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 HCC Sermon Manuscript
 1 Cor 6:12-20

A Holy Church

INTRODUCTION

1. Image: A study asked Christian singles between the ages of 18 to 59: “Would you have sex before marriage?”
2. Need: Sexual immorality continues to exist within the church.
3. Subject: How does a holy church avoid sexual immorality?
4. Text: 1 Cor 6:12-20
5. Preview: What does sexual immorality reveal about us? What think do we need to pursue sexual purity?

BODY

- I. Sexual immorality reveals wrong thinking in our theology (6:12a, 13a, 18)
 - A. Paul exposes the wrong thinking in the theology of the Corinthians.
 1. God gives us the freedom to do whatever we want (6:12a)
 2. What we do with our body doesn't matter because it will be destroyed (6:13a)
 3. Sin has no physical consequences (6:18)
 - B. We may use wrong thinking in our theology to justify immoral sexual behavior.
 1. God will forgive me anyways.
 2. I'm more mature, so I can handle sexual content.
- II. Our body belongs to God (6:13b-18a)
 - A. Paul explains to the Corinthians that their bodies belong to God.
 1. Since we belong to God, we should be mastered by nothing (6:12b).
 2. We belong to God because he redeemed our bodies (6:14)
 3. If truly belong to God, then we would never unite our bodies with a prostitute (6:15)
 4. To unite with a prostitute would make her your master (6:16-17).
 - B. Flee from sexual immorality because you belong to God.
- III. Our body exists to glorify God (6:19-20)
 - A. Paul uses two images to explain why the Corinthians should glorify God in their bodies.
 1. [Temple] Their bodies serve as a temple of the Holy Spirit (6:19a)
 2. [Slave Market] God purchased their bodies to serve him (6:19b-20a)
 - B. Glorify God with your bodies.

CONCLUSION

1. Summary: Sexual immorality reveals wrong thinking our theology. Our bodies belong to God. Our body exists to glorify God.
2. Closing Image: Woody belonged to Andy and existed so to make Andy happy

MANUSCRIPT

A study in 2014 asked Christian singles between the ages of 18 to 59: “Would you have sex before marriage?” The response? 63 percent of the Christian respondents responded: Yes.

A Christian writer comments on this statistic: “In my 30 years of youth and adult ministry experience, this is as unfiltered, direct and honest as a question and answer can be. In practice, [Christian young adults have become] sexual atheists. In other words, God has nothing to say to them on that subject of any consequence or, at least, anything meaningful enough to dissuade them from following their own course of conduct. It is the ultimate oxymoron. A person who at once believes in a wise, sovereign and loving God who created them and all things, can also believe simultaneously he should not, cannot or will not inform their thinking or living sexually.”

It shows that sexual immorality does not exist only outside the church. It lives and breathes still within the church. **Sexual immorality continues to exist within the church.** We hear reports of it. Sexual Abuse scandals within the Southern Baptist Convention. We read reports of pastors involved in extra-marital affairs. We may even talk to believers who engage in pre-marital sex. I read of a college pastor asking students returning to his church for summer break: So who have you been sleeping with? The common response is: how did you know? We hear of how many people within the church, guys and gals, use pornography. **Sexual immorality exists within the church.**

It’s easy for us to think: Henry must be talking about other churches. This can’t possibly happen here at HCC. But I assure you that there sit in the people who struggle with sexual sin. You just may not know it.

This problem of sexual immorality within the church is not just a 21st century. Some might think: If I hop into my time machine DeLorean and leap back to the first century, then I would find a sexually pure church. But it's not the case.

If you've been here the last few weeks, then you would know that sexual immorality existed within the first century church of Corinth. A man sleeping with his stepmom. One would think: With the great apostle Paul as their pastor, the Corinthian church would not have so many troubles. But the troubled church in Corinth reminds me of something my mentor at work often told me: Nothing changes but the faces.

The message title for this week is "A Holy Church". The adjective: holy means set apart or distinct. **How do we become a church that is distinct in its sexual conduct? How does a holy church avoid sexual immorality?** How does it turn away from sexual sin?

To answer this question, we'll be looking again at the letter that Paul wrote to the Corinthian church. We'll be specifically in 1 Corinthians, chapter 6. Please turn there with me if you're not there yet. 1 Corinthians, chapter 6. Now if you recall in last week's sermon, there was a vice list. This vice list begins in the later half of verse 9: *"Do not be deceived, neither the sexually immoral, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God"*

Jason provided a trailer for this week's sermon when he stated that the first items of the vice list: sexually immoral, idolator, adulterer, men who practice homosexuality prepares the

listener for this morning's text. Though the Corinthians were washed, sanctified, and justified, they still struggled with sexual sin.

