

# MESSAGE TRANSCRIPT //

**PURCHASED AND REPURPOSED | CHURCH IN THE WILD**

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Alright. What's good Traders Point? How are we feeling? Good. Good to be here with you. Hey, do me a favor. If you have a Bible or a device with a Bible on it, would you turn or scroll with me to 1 Corinthians, chapter 6—1 Corinthians, chapter 6, that's where we are going to be camping out today.

And as you are turning there I just want to kind of give a heads up, give you some messaging ahead of time that today's message might be a little sensitive to young ears. So if you have a child in 6th grade or younger, we encourage you to consider having them join us in our Kids' Ministry. We would love to have them there.

If it's your first time joining us, we have been going through this book in the Bible called 1 Corinthians. And we're in a series right now called Church In The Wild. And what we've been doing is looking at this book in the Bible and just really asking, "Hey, what does it mean to be the church? What does it mean to be a church full of imperfect, broken people trying to follow the way of Jesus, one that carries the light and the hope of Jesus in a way full of grace and truth?"

"What does it look like for people who maybe don't know Jesus to look at those who do and be a little bit curious? 'How are they so united the way that they are? How do they love people the way that they do?' What does it look like to be that kind of church?"

In order to do that we've been looking at a real church in history with real people who had real issues and were surrounded by the same temptations as you and me. But, here's the thing. They had also been given the same mission and the same message as you and me. This church was started in a place called Corinth. And Corinth was a crazy city.

But there was this guy who actually hated Christians, had this radical encounter with Jesus, and he became this church planter going from city to city starting new churches. And one of the places he found himself in was this city called Corinth in modern day Greece.

And he didn't just start this church, tell people about Jesus, and then leave a few days later, like, "Good luck. Let me know how it goes." No. He actually, as we saw a few weeks ago, was there for over a year-and-a-half spending time with them, earning their trust, and building a rapport with them and getting to know their stories and their hurts and their pain and helping them get connected to this person that they had no concept for named Jesus. And it changed everything.



So, what 1 Corinthians is is actually a letter. A letter that my man, Paul, is writing back to this church years later because he heard that there were some things going on and that wasn't the way that he taught them. He was like, "Hey, man. I have so much to say to you about the way that you are conducting yourselves. Let's get this thing back on track."

What we've been doing is kind of plowing our way, chapter by chapter, through 1 Corinthians. This was a doozy. Let me just tell you it has been so much fun. And in case you are new or you've forgotten what we have walked through already, I just want to kind of jog your memory a little bit:

- Division
- Pride
- Living for temporary vs. eternal values
- Judging others
- Spiritual complacency
- Church discipline
  
- Lawsuits and disagreements

Up to this point, we have talked through division, we've talked through pride, living for temporary versus eternal values, judging others, spiritual complacency, church discipline, lawsuits, and disagreements—all in the first 6 and a half chapters of this letter. And you would think that, at this point, Paul would kind of let his foot up off of the gas a little bit. Right? But, no. My man is like, "But, wait. There is more. Let's talk about sex."

And for those of you who are products of the 90s like me, he is not talking about the Salt-N-Pepa songs. Alright? He is not as enthused about sex as Salt-N-Pepa and DJ Spinderella, but it's fine.

He says, "Let's talk about it. While we're here let's talk about it." Why? "Because the way that you are viewing it and the way that you are approaching it isn't the way that I showed you and it's actually harming you and ruining your witness for Jesus. So, let's talk about it."

So, what I want to do is talk about it. What I want to do first is, I want us to actually read the passage in its entirety. Because what I want to do is let the Holy Spirit to just kind of set the table for where we are going to go today. So, 1 Corinthians, chapter 6, we're going to start in verse 12 and we're just going to read it through to verse 20. This is what Paul says:

“You say, ‘I am allowed to do anything’—but not everything is good for you. And even though ‘I am allowed to do anything,’ I must not become a slave to anything. You say, ‘Food was made for the stomach, and the stomach for food.’ (This is true, though someday God will do away with both of them.)

