

Gamma 2017

| | |
|-----------|-----------------------|
| Book | 1-Corinthians |
| Topic | Christian Sexuality |
| Reference | 1-Corinthians 6:12-20 |
| Date | 10 May 2017 |
| Speaker | Dr Peter Ng |

Corinthian church grew up in an environment where prostitution was a norm. 1000 Prostitutes from Acrocorinth come down to the city to ply their trade every night. They also have temple prostitutes and in this particular passage as well as the next passage which is in chapter 7 they give you two extreme views of sex which is actually relevant today. Even today human beings sway between one or the other.

On one hand is liberal; 12 “All things are lawful for me,”Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food 1 Cor 6: 13 (ESV). They think that they have sexual organs so they must use it.

The other one is conservative; It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.” 1 Cor 7:1 (ESV).

So we have got two opposite poles on the same society and we actually see this in many countries.

Chastity Ideal

The idea of chastity is the ideal for spirituality. Some people misunderstand. There is actually a passage in Revelation chapter 14, *at the time 144,000 will be gathered and they will be virgins*, because virgins are the best, but actually that is metaphorical.

We have got an early church father called Augustine. St. Augustine is one of the foremost theologians of our time and he led a very sexually active life, had a mistress and when he became a Christian he went across the other side and advocated sex was bad because he had so much sex and he was addicted to sex and he could not get out of sex and so therefore he actually was against sex and says, *sex is actually dirty and in fact original sex is transmitted through sex*.

Conservative View of Sex

So that is on one ideal and then conservative view of sex which then goes across to the Christian church. You can only have sex if you want to procreate, can't even enjoy yourself if you are having sex, certain positions you cannot hold.

So in fact in some conservative society there was an example of this Sachi and Tomio Hidaka. They were a shy Japanese couple, who basically waited 14 years to consummate marriage. They wrote in their diary

They could barely make eye contact when fully clothed. Much in love, but more in regard to spirituality and mutual respect. She wrote in diary, "Tomio and I are very much afraid but it's now or never. Tonight is the night." (Chiba, Japan)

Sex Can Be a Dangerous Thing

80 % men who died during sex were not having sex with spouse. So if you were to die having sex most likely you will be having it with somebody else and there is a reason, because if you actually have sex with your wife it is about 100 beats per minute, mistress is 130. So there is a difference.

Christian Liberty and Freedom.

1 Corinthians 6:12 (ESV) *All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything.*

This sets the scene for the particular passage for us to interpret. What he is saying is that all things are lawful. So we are now Christians and we find that the Christians in the Corinth are suddenly free. For example, they can eat pork and eating whatever they want to eat. They could wear whatever clothes they want to wear. They don't have to follow certain calendars or certain days. A Christian is very-very free, so they are no longer bound by so many cultural morals but yet they take this liberty to extreme and Paul says, yes we are all free but it says not all things are helpful. The Greek word for helpful is basically not all things bear together. So it is like a picture of rocks. The rocks need to bear together so there will be no crack. Ken Bailey writes, *"Christian must avoid anything that does not build up the community and reject anything that enslaves. They already had a master"*

So because you have a master you actually are completely free but you are not free to do something that will not help build up the community. So a Christian has freedom. So Paul wants to cast his idea of Christian sexuality in terms of freedom. Because when we talk about sexuality people always think that church is about laws and rules, cannot do this or that. Paul wants to approach is from another angle. He says, you are free but not all the things that you do especially in the area of sexuality is going to help you bear up.

Proverbs 7:21-23 (ESV) *With much seductive speech she persuades him; with her smooth talk she compels him.²² All at once he follows her, as an ox goes to the slaughter, or as a stag is caught fast²³ till an arrow pierces its liver; as a bird rushes into a snare; he does not know that it will cost him his life.*

So here is a picture that if you follow this prostitute and she is going to basically keep you like a bird in a snare or oxen that has been caught. So there is an idea of yes you are free but the wrong kind of sexuality will cost you your life because it will cost you to be enslaved. Corinthian position was not very far different from many Western societies today. It says,

1 Corinthians 6:13 (ESV) *Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food*

So basically if you feel hungry you eat. If you feel like having pee go and pee. If you feel like having sex, you have sex. What is wrong with that? Before we have to understand that we have to understand the Greek view of the body.

