

Maintaining the Temple

1 Corinthians 6: 19-20

Our text this morning comes from the first letter that the Apostle Paul had written to the Corinthian church, the longest of all his epistles. In this lengthy letter Paul covers a variety of challenges and problems the church faced. He dealt with *church division* in [Chps.1-4](#), *moral failure* in [Chps.5-6](#), *issues concerning marriage* in [Chp.7](#), *questionable practices* in [Chps.8-10](#), *church order* in [Chp.11](#), *the proper use of spiritual gifts* in [Chps.12-14](#), and *errors of false doctrine*, particularly concerning the resurrection in [Chp.15](#).

Clearly Corinth was a difficult city in which to minister and maintain a Christian standard. The city was the capital of Achaia, located at the southern tip of Greece. It was surrounded by two natural harbors that made it a commercial center for trade and shipping. The city had a large population, a melting pot that including Greeks, Latins, Jews, Egyptians, Syrians, and those from Asia.

Due in large part to its commercial trade and prosperity, Corinth was a city that was known for indulgence and immorality. The name of the city, "Corinth," became a by-word for wicked and immoral living. The worship of many local residents centered around the great goddess of love, Aphrodite. The temple built in her honor housed 1,000 temple prostitutes that were used as a twisted form of worship.

As you can see, the church in Corinth faced great obstacles in maintaining their purity and witness before the Lord. Even among the church immorality was evident. Paul dealt with it because it was prevalent among them. [1 Cor.5:1 – It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.](#) [1 Cor.6:13b – Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.](#)

You will have to admit that we too live in a culture that closely resembles that of Corinth. Our culture in America has become infatuated with the human body, with more and more being exposed for public view. It is prominent in advertisements; body augmentations are becoming the norm for those who seek to possess the perfect body. Society has embraced the motto of "please the flesh, whatever the cost."

That may be accepted among society and promoted in our culture, but the children of God have a different obligation. The verses that we have read this morning deal with our physical bodies and how we are to maintain them. I want to look at the [principles revealed](#), looking at the body from a biblical perspective as we consider: [Maintaining the Temple](#).

I. The Opportunities of the Body (19a) – [What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost.](#) Paul reminds them of the importance and significance of their bodies. He was well aware of much that was going on among them and he challenged them to consider the use of their bodies in light of God's righteous standard. In this profound question we are reminded of the potential that the body has. We have certain opportunities within our physical bodies.

A. The Opportunity for Sin – Now let me say up front that I am in no way condoning or encouraging sin within our bodies, but we must realize the potential for sin within these bodies. Paul became aware of the sin that was being committed within the bodies of believers. He had heard of much that was being committed that was sinful and wrong.

- I have been saved for over 28 years and there is still the potential for sin within my body. I am faced with that opportunity every day. When I was saved, the Lord saved me spiritually, but this flesh was not saved; it still has the desire and the potential to sin! Each of us, no matter the age or experience, is capable of sin. We need to be reminded of that and seek to guard our lives against such sin.
- If you ever get to the place that you feel you can handle sin, you are walking in a dangerous place. The flesh desires those things that please the flesh; it is never interested in doing that which pleases the Lord. Christians fell prey to temptation and sin in Corinth and they can and do in Mount Airy as well.

B. The Opportunity for Sanctification – I am glad that we don't just have the potential and opportunity for sin; we also have the opportunity and potential for sanctification. Through the help and guidance of the Lord we can avoid and even overcome sin. We don't have to live our lives victim to sin and the devices of Satan. We do not possess the power of desire within ourselves, but we can find the strength we need in the Lord.

- You might ask how that is possible. Consider [V.18 – Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.](#) When we find ourselves in tempting situations, where we fear that we will give into the temptation and commit sin, flee from it! There is nothing cowardly about running from sin. Get away from it; remove yourself from that situation. It is almost impossible to drink a beer or use drugs if you are not in a place where they are available. It is almost impossible to get in a compromising situation with someone if you are not in a place for that to happen.
- The point is: we don't have to engage in sin just because we have the opportunity for it. We can avoid it and flee from it. Satan has power and he will do his best to tempt you, but he

does not possess the power that our Lord gives through the help of the Spirit. You can live a life that honors God with your body.

I. The Opportunities of the Body (19a)

II. The Occupation of the Body (19) – [What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?](#) Notice:

A. The Resident – We must keep in mind that the Corinthian believers were struggling with keeping the body pure. They faced all manner of temptation from the world around them. Some even had the strange idea that the body was only to be kept pure while attending church services, and at other times they were free to do as they pleased.