“But you can’t say that our bodies were made for sexual immorality. They were made for the Lord, and the Lord cares about our bodies. And God will raise us from the dead by his power, just as he raised our Lord from the dead. Don’t you realize that your bodies are actually parts of Christ? Should a man take his body, which is part of Christ, and join it to a prostitute? Never! And don’t you realize that if a man joins himself to a prostitute, he becomes one body with her? For the Scriptures say, ‘The two are united into one.’ But the person who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him.

“Run from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does. For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body. Don’t you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.” (NLT)

This is the word of the Lord. Who’s excited for church today? No. This is a fun one. But here’s what I want to acknowledge. I want to acknowledge that, as we read those verses, we all have different experiences. We all have different backgrounds. We all have different viewpoints that we come in here with. And we all can react differently to a passage like that, whether you are familiar with it or maybe you have not read these verses before, we all have different responses and different emotions that can be elicited within us. And I want to acknowledge that. And I want to give space to that.

Maybe as we were reading that passage there was a little bit of uneasiness or maybe some discomfort that began to well up in you. Maybe you question your whole decision for coming to church today and you’re kind of like that meme of Sponge Bob floating around like, “IGHT IMMA HEAD OUT.”

Maybe, on a serious note there is a little bit of fear because you were a part of a church that would pull passages like this and they would mishandle and misuse them and every time they did so it was very judgmental and very condemning.

Maybe, you are actually a little bit curious, because if you’re honest, you have been kind of following the secular script about what sex is and it’s not working, you’re still empty and you’re still void, and you’re still trying to find something to fulfill you. And you are like, “Hey, let me actually hear what God’s word has to say about it and see if it is any better.”

Maybe you’re a little embarrassed because you’ve been inviting that friend or family member to church for weeks and today is the day that he or she came for the sex talk. Welcome to Traders Point.



Again, I just want to hold space for that and to acknowledge that all of us have different emotions and different responses that well up within us as we hear God's word. And that's okay.

My prayer throughout this entire week was that God would help me be sensitive and gracious, but at the same time truthful and unapologetic about His word. I truly pray that the Holy Spirit would guide our time together. And I believe that God is going to do something special. Amen? Amen.

So, what I want us to do is to kind of go back and just break things down, unpack this verse by verse and just see what God has to say to us. So let's start in verse 12. Paul says:

"You say, 'I am allowed to do anything—but not everything is good for you. And even though 'I am allowed to do anything,' I must not become a slave to anything.'" (NLT)

What Paul is actually doing here is he is quoting them. He's quoting the Corinthians. And I don't know if you've ever seen something on Facebook or Instagram and you repost it, it's like a thought or an idea, but then you add your own commentary to it, your own thoughts

and opinions. Alright, none of you? Just me? Alright. Yeah. That's fine. But this is essentially what Paul is doing.

They had had this colloquialism, this thing that became popular in Corinth, "I'm allowed to do anything." And Paul got word about this and he was like, "Oh, no. Wait a minute." Because what was happening is that these Christians were actually taking freedom in Christ, the grace that they had been shown, and misusing it to justify different actions that they were indulging in that weren't really following Jesus at all. They were actually abusing God's grace.

As Paul is hearing about this, he's like, "Wait a minute. Hold up. Pump the breaks. Let's interrogate this for a second, because you shouldn't be using God's grace to indulge in a way of life that is either harmful to your walk with Jesus or is essentially something that could be ruining your witness for Jesus.

So, what he is saying is, "Hey, what you are doing, the way that you are living, it might be legal, it may not be against the law what you are doing, and it may even be permissible by society's standards or even by what God says, but let's actually hold this up to the light and ask a few deeper questions. It may not be beneficial for you and it's not good for yourself, or for others, or your relationship with God. And is it something that is controlling you, that has a capacity to dominate you?"