Greek View of the Body

Greek view of the body has basically infected the Christian view of the body. The view is that we have the body then we have got the spirit or the soul and when you die the soul separates from the body. They are two separate things. The good part of you is actually your soul. The bad part of you is the body. So there are two ways to deal with your body. One is you suppress your body as much as possible. If you are a Buddhist, you will suppress it by doing all the right things. If you feel love you will suppress that. If you feel hate you suppress it. If you feel jealousy you suppress that. You suppress all of that, so therefore one day you will be released, your soul will go up to God and join the eternal God and be part of that God.

The other way is to say, the body is horrible anyway. I may also do whatever I want to do with my body, it does not really matter, it doesn't affect my soul at all. So there is a dichotomy. So therefore the Corinthians are saying. My soul is different from my body, so whatever I do with my body doesn't affect my soul, so therefore I can do whatever I want.

Hebrew Idea of the Body

This idea is totally different. It is, we are embodied soul that means the soul and the body are one, which is a reason why when you actually resurrect you have a bodily resurrection. So this idea is quite embarrassing when you go to Christian funerals and the guy there will be talking, my father is in heaven now and he is like singing there with a harp on the clouds and then his body is separated. No, you go to a state where this is basically a place for the dead and when you resurrect, body and soul are together. It is just that when you die you will be with the Lord.

If everybody here is like an embodied soul therefore what you do with your body matters that is the theology behind it. If you are separate from your body whatever your body does is not problematic to you. When Jesus walked on the earth he had scars on his hands, to show what he does in the body matters for all eternity and those scars are actually scars of victory because he bought all of us with that. So it is there, it is not ugly. When you look at those scars and when you go to heaven you will see that is what he paid for me and will remember that.

Sexual Revolution

In 1960s they rebel against all this religious stereotypes. So therefore sex is like a cup of coffee, you put it down, emotional involvement, commitment, meaning, context, consequence, human connection, when all this is out you have got pure sex.

Sex as a Right

Not only sex is an enjoyment, sex becomes a right. There is an article by Kate Lette in the Canberra Times and she has an autistic son. It is very hard for his autistic son to get a girlfriend. She writes, *"How does someone with special needs fulfil their inalienable right to the pursuit of life, liberty and human sexual contact?"*

She means that everybody has the right to have sex even the disabled people too. So therefore she thinks about hiring a prostitute and this is a real story in Australia. She printed out in the Canberra Times to have a discussion. Everybody was horrified.

Definition of a Prostitute

"sex care provider who is presenting herself as a commodity allotment within a business doctrine".

Again not only has it become like basically an appetite, now it has become business venture.

Are people free because of this sexual freedom? There are a lot of articles that are recently written in psychology today to talk about this idea of sexual freedom. Leslie Bell wrote about a woman who had free sex all the time. It is very unusual what she writes, *"I wish I weren't so horny, so I didn't need to go out and get it so much. I wish I could take a pill to kill my desire,"*

After so much sex she turns around and she is wondering that she wishes she doesn't have so much desire. So she doesn't have to go day after day after day looking for somebody to fulfill that sexual need that she has.

Paradox of Sexual Freedom

St. Augustine knows that. He says, *"I was bound down by this disease of the flesh. Its deadly pleasures were a chain that I dragged along with me, yet I was afraid to be freed from it".*

He knows he is enslaved but he is afraid to be freed from his enslavement because he likes that and that is the worse kind because you can't let go.

