

Sermon outline and notes © Dr. Stephen Felker, Pastor
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18510 Branders Bridge Rd., Colonial Heights, VA 23834
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1 Corinthians 6:19-20 “The Obligations of Redemption”

Intro. Back in 2007 the Associated Press stated (2/28/07) that, “Today’s college students are more narcissistic and self-centered than their predecessors, according to a comprehensive new study by five psychologists....” This was based on the responses of 16,475 college students nationwide. A few years later, W. Keith Campbell, PhD, head of the University of Georgia psychology department said, “Narcissism is on the rise.”¹

So what’s the problem with being narcissistic, some ask? Well even this secular study concluded that narcissists “are more likely to have romantic relationships that are short-lived, at risk for infidelity, lack emotional warmth, and [are more likely] to exhibit ... dishonesty, and over-controlling and violent behaviors.” Such people also have a strong sense of entitlement. Furthermore, such people say, “It’s *my* body, and I will do with it as I wish.” As a result, many young people today are doing what brings bodily pleasure, but are actually abusing their bodies with alcohol, drugs, immorality, and reckless living. People use the same argument to justify abortion on demand.

There’s another big problem with such self-centeredness. It is contrary to sound biblical truth. If you see yourself as the center of your universe, then it is obvious that God is no longer the center of your universe. And when God is pushed aside, darkness fills your soul. And spiritual darkness leads to all kinds of sin and self-destruction.

We cannot fault these young adults alone. The researchers traced the phenomenon back to what they called the “self-esteem movement” that emerged in the 1980s, asserting that the effort to build self-esteem had gone too far. For example, they were taught to sing, “I am special, I am special. Look at me. Look at me” (to the tune of “Frere Jacques”). They also faulted permissive and indulgent parents. Social media can certainly make us even more self-centered and narcissistic.

This self-centeredness is so prevalent in our culture that it has even made its way into the Christian community. Churches are increasingly catering to the attitude that says, “What do you have to offer *me*?” People look for a church with a consumer mentality, going to the ones that offer the most fun, excitement, and entertainment for themselves and their children.

Well, it is past time for Christians to reject the me-first attitude that is so prevalent today. I believe that my text of Scripture today is a good antidote to that problem. I want to show you why you should put *God* first in your life. Jesus said in Mt. 16:25, “For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.” It is a strange paradox of life. The more you put yourself first, the more you will lose real life. To find real life, you must deny self, and put Christ and others first. So this morning I want to show you why you should abandon self-centeredness, and place God on the throne of your life. And the special focus of our text is upon our bodies. We are not to use our bodies selfishly, but for God. I believe this message will also prepare our hearts to observe the Lord’s Supper together.

Now the first reason why we should put God first in our lives is this:

¹ <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2011/02/narcissism> (accessed 3/2/2019).

I. CHRIST REDEEMED OUR BODIES

The word “redeemed” is not actually found in my text, but the concept is clearly found in v.20, “You are bought with a price.” [He says the same thing in 7:23]. The word translated “bought” (*agorazo*) literally refers to making a purchase from the marketplace. At times the word is translated “redeemed.” For example, Rev. 5:9 says of Jesus, “For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.” [Also translated “redeemed” twice in Rev. 14:13-14].

Now to understand the meaning of this verse, you need to go back to the days when slaves were sold in the marketplace. That was a common practice in the Roman Empire, and it was practiced right here in America until the 1860’s. Picture in your mind a slave standing on an auction block. His freedom has been stolen from him, often as a spoil of war. He is probably chained at his hands and feet. Well Paul is comparing our salvation from sin to being purchased from the slave market at a high price and set free from the cruel master of sin.

You see, before Christ saved you, you were a slave of sin. Do you remember when you were addicted to your sins? What a desperate condition we were in. At one time we imagined that living self-centered lives would be a great blessing. But let me assure you that there is no ruler so tyrannical as your own sin nature. Self is a fierce dictator and terrible oppressor, for self is dominated by sinful lusts which totally control you, even after you want to be free from its control to seek after other things. But seeing our desperate condition, God had mercy upon us and provided a way for us to be set free from the penalty of sin and from the power of sin over our lives. But just as purchasing a slave was expensive, even so it would cost God a great price to set us free. The word “bought” implies that a price would be paid, but Paul emphasizes this by explicitly saying, “with a price.”