Here's what Paul wanted them and essentially us to know today:

## YOUR LIBERTY IS NOT A LICENSE

The liberty that you have been given by God, the freedom as a follower of Jesus, which you have more than you actually may realize, should never be weaponized or used as a license to indulge in sin. But that's what was happening. The Corinthians were saying, "Hey, you know what? It's okay. God's grace covers me." Instead of grace leading them from sin to freedom, it was actually being misused as freedom to sin.

And actually, in Romans 6 Paul speaks to this. He says, "If God's grace has set us free from the law, does that mean that we can go on sinning? Of course not. Don't you realize that you've become (here's that word) a slave of whatever you choose to obey." So, essentially he's saying, "God's grace is not a license," but so often we use it as a way to test the waters.

I often hear it phrased this way. Pastor Ryan brought this up a couple of weeks ago, we often ask the question:

### WHERE IS THE LINE?

Where is the line? What is the out of bounds line? How far can I go? How can I be an NFL wide receiver and catch it then just try to tiptoe, stay in bounds, not cross the line—how far can I go without going too far? What is the sand box that I can play in?

And that's not necessarily an incorrect question to ask, but it may be incomplete because I think there is a fuller question that we can actually ask. Instead of, "Where is the line?" maybe we should first ask, whatever it is that we are doing:

Is this good for me?

Is it healthy in my relationship with Jesus or is it actually pulling me away from my walk with Him? Is it distracting? Is it something that could essentially be good but the way that I'm indulging in it and the frequency that I'm doing it is actually harming more, that it is hurting.

And the second thing is:

Is it destroying my self-control?

Am I becoming dependent on something outside of Jesus? Is it actually harming my self-control.

Let's put sex aside for a moment. This could be anything. It could be anything that is essentially good that God created that we cause to become an ultimate thing in our lives. It could be a relationship. It could be social media. It could be money. It could be work. You name it. Fill in the blank, "Is it now causing me to have less self-control? Am I looking to it to fulfill me as opposed to Jesus?"

What Paul is saying is, “You may be allowed to do it. But one: it might not be good for you. And two: it might be destroying your self-control. So, we all must be careful when what God has created for us to enjoy becomes a habit that one, dishonors Him; and two, that controls us.

What Paul is going to keep doing is he’s going to take another of their phrases and repost it and add his own commentary. In verse 13 this is what he says. It says:

“You say, ‘Food was made for the stomach, and the stomach for food.’ (This is true, though someday God will do away with both of them.) But you can’t say that our bodies were made for sexual immorality. They were made for the Lord, and the Lord cares about our bodies. And God will raise us from the dead by his power, just as he raised our Lord from the dead.” 1 Corinthians 6:13-14 (NLT)

For a little bit of context here, the Corinthians lived in a sex saturated culture. It was all around them, very similar to us if not worse. In fact, there was a whole temple in the city of Corinth—it was the temple of Aphrodite. And Aphrodite was the goddess of love. She was a Greek goddess. And it was a temple that was dedicated, actually, to prostitution. So they had these priestesses in the temple but they were actually prostitutes. And people would go there to worship.

So, what was happening? Well, the men of the Corinthian church were visiting this temple. They were going to church on Sunday and they said, “Alright. Praise the Lord. ‘I want to go and worship in a different way after service.’” And they were going to this temple across town.

Now, that is the truth. But also the problem was that both men and women had a very low view of the body and they had a cheap view of sex. Here’s what I mean by that. They had a low view of the body meaning that the body and the spirit are separate. So, their vantage point was, “I can really do whatever I want with my body, it’s just flesh and it has no connection to my spiritual life. Therefore I can do with it what I want.”

And on the other hand they were saying, “Hey, sex is just another bodily appetite.” That’s why they had that phrase, “Food is made for the stomach, the stomach is made for food.”

So, no different than physical hunger, “I get hungry so I eat. When I’m aroused, I’m going to indulge in sex. I’ll do the same thing with my body when I get aroused as when I get hungry. It’s just another bodily appetite. I’ll do what I want, when I want, with who I want.”

