

1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

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- [0 : 00] Well, this morning, we're going to continue our series in 1 Thessalonians.
- Has anyone been reading ahead? And our topic this morning is sex. I want to start here as we talk about it this morning.
- Sex is a good thing. It's a really good thing. Something that God created. And in His creation, He looked at it and He declared, it is very good.
- And my heart this morning is filled with a desire as your pastor that you would embrace the wholehearted glory and goodness of what God has given us in sex.
- And that you would think deeply and carefully about what a gospel-shaped sex life looks like for you.
- [1 : 22] And I'm aware as I do this this morning, as I look at your faces. Some of you, I know some of your stories.
- I know how much pain and brokenness there is. I know some of the struggles that you face. And I want you to know that my greatest desire for you this morning.
- We just sang it earlier. Jesus, you are stronger. You are stronger. Sin is broken. You have raised us. That there is hope for us.
- That there is hope that this goodness that God originally gave us can be ours. I also say that as a father, I've been thinking about my own children this week.
- I look at my two and four-year-old and I think about how they will grow. I think about the world they will grow up in. And I long for them as well. I long that they will be convinced the depth of their soul.
- [2 : 29] As I hope for you, you will be convinced. That sex is a good thing. It's given to us to cherish.
- And to use as he has designed it. And I say all this because I know that we live in a day where as a people and as a culture, we have a hard time handling sex the way God designed it.
- Really, sex is in the air we breathe and the water we drink of the culture that we live in. There was a study done a few years ago that said that in 1983, the advertisements in magazines, 15% of the time, used sex appeal to sell their products.
- In the 20 years after that, that amount doubled. Another study said that the millennials, some of you are part of that, broadly in our culture, 90% of this generation will have intercourse before marriage.
- 50% of them, 50% of evangelicals who sit in the pews have been at least at one point sexually active before marriage.
- [3 : 57] Even if now they're repentant of it and don't continue in that pattern. The statistics are staggering. But you know this, don't you? I don't have to spend time haranguing us about our culture or what it is.
- You know this, don't you? Links pop up on the sidebar of the websites you look at. Your email flashes at you a site, a link that says, come, look at me.

Right? You get requests on your phone from your classmates in school. Send me a picture. If you go through the checkout line, it's stop and shop.

Just scan the headlines. It's everywhere. And you know this, don't you? We are bombarded with messages and tales about other people's sex lives and how to improve your own.

I was struck on Thursday in the Yale Daily News. There was an op-ed piece by Suzanne Fritzberg and Rachel Loof. I'm not sure if I got her name right. And it was a piece that called upon Yale to develop a culture of sexual respect as a part of a lead-up to the Take Back the Night March that happens, that celebration that happened this weekend.

[5 : 13] The Take Back the Night March is a great thing because it speaks out against sexual violence. It speaks out about coercion and rape and abuse. And they rightly said, Yale needs to change.

We need to progress in our having a culture of sexual respect. As they wrote their views, they said this. Sexual respect means respect for yourself.

It means having the opportunity to notice and validate your own desires rather than feeling the pressure to conform to social expectations regarding sex. It also means having the opportunity to participate judgment-free in all the glorious consensual sex you want.

And what they propose on one hand is a beautiful and right thing, a huge step in the right direction to denounce abuse, to defuse peer pressure in our culture today.

That there should be no coercion in this area. And that's right. And yet, did you hear how what they said illustrates what I think is the broad message of our culture today?

[6 : 20] The dominant message about sex. It is normal. To be a healthy human being means you are a sexual being who either is presently or will be and should be sexually active.

Our culture says you are a sexual being. And you need to find a way to be sexual. In fact, I would argue that it's become so normal that to suggest abstinence from sex is often regarded like if I told you that you should stop breathing or stop eating.

It is a natural urge. It is a necessary human desire. And to limit your sexuality would be considered limiting your humanity.

And to limit someone else's sexual experience is to violate their human rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. And in our culture, it is above public critique.

Judgment-free. Glorious consensual sex. I don't know where you're at today. I don't know how you think about these things.

[7 : 38] But I wonder how much maybe you've been more affected by our culture than you even know. Maybe it sounds something like this in your internal self-talk.

How can it be wrong when it feels so natural? If we really love one another, why would sex be wrong? If no one's getting hurt, what's wrong with it? All of these are the outflow of this perspective in our culture today.

And so, on one hand, we live in a remarkably sexualized culture, and we are shaped by it. And yet, on the other hand, there's this church culture, isn't there?

