my integrity as a human being demands that I do what I'm told not to do.

Now, I have a very good friend who's a member of the Sunday School of St. John's Church and who is three years old.

And at the conclusion of the Sunday School year, his mother persuaded him to send a card, a thank you card, to his teacher.

And she bought the card, and she gave it to him, and he took a pencil and scribbled all over it, to which his mother said, my, that's wonderful.

And she saw undoubted artistic talent in the way that he did it. And then she took the card and put it in the envelope and carefully wrote the address of the teacher on the front of the card.

[49 : 23] And when he saw the address there, he said, should I do some drawing on the envelope? She said, yes, but don't mess up the address, which is at the center.

And he said, of course I won't do that. And he took it off into a corner and came back and gave it to his mother, having scribbled the address out and nothing more.

Well, the problem that Eve ran into was much the same. The problem of our humanity is much the same.

When we're told no, we've got to do something about it. Now, in the scene which takes place in the Garden of Eden, you will remember that there was a serpent.

And the serpent was, in a sense, there. He was a crafty snake, as we're told. And he discussed the whole problem with them.

[50 : 34] And they said to him that Eve had come to think of this tree as being in the center of the garden. And the serpent discussed and said, God doesn't want you to eat of that tree?

And she said, no. Because when we eat of that tree, the fruit of that tree is the knowledge of good and evil.

And when we do that, we will die. Now, the serpent was very clever and said to her, but consider this.

What will the knowledge of good and evil do for you? You will become as God. You have been created in his image. With the knowledge of good and evil, you'll be even more like him.

You will understand him. You'll be able to do his work much better than you can do it now. God. So, isn't it logical that you should eat of the fruit of this tree?

[51 : 45] Isn't this what God really intended you to do? I mean, what he says and what he really intends, that's still a problem in our time.

There are so many people who tell us that what God said is not what he really intended to say. And they tell us what he intended to say. Well, that was their problem too.

Because the serpent persuaded them that if they would eat of this, they would become more God-like in that they would have the knowledge of good and evil.

But they were concerned because the postscript to this event was that you will surely die.

To which the serpent laughed in scorn and said, You mean that the God who has created life should allow death?

[52 : 48] Impossible. All the vitality and all the vigor and all the promise and all the vision that attaches itself to the dynamic of life that this God should take that away?

Quite unthinkable that he would do that. I'm afraid that's just another example of God not saying what he really intended to do.

And so they ate of the fruit. Well, the advantage of this was they saw that the fruit was good for food and man needs food.

They saw that the fruit was artistically pleasing and man has this deep aesthetic need which he associates with his essential spirituality and that would be satisfied.

And furthermore, it would make one wise. And so for those three reasons they ate of the fruit. Well, the wisdom which they received was not the ancient wisdom that the scriptures subsequently came to teach about that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

[54 : 17] This was another kind of wisdom. The defiance of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. And that's strongly advocated again in our time and in our city.

That what man has to do in order to find his true fulfillment is to live in defiance of the unjust impositions of the will of God on his life.

That's the breakthrough and that's the wisdom. So having eaten of the fruit, they now knew themselves to be more God-like.

They could take from God the work of deciding what was good and evil.

they could now call evil good and they could now call good evil and if both those things didn't work death was always there to relieve them of final responsibility.

[55 : 22] You know, that death made life meaningless anyway. So they had they had a case made for themselves. They could call anything they wanted good. They could call anything they wanted evil and eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die so it doesn't matter anyway.

And that was the new status that man had achieved before God. Well, now I want to show you what happened in a particular city where several centuries later, many centuries later, you see the results of this.

Now you've got to remember that cities in the Bible tend to be the places where our humanity attempts to get along without any God except the ones they can create or they can adapt for their own purposes.

So this ancient city had adapted from the east a goddess whose name was Aphrodite and she had a son whose name was Eros and she began by being the patron of marriage and she became subsequently because of the problems of marriage that we all know, she subsequently became the patron of sensual passion and Eros who was in a sense the vital principle of life that brought life to its pinnacle and made it a power to be reckoned with.

Eros was consumed with sexual gratification. So that was at the core of the city. That was the religion of the city.

[57 : 33] And as you know, sexuality and religion are very close together. I mean, most people in their lives, if they make a great success of sexuality in terms of fulfillment, I suppose you might say, then usually their religion isn't worth a damn.

And if they make a great thing of religion, usually you can fill in the blank words.

And so that was the problem in the city. And so that what took place as the result of that is that Paul reviews the nature of this city when he says, ultimately, the kingdom of God can't belong to the wicked, to the unrighteous.

And you know, when that baby was baptized, what we used to say in the old prayer book words was, she was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.