And instead of taking their cues from Jesus, they were taking their cues from the Marvin Gaye song Sexual Healing. Alright? You all know the one, “When I get that feeling, I want sexual healing.” You’re laughing. Some of you all were conceived by that song. Okay? We’re keeping it at a hundred.

But that’s what was happening. They had this warped view of sex. And while we may laugh at something like that, sadly much of our culture has adopted the same thinking, “Hey, as long as it’s two consenting adults, as long as I’m not hurting anyone, what’s the big deal?”

And God would say, “Hey, I have a much different, a higher view of sex.” And, unfortunately, we have minimized something so valuable, something so beautiful and relational, to something very transactional. And Paul is saying, “Hey, the body is not made for that. The body was not made for sexual immorality.”

The words sexual immorality in the original language is porneia. It’s where we get our word for pornography. And really it was a catch-all term for any illicit sexual activity outside of God’s original design, a man and a woman in the covenant of marriage.

I think we hear that and it brushes up against some things. Maybe we have some questions. And maybe, depending upon our upbringing or what we saw and were exposed to, all of these things have informed our view of sex. And it can even be something kind of dirty, but we cannot forget that God is the Creator of sex. Amen. It was His idea.

And why I bring that up is when it happens, He’s not looking at it like He’s grossed out by it, like covering His eyes, “Oh my goodness. I can’t believe they are doing that.” No, He created it. It wasn’t something that happened after the fall, after Adam and Eve disobeyed Him. It actually preceded the fall. He created Adam and Eve and their companionship and sex. He deemed it very good.

God created sex. He authored it. So when He looks at it, it’s good. But, when it’s taken out of its design, when it’s taken out of its context, He is grieved by it. He’s saying, “That’s not my best for you. I have so much more for you. You have taken something that is so powerful and you are reducing it to something that was never intended. The body was not made for that.”

In fact, author and theologian, who is actually a former agnostic, Nancy Pearcey, in her book *Love Thy Body*, which is a phenomenal book, by the way. I highly recommend it, she says this. She says:

Sex is God’s appointed way for two people to say reciprocally to one another, ‘I belong completely, permanently, and exclusively to you.’ When we have sex outside of marriage, we are essentially lying with our bodies. Our actions are saying that we are united on all

levels when, in reality, we are not. We are contradicting ourselves. We are putting on an act. We are being dishonest.

That's heavy. There's a lot of truth to that. And I just want to acknowledge that. But hearing something like that at the same time, again, maybe brushes up against some realities that might have been present now or even in the past that are kind of hard to really digest.

So, I just want to kind of offer up some identification right now. I want to admit that I am standing on this platform as somebody who doesn't have a clean sexual history. There were times before I began following Jesus and even shortly after where I made decisions that I'm not proud of. And I'm not afraid to admit that.

In fact, I think we need more churches with pastors and Christians who are not afraid to be honest about their sin, past and present. I think that if we do that, then the people who don't know Jesus won't look at the church as full of hypocrites but that it can actually be a safe haven for people who are trying to know what it looks like to experience healing and freedom the way that the church has always been designed to be.

And I just want you to know that that's the kind of church that you walked into today. There are a bunch of broken people sitting side by side who admit that they are not perfect but are trying to walk step by step toward Jesus. And we want to do so together.

There are people, including myself, who have experienced the liberating freedom that Jesus offers and we want to do that with you, admitting our own brokenness and saying, "Hey, let me just tell you about what this experience has looked like for me, how I still sometimes can get it wrong. But, man, God's grace covers me. Let me tell you about that Jesus."