This morning's text will address this topic. In this text, Paul will first show us what does sexual immorality reveal about our thinking. Next, he'll offer two correctives about understanding our bodies. **What does sexual immorality reveal out our thinking? What are two things we need to understand about our bodies?**

First, what does sexual immorality reveal about our thinking? **Sexual immorality reveals wrong thinking in our theology.** It demonstrates that we're not thinking quite clearly about what we know of God. There's something faulty going on in our logic. Sexual sin. Sexual wrongdoing. They expose a failure within our thinking about God's view of sex. **Sexual immorality reveals wrong thinking in our theology.**

Paul exposes the wrong thinking of the Corinthians. He attempts to show the Corinthians the flaws in their argument. The Corinthians believed in three slogans that justified their sexual immorality. Now if you look at the text for this morning in your Bible, then you should notice something in verse 12 and verse 13. There are quotation marks. These quotation marks indicate Paul citing a source. Now you may wonder: But Henry, you said that there are three misunderstandings. The last citation in the later half of verse 18. But there are no quotations. Let's discuss each of these slogans that the Corinthians.

First, **they believed that God gave us the freedom to do whatever we want.** Look at verse 12. *All things are lawful for me.* Now the Corinthians may have conceived of this slogan when the heard from Paul: Now that you are Christians, all types of food are now lawful for you to eat. You can eat bacon, pork chops, lobster, and oysters. But then they extended this

freedom to sex. They co-opted Paul's teaching believing it meant: Now that I'm Christian, I'm free to engage to whatever sexual behavior I want. This includes as we'll discover later sleeping with prostitutes. First wrong thinking: the freedom I have in Christ allows me to do anything. This includes engage in sexual sin.

Let's look at the second idea that the Corinthians use to justify their sin. **What we do with our body doesn't matter because it will be destroyed?** Look at verse 13. *Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food – and God will destroy both one and the other.* God will destroy food and the stomach one day. While we still have our bodies, then let us continue to indulge in our appetites. If we have a sexual desire, then we should seek to satisfy it even if it means engaging in sexual sin. It doesn't matter.

Let's look at the last ideas that the Corinthians use to justify their sexual sin. It's this. **Sin has no physical consequences.** Yes, we may sin. But it's merely spiritual, mental, or emotional. Look at the latter half of verse 18. *Every other sin a person commits is outside the body.* Now the word: other seems to indicate that Paul is contrasting two types of sin. Sexual Sin. All other sins. But in the original manuscript, the word: other is omitted. If you have the ESV, then you'll notice footnote, above the word sin in verse 18. My bible has the number 4. If you look at the bottom of the page, then you'll see the alternative reading: Every sin. For this reason, I think that this is a slogan that the Corinthians use to justify their sexual sin. Sexual sin does not involve the body. It's an experience. It's non-physical incident.

Now you may be thinking: These Corinthians clearly did not pass logic school. Their reasoning fails to have any appeal. Before we judge the Corinthians too harshly, I can't help but wonder if we do the same thing.

We use wrong thinking in our theology to justify our sexual misbehavior. We don't always think rightly when we engage in sexual sin. Let me give you some examples.

We engage in sexual sin because we know that God will forgive us. You might think to yourself: I know what the Bible says. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. I'll just sleep with my girlfriend this once. Then in the morning, I'll pray and ask God for forgiveness. Sin problem solved.

Or someone might think. I plan on marrying this guy. Why wait? In my mind, everything says that we're moving in that direction. He's met my parents. I met his parents. We've been dating for five years. We've already begun shopping for a ring. What's the harm of getting a sexual foretaste of things to come.

Someone else might think. I can handle watching sexual content in my entertainment. It doesn't bother me. When I watch shows like Game of Thrones, I'm unaffected when I watch sexual material. After all, I know it's fake. I'm not like those other believers, who are tempted by this stuff. I'm made of stiffer mental stuff.

Imagine the person sitting at home. The parents are away for fellowship. My siblings are hanging out with their friends outside. With a tap of a few keystrokes, I can indulge in my sexual fantasies. No one would ever know. It's between me and the computer screen.

We deceive ourselves. Our participation in sexual sin reveals that we don't always think straight. We're not as reasonable as think. Although we may have letters after my name, B.S., B.A, MD, JD, PhD, our minds don't operate logically when it comes to sexual sin. Sexual sin reveals that there's something truly flawed in the way we think about ourselves and about God.

Paul in the text offers two correctives to our thinking. Let's turn attention to the first correction. What should we think about when we face sexual tempted?

Our body belongs to God. We don't have sole ownership over our bodies. God owns them. He is the master of our limbs. He is the captain that directs our steps. He is the owner of our bodies. **Our body belongs to God.**

Let's think about the implication of this idea. Since we belong to God, we should be mastered by nothing else. Nothing should be calling the shots in our lives. We see this implication in the latter half of verse 12. *But not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me but I will not be dominated by anything.*

Paul is saying: "Yes. We have many freedoms as a believer. But it doesn't mean that we have freedoms to do anything. Anything that is unhelpful is off limits. Anything that might master me is not permitted". In other words, there are caveats to our freedoms.