And one of the reasons, I mean, one of the purposes for baptism is to claim that inheritance. inheritance. And that's the inheritance that Paul speaks about when he says, ultimately, that inheritance cannot be claimed by the unrighteous.

[59 : 41] Because the unrighteous are basically on a pattern of self-destruction. They won't be there to inherit it. And so, Paul then catalogs in the text that you have in front of you what has happened to these people.

And he says that in the city they have become sexually immoral. That is, they have legitimized prostitution.

And that's where sexuality and religion work closely together. because the religion provided the occasion for the spiritual experience of going to a prostitute and finding in that something which was your religious duty and fulfillment.

And Paul just said that as far as he was concerned that was simply sexual immorality. He goes on and says further in the catalog that both the active and passive partners in homosexual intercourse are prevalent in the city.

And in the Greek it puts in the names of them both, the active and passive partners in homosexual intercourse. Thieves, those who rob with violence, the greedy, the drunkards, the slanderers, and the swindlers.

[61 : 16] So, Paul comes to the conclusion, such were some of you. That's the city in which the gospel was being preached.

The gospel was being preached because already there was established in the city a synagogue. And one of the rulers of the synagogue was Sosthenes, and his name is at the head of the letter in chapter 1, verse 1, as being with Paul as he writes this letter.

So, there's the synagogue there. To the synagogue, persecuted and being driven out of Rome, comes Priscilla and Aquila, the tent makers. They join the congregation and bear witness to the fulfillment of the Jewish hope in the coming of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

So, when Paul arrives in Corinth, he finds these two people, he joins with them, and he starts to proclaim Christ, Jesus, as the Christ of God.

And along comes Silas and Timothy, and they join him. Soon, the synagogue won't have him anymore because they disagree with the impact of what he's saying.

[62 : 45] And so, very thoughtfully, Paul moves out and takes most of the significant members of the congregation with him. And just so that everything will be happy, he moves into the house next door.

And there he carries on. people and they go and they create a street scene. One of the kinds of things that would happen in a city like Vancouver all the time.

A demonstration in the streets in which they are objecting to the preaching of Paul. And they take it to the Roman consul and the Roman consul says, this is no significance at all as far as I'm concerned.

Go and look after it yourself. And so, in order to try and impress him with the significance and the gravity of the situation, they beat up on Sosthenes out in front of his quarters.

So, you can see here is the beginning of a church in a city which is made up of the sexually immoral and all those people that were catalogued and somehow the gospel is reaching them and some of them who are in the catalog then become members of the congregation.

[64 : 12] I wonder if there are parallels to that here. Such were some of you, Paul says. Some not all were like this, but all were capable of being among them.

So, you get God's work in the synagogue and it's interesting, you see, because God has already demonstrated his sovereignty by saying to Paul when Paul was subject to acute persecution.

Paul said, I have many members, many people in this city who are my people, and you must go on preaching the gospel so that I can draw them to myself.

So, that's the picture of where things went wrong, and then the city which demonstrates how wrong they were, and then you see the beginnings in the preaching of the gospel through the synagogue and the old ancient structure of Jewish religion, you see the beginning of the proclamation of a new creation and a new Adam, which is Jesus Christ, the beginning of something altogether new.

Well, then it goes on and says to those who have come to join the church by baptism, because this is a very specific passage with reference to baptism, and Paul says to them, this is what God has done for you.

[66 : 05] You were washed, and that's what baptism represents, the implication is that you as mature Christians came and chose baptism, whereby God washed you.

You were sanctified, that is, God called you to be his own, to be, to become a saint, not a saint, remember this, you see, not a saint by reason of moral achievement, because he said your moral achievement leaves somewhat to be desired at this point, but God has washed you from that, and God has called you to be a saint, and God has justified you.

That is, you have, as it were, appeared before God, and you have been acquitted. All the guilt which belong to you, which is yours because of your, our, our, our, our, our, our, it belongs to us because of our disobedience of God's will and purpose, all that God has has acquitted you of, and you are now theologically something that you must morally become.

Theologically, you are washed, you are sanctified, you are justified, and you see, all that is because of the person of the Lord Jesus, that he is the founder of a new humanity, the beginning of God's new creation.

You see in Corinth the breakdown of the old creation, you see the creation being built, the, the, the, the old creation thought itself emancipated from God and disobedient to God, and yet the new creation is the work of God in establishing what he does to you.

[68 : 48] Now, the, the way this, the way this works, you see, is that when you stand before God as, as those who, as human beings, have chosen to live in disobedience to God and the consequent immorality that has invaded your culture and your society, as you stand before God, God takes your sin and it is born by Jesus Christ on the cross so that God is free to forgive you because Christ has borne your sins in his body on the tree.