That's the freedom that Paul essentially points to. And I love that because as he continues down he says, "Hey, what this is rooted in is actually something so much deeper. He doesn't just say, "Hey, don't do it." He doesn't say, "Hey, stop it." That never works. And honestly, that's what a lot of us heard growing up. Right? "It's wrong. Don't do it. Don't do it. Don't do it. Oh, you're married. Green light. Do it." Right? No. He goes a layer deeper. He says, "Man, I want you to be reminded of the: why. Let me tell you about the value that you have." Look at what he does in verse 13. He says:

"Don't you realize that your bodies are actually parts of Christ? Should a man take his body, which is part of Christ, and join it to a prostitute? Never! And don't you realize that if a man joins himself to a prostitute, he becomes one body with her? For the Scriptures say, 'The two are united into one.' But the person who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him." 1 Corinthians 6:15-17 (NLT)





So here's what Paul is saying. He's saying, "Hey, your body, not only was it made by God, it was made for God, and it is actually a part of God. And when you take something that is purposely connected to God and you unite it with someone else through sex, you are actually uniting spiritually with them, whether you know it or not."

#### SEX IS NOT JUST PHYSICAL, IT'S SPIRITUAL

What does that mean for you and what does that mean for me? Just a helpful reminder, or maybe this is new information, sex is not just physical. Sex is deeply spiritual. Sex has this deep, spiritual connotation to it. The married couples in the room are like, "Is that why it feels like heaven?" Yep.

But that's the truth. It means that sex is something so spiritual because it's connected to God, the very presence of God is within us. He's living in us. And He's guiding us. And we can't just take our bodies and connect them to anything.

I love how it is actually translated in the Old Testament. The Hebrew word for sex is the word yeda. Everybody say yeda, yeda. Okay. Now, I normally don't like to break down the Greek and the Hebrew in my messages. One, because at the end of the day you all really don't care.

But at the same time, a lot of preachers and teachers like to use the Greek and the Hebrew just to really show how smart they are. I'm not that smart, so I really don't do it too much. But, I found this so fascinating. The word yeda means to have this deep experiential intimacy in relationship, to know something in a deep and intimate level. Genesis 4:1 actually says that Adam knew Eve and they gave birth to a son. It was the word yeda.

Now, the crazy thing about that is that the same word yeda is also used to describe our relationship with God throughout the Old Testament. For example, in Psalm 139, David says, "Oh, you have searched me God and you know me." "You yeda me." See the correlation there?

Well, sex is something that is designed to be within the context of one: a committed marriage, but something that it done in the context of where you know the person on a deep and intimate and spiritual level, the same way that you know God. It's a knowing, not just an action.

Now, the temptation, as we read a passage like what we just read is to say, "Well, hey. I'm not out here joining my body to prostitutes so what's the big deal? To which I would say, "Please don't miss the forest for the trees. The underlying principle is that anything that we look to to fill ourselves sexually outside of God's beautiful and sacred context for sex is not what's best for us. It's actually a cheap substitute.

And it's part of Satan's plan to take something good, which he always does, and create a counterfeit. That's what he does. He takes something good and he creates a counterfeit. So, pornography—counterfeit. Pre-marital sex—counterfeit. Adultery—counterfeit. Lust—counterfeit.

In fact, Jesus in Matthew 5:28 says, "If you even look at a woman with lust, you've already committed adultery with her in your heart." That sounds like heavy language. It may sound like, "Well, that's kind of impossible to do." What He wasn't saying is, "Hey, you can't admire somebody's beauty," or, "You can't find somebody attractive."

That would be impossible. If that was the case, then I would have been doomed the moment I saw my wife walking the hallway at Pike Highschool 19 years ago and was like, "Man, she's beautiful." And I still wake up every single day and look over and I'm like, "Man, she's beautiful." I love you, babe.

No. That's not what Jesus was saying at all. Especially if you are single, you can find somebody attractive. But what He was saying was, "Hey, don't forget that that person that you are looking at has My image stamped on her. Don't forget that the person you are

admiring is made in My image, therefore, don't objectify her, don't use her as a thing for selfish pleasure."

So, if you're looking at somebody and your thoughts get to racing about what you would do with or to him or her, or what you hope could happen, that's when you are taking it out of its context, you're taking admiration into lust. And Jesus is saying, "Hey, there is danger in doing that." It's strong language but it's because God has a high view of sex and the body. And His knowledge of our own hearts is really deep and He knows how it can lead us to sin.