There's this church culture that maybe you grew up in that says something different. The message you've heard is this. Sex is bad. It's dirty. Don't do it. Stop it. Don't think about it.

Sex is something for you to avoid at all costs. With a strong message of judgment, if you blow it here, oh boy, you have blown it.

[8 : 41] It's a message of condemnation. And out of this church culture, then, comes two different kinds of responses. On one hand, we may say, well, we've met the standard.

We've kept it. And look at how great we are. And we developed self-righteousness. Against this culture that's terribly sexualized. Look at how pure and wonderful we are. What a terrible response that is.

And then, on the other hand, we become buried under guilt and condemnation. Because we know the lust that wells up in our hearts at times.

We know the time when the hormones raged and we crossed a line we said we'd never cross. And feel like we can't ever go back. Or maybe for some of you it wasn't your choice at all.

But someone imposed themselves upon you. You feel dirty and shameful. The church message doesn't give us a lot more hope.

[9 : 49] The church message of don't do it. It's dirty. It's wrong. Doesn't give us a lot more hope. Does it? And so we struggle. We struggle to handle sex the way God designed it.

And this morning we want to explore what difference can the gospel make. Turn with me to 1 Thessalonians chapter 4.

The page number is in your bulletin. I forgot to write it down. 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. And as you're turning there, we're going to look at a passage that's going to deal with this.

Remember what Nick preached last week. If you remember, at the end of chapter 3, Paul prays for the Thessalonians. And at the core of his prayer, he's saying, God, make these people a loving and a holy people.

Make them. Make them, please, God. Make them. The people that you have saved them to be in Jesus Christ. Set them free from sin.

[10 : 49] And set them free to live a life out of the gospel that is rich and full and glorifying to God. That's what Paul is addressing then.

He's, in this first section of chapter 4, he's going to hone in particularly on the issue of sex. So let's read the passage and then pray together. 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, verse 1.

Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you were doing, that you do so more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

For this is the will of God, your sanctification, that you abstain from sexual immorality, that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like Gentiles who do not know God.

That no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness.

[11 : 58] Therefore, whoever disregards this disregards not man, but God who gives his Holy Spirit to you. God, we pray this morning for your Spirit.

God, we pray that as we look into your Word this morning, that you administer to our hearts. Lord, give us hope. Hope in our brokenness, hope in our shame and guilt.

Hope that we can live a life that is pleasing to you because of your Gospel, because of what you have done for us in Christ.

God, I pray that you would fill me, my heart, my mouth with your words. God, that your Word would speak to us this morning. We pray this in Jesus' name.

Amen. To understand our passage and our lives aright this morning, we need to look at three questions regarding sex.

[13 : 04] First one is, what does God say about it? Two, why does God care about it? And three, how can we do what God calls us to? Right? So the what, the why, and the how.

First, the what. What does God say? This passage is fairly straightforward, isn't it? There's not a lot of exegetical gymnastics we need to do to figure this out. Verse three, For this is the will of God, your sanctification, that you abstain from sexual immorality.

Or verse seven, For God has called us, has not called us to impurity, but in holiness. What does this mean? In order to understand it, we need to step back for a minute.

We need to look at the big picture of the Bible. We need to look at how God set up the world, so that we can understand why Paul is saying this. So we have to go all the way back to Genesis 1. In Genesis 1, God creates the world and everything in it.

He creates human beings, male and female. And if you remember, in Genesis 2, He specially creates the woman for the man. And He says, These two shall become one flesh.

[14 : 13] God creates sex in the very creation of humanity so that these two people, body and soul, will be joined together in a union that is meant to be glorious, that is meant to be full of joy and pleasure.

That is meant to be the most intimate relationship of any human relationship. And He says, This is very good. He says, This is very good.

In the covenant commitment between a man and a wife, This is a good thing. This is what I made it for. If you've ever thought about it, in Genesis 2, there's a little piece of poetry.

When Adam sees Eve, and I translate it, Wow! Because he sees Adam, and he just bursts out in song.

And he says, God has given me this thing, and it's glorious. It's wonderful. And it has a purpose.

[15 : 19] God hasn't just given us sex to enjoy in marriage. But he's given us sex to enjoy in marriage because it pictures. It pictures a relationship of intimacy between God and His people.

And it is meant to remind them of the two becoming one, pointing to the three in one of the God who lived in perfect unity, in perfect union, in perfect intimacy with each other, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit before time began.