The paradox of sexual freedom is because you are sexually free you can do whatever you want then you can go into pornography. The problem with internet pornography is that when you see pictures, you need to see more graphic pictures and more and more graphic pictures and then the more graphic they are the more they desensitize you. At first you start off the X rated then you go to R rated then go to unrated, because every step of the way you are desensitized already. So sex becomes something and it is a physiological thing.

Human beings are never satisfied, they want to make things more and more exciting. So then we go to escalate things. Then we have got loneliness. There are some people who think, I am single so sex is a cure for my singleness, but sex is a cause of your singleness too. Because the more sex you actually have you are looking for a connection that actually isn't there. 26% of woman in United States are actually on antidepressants. STDs, abortions, fatherless children. In US 70% of black children have no father. It is a terrible-terrible problem and then declining marriage rates as well.

So the paradox of sexual freedom in the sexual revolution has got us all these things which is very bad. When you actually have sex the paradox about sex is this woman says, *I am desired because I am worth it*. Kim Kardashian says, *I am worth it because I am desired*. So there is a problem, they are actually using sex as a measure of self-worth. So therefore woman become objectified, man also can become objectified. Your self-worth is based on how pretty you look or how sexually good you are.

Men boast about how many women they have in life with other men and the women will boast about the beautiful or handsome man they snared. So therefore not only do they become objectify each other, it becomes a marker of their self-worth and validation. Some people will have sex with women just to validate themselves. They are not interested in the woman the next morning. So the paradox is that, they are all enslaved to this vicious circle.

Rachel Lu writes back, *"For sex to stay sexy, it has to mean something. There needs to be some objective significance that extends beyond the horny-adolescent feelings."*

They now suddenly realize that sex is just not an appetite. There has got to be something that extends beyond the feelings. You can't have the joy without the commitment hence sexual immorality is the total betrayal of this

Let's look at couple of reasons why Paul says Paul immorality is wrong

1. The eternal significance of our bodies

1-Cor 6:13 Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food" —and God will destroy both one and the other.

1-Cor 6:13-14 The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. 14 And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power.

Food is meant for the stomach but the body is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord. So therefore he is telling you in this sentence that your body, you think food is meant for the stomach but he is telling you that body is not meant for sexuality, God created you in the body and that body is meant for God.

The stomach is for the food, but the Lord is for the body. It means that not only the body is dedicated to the Lord, the Lord is also dedicated to the body because He died to save you in a bodily resurrection.

The next step is God will destroy both one(stomach) and the other (food). So therefore stomach and food are both transient. Whatever you eat, however fantastic meal you have it is only transient. It is a fact, but when God raised the Lord, God will raise it up by his body. So the comparison isn't correct, because the spiritual view is that the body is meant for the Lord and the Lord is meant for the body. So as the food will disintegrate the stomach, but not our bodies. We will be resurrected with God.

So food and stomach are both transient, sex and the body is permanent.

2. Our bodies already bonded to Christ's

1 Corinthians 6:15 (ESV) Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never!

So therefore when you are in Christ you are part of Christ body. So here is the word, shall I rip off your hand and I sow it onto to other person, it will look horrible, it is abnormal. So it means that having sex with prostitute is like grabbing one part and ripping it and joining to other. You are body of Christ and it takes a bit of you and grabs it and join it then join it with the prostitute. So he is saying that body and relationship with believer and prostitute. So therefore what you are doing is mutually exclusive, you are going to be destined for resurrection with Christ, so therefore you cannot be a part of a prostitute's body.

3. Sex is a more than skin deep

1 Corinthians 6:16-17 (ESV) Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh." 17 But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.

So there is a parallelism that you are joined to God, if you are going to have sex with a prostitute you are going to be joined to her and become one body.