And this applies to many different areas. Food you eat. You may have freedom to eat Chick-Fil-A every day. But Chick-Fil-A everyday might mean a heart attack today. TV shows you watch. Hobbies. Books. Video games. But they are not your master. God is the master of your body.

In the context of sex, Paul will not allow his sexual desires to be his master. His sex drive will not motivate his decisions or his actions. Only God will direct his steps. He will only obey the directions of God because God is the master of his body. That is the implication.

But why? Why do our bodies belong to God? **We belong to God because he redeemed our bodies.** Look at the latter half of verse 13. *The body is not meant for sexual*

immorality, but for the LORD, and the LORD for the body. And God raised the LORD and will also raise us up by his power.

The Corinthians had a dualistic thinking. By dualism, they believe that everything that happens in the spirit is good. But everything that happens in the body bad. Since Christ procured for us a spiritual relationship with God through his death on the cross, what we do with our bodies doesn't matter.

But Paul corrects this misunderstanding by pointing to a specific element of the gospel: Christ's resurrection. If God raised Jesus from the dead in a new physical body, then that means our physical bodies are good. Christians anticipate when they will receive a resurrected body without the influence of sin. Jesus foreshadows this reality.

While a resurrected body awaits us, it doesn't mean that we sit by and twiddle our thumbs waiting. We experience that in part now. Before we came to faith in Jesus Christ, the power of sin ruled over lives. We used our members for the pleasure of our former master, sin. But when we placed our faith in Christ, we came under a new master. God. This means that God rules over our entire being (spirit and body). We use our members to serve God.

Let's think then about implication. **If we truly belong to God, then we would never use our bodies for sexually immoral behavior.** Look at verse 15. *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!*

When we place our faith in Christ, we have become united with Him. This is something that some call: union with Christ. Since we are united with Christ, God no longer sees our sin. But he sees Christ's righteousness given to us.

Let me help you with an image. Think of two pieces of duct tape. One piece represents Christ. Another piece represents you. When you stick the two pieces together, they are nearly impossible to pull apart. This represents your union with Christ.

If you are so attached to Christ (think duct tape), then is it possible to detach yourself and unite yourself with sexually immoral behavior in body? Nope. Never. May it never be. The word: Never! Indicates something that would never happen and should never happen.

Why does Paul think it's an impossibility for a believer to engage their body in sexual behavior? There's an implication when you unite yourself to someone sexually physically, you have given them mastery over your body. You have given them permission to use your body as they would like. To engage in sexually immoral behavior puts you under its mastery.

Now in the case of this text, Paul confronts the Corinthians on their use of prostitutes. Look at verse 16. *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" But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him.*

Let me use another image. Some might think of their union with Christ like two post-it notes. Jesus represents one post-it note. I represent one post-it note. When I stick them together, we stick together. But it's easy for someone to detach the post-it note and stick it elsewhere. When we fail to understand that our bodies belong to God, we treat it like a post it note. We can do whatever we like with it including engaging in sexual immoral behavior.

Now you may not be convinced that sexually immoral behavior might master you. Let's do a thought experiment. Let's say you had a sexual relationship with your girlfriend. But the

relationship didn't work out. Your past sexual activity will affect all your future relationships.

You may wonder: How?

When you begin dating someone new, you'll eventually have to disclose of your past sexual activity. Let's say that your new girlfriend: forgives you for your past sexual transgressions. But every time, you kiss your new girlfriend your mind might think. Hmm... she's not quite a skillful kisser like my previous girlfriend. Let's say you fast forward the tape of your life even more. You marry this gal you're dating. Before you consummate your relationship with your new wife, you may be wondering: how will she compare to my former girlfriend? You can't escape your past sexual sin. It affects your present. It shows its mastery in your life.

Now some of you might be wondering. Ok... I confess that I've slept with my boyfriend. So, what should you do now? Does that mean I am forever distanced from God? If I feel the guilt and dirtiness of using porn, then does that mean those feelings will never go away? No. Why?

There is one who never allowed himself to be mastered by anything in this world. In fact, he dedicated his body to the service God. When his body felt hungry, he was tempted to turn stones into bread. He said: "No". His body would endure lashing and beating, so that you could experience a resurrected body because he experienced resurrection first. Since Jesus did all these things, there is no longer condemnation. There is forgiveness and restoration when you confess and repent. Dedicate once again your body to the service to God (Rom 12:1).

If your body belongs to God, then what should be your response when you face sexual temptation. Flee! Flee from sexual immorality because you belong to God. Look at the first half

of verse 18. *Flee from sexual immorality*. Does this mean that one simply run in the opposite direction when they face sexual temptation?