So, what do we do? So glad you asked. How in God's name do we live in a world that is deeply entrenched in temptation and sexual sin? You know, I think as the Corinthians were hearing this letter from Paul, they probably thought the same thing. I just envision them throwing their hands up like, "We're toast. How in the world do we live? It's all around us. What do we do? Leave out of here. Go be nuns and monks and not be amongst society?"

No, Paul has some very practical advice for us in the next verse. Look at what he says:

"Run from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does. For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body." 1 Corinthians 6:18 (NLT)

I find it fascinating that so many of the times in the Bible we are instructed to fight. We're instructed to stand toe to toe with Satan to resist the devil and he will flee. My man says, "When it comes to sexual sin, run Forest, run." Why does he say that? Paul knows that you are no match for it. This thing has been the downfall of humanity from the beginning of time. It is undefeated, so don't make any provisions for it. Don't give it any time of day.

But again, so many of us see this like, "Oh, it's just a little baby flame. How cute. Let me see how close I can get to it without getting burned." And we easily forget that a small flame can turn into a raging fire. And before we know it, we're engulfed and we're like, "How did I get here?" Well, it's because you tiptoed and you baby sat it and you got cozy with it and you thought that it wasn't a big deal. So it happened.

This happens to all of us. We find ourselves staring too long at something. We have these lingering thoughts that we meditate on. Or maybe when you're scrolling through something and all of a sudden a picture or a video comes up that you weren't really expecting—all right that doesn't happen to you all either. That's fine. Um, I'm up here by myself. But we have a decision to make.

It might be late night and you are by yourself and you are lonely and that text message comes through. You know the one that I'm talking about. The old relationship that wasn't healthy to begin with, feelings start to arise, and the text is like, "Hey, big man. You up?"

I like to live by this thing called the five second rule. Now, this helps me. I don't know, it might help you. But in those situations, I give myself about five seconds, that's how long I have before I need to discard that thought.

I'm just going to be really, really real. I'm human. Things happen. I see things. Things pop into my head, one Mississippi, two Mississippi... before I have to discard it. Right? Because when I get to six Mississippi, it's like eh-eh abort mission. You need something to do. And I try to just live practically by that.

Again, we're going to be exposed to things. Now, the question is: what do we do when we are? Because we may find ourselves in a tempting situation maybe that we didn't ask for. What do we do then? What do we do when we're faced with making a decision? Paul has some practical words for that as well, but they are also deeply theological. Because in chapter 10 verse 13, he says:

"...When you are tempted, he," he's talking about God, "will show you a way out so that you can endure." 1 Corinthians 10:13b (NLT)

And I love that. Some translations actually say, "He'll give you a way of escape." And the picture that came to mind as I was looking over that this week is almost of one like an

emergency exit. What's the purpose of an emergency exit? It is something that is strategically and purposefully placed in a building to show you how to get to a place of safety when you are in danger. Right?

Now, a lot of times when we are tempted by something, let's say we are in great darkness, we are walking and we are either expecting, or maybe we're not expecting something, God will always give us an emergency exit. He will show us a way of escaping.

He actually might light that thing up in a very prominent way for you to be able to notice it. The question is: are you even looking for it? Or, have you already made up your mind? You premeditated that you're getting ready to do it and you're not going to consult the Holy Spirit. He always provides that way. He lights up a way for us to have an escape.

I think of how on an airplane when you're kind of like sitting there ready to take off and the flight attendant is at the front with a little microphone thing and she's giving the safety instructions. You know what I mean? No. You all don't because none of us ever listen to those ever. But what does she say? "In the event of an emergency, when we lose power, the lights will become dim but there will be these lights that will illuminate the aisle that point to the nearest exit."

Can I say that our relationship with the Holy Spirit is the same way? When you are in temptation, when you are in darkness, when you are like, "Ah, I don't know if I should do this. Ah, this feels wrong." Man, God will light up a way. It may be a phone call. It may be a friend who you need to call. It may be a sign that He gives you like, "Hey, bro. You need to get out of there fast." Right.