What was the ransom? What was the price Jesus had to pay to purchase our salvation? Well, something inestimably precious was paid for you. 1 Pet. 1:18-19 says, “You were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” God actually owns all the gold of this world, but gold could not purchase our salvation. Acts 20:28 says that God bought (*peripoieomai*) His church with His own blood. Christ paid the ransom for our sin-debt. That meant that Jesus had to become our substitute, and shed His life’s blood, dying in our place. Likewise, Jesus said to His disciples in Mt. 20:28 that He came to “give His life a ransom for many.” He knew that He had a high price to pay.

Let me show you what it cost Jesus to become our substitute. Have any of you been racked with pain? If so, you can appreciate a little of what the Savior went through. Oh, the pain He endured when they tied His hands to the whipping post and lashed His back over and over again. He bore on His back the lashes that should have fallen upon us. See the soldiers mock Him and beat Him, and place a crown of thorns upon His brow. Consider His pain when those nails pierced His hands and feet, severing those tender nerves. But greater than His body pain was His soul pain. Come, stand and view Him in Gethsemane; see His agony and understand at what a cost He procured your deliverance. Sin is abhorrent to Him, and yet He bore our sins upon the cross, for the prophet said, “And the Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:6). He was made a curse for us, for Deut. 21:23 says, “he who is hanged [on a tree] is accursed of God.” He bore the pain of being, for a time, separated from His Heavenly Father in unusual darkness. He laid His soul beneath the fiery wrath of God against our sin. And from the cross He could have whispered to us, “It was here, and thus, I bought you with so great a price!”

Oh Christian, how are you living in light of so great a sacrifice? If you are a Christian, you belong to Christ. Are you living for Him? Are you obeying Him? In 1 Cor. 11:28 we read that we are to examine ourselves during the Lord's Supper. I believe we are to examine ourselves also in light of the sacrifice that Jesus has made on our behalf.

Paul gives another reason why we should yield our bodies to God in v.19:

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT INDWELLS OUR BODIES

Paul says, "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God...." When you became a Christian, the Holy Spirit of God actually took up residence in your body. This is one of the most remarkable features of the New Covenant. In the old dispensation, the Spirit of God only came upon some, such as the leaders of Israel. No one had the assurance that the Spirit would remain for a lifetime. The Spirit also dwelt in an earthly tabernacle or temple. But in the new dispensation God's temple is not a building made with hands, but it is the body of a believer. Every individual believer is personally indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9), rendering him the temple of God.

What a blessing the indwelling Spirit is! Do you know what He does for you? He breathes new life into our souls and we are born again. He helps us to understand God's truth (John 14:26; 1 Jn. 2:27). He leads us in the right way (Rom. 8:14) and sanctifies us (1 Pet. 1:2; Gal. 5:16). He strengthens us to do God's will (Acts 1:8; 5:32). He bears spiritual fruit in our lives (Gal. 5:19-23) and gives spiritual gifts to His church for the common good (1 Cor. 12:4, 7-11). He comforts us when we are hurt (Acts 9:31; Jn. 14:26). Finally, He seals us until the day of redemption (Eph. 1:13; 4:30). The Holy Spirit indwells us to ensure that our salvation will be completed. And finally, on that great resurrection day, the Spirit will create for us an immortal body like unto Jesus (Rom. 8:11). The Holy Spirit does so much for us as He dwells within us as His temple!

I believe that I can preach only by the aid of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes I feel like Clark Kent. Normally I am quiet, shy, and mild mannered. But when I get up to preach, many have said that I seem like a different person. A transformation takes place. That is the Holy Spirit within me.