Concept of flesh-broader than physical

Genesis 6:13 (ESV) And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

Acts 2:17 (ESV) And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams;

All flesh means mankind, so flesh does not mean just anatomical body part. It means human beings, people, persons. So therefore they will become one person. When you join their body parts it symbolic of being one person. So in one part it will talk about anatomical body part, the other part talk about one person

Genesis 2:22-25 (ESV) And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. 23 Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." 24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. 25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

Three things are happening here; original intent, the man and woman will leave and cleave that is called marriage. There is a leaving and cleaving. In Greek cleaving is very tight, it is just like gluing together of the body parts. Then we have got consummation which is basically the one flesh, one-person experience. So therefore Paul is saying that when you are having sex with a prostitute you are actually having a one-person relationship which is actually part of a process where you leave and you cleave and you become one person that is what was the original intent, one body, one life.

(ESV) Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her?

So what is sex?

Sex is basically a Unitive act whereby one gives himself or herself to another wholly. Sex is an act in which you give yourself to somebody, it is a unitive act, it unifies you. Some people describes that the tool for total commitment, it sends a signal to the other person that you are totally absolutely committed to person. It is a physical expression of your marital covenant. Sex is like Lord Supper where we relive that moment when Christ died for you, so that your feelings of love and reciprocation and gratitude are rekindled again and again and again. That is why God says, do as often as you can. Same thing with sex, if you want your marriage to be strong, you do it often as you can because it renews. It is basically the physical expression of your marital covenant that is why you leave and you cleave and you have the sex. If you leave and cleave and you don't have sex then it doesn't renew this covenant. It is a physical donation in the context of the whole life donation.

Sex is like donating your organs and then you become part of your partner and your partner become part of you. Tim Keller describes it as, *"God's invented way of self-donation to give to someone so deeply and radically that it involves deep personal transformation and soul nurture"*

You give yourself so completely to the other person that it actually changes you inside and also nurtures your soul. It is a very nice definition, self-donation in the context of whole body donation. Some people just donate sperm, this is not real sex. Real sex is self-donation; it is a whole body donation. So not only it is social, intellectual and physical unity together. You are like two oxen yoked together, no longer independent but interdependent that is sex. The sex to mean anything must mean all those things.

Marriage and sex as foretaste of heaven

Ephesians 5:23 (ESV) *For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.*

Ephesians 5:28-29 (ESV) *In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church,*

Which means husband and wives are actually two become one. They are one person, so you cannot hate your hand or your foot, it has become one person. So the one flesh experience it actually symbolizes and renews this idea that we have self-donated to each other in the deepest possible commitment and the ecstasy you get from sex which is basically in physiological terms is called orgasm. Heaven is like having sex with your wife, because when we look at Song of Solomon it describes sexual joy as that. It is a foretaste, it points to something, it must point to something. Sex is the most beautiful thing which God has created in order to point to something that one day when you are with God. That is why Christ is our husband, we are the church. So one day when we are united with Christ the delight will be out of your mind. Here it is just for few seconds, but there it is forever and ever and ever. So God gives you a little foretaste. So therefore heaven must be like that.

How does one become one flesh with a prostitute?

This is an absolute distortion of the one person, you are not one person with the prostitute, it betrays that reality. There was a TV show called Pretty Woman in which Julia Roberts acted as a prostitute. Richard Gere comes in and he was a millionaire and he picks her up and he pays her to have sex with him and live with him for one week. In that show he had sex with her but there was one thing that she never allowed him to kiss and that was her mouth. Because the mouth to Julia Roberts was the opening to her person, her deepest innocent soul. According to her, you can have the rest of me and do what you like because you have paid for it but when you kiss my mouth it is personal, it is joining together. So even as a prostitute she has sold her body but there is one part that she must keep to herself, because this testifies to the unitive action of sex. It is so deep and so intimate that if you just give it all away, you cheapen it and it actually degrades her. So therefore she will keep one part of her body for herself.

The Korean comfort woman and the Japanese testifies,

"I don't want to live anymore," the frail woman said in a husky voice. Reaching the end of her life, in pain from several severe diseases, she has terrible memories of her earlier days. Zhang Xiantu is one of the surviving Chinese "comfort women", as those forced to work in Japan's wartime military brothels are euphemistically called. When I met Zhang in her dark and shabby home, she recalled the day Japanese soldiers broke into her house and abducted her at the age of 15. "I was still so young, within two months my body was completely destroyed," she said. "I was nothing but a toy, as a human being I meant nothing, that's how it felt during the Japanese era."