And we know this because of Genesis 1 and 2. But we don't know this in our experience in our world today, right? Because Genesis 3 happened, and we've never been able to get back completely.

Right? Genesis 3 comes in. Humanity rebels against God, and everything is corrupted. Everything is fallen. The relationship between God and man is broken, and the relationship between man and man is broken.

So the relationship of how we handle sex is broken. And so today we see that sex is either made too much of, this thing that God gave us as a signpost, as a good thing to point to His goodness.

[16 : 40] forgiveness. We take the gift and we make it the God. And we make too much of it. And this is what we live for. And this is what we're consumed by.

And our lives are driven by a desire for it. Or we make too little of it. And sex becomes simply a physiological thing, like eating a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

We divorce the body and soul that God gave, that God meant to be in unity in a sexual act. And we say, well I can do this with my body and it doesn't make any difference about my soul.

And so we divorce it. We divorce it from God's intention. We divorce it from childbearing. We divorce it from the committed, commitment of marriage. And in all of this, we step outside of God's intended purpose for sex.

I think it becomes ultimately a self-centered activity where we seek our own release and pleasure and satisfaction. Oh, most of us aren't so bold to just say that.

[17 : 55] But I think that if we look at the depth of our heart into this mess, which we see the power of sex on display in our world in many ways, our passage speaks.

God steps in and says, you are to no longer live in those fallen patterns. You are to no longer engage in sexual immorality.

The word is porneia. It's what we, the Greek word from which we get pornography today. It is a very broad term. It means sexual activity outside of marriage. In the Roman context in Thessalonica, it would have talked, a man would have had three categories of women that he'd interact with.

His wife who would bear his children, his concubines who would care for his daily needs, and the prostitutes that he would go to for sexual satisfaction. And this was a common pattern.

And overlay that on top, both the Greek predisposition towards homosexuality and a lot of temple worship, a lot of religious worship that included sexual activity.

[19 : 07] And Paul had lots to say to the Thessalonian culture. All of these are outside the bounds, he says.

And so it is for us, too. Sexual activity, whether with another person or alone, whether in reality or in fantasy, whenever we engage to arouse our sexual drive and desire, we cross over this command to avoid sexual immorality.

Now listen, Martin Luther has a great thing that some of you may be very helpful to hear. Right? The difference between temptation and falling in sin. He says it this way, you can't keep the birds from flying over your head, but you can keep them from nesting in your hair.

Do you get it? You may have a thought, a desire, an impulse, a step in a direction towards sexual immorality.

That's not sin. It's a battle with sin. It's living in a fallen world. The sin is, what do you do with it? Do you let that bird come down, begin to put twigs, intertwine it with your hair, kind of settle in, sleep there every night, you know, lay some eggs, have a baby?

[20 : 32] This is cherishing. Sexual immorality. This is embracing. And God says, sex is good, but only as I designed it.

And here's the hard word. Ready? This means, for those of you who are single, no sex. If you're divorced, no sex.

If you're a widow or widower, no sex. If you're dating, no sex. If you're engaged, no sex.

If you're married, no sex with someone who's not your spouse. Jesus takes it one step further, doesn't he, in the Beatitudes.

He says, whoever thinks lustfully of a woman has lustful intent towards another commits adultery. So that means no thought life, no fantasies to get you through the day, no websites to slake your thirst, no flirting with the waiter at the restaurant, no lingering a little too long on the curves of a stranger walking by, no self-arousal to assuage the loneliness and the need for the release late at night.

[21 : 53] But the good news is, it does mean sex wonderfully given in marriage. All right, I'll just tell you, here's my fear. Half of you just tuned me out.

I gave that introduction earlier and you just heard me say exactly what I said, the church is preaching. And I want you to see that this passage helps us not stop there.

It is true. That is the message of the scripture. But I want you to see its goodness. And I want you to see why God cares so much about it. So let's look at the passage together to try to understand why this is so important.

All right? Paul gives three reasons for the instructions. Each one is rooted in the gospel. Each one of these reasons can reorient how we understand sex and our approach to our sexuality.

So look with me first, first in verses four and five. All right? Let's read it again so we can remember. That each of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God.

[22 : 57] The exhortation is to say, you, because of the gospel, are able to have self-control. You are able to conduct your body, to hold your body and to use it in a way that is honorable and that is holy.

That it is a set apart for the things that it was meant for and in a way that shows respect ultimately to God and also to others. And he sets a contrast.