Do you view your body as the temple of the Holy Spirit? When people are around you, can they sense that God is in you by the transformation of your life? If your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, then people should be able to find God through you! That's what a temple is supposed to be: a place where people connect with God. Furthermore, in light of the many wonderful benefits of the Holy Spirit, we ought to respond with gratitude and give ourselves fully to the Lord!

So we have seen that Christ died to redeem you, and the Holy Spirit of God indwells you. Both truths should fill your soul with awe and wonder. But what do these truths mean? Well, the bottom line is this. Because Christ died to redeem us, and the Holy Spirit indwells us:

III. THEREFORE, OUR BODIES BELONG TO GOD

This truth is stated negatively in the last of v.19, "You are not your own." You should no longer be self-centered. You were created and redeemed for God. Now you should be God-centered. At least 5 times in this text Paul says that your body belongs to the Lord. Already some false teachers, incorporating Greek philosophy, were saying that what you do with your body is

not a problem as long as your spirit remains pure. Paul refutes and heads off that false teaching. It does matter to God what we do with our bodies. Since our bodies are His temple, our bodies should be holy unto the Lord.

Now since that is the case, I want to make 3 applications:

A. You Have No Right to Rule Yourself - God did not give you a body to do with as you please. If our aims rise no higher than living for self, then we are denying the fact that we are bought with a price. Worldly ambition, covetousness, and so forth, might try to claim our souls, but we say, "No, it is not our own; we cannot, therefore, do what our old will would do."

In contrast, since we have been bought by Christ we should yield our lives to the Lordship of Christ. Christ should be Lord over our bodies. He whose hands were pierced for you should control the royal scepter of the kingdom of your life. We should obey Him. We should not allow the passions of sin to be in control. The theme of our life should be, "Not my will but Your will be done."

This truth of the Lordship of Christ also brings great blessing. What if a ship in the Atlantic is abandoned? It would drift here and there, with no direction. It would fall prey to every storm. Rocks or sand bars at some shore would eventually destroy it. Or an ocean storm would engulf it. But look and you can find other ships under the control of an able captain. It sails with purpose and direction. It arrives safely at a destination. What a blessing it is to be under control and direction.²

Even so, we are like a ship on life's sea. We are tossed to and fro by the circumstances of life. When we live for self we are just drifting along without direction or purpose. In time we would be destroyed by the storms of life, and certainly by the grim reaper called death. But what a blessing it is for Jesus to come to us, and be the captain of our soul? With Him in control as owner, He leads us through the storms of life. He directs us to that distant harbor of safety and rest called heaven.

So do you accept the fact that as a Christian your body belongs to God, and therefore you have no right to rule yourself? You belong to God. He is the rightful ruler of your life.

Secondly, since Christ redeemed you, and the Holy Spirit indwells you:

B. You Have No Right to Sin with Your Body - The fact that our bodies are not our own, but belong to God, should make us more careful how we use our bodies. We have no right to sin with our bodies. Across our bodies should be a "not-for-sin" sign, for we can't soil the property that belongs to another. If I borrow your car I will be more careful with your property than I will be with my own. So the redemption wrought on Calvary by the death of Jesus must be the death of sin in our lives. Your body is not made for sin. Indeed, Paul said in Rom. 6:12, "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts."

This means that you are not to use our hands to steal. We are not to use our mouths to lie, or to utter profanity. We are not to use our eyes to view pornography. In the context of these verses, Paul is making strong arguments against indulging in the sins of the flesh. There is no place in the Christian life for homosexuality (v.9), prostitution (v.15), promiscuity (v.18), or adultery. Paul says in the last of v.13, "Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord..." In v.18 he says that such sin is a sin against your own body. Certainly, in light of all the publicity about AIDS and venereal diseases, we can easily agree with Paul. Your body belongs

² Adapted from Charles H. Spurgeon, *12 Sermons on the Passion and Death of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1971 reprint), 73.

to Christ. You are not to injure it in any way. Finally, as Paul says in v.19, your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. To commit sexual sin or any other sin in a church auditorium, disgusting as that would be, would be no worse than committing the sin anywhere else. If you are a Christian, sexual sin is committed in God's sanctuary no matter where you are. Furthermore, we must not give our bodies over to such destructive things as drugs and alcohol. We must not destroy our bodies with worry, or too much stress, or over eating. Your bodies belongs to Christ, and we should live accordingly.

