

**“STEWARDSHIP OF GOD’S GIFT OF SEX:
PROTECTING SEXUAL PURITY, II.”**

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First Christian Reformed Church

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Scripture Texts: I Thessalonians 4:3-8; Hebrews 13:4

Introduction.

This morning I am returning to our text from last week to finish my sermon on protecting God’s good and beautiful gift of physical intimacy in marriage.

These sermons are my love for you. I want God’s best for you, I want God’s will for you. This is the pleading of a pastor who loves this flock and wants to guard this flock from Satan’s evil intentions and destructive purposes that are flooding our culture today.

Last week I gave three motivations to encourage us to pursue sexual purity and abstain from and flee from sexual immorality.

The first motivation is because you know God and you know His will.

The will of God for you is to become increasingly sanctified, increasingly set apart from the world, not giving into the lusts of the ungodly who do not know God.

Colossians 3:4-5 If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, ... 5 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire.

The second motivation to encourage you to pursue sexual purity is honor.

Controlling your own body and desires is a matter of honor, of being an honorable person. Sexual purity is the honorable thing to do, as opposed to all forms of sexual immorality which are shameful.

Hebrews 13:4 Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled.

The third motivation to encourage you to pursue sexual purity is out of love for others.

Love seeks the good of others and does no wrong or harm to others. Christians are people who don’t use others for their own selfish desires or pleasures, whether that person is physically present with us in the flesh or is being viewed virtually.

I Thessalonians 3:12-13 May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, ... so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God.

These are three positive motivations that we could sum up as love God, love yourself and love others. Love God's good and perfect and best will for you. Love yourself by disciplining and controlling yourself and being an honorable person. Love others more than yourself and your selfish desires.

We turn now to the fourth motivation or incentive to encourage us to pursue sexual purity and holiness. If you will not heed these three reasons, then heed this one.

The fourth motivation to pursue sexual purity is the fear of God and His righteous judgment.

I Thessalonians 4:6, 8 The Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. ... 8 Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God.

Our text includes two serious warnings. God will judge and avenge those who defile the holiness of the sexual union which is intended only for marriage.

The nature and consequences of sexual sin is so great it requires strong words. The desires that tug and pull on us are so strong they are countered with the strongest of warnings. Some of us have to be hit up side of the head with a two by four to get our attention.

We Americans don't like to hear the word no, we don't like negatives. When we are talking about God we want positives, we want those who tickle our ears and tell us things we want to hear. We want to hear God's yes, not God's no.

We are just like children who don't like it when our parents tell us no. We whine, cry and throw a tantrum when we don't get what we want, when we want it. We want our will, not God's will.

But God's Word is filled with both yes and no, with blessings and cursing, positives and negatives, encouragements and warnings.

I would be remiss not to sound the alarm and urge us all to take seriously God's warnings. Not just remiss, I would be unloving, uncaring if I didn't plead with us to flee all impurity and sexual immorality.

If someone is driving toward a cliff, isn't the most loving thing to do, to warn them and stop them and plead with them to turn around. If this sermon keeps one person from going over the cliff, it is worth it.

From Genesis to Revelation every book of God's Word gives serious warnings about the seriousness of all sexual sin.

I Corinthians 6:9-10 (NASB) Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, ... will inherit the kingdom of God.

Galatians 5:19-21 The works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ... I warn you, ... those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Ephesians 5:5-6 Everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, ... has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

Colossians 3:6 On account of these the wrath of God is coming.

Hebrews 13:4 God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.

Galatians 6:7-8 Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

Don't be deceived. In our culture there are sins that are not only accepted and approved, but even promoted and celebrated. Paul is pleading, no matter how common a sin is or how many people are doing it, don't be deceived, God is not mocked, He is the judge and avenger.

Who is sounding the warning in our culture today? Who is sounding the alarm? Who is saying no? Who is paying no attention?

Think about what every sexual sin is. Every time we look at or watch nakedness or promiscuity or engage in it outside of marriage we are challenging God's wisdom and authority. To intentionally indulge in temptation is to defy God, daring Him to judge our sin.

It's like we are saying, "God, we don't like what your Law says and we don't care what your Law says and we are going to do what we want." This is more than disregarding God, it is despising God. We should tremble to think of rejecting God, of not fearing the Lord.