- Paul addresses that doctrine by reminding them that their physical bodies were the temple in which the Holy Ghost resides. Now that is a sobering thought. We have no problem with the doctrine of being indwelt with the Spirit at salvation, but this verse puts things in their proper perspective. Our physical bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost. This sanctuary is not where He resides. He doesn't dwell here and wait for us to show up on Sunday mornings. We are the temple at all times. We are the church, the temple in which the Spirit dwells.
- So, that ought to make us consider where we take the Spirit. It ought to make us consider how the temple is kept. Take a moment to personally reflect on this past week. Just consider all that you have seen, the conversations you have had, the places you have gone, and even the ideas that have gone through your mind. Now consider whether you would have been comfortable with all of those moments while seated here in the congregation. Most of us would be embarrassed to engage in some of those activities within the church, but we fail to realize that we are the church; the Spirit is with us wherever we go. He may not be happy with it; we can grieve Him with our actions, but He is always there nonetheless.

B. The Reliance – You might be thinking that this is a tall order and you are right, it is. We have the awesome responsibility of maintain the temple of the Holy Ghost. How can we possibly do that in a manner that honors the Lord? [What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God.](#) We have been given this blessing of the Lord. He has given us the Spirit to dwell within us. God has ordained that we be indwelt with the third person of the God-head. What a gift we have received of the Lord. This is not limited to certain Christians, all believers have this blessing.

- So, when we are tempted to live or behave in a manner that we know is displeasing to the Lord we must depend upon Him. He has given us the gift of the Spirit. We can and should rely upon Him from day to day!

C. The Restraint (19) – The Corinthians, as well as many believers today, have been forced to deal with this issue of purity and maintaining the body. Some might wonder why this is so important; why does it really matter? Well we need to consider what the Bible says: **ye are not your own**. We are no longer free to live and behave as we please. We belong to the Lord. We are no longer our own. We don't have the right to live anyway that we please; we are the Lord's! That brings us to the final point of the message. We have considered:

I. The Opportunities of the Body (19a)

II. The Occupation of the Body (19)

III. The Obligation of the Body (20) – **For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's**. This ought to put things in perspective when we consider our obligation to live lives of purity and honor before the Lord. Notice:

A. The Price – We have been bought with a price! That is a powerful thought. Clearly Paul is speaking of the price that our blessed Lord paid as He offered Himself as the sacrifice for all humanity. He paid the price that no other could. He held back nothing, willingly giving Himself in our place. He gave His life so that you and I might be forgiven and inherit eternal life.

- As we consider the price that was paid, surely that ought to put a compelling desire in our hearts to live lives that honor the Lord. We are willing to make sacrifices and refrain from certain things for people that we love. We are willing to go out of our way and give of ourselves for them. But who has done for us what Jesus has? Who has offered such a glorious gift and paid such a price for us? We have an obligation to live in such a way that honors the Lord because of the price that He paid!

B. The Purchase – Not only was a price paid, but with that payment a purchase was made. **We have been bought with a price**. This goes hand in hand with the previous verse: **ye are not your own**. We belong to the Lord. He purchased our redemption, literally ransoming us from the slave-block of sin. Prior to the Lord we were servants of sin, and now we are servants of His.

We are obligated to live for the Lord. It isn't an option, although many believe that it is; we are expected and required to live for Christ because He has bought us!

C. The Purpose – *For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.* Did you really notice what that verse said? We are to glorify God in our bodies. Really it makes sense and should be expected. Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost. We expect to have worship services within the church that glorify the Lord, but this isn't the temple; it is really just a place where the true temple gathers with other temples to worship. We are to glorify God with our bodies. We are to glorify Him with all we do, our actions, behaviors, thoughts, and even our gestures.

- This is something that is little taught or discussed in our day, but it needs to be addressed. If this body that I inhabit is the temple of God, and it is; if this body has been bought with a price, and it has; if this body is expected to glorify God, and it is; then one would rightly discern that we ought to be mindful of how we maintain and even present the temple to the world. We can't glorify God in our bodies if our bodies are found engaging in activities that do not honor the Lord. In fact, when we get right down to it, our choice of dress many times determines whether we glorify God in these bodies. We need to present ourselves, at all times and in every situation, in such a way that pleases and glorifies God.
- It is possible to bring glory and honor to the Lord in these bodies of flesh. Are we living in such a way that does that? If not we should be.

These have been challenging verses. They deal with each of us in regard to our everyday lives. If you are saved, your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. He resides within. How are we maintaining the temple? Has it been places this week that is should never have been? Has it been soiled by engaging in ungodly activities? Are we doing all we can to maintain the temple and glorify God with our temple? If not we should. If you need to do some housekeeping within the temple, this altar is a good place to do that. Why not come and seek the Lord to help you make your temple a place that glorifies the Lord?

If you are here today unsaved, your body is not the temple of the Lord. The Holy Spirit does not reside in you. He would love too, but you must come to the Lord in salvation before the Spirit will take up residence. Why not come today and seek the salvation of the Lord?