

YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN

1 Corinthians 6

Introduction

[From Illy]... FREE TO GO

The story is told of Abraham Lincoln going to a slave auction one day. He was appalled to see how the traders and their customers mistreated the human beings they were buying and selling. One young woman who was put on the block especially captured his attention.

He could see in her eyes how years of oppression had shriveled her soul. She regarded everyone around her with hatred and contempt. This moment of cruel humiliation was one more incident in a life filled with nothing but abuse.

When the bidding began, Lincoln offered a price. Someone else bid higher. Lincoln continued to raise his bid until finally he had won. He gave the auctioneer the cash and took title to the slave woman. Having purchased this slave, she now belonged to him to do with as he pleased. She belonged to him because he had paid for her. She glared at him with bitterness in her eyes and asked what he was going to do with her.

"I'm going to set you free," replied Lincoln.

The young woman was skeptical. "Free? Free for what?"

"Just free," Lincoln explained. "Completely free."

"Free to do whatever I want?"

"Yes," he said. "Free to do whatever you want."

"Free to say whatever I want to say?"

"That's right."

"Free to go wherever I want to go?"

Lincoln answered, "Yes, you may go wherever you want to go."

With a sudden smile she said, "Then I'm going with you!"

[A Church for the 21st Century by Leith Anderson. Bethany House Publishers, 1992. Page 216.]

That story illustrates for us the principle which is in our Scripture text today. 1 Cor 6:19b-20a. "You are not your own for you were bought with a price." Just like that woman we have been set free from slavery, except that our slavery was to sin. Having been set free from sin by the Lord Jesus, it should be our highest joy to go wherever He goes.

This morning, I would like to consider that thought as we look at this passage we have before us. You are not your own. You belong to God. He bought you, you belong to him. The real question is, what difference does that make? How does that affect my life? What difference does it make to my conduct? To my attitudes? To my thoughts? There is another important principle – closely tied to this one – v. 11 – God saves and sanctifies sinners. He has bought you even in all your sin and filth.

There is in this chapter two issues or areas of discussion which set the context for these principles. Two areas in which there was disorder in the Corinthian church. Let us look at what Paul has to say about these issues and then try to tie it all together in a way that changes not only our thinking but our lifestyle as well.

The first area of disorder in the Corinthian church...

Legal Disorders

The Corinthian believers were apparently a contentious and litigious group of people. We are not talking about criminal matters here—the state is responsible for that. This is more likely about civil matters – perhaps property conflicts and other similar matters. This is all tied in with the Corinthian's concept of legality and morality.

Read vv. 1-6 and comment briefly. Then focus on vv. 7-8 noting that:

- Such actions were a bad testimony to the world
- Such actions demonstrated a selfish, greed attitude
- Paul says it is better to be cheated or to be wronged than to try to "get even" with your brother in Christ.

You see, the problem in many of our conflicts is the tendency to look at others and see all their problems and all their sins and inconsistencies, while being blind to our own weaknesses and sins. Paul takes us there in verses 9-10 as he turns a bit of a corner, moving away from the problem between believers to talk about the destiny of the wicked. Paul points out that God will deal with the wicked. It is not our place to judge them or to try to get back at them for their evil behaviour.

Go through vv. 9-10 – the sinful lifestyle of the wicked; the kind of life that will never be seen in heaven.

Verse 11 – a reminder and a wonderful truth – we were no better. Paul reminds his readers, including us, that many of us were just as wicked, but the wonderful truth is that God saves and sanctifies sinners.

- Washed – our sin and guilt is removed, cleansed
- Sanctified – the power of sin over our lives is taken away
- Justified – we were brought into a right relationship with God

vv. 9-11 are a bit of a digression from Paul's discussion about the legal disorder in the Corinthian church, but they contain such a wonderful affirmation of God's grace.

Also, they form a transition into the second area of disorder that Paul addresses in this passage...

Moral Disorders

I would remind you of some of the things we said about the depth of immorality in the Corinthian culture and society – the temple dedicated to Aphrodite, the goddess of sensuality, with its one thousand temple prostitutes. Corinth was a place of entertainment, arts, vice, and incredible immorality.

That immoral culture had invaded the church and corrupted the moral views of the believers as well. We live in a culture today that is increasingly corrupt when it comes to morality and sexuality. Views about what is right and wrong, or what is acceptable in areas of sexuality are becoming more and more twisted. And it seems that many, in the name of religion have become very adept as well at twisting the truth about sexuality and morality. Cult leaders, and even many supposedly sound Christian leaders have twisted views of morality.

There seem to be two opposing views: all sex is evil, or everything is permissible.

Go through vv. 12-19. Note some key thoughts:

- The Corinthians twisted view of morality. Their attitude seemed to be that whatever is legal is moral – v. 12
- Someone has wisely pointed out that not all sins are crimes and not all crimes are sins.

- The body was not intended for sexual immorality, but for the Lord. The physical being cannot be separated from the spiritual – v. 13.
- Our bodies are members of Christ. The church is the body of Christ; therefore we, as believers in Christ, are members of his body. We cannot legitimately take the members of Christ's body and use them for immoral purposes – v. 15
- In vv. 16-17 we are given a contrast – union with a prostitute is a physical union; union with Christ is a spiritual union.
- At salvation the Holy Spirit takes up residence in us. We are his temple—his dwelling. How can we use that for immorality?

Key truth from this passage:

- Sexual immorality is an offense against God (the Father) – vv. 13-14
- Sexual immorality is an offense against Jesus Christ – vv. 15-17
- Sexual immorality is an offense against the Holy Spirit – vv. 18-19

In spite of the culture in Corinth, Paul reminded them, and he reminds us, that immorality, any sexual involvement outside of the boundaries God has set is an offense against God and against our own bodies. He concludes with an important truth about our bodies and the role they play in our Christian experience – vv. 19-20.

Conclusion

Well, we have come full circle – back to where we started. Jesus Christ bought us to set us free – free to follow him and serve him.

I would like to just leave you with a few closing thoughts to mull over throughout this week:

1. God has saved us and sanctified us – set us apart for a purpose.
2. Our bodies are the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, whom we have received from God.
3. You are not your own. You were bought with a price. He purchased you; therefore, you belong to him.

So, as Paul concludes this passage, **“...glorify God in your body.”** (v. 20)