He says, not like the lust of the Gentiles who do not know God. The passion of the lust of the Gentiles, the picture is of someone who is out of control.

Now, I don't want to be crass, but have you ever had a dog in heat? I didn't, but my neighbor did once. And we had a strapping male golden retriever, male, at our house.

And he went crazy. I don't know if you know how this works. When dogs, when they go in heat, they exude a pheromone, they exude a smell, a scent, and all the male dogs around it, they pick it up and they know.

[24 : 08] And they will do, they will jump through windows. They will go over fences. They will go crazy. And the female is indiscriminate and urgent.

She will take any comer. Whoever can get there, she will have. And this is the picture of a loss of self-control that I think that Paul is giving us in the lust of the Gentiles who don't know God.

When we make our sexuality our identity, we allow it to control us. We end up defending and excusing our behaviors at times.

And the thing is, it's a lie. Because this sexual freedom that we live in our culture saying, go for it, you can do it. It doesn't give us what we want.

What we want is the intimacy and the union that it was created for. But instead, what do we get? We get slavery. Slavery to lust that we can't stop.

[25 : 18] And we get emptiness. Because whether it's a one-night stand or a long-term dating relationship, when that person finally walks out the door, you're alone again.

God wants to restore your humanity in the gospel.

He wants you to be someone who can control yourself. And he has made you able to do that in Jesus Christ. I referenced it earlier, but let me say it again.

We just sang it. Jesus is stronger and he has broken the power of sin in your life by dying on the cross for you. Sin no longer has mastery over you because you have replaced it with a new master who is Christ.

And it does not mean that there will not be struggle and it does not mean there will not be failure. But Christ in his redemptive work is making you human again.

[26 : 25] Not one driven out of control by your sexual desire. So that's the first reason that the gospel gives us hope.

The second reason, look with me in verse 6. It says, so this is the second one, for this is God's will, going back to verse 3, this is God's will that you abstain from sexual immorality.

He's describing again verse 6, that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this manner. Friends, sexual immorality means that we are taking advantage of someone else.

We are crossing over a boundary of their life that we ought not to do. If you are married, you wrong your spouse with your porn addiction.

If you are married, you wrong both your spouse and your partner. If you engage in an affair, you violate the body and soul union that God gave you to have.

[27 : 30] And you destroy the trust and intimacy when you force yourself upon another. And even in marriage, do you see?

Your sexuality is not a free license. For those of you who are single, just so you know, if you get married, it doesn't suddenly mean whenever, wherever, because it's still controlled by love in Christ.

If you're single, anyone you're sexually active with is someone else's future spouse. And if it happens to be you, all you've done is create a pattern where you're encouraging them or setting a pattern of infidelity by being sexually active with them before you get married.

You're using them for your own satisfaction. It's a strong word, but I really believe it's true. If you're single and you use pornography, you warp your ability to ever love a real person because you are training your brain to engage sexually with a fantasy.

If you engage in sexting with others, you are sharing with someone else what is meant for only your future spouse.

[28 : 54] All of these are not expressions of love. And the gospel comes to us and it says, you don't have to live a selfish, unloving life anymore.

Jesus Christ has set his love upon you. He has loved you so much that he's died on the cross for your sin. He has poured his love out into your heart by the Holy Spirit.

And now you have a love to give to others that you never had before. So don't let your sex life be a place for you to continue to be selfish because you can love and serve others by your abstinence, by your seeking the pleasure of your spouse in marriage.

It's a good thing. Finally, thirdly, the gospel is able to restore to you a desire for the best things.

Verses one, Paul reminds them, hey, we instructed you that you would live, how you're supposed to live to please God. And I think part of what he's saying is before, who did you seek to please?

[30 : 16] He sought to please yourself. Your greatest desire was ultimately oriented around you. But God comes in and he says, no, there's a greater desire for you.

There's a desire that I have planted in you for my glory. my glory that I won't give up, my glory that I won't share with another.

This is why I've made you and this is why I've redeemed you. And this is why I will come to judge the world. Do you see it in the second half of verse 6?

Right? That no one wrong or transgress his brother for, right, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things.

The Lord will not overlook this. There is no judgment-free glorious sex as much as we want in the world. There is lots of glorious sex within God's intended purpose that is judgment-free.

[31 : 30] glory. So God comes and he says, what do you really desire? Do you desire me above all things?

Do you desire my glory? This is what Jesus Christ came to save you for. To save you from your smaller desires. To save you from the little pleasures.

others. God comes and he says, you long for intimacy and union. Don't settle for the breadcrumbs and the crust of sex outside of my design.

