

Flee From Sexual Sins!

This morning I am going to need to borrow your imagination. I want you to put yourself in the shoes of someone living 2000 years ago. Let's say that you grew up in Greece 2000 years ago. And, somehow, you come in contact with a Jew. This Jewish person tells you of the one, true God. And, over time, as you hear what he or she has to say, you believe in the same God as he or she does. And you learn of the temple to the LORD. And you yearn to go to Jerusalem to see the temple—to worship and pray there. So, you save up your money. And then you save up even more money because you know that you are supposed to offer an animal to be sacrificed. So, you save up your money and you get on a boat and you travel to Israel. You are looking forward to going to the Passover festival. You are looking forward to praying and worshipping with other non-jews, other gentiles like yourself. And then you walk up to the Temple. And what do you hear? You hear one animal after another lowing. You hear one guy after another yelling at you, trying to get you to buy his sheep instead of the other guy's sheep. You are going to the temple to worship and pray. Instead, all you hear is people yelling. All you smell is animal droppings. All you see is people coming to the temple to make money—not to worship the one, true God.

How horrible that would be, wouldn't it? And that's exactly what Jesus saw. Jesus saw his Father's temple—a place of worship, praise and prayer turned into a place where you could hardly hear yourself think, let alone worship. And he became so angry that he wove together a whip. And he went throughout the whole temple yard, which is a big area. He whipped those who were trying to get rich off of those who came to worship. Imagine what the disciples were thinking. Jesus was so angry that he wove together a whip. That took time. He beat up the people selling sheep and extorting the people. How many minutes dragged by and Jesus still wasn't done until he had finished cleaning out his Father's house. That is how much he loved his Father. That is how much he loved those worshipping there!

In the words we read from Paul this morning, we hear God's word saying that we are temples. Jesus cleaned us. He cleanse us of all our sins by obeying his Father perfectly. He cleaned us by being punished in our place. He cleaned us by dying and rising from the dead. He did all of this. And what's the result? We are temples. What does that mean? It means that we worship God in and with our bodies. We worship and serve him with what we do with and how we treat our bodies.

Since our bodies are glorious temples that God has prepared for serving and worshipping him, what do we do with our bodies? Paul tells us: *“Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. 19 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?”*

Your body is a temple for the Holy Spirit. Since this is the case, flee from—run away from sexual sins. The word that Paul uses here, *πορνεία* describes everything people do to break the 6th commandment. It describes the gift of sex that God gave to husband and wife and all the things people do with their words and actions to defile this commandment.

In our day, there are many ways that we make this commandment dirty. There are many ways that we take this temple that Jesus has cleaned and make them dirty again. For us men, this happens through our eyes. When I was going to school, I used to work in a beer depot. And in the back room there was a poster of a woman in a swimsuit. And on her swimsuit was “Budweiser” written in dozens of different languages. And, at one point, I remember laughing with the other guys who working there. We told each other that we were looking at the words, trying to translate the languages. But, let's face it, we weren't looking at the words.

Brothers, guard your eyes. For, Satan tempts us through our eyes. Now, women, I'm not a woman. I don't know how your minds work. And the longer I'm married and, as I see my girls growing up around, the more I'm convinced that I don't know how your minds work. I don't know the ways that Satan tempts you to dirty and defile your bodies—your temples. But, I'm sure that *you* do.

Paul tells us to run away from sexual sins. And for us living today, the biggest example we see of people acting against the sixth commandment is when a man and a woman start dating, and maybe they're even engaged. And, at some point, they start living together. Now, when I say “living together”, what do I mean? I mean that they are having sex before they are married. Or, they are giving people around them the impression that they are, even if they aren't.

If you watch TV, or the movies. If read books or magazines. If you grow up today and listen to what the world teaches, you would think that there is nothing wrong with living together before you are married. What what does the bible teach us? It says: ‘your bodies are temples for the Holy Spirit. And are defiling those temples when you act like you are married, but you are not.’

The bible teaches us with clear words. But it also teaches us with clear examples. You don't have to go very far into

the bible at all to see this. You read through the Old Testament and you get to the book Ruth. Here we meet a woman who loves this man Boaz. And how does she show her love? She finds him in the middle of the night and proposes to him. Imagine what was going through Boaz' mind. He was in deep sleep. And then there's a woman at the foot of his bed. And when he wakes up, she proposes to him. Now, notice how Ruth behaved. She could have had sex with Boaz that night. No one besides them would have known. But what does she do? She asks him to marry her—and that's all she does.

And notice how Boaz acts too. Ruth asks him to marry her. They agree to marry each other. They rejoice at this. But what does Boaz do? He has her leave *before* morning comes. He didn't want to make his temple dirty. And he didn't want anyone else to think that he and Ruth had had sex.

The examples from scripture and the words of scripture are clear. Run away from sexual sins. Don't live together before you are married. But here is where the painful part comes. This isn't a new thought for us to hear. But it is so very difficult to follow. What do you do when your brother or sister, your son or daughter is making it seem as if they are having sex before they are married? It is at these times when I have seen so very many Christians become cowards. Even when we *know* that their loved ones are sinning by living together before they are married, we say nothing. We know what God's word says. It's not hidden. But, we show by our actions that we don't trust what it says. And I've heard so many excuses: 'They are married in God's eyes. They love each other, so it's ok. That's the way people are doing it now days.' So many excuses and so little conviction. Do you love this world so much and your Savior so little that you would not speak the truth?

Think of Noah. He built the ark for 500 years. For 500 years he built an ark. Everyone around him thought he was stupid. No doubt, there were times he thought he was stupid. But, in the end, he trusted that what God said was true and good. Think of Sarah. She was old, really old, so old that everyone would think she was stupid when she told them that she was going to have a child. They laughed *at* her. And then a year later they laughed *with* her when she gave birth to Isaac. All these men and women trusted God, that what he said was both true and good for them. Do you? Do you trust God enough to wait until you are married until you act like you are married? Do you trust God enough to tell your son or daughter, your brother or sister that it is wrong to live together before you are married?

The truth is that there have been many times we have run toward these sins. We have been ashamed that God would have people wait till they get married. We have chosen to ignore these parts of God's word despite how clear they are. Jesus cleaned you. He cleaned out all of your dirty sins. He made your body a place where the Holy Spirit. He forgives all the times we have not trusted, all the times we have been ashamed of him, all the times we have been all too willing to run *toward* sexual sins instead of away from them. And, as we come before him and confess these sins, he forgives them, just like he has done with all our other sins.

Jesus has made our bodies temples for his Spirit. But he has done even more. Paul tells us: "*You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.*" Jesus bought you. And the price he paid was costly. On Good Friday he was separated from everyone who loved him. He suffered hell—the hell you deserved. And the result of that is clear. Now you are free from sin. But do not be mistaken, you are not free from God. We have a word for what it means to be free from God. We call that 'hell'. Hell is when you are free from and separated from God. No, Jesus in his love, bought you not for yourself, but for him. You belong to him.

So then, my brothers and sisters in Christ, show that you belong to him. Avoid the things that cause you to want who you can't have. Avoid the traps that cause you to lust after what is not yours. Warn others. Do not be afraid to tell people, especially those Christians you know to run away from sexual sins. Run away because your body is a temple for the Holy Spirit. Run away because Jesus bought you for himself, not so that you would drift off on your own.