She is describing a psychological disintegration. She is not saying, in two months my body was destroyed. What she is saying that within two months the person, her self-worth totally degraded and she becomes a commodity. So sex touches you in that deepest part of your soul that is why sexual crime is so horrible.

Sexual Soul-Ties

There is some wrong doctrine going around called Soul-Ties. You go to certain churches, then they say, you have sex with a woman and that woman has sex with another woman or man and now you come to church and you got all that soul ties and you must remember every single one then you must cast and break them out. There is actually no biblical background for it. There is only one verse in the whole Bible that actually talks about a tie and that was

1 Samuel 18:1 (ESV) *As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.*

So that basically means they were very close together.

Is One Flesh a Spiritual Union?

Are you and your wife one spirit. This is a controversial point. So you are one, your personality intellects socially or whatever but you are one in spirit. No because it says

1 Corinthians 7:13 (ESV) *If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him.*

Now if you have got a husband, your and his spirit is not the same. You are saved but he is not therefore it cannot be bound at the soul level.

1 Corinthians 7:15 (ESV) *But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you to peace.*

So if your non-Christian husband wants to leave you they can go because you are not bound together as one soul. You are different. You are bound in every other way but you are not bound together in one soul.

1 Corinthians 6:17-18 (ESV) *But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. 18 Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.*

Sexual immorality is basically a sin against your own personhood. Sin against body disrupts the body's most powerful intimate way of communication in this relationship and self-donation for personal transformation. There is only one act in the entire world where you could send a signal to somebody else that that person is the most important person to you. It is self-donation for self-transformation that is the only one. If you sin in that particular area, it destroys that only means of communication.

In those days they use to have ships and the ships would communicate with each other to turn left or right by the use of flags. If all flags are burnt then you lose that method of communication then all the ships will get confused, they run into each other, life will very-very difficult and so when Paul says that the sin against your body, sexual immorality is the only communicative event that you actually have with another human being that is so deep at the soul level that if you actually bastardised that then you have got no way of communicating at every deep level of somebody else. You are disrupting that because that is the deepest most intimate one. So if you sin against your body with sexual immorality it destroys that ability for you to communicate that is why sexual promiscuity causes a lot of loneliness.

Sex is the unifying act which is only meant for you to leave and cleave and become one person, it is such a beautiful thing and then you go and take it out and you bastardise it and it causes huge problems. You have got posttraumatic syndrome, you have got depression, anxiety, panic disorders, suicidal ideation, so all sorts of things can happen when you actually abuse sex because it affects you to the deepest core of your personhood. Nothing affects you as much as that. That is why Paul says, sexual immorality is a sin against your body, your person, not only your physical it is your personhood.

1 Corinthians 6:18-20 (ESV) *Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.*

19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

The other aspect of this is that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. If your body is a temple of Holy Spirit and when you sin against your temple, your temple is a place where the Holy Spirit

resides. It is the holiest of holies and you imagine a huge temple rarely clean, priest has to prepare himself without sin for one week, cleanse himself and goes in and what you do, you bring a whole bucket load of cow dung and you throw inside there. No there is a difference between a temple you try to destroy the temple from outside or you destroy the temple from inside. Destroying the temple from inside is like taking a bucket of cow dung going inside there and just desecrating it because you have no respect for the God that is inside and with sexual immorality is doing that. That means you are not recognizing your body is a temple and you are actually giving your allegiance to a prostitute. It is a betrayal; therefore, it is the only sin that destroys you from inside. It is a very-very defiling sin.

We are not our own, we are his temple and also we are liberated at great cost. so therefore let us stay true to what sex is because in this proper context sex is wonderful, it is a foretaste of heaven that is to come and it creates families, it creates the glue of the society.