The question is: are you looking for it? And the deeper question is: do you even know what it is?

#### WHAT IS YOUR EMERGENCY EXIT?

It's an invitation to be strategic, to be purposeful and thoughtful, "As I go throughout my life, I'm going to have an emergency plan. If I find myself in a situation, I know what to do." So, practically, maybe for you, that's, "Hey, I need an accountability partner. I need somebody, man. Can you call me? Can you check on me to make sure that I'm where I'm supposed to be with who I'm supposed to be, at the time I'm supposed to be?"

"Hey, can we meet up every so often and grab coffee? Can I just invite you to ask me tough questions about my life, my sex life, and what I'm thinking about? Can we just have open and honest transparency?"

Maybe it's, "I need to set some healthy boundaries, because the in relationships I always find myself in I find these blurred lines that are always getting crossed and I'm not setting boundaries of what it's supposed to look like."

Maybe you've already started crossing those boundaries either unintentionally or intentionally. I've heard it all, "I'm just going over to this person's house who is not my wife and we're just going to chill. And I might spend the night but I ain't going to do nothing." Bro. Who are you kidding? I know me. Hopefully, you know you too.

What is your emergency exit and do you even know how to look for it? That's essentially what Paul is inviting us into. So, the question is: are you looking for it or do you bypass it because you've already made up your mind that that's what you want to do?

Trust me. I've been there. It's hard. It's not easy. We do get lonely. We do have emotions and feelings that we want to engage. That's why we need to be reminded, "Man, God is with us in that. He always gives us a way of escape."

I love how Paul doubles down on the why. He gives more body language here. Look at what he says in verse 19 and 20. He says:

"Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself," that's strong language, "for God," here's the word, "bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body." 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NLT)

What I love about this is that Paul does not close this by making it about moral behavior. He doesn't close this by saying, "Hey, you just need to try harder." Because the reality is that we can only white knuckle sin so far. And the gospel is not about behavior modification. It's not, "Hey, get yourself cleaned up. Don't do these things but do these things." No. It's not behavior modification.

The gospel is about heart transformation. So, when God has your heart, then He gives you a deeper why. He gives you something to cling to when you are tempted. He gives you something to help you navigate when you do find yourself wanting to lean into temptation.

And it's not, "I can't do this because it's wrong. It's, "Man, I don't want to do this because of who Jesus is and what He's done for me." It's being freed from something to something. There is a difference. And that's what Paul is talking about here. He's saying, "Don't focus on do's and don'ts but look at what has already been done."

And what's already been done? Well, you've been bought with a high price. The cross was costly. Jesus gave Himself willingly. Stripped of all of his dignity. Stripped of His clothes. Beaten, spit upon, mocked, beaten until He was unrecognizable, given this heavy cross that He then had to carry by Himself up to a hill.

And then willingly allowed Himself to be put on there. When He could have called down thousands upon thousands of angels to get Him down He thought about you and He

thought about me and He said, “No. There is a sacrifice that needs to be made for every past, present, and future sin. I’m going to stay up here for them.”

It was costly. He absorbed the wrath of His Father. That’s why it says, “God, oh, God. Why have You forsaken Me?” He didn’t feel like God was absent, but in that moment God was actually pouring His wrath upon Jesus that was meant for you and for me. For the first time He felt separation from His Father and He felt the full wrath of sin. We were bought with a high price so that we could be redeemed. That’s what has been done.

And not only that He says, “You have been given the very Spirit of God. That is also what has been done.” If you are a follower of Jesus, you are not alone. It’s not like Jesus did what He needed to do and then said, “Good luck. Let Me know how it goes?” He said, “No. I’m going to give you My very Spirit to empower you because I know that you are still going to face temptation. It’s still going to be hard. You’re still going to have struggles. But, guess what? I’m with you. I’m living within you.”

So, when you are faced with that temptation, when life gets hard, “Hey, I know that I’m not alone. God is with me. The Holy Spirit indwells me. That is what has been done.”

