

Second Sunday after Epiphany

Sermon Road Map
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1 Corinthians 6:12-20
January 17, 2021

Grow in Jesus' enlightened understanding of freedom.

- **“All things are permitted for me”**
 - ◆ Paul quotes the bold claims and justifications of Corinthian Christians
 - ◆ Paul affirms, offering an enlightened understanding of Christian freedom:
 - True, **but not all things are beneficial.**
 - True, **but I will not allow anything to control me.**
 - Only a fool would call it *freedom* to voluntarily enslave himself to harm.
- This text invites us to come into the light of Christ and ...

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- ❖ Learn to wisely define *freedom*
 - **freedom:** *the power or right to act, speak, or think as one wants without hindrance or restraint.* Oxford Languages
 - ◆ By this definition alone you would be infringing on the right of a mass murderer, serial killer, or serial rapist to stop them from doing what *they want*.
 - In elementary school I was taught: **freedom:** *the right to do what I want as long as I don't hurt anyone else or infringe on their freedoms.*
 - ◆ In other words: There are limits to: **All things are permitted for me**
 - ◆ Christians are not free to engage in insurrection to get what *they want*.
 - Christ came to free the captives. **Did Christ set you free to do what you want?**
 - ◆ It depends on **which you wants it?**
 - ◆ Jesus came to rescue us from our sinful nature, its will - what it wants.
 - **Sin always enslaves.** There is **no freedom** in doing **what sin wants.**
 - ◆ Jesus came to give us a **freed** will, freed to want God's good and gracious will.
 - We are freed to live free from sin's mastery, blindness, and foolishness.
 - That's enlightened freedom - the freedom that is ours forever in Christ.
- ❖ Be enlightened about “*Sexual Liberation.*” It enslaves and ruins people.
 - 21st Century America shamelessly rivals Corinth.
 - ◆ Even the pagans considered Corinth morally depraved and foolish.
 - ◆ Apparently some *Christian men* claimed they were free to use prostitutes.
 - Justifying sexual desire as a *natural appetite* that they were free to satisfy.
 - The sinful human nature is a master at fooling us with deceptive justifications.
 - ◆ When desire is put in charge, it becomes a **taskmaster**. Wisdom & truth lose.
 - ◆ Paul exposes the deception of *casual sexual intimacy - hookups*
 - Our bodies are not objects to be toyed with. Sexual intimacy has an impact.
 - Sexual intimacy is a *whole-body-and-mind* experience and encounter
 - Intended or not, those engaged in sexual intimacy are **made one**.
 - True even if not approached with any intent of a relationship. *Made one.*
 - God designed it this way to strengthen and enrich the bond of marriage.
 - It is a *cleaving* (clinging) *and cleaving* (rending) - ruining and wrecking
 - Destroying the ability for relationships, closeness, trust, openness.
 - Feeling used. Being a user. More and more self-centered. Shame. Guilt.

- ❖ Only Jesus can heal and liberate from such intimate misuse and abuse.
 - Every shameful encounter, act, foolish choice - nailed to his cross. Paid in full.
 - ◆ Jesus' blood is an inexhaustible supply of healing, help, and hope.
 - ◆ Ready to be applied when minds are stirred, remembering sexual misuse
 - ◆ Medicine for: youthful foolishness, seduction, rape - heterosexual/homosexual
 - ◆ The light of Jesus affirms, *You're right. It was wrong. It's also fully forgiven!*
 - Jesus frees us to have a higher view and freeing role for our bodies.
 - ◆ Sin's tyranny of *body image*.
 - To rate the bodies of others like a dog or horse show - self-centered pleasure
 - When self-image is based on a sexy body - it will let us down with age.
 - Both the looks and function of our aging bodies will destroy self-worth.
 - ◆ Many cope with their body's *imperfections* by considering their body a shell
 - Knowing beauty is more than skin deep - delight in abilities or character
 - Contempt or neglect of body is foolish. Life can't be divorced from the body.
 - Without a healthy body abilities will fade. Our body is not worthless!
- ❖ Christ heals and frees us with an eternal enlightened view of our bodies.
 - Christmas: Jesus took on a human body to rescue the whole you, body & soul.
 - Jesus paid the high price of his blood to redeem - to free your captive body
 - God who raised Jesus' body, wants your body with him. He'll raise your body.
 - ◆ This body, the one you have, will be raised and glorious. He values it.
 - ◆ Isaiah suggests Jesus wasn't considered attractive. That body is gloried!
 - Even now our flawed bodies, struggling with sin, are temples of the Holy Spirit.
 - ◆ Look at yourself - in the shower or in the mirror - and remember this!
 - ◆ Be filled with humble holy awe. Renewed to devote your body to his holy use.
 - *the body is ...for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body.*
 - ◆ Understand your body - my body - are for the Lord. Cared for by the Lord.
 - ◆ The Lord uses his people to remind us of this in the strangest of places.
 - Heather shared this *Rawr* protein bar. On the wrapper: 1 Cor. 6:20
 - *...you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God with your body.*
 - God created us and redeemed us to use our bodies for his praise and glory.
 - ◆ This includes: *Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?*
 - This is more than a mystical spiritual union with Jesus himself.
 - Scripture reveals each of us is a *member (body part)* Christ's church.
 - Our bodies are in fellowship with each other in his church.
 - Every Christian is called to function in Christ's body, with each other.
 - Full freedom is only found in living as servants of the Lord Jesus.
 - ◆ Unbelievers see this as slavery, a sacrifice of self-will and freedom.
 - ◆ They fail to see that **the sinful will is slavery** - controlled by foolish thinking - leading to death and eternal captivity.
 - ◆ Made new and wise by Christ we are freed to know, love, and **want** the will of God, continually discovering just how good and right it is. Truly liberating.
 - ◆ *Continually flee sexual immorality* and...

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