But wait for the feast that is to come. I'll come back to that in a few minutes. So that's the why. The gospel gives us a renewed humanity, an ability to love and a new desire, a greater desire.

So how do we do that? Some of you are sitting there saying, please, Pastor Matt, do not not be practical in this sermon. Please give me something to do.

[32 : 44] Well, I'll give you a few things to do. But before I do that, I have a few words for you, a few words for different ones of you in this audience. first of all, for those of you who are married, I want you to see how wonderfully glorious sex is meant to be.

It is one aspect of this total body and soul union that God has called you into in marriage. And God calls you to celebrate it. God calls you to cultivate it.

God calls you to enjoy it. Oh, there are seasons. There are seasons where physical inability or personal trials. Sometimes those seasons are even long.

But in your marriage recognize God intends for this to be a part. And however you can continue to pursue that, this is a good thing. It's a part of marriage that God intended for you.

So pursue it. Word for those of you who are single, and I speak with compassion because I know what it's like. I was over 35 when I got married.

[33 : 56] So I lived for a while as a single. And I want to encourage you, see that God's grace is rich and sufficient for you even in the context of your pursuit of purity as a single.

Some of you may know of John Stott. He was a British church statesman, great theologian and pastor. He lived 89 years.

I was going to say sexually pure. He probably would say no because I lust in my heart just like every other sinner. But he was faithful to the command to abstain from sexual immorality as a single man.

So he has these words for those of you who are single. What about us? That is, what about us singles? We too must accept this apostolic teaching however hard it may seem as God's good purpose both for us and for society.

We shall not become a bundle of frustrations and inhibitions if we embrace God's standard, but only if we rebel against it. It is possible for human sexual energy to be redirected, sublimated would be the Freudian word, both into affectionate relationships with friends of both sexes and into the loving service of others.

[35 : 23] Multitudes of Christian singles, both men and women, can testify to this. Alongside a natural loneliness accompanied at times by acute pain, we can find joyful self-fulfillment in the self-fulfillment in the self-giving service of God and other people.

this is a command for all of us. It has its own challenges.

I hope, I hope that you will have hope this morning that God can do this, that God can enable you to live a life where you abstain from sexual immorality to pursue purity.

So practically, how does this work? I have a diagram working with college students for 15 years. I have thought a little bit about how to help boys from 18 to 22, men, young men from 18 to 22 think through this.

It is a very ripe time for training. And part of what I have learned is that there are two levels upon which we need to fight this battle. Right? There is a battle for what are you doing?

[36 : 34] And then there is a battle for what is going on in your heart. Okay? And as we pursue this battle, let me give you some practical steps.

First of all, preserve your innocence. There are some of you this morning who are sitting there going, yeah, this isn't really a big, I don't think about this very much. I don't, and if you are asleep to the sexual pressures of your culture, and if you are asleep to the urges in your body, praise God.

Be thankful for it, that you are not fighting against it like a car whose accelerator is stuck like some people. Be thankful that you are at peace with this.

And don't feel like you're the geeky nerd who doesn't know anything about these things. Rejoice in the glory that you don't know anything about these things.

If God leads you to marriage, you will wake up and it will be a great thing. You don't need to rush it. Okay? Secondly, the external thing.

[37 : 43] There are times when we need external constraints to help us not do what we don't want to do and to do what we do want to do. So if you struggle with sexual temptation, here are some thoughts for you.

Jesus says, if your eye offends you, pluck it out. And if your hand offends you, cut it off. It is metaphorical, indeed, and yet, perhaps some of you need to cut off some things in your life.

Perhaps you need to put one of those really annoying internet filters that means you can't go to lots of websites like sportsillustrated.com to find out the story about how Yale and Quinnipiac vied for the national championship in hockey last night.

And you can't go to that because of that website. But you need it. You need it because there's other things on that website that will lead you to fall in this area.

You may need to cancel your TV subscription or your Netflix account because you can't not watch some of the media that's available today that leads you to lust in your heart.

[39 : 02] You may need to develop an accountability partner who's asking you every week about the things that you have done and not done, the websites you have looked at and not looked at, the thoughts that you have had and not had, the conversations you've had with your co-workers around the water cooler.

Do they even have water coolers anymore? You know what I mean. That's becoming it anyway. Accountability where you know that you're going to have to answer to someone who's going to ask you hey how did it go this week?