Here’s the thing. There is an enemy who doesn’t want you to believe it. There is an enemy whose sole responsibility is to destroy the intimate relationship that you were designed to have with your Heavenly Father. And he will do anything he can to discourage and distract you long enough to make you ineffective.

So, when he says things like, “You are your past.” “You are your sexual sin.” “You are your trauma.” “You are an addiction. You will never get free from this. You’re going to struggle with this forever.” when he says that you have to clean yourself up first before you come to Jesus, “You have to stop doing that before you’ll be accepted by God,” I just want you to know that that is a lie from the pit of hell.

What God says is, “I love you as you are where you are. And there is nothing you can do to make me love you more and nothing you can do to make Me love you less.” God says, “I went to a cross, and was put in the grave, and was resurrected so that you could be redeemed and restored and renewed. And you don’t have to do anything to earn it. All you have to do is receive it.”

The question is: do you believe that? That you cannot out sin God’s grace. It is abundant and it is deep. Receive it. That’s the heart posture that we get to have. And that’s what Paul is going to continue to point to.

As we get ready to close out and worship, I want to invite everybody at all of our campuses to stand to our feet because we’re going to look at a final verse that I think is so critical to us fully beholding the depths of the gospel and what the Good News of Jesus actually is. And it’s one of my favorite verses in this chapter. It’s verse 11.

You need to know that before this verse Paul had actually listed out a bunch of sins that the Corinthians were involved in, including sexual sin. And right after doing that this is what he says. He says:

“And that is what some of you,” everybody say it together—what? “were.” That is what some of you were, and then he says, but—oh I love a good but in the Bible. You’ve got about five seconds.

“But you were washed, [but] you were sanctified, [but] you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” 1 Corinthians 6:11 (NIV)

Church, that is the gospel.

You may be here today or at any of our campuses and you are thinking, “I am my past.” “I am what I’ve done.” “I am what has been done to me.” No. That’s who you were. But because of the grace of Jesus and what He has done and what He is offering you, that’s not who you are. You have been washed, you have been justified and you are being sanctified—made more and more into the image of Jesus.

And, yes. It may feel at times like it’s two steps forward and one step back. But, guess what? God is with you every step of the way saying, “I’m here. I’m here. You may have fallen today, but guess what? I’m still here. We’re going to get back up and we’re going to keep walking. We’re going to keep going.”

I want to pray for anybody who feels like you don’t have what it takes to keep going, that maybe you’ve gotten it wrong, maybe you are filled with shame and guilt. And the lies of the enemy have been eating you alive for as long as you can remember. I want to pray that you would feel the depth of the unconditional love of Jesus. That today would be a day that you put your marker in the sand and you say, “You know what? I fully embrace all of what Jesus has done for me. And I know it’s not going to be easy, but I invite Him in.”

So everybody, at all of our campuses, let’s bow our heads as we pray.

God, we thank You. God, we thank You for Your abundant mercy and grace. God, we thank You that You are a God who doesn’t tell us to get our act together and do better, try harder.

God, we had nothing to offer You. You made the first move. You did what nobody could ever do to save us. On our behalf You are the One who wrapped Himself in skin and bones and came to this earth, lived a perfect and sinless life, and died the death that we deserved to die so that we could have an eternal relationship with you.



But it wasn't just so that we can go to heaven one day. It was so that we can experience Your power right here right now. There is a practicality to Your gospel. So, would You fill us with it right now?

God, I pray that the enemy who is wanting to create a false narrative in somebody's mind who thinks that they are their past or that they can never get free from this, that they are used goods—God, I pray that they would feel Your warm embrace by and through Your Spirit and that today would maybe be the first day where they take a journey of liberation, a walk with You, so that they can experience the renewal and the redemption that You died for them to have.

And, God, because of that we give You the highest praise. You deserve all of us, God. We could never do enough to repay You. The least that we can do is to give You the praise and the worship You deserve. Not just with our lips, but with our lives. So, we offer that to You today. We thank You and we love You. It's in Jesus' name that we pray. And the church says: Amen.