Paul might be using the word: flee to depict the earnestness by which one should avoid sexual immorality. To flee from sexual immorality might mean never putting you and your girlfriend in a situation where you may be tempted sexually. You commit to always spending time together in a public space. You refuse to stay overnight with your boyfriend alone because of what might potentially happen. To flee from sexual immorality might mean inviting people to ask about your how you are walking with the Lord in this area of your life. It might mean moving your computer into a public space where everyone can see what you're doing on your computer. Pray and ask God to see how you might be able to avoid sexual sin.

Let's move to the last thought that Paul provides. What else do we need to think about when it comes to pursuing sexual purity?

Our body exists to glorify God. The purpose of our body is to make God known. We are to give credit and praise to God with our bodies. We use our bodies to worship him. **Our bodies exist to glorify God.**

Paul uses two images in the text to explain why the Corinthians should glorify God in their bodies. There are two images. First image. A temple. **Their bodies serve as a temple of the Holy Spirit.** Look with me at the first half of verse 19. *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you whom you have from God?*

What is the purpose of the temple of God? One purpose of the temple of God is that it would serve as a dwelling place for his Spirit. Remember in both tabernacle and the temple there existed a place called the Holy of Holies. Within this room, there would be the ark of the

covenant. God's presence dwelt at the top of the ark of the covenant where the wings of the cherubim. The other purpose of the temple is that it would serve as a place for worship. People would gather there to offer their sacrifices and commune with the Lord. They would meet with Him there.

But the presence of God no longer dwells in a man-made temple. Instead, it dwells within believers. Now the dwelling of the Spirit serves a metaphor. If a surgeon opens up your body, he won't find the Holy Spirit living in your chest cavity. The dwelling of the Spirit depicts a deep intimacy with God. It's such a deep intimacy that when people spend time with you or look at you, they see glimpses of God.

The second image that Paul uses is a slave market. **God purchased the bodies of believers to serve him.** Look the latter half of verse 19. *You are not your own, for you were bought with a price.* God purchased you with through the death of his Son Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ died the death you deserved, so that God might purchase you – body and soul. Since we are his slaves, we should do his bidding. For a slave carries out the will of his master. We carry out the will of our God.

Since we are the temple of the Holy Spirit and purchased by the blood of Christ, we should glorify God. Glorify God with your bodies. This means that we use our bodies to do the will of God rather than our own. This means pursuing sex within the context that God designated – marriage.

Marriage is a covenantal relationship between a man and woman, where they vow to one another that through thick and thin they will love and cherish one another. This might mean giving up freedoms to love your wife. No more late-night basketball games with your guys

because your wife needs you at home to help with the kids. It might mean setting down your Xbox controller to change a dirty diaper. It means that you give up freedoms to defer to your husband. After you share your thoughts about where you'd like to go on vacation, you defer to your husband to make the final decision. You give up the opportunity to spend time with your gal friends because your husband is ill and you need to care for him.

(Enter Move to Christ)

Yet people simply reduce marriage the physical act of sex. Some might say, since we've had sex, they are my spouse. But if you think that, then would you put this person on your house title? Would you give her keys to your car? Do you introduce the other person as your husband? Do you introduce them as your wife? To reduce marriage to mere sex is to remove the covenantal commitment required for you to spiritual grow.

What does this mean if I really want to pursue sexual intimacy with my girlfriend or my boyfriend? You then have to ask the question: Do you want the entirety of the person? Her habits? His shortcomings? Her laugh? His snicker? Her insecurity? His pride? Will you dedicate your entire life for the benefit of the other person? Or do you merely want to use their body for your sexual gratification?

If you desire to commit yourself to another person spiritually, emotionally, and physically, then to glorify God would mean pursuing this person in marriage. Pursue engagement. When you get married, enjoy the joys of sexual intimacy without shame.

Now if you're single, then you may be wondering I have these sexual desires. What am I supposed to do with them? I don't want to indulge in sexual sin. I would encourage you think about this: how can I devote this sexual energy to the service to the Lord? Instead of dwelling

on your sexual needs, ask the Lord to help you channel time you spend thinking about sex to serve others. Find places to help in church. Channel that energy into the study of God's word. Read good books that help you cultivate your relationship with God.

How do we become holy church that avoids sexual immorality? Realize that we might have faulty thinking in our theology that leads us to say sexual sin is ok. Acknowledge that your body belongs to God. Know that the purpose of the body is to glorify God.

The Toy Story movies follow a cowboy sheriff toy named Woody. Woody reminds the other toys in each of the movies is that they exist for their kids. They exist to make their kids happy when played with. Underneath the boot of Wood, there is the name: Andy – Woody's owner. Woody exists to make Andy happy. Underneath each our feet, there's written in spiritual ink: God. God created us to glorify him and for his joy. Let's take sexual sin seriously as a church because we all belong to God.