So, into this moral sewage bed, the new creation begins to emerge as God takes people and washes them, claims them to be his own, justifies them, and this on the basis of the fact that he has the sovereign right to forgive them because the penalty of their sins has been paid.

Now, that's where forgiveness comes in. You see, we think in terms of forgiving one another, but the primary reality is that we don't forgive one another, not easily, and we tend to hold one another under condemnation.

what we do, you see, when we are disobedient to God, when we are sexually immoral, we rationalize it, and we say, well, there are reasons for this to have taken place, but God doesn't rationalize it, he forgives it, and there's a great difference because our society is so desperate to rationalize our sexual immorality and make it appear to be politically correct, but that's not the way that God purposes to accomplish the new creation.

That still remains part of the old and dying creation that lives in defiance of God, the new creation that lives in the faith of Jesus Christ is one in which God has said the basis of this is forgiveness, and so that every person who comes in the place of baptism comes in repentance acknowledging their sinfulness because they have gone along with the old creation, and they have recognized that God has forgiven them through Jesus Christ, and they respond to this claim that God makes on their life.

[72 : 27] And I want to assure all of you that this is a bona fide claim that God makes forgiveness on each of your lives, no matter who you are, that you are forgiven through Jesus Christ.

And you have to decide whether forgiveness is because God wants to establish this new creation on the basis of forgiveness.

That's why if you come here to communion, the first thing you're asked to do is to acknowledge your sinfulness and receive the promise of God's forgiveness.

That's what we did tonight. That's what we do at every service, to do that, because that's the basis of our relationship to God, not by rationalizing ourselves or our position, but by accepting God's forgiveness.

Let me just, I'll quit in a minute, but let me just go through this. Paul then goes on to explain, because sexuality is so close to us, and our great joy in life comes from sexuality, our greatest sorrows and misery in life comes from our sexuality.

[74 : 04] So it's not an easy thing to handle, and it concerns the fact that we are in this body of humiliation, and this body isn't easy to deal with.

So Paul, in the latter part of the chapter, says this, just so you can read it over, let me give you some guidance in doing that. He says, for me as a Christian, everything is permissible.

Well, you know, that was one of the boasts of the Corinthians. They were wonderfully emancipated people. Everything was permissible. But Paul's, I won't be mastered by anything.

My sexuality is to serve me. I am not going to be mastered by it. And then he goes on and explains that the body is not primarily meant for sexual immorality.

The body, he says in Romans, is the thing you offer to God as a living sacrifice. The body is that by which you become a member of Christ's body and remember that it is the God with whom you have to deal is the God who raised Christ bodily from the dead.

[75 : 29] And you become a member of Christ's body in your body, still in your body. And he says, you've got to be careful then because you belong to Jesus Christ.

He says, if you give yourself to a prostitute, you become one with her or him.

You become one with the prostitute. And that violates the fact that you are already one with Christ. Christ. So everything is permissible but my basic identity is that I am in my body one with Jesus Christ.

And I am a member of his body and my body, he says, our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit.

And so he shows you that though you may regard your body as a quite weak and useless kind of thing, which constantly gets you into trouble, he says, you are to value your body, to think highly of it.

[76 : 53] Lovely to hear that testimony about the basketball players. You know, that you are to have this high regard for your body as the temple of the Holy Spirit, as the means by which you are a member of Christ, and as one by which you are made one with him, as that in which you share the reality of the resurrection.

And so it's not surprising that Paul says, I can do anything, but I know who my body belongs to, and I don't want to violate that belonging.

And then he concludes with these memorable words when he says, you're not your own, you are bought with a price.

There it is. baptism is the public recognition of the validity of that claim accepted by you.

That's what these parents are doing, bringing their child to be baptized. They're accepting the reality that that child does not primarily belong to them, that child belongs to Jesus Christ.

[78 : 33] And they are entrusted with the care of that child, to bring that child up to claim the inheritance, which can never be given to the unrighteous.

They acknowledge the claim, you're not your own, you are bought with a price. And I hope that you've got this straight, all of you.

And I hope if you have got it straight, that you, you know, in essence, confirm that reality by acknowledging before God in this service, the reality of the fact that you are not your own, you are bought with a price.

And though we live in a culture which says, I am my own and I can do whatever I want, that is a fool's fantasy.

reality. And the reality is that the eternal God through Jesus Christ has laid claim to your life that he may wash you, sanctify you, and justify you, and in you bring to be into being that new creation.

[80 : 07] which is a sharing in the resurrection of Jesus himself. Amen.