These kinds of external constraints. You may need to not go to a certain kind of party on a Friday night or a certain kind of club. You may need to choose what movies you're not going to watch anymore.

There are all sorts of ways. External decisions. And I'm not going to tell you what you have to do. You have to decide for yourself. But what I want you to see is these practical disciplines and commitments are some of the external controls that will help you pursue what God has for you.

One more word about this. If you are stuck, and I'm sure that some of you this morning are, if you feel like I've tried all those things Pastor Matt, I can't do it.

[40 : 24] I do them and I still fail and I still fall. God wants you to be engaged with other people who will help you. We want, we as the pastoral staff here, want to be the first line.

Come to us. Talk to us. We won't be surprised, I promise you. You're not the first one to struggle with these things. Come and talk to us and let us help you engage helpfully in a pursuit of sexual purity in your life.

But part of what I want you to see is this is often where lots of talks end, right? Don't do it, put in the control so you won't do it, all right, now you're good. That's not it at all.

Remember Jesus' words? If you look lustfully at a woman in your heart, we need the external controls to stop us from doing the things every day so that we can allow God to do a deep heart work in our lives, so that we can allow God to change our desires.

We need to go to the gospel and find in it the deep power to transform us. What does this look like? Firstly, it looks like this.

[41 : 47] We need to stand in the forgiveness and the cleansing of the gospel. Jesus Christ shed his blood for you so that you would be washed white as snow, clean from all of your sexual immorality and impurity.

He has forgiven you and he comes to you as a loving savior and he wraps around you his righteousness and he says this is now yours.

And as you stand before the judgment seat of God and God looks at you, he sees that righteousness and he says, welcome my son and my daughter. And this is the power.

This is the power to be free from guilt and shame. This is where the power of sin is broken in our lives. And then Jesus says, come, come and follow me.

I have given you a new life. I have made you born again so that your spirit, which was once dead and desired only the dead giving things of this world is now alive.

[42 : 58] And you are now alive to God. And the things that God promises to you, the things that God holds forth to you, he has redeemed you for a day.

We read about it earlier. He has redeemed you for a day, one day that is coming where there will be no more tears, no more sin, no more sorrow, no more pain, no more death.

Do you know why? Because there will be no more sin. It will be judged. It will be taken care of.

And he has called you now to begin to live the life that you will live fully on that day. And he has given you a desire for him.

And it may feel like a flickering candle in a hurricane. but he has given you a desire for him. And we need the external commands, the external constraints on our lives sometimes to let the wind of our culture die down so that that little candle can become a fire, so that we can passionately pursue God and his kingdom and not these other things.

[44 : 15] you know the quote from C.S. Lewis, you've heard it before, but I'll say it again. It would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong but too weak.

We're half-hearted creatures fooling around with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us. We're like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by an offer of a holiday at sea.

We are far too easily pleased. The Puritan Thomas Chalmers wrote the best sermon ever. You need to go read it.

The expulsive power of a new affection. We cannot overcome our desire for sexual immorality simply by saying no. What Lewis is saying is that we need to say yes to something greater.

And we need to believe that God in the gospel has given us something greater to pursue. And in the work of Christ we find healing from our brokenness.

[45 : 29] We find freedom from our guilt and shame. We find new things to live for. Friends, one of the most remarkable things is that there is no sex in heaven.

Jesus, interacting with the Pharisees, they ask him about a woman who's had multiple husbands appropriately, and whose will be her husband. He says, you don't understand God or the power of God.

There will be no marriage or giving of marriage in heaven. Do you know why? Because that original purpose sex for intimacy, for union, for joy, and for pleasure.

In heaven, we will have that with the Lord. He says, you are my bride. I have won you with my blood. I will purify you and I will bring you in to be at my feast with me.

This is what we read earlier in Revelation. Welcome to the wedding feast of the Lamb, and you are the bride. Jesus is the bridegroom, and with him, we find perfect intimacy.

[46 : 48] With him, we are perfectly united. With him, we find fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore. And friends, this is a gospel-shaped sex life.

This is the hope of the gospel for us. Let's pray. Let's pray. Jesus, we come to you and confess our impurity.

we confess our failures. We confess our shame and our guilt. Lord, we come to you because and we confess these things because you are faithful, because you are just, and you will cleanse us from all our impurities and our unrighteousness.

God, we ask this morning that you would make new, make new our desire to pursue purity in our lives for the sake of your gospel as a display of your power and for your glory.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.