The third application I want to make from our text is this:

C. You Should Instead Glorify God – In v.20 Paul drives home his main application. Since we have been bought by Christ with a great price, “Therefore glorify God in your body...” 1 Cor. 10:31 says, “Whether, therefore, you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” Furthermore, Romans 12:1 says, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.” Your bodies and your spirits are God's: oh, live for God, and glorify Him in the power of His Spirit as long as you have any breath. To glorify God in our body means so to use our earthly body that people may sense that God is in us, and give glory to Him. The Westminster Catechism rightly says that the chief purpose of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

Now there are several ways we should glorify God. First, we should glorify God by reflecting the nature and character of God. They should see in us the love of God. They should see in us the holiness of God. That means that our bodies are kept separate from sin, as we have already talked about. But that also means that we are set apart unto God. And that leads to the second way we glorify God: by serving Him with good works. Matt. 5:16 says, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” Are you using your hands, eyes, and feet to serve God? Remember, your body belongs to God. Are you using your mouth to serve Him? You can bring glory to Him by using your mouth to lead a soul to Christ. Oh, how they will glorify God for their salvation! Furthermore, you ought to glorify Him with your praise and worship. Psa. 50:23 says, “Whoever offers praise glorifies Me...” The legs that used to carry us to places of sinful pleasure ought to more diligently take us to worship. Do you use your mouth to praise the Lord? He gave you that body; use it for Him.

There was a great pastor by the name of Gregory. He was the pastor of the flock of the Lord in Rome in the 500s A.D. At that time Rome still practiced slavery. What we know today as England was conquered by the Roman legions. And the slaves were brought down to Rome by the thousands and sold there on the auction block. They were very noticeable because most of the people of the Roman Empire were dark-eyed and dark-haired and darker-skinned. And many of these slaves that were brought back were fair-haired and fair-skinned and blue eyed. And this pastor, Gregory, went down to the slave blocks in Rome. And when one of those youths from England was placed on the auction block, he bought the lad. And then having bought him, he told the young fellow, “You're free. I haven't bought you to abuse you. Nor have I bought you for menial tasks and labor. I haven't bought you to be a servant or a slave in my house. I have bought you that you might be free.” Then the pastor would say, “I invite you to come with me. I want to introduce you to the blessed Jesus. Would you study the Word of God with me? And would you follow me in the discipleship of the Christian faith?” Many did out of gratitude, and even eventually went back to England as missionaries.³

³ Told by W.A. Criswell 05-22-77.

Christ has bought us and redeemed us by his own blood. Out of gratitude we should be willing to become His disciples and missionaries, representing Him on earth and bringing glory to Him.

Conclusion: Christ has suffered and died to redeem you. He has given you the gift of the Holy Spirit. Your body is now the temple of the Holy Spirit. In light of God's goodness to you, will you present your body to Him? Will you live for Him, and serve Him? Will you reject the destructive life of self-centeredness, and live for Christ? If you have not yet given your heart to Christ, why not do so today? So great a love requires a positive response.

Sources: W.A. Criswell (notes from his sermon on this text from wacriswell.org dated 05/22/77); R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1937); John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 1 Corinthians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984); MacArthur, *Nourishment For New Life*, 85; Paige Patterson, *The Troubled Triumphant Church: an Exposition of First Corinthians* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1983); Larry Pierce, *Online Bible* [Ver. 5:30] (Ontario: onlinebible.net, 2017); A.T. Robertson, *New Testament Word Pictures, Vol. 14* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1931, accessed through *Online Bible*); H. Spurgeon, *12 Sermons on the Passion and Death of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1971 reprint), 68-79; [25G.44]; Jerry Vines, *God Speaks Today: A Study of I Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979); Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Wise: I Corinthians* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1983). Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982). Nothing available from Maclaren. McGee and Blomberg (read, but not used).

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