It is a frightening thing to fall into the hands of a holy God. It is a fearful thing to show no holy fear of God, to have no shame, to dishonor God, to mock God and His judgement, and laugh at His commandments, to ignore or silence our conscience because it convicts us and makes us feel guilty.

We need to hear in the strongest terms the warnings about our souls, because it is on account of these sins the wrath of God is coming (Colossians 3:6).

We need to hear the sober and serious warnings of God's Word, *but* if we stop here we may despair of any hope or help we have from such a holy God. We are not left at the mercy of our own weak willpower or self-control.

Fifth motivation to pursue sexual purity, the Holy Spirit.

Let me add a fifth motivation to help us have hope and victory over our sin. Our text ends with the words "God, who gives us His Holy Spirit."

Paul holds out to us the Holy Spirit who's immeasurably great power enables us to flee sin, flee Satan, flee lust and live for holiness. Remember the prayer we are praying this year from Ephesians 1, that the same power that raised Jesus from the dead, is ours and at work in us. The Spirit of God is a holy Spirit and the fruit of the presence of the Holy Spirit is self-control.

By the Holy Spirit we have wisdom to discern evil.

By the Holy Spirit we have power to resist the devil and all evil.

Christ offers us a way of escape through His divine power at work in us. The resources for daily victory are ours through the presence, power and grace of Jesus. We must rely on Him to subdue our lusts and desires. God has provided a way of escape (I Corinthians 10:13).

Galatians 5:16 Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

Galatians 5:24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Now, let me say a word to all of you who have sinned in these things, who have failed, perhaps again and again, who have not abstained or stayed pure, who have not honored God and His gifts.

If by the grace of God at work in you, you genuinely and sincerely want to repent of your sin, throw yourself on the mercy of God for your forgiveness and for freedom from the guilt of the past.

Romans 8:1 There is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

Psalms 32:1-2 Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not reckon his sin.

Psalms 103:10-12 He does not deal with us according to our sins nor repay us according to our iniquities. ... as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

I call you to flee to the cross of Jesus and plead for the blood of Jesus to forgive you and cover all your past and present sins.

No matter what your sin is, no matter how big your sin is, no matter how long you have been sinning, or how bad you have messed up, God's grace and mercy are bigger than all your sin. We all have access to the cleansing blood of Jesus through confession and repentance and turning from our sin to His holiness and righteousness.

Titus 2:11-12 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age.

The same grace that saves us is the grace that delivers us from all our sins. This grace is the power of God in us that enables us to say no, to renounce ungodliness, to resist worldly passions, to flee from Satan's temptations. Learn the Gospel, preach the Gospel to yourself every day.

Implications and application.

Finally, take practical steps in this fight against sexual sin. Do you take the serious warnings seriously, what steps will you take to show it?

To repent means to turn away from what led you to be tempted and sin.

Start with your smartphone, which maybe killing your soul. Take Jesus seriously, cut out or cut off all the gateways to sin. Put Covenant Eyes on all your devices. Delete apps, set up codes and passwords that you don't know, give them to your parents, a trusted friend who will hold you accountable. Parents protect your children, guard their hearts, Satan is out to get them.

Turn off, delete, remove apps, whatever leads to temptation. Cut it off, as the serious warning of Jesus says. Pay attention to where or when you are most often tempted and take active steps to avoid those times and places. Don't keep your phone by your bed at night.

Flee from evil, flee from secret sin, don't stay hiding, don't stay in the darkness, hate your sin.

I know about what gets passed around in your schools and among your friends. I have heard about some of the consequences and damage done. Some of you are be addicted to lust. You have given in to temptations. Maybe your conscience still gets your attention and you feel some shame and guilt. That's good, don't ignore it.

Fear God, fear for your own soul, fear for the souls of those you love. You are in a war that Satan is waging for your soul. If you don't wake up to the seriousness of it, the consequence could be life long and even eternal.

Turn to God, repent of your sin, pray for His power and strength to flee the devil and to escape the bondage of your sin. Don't go it alone, talk to someone who is spiritually mature and who can give you help and hold up your arms in the fight.

The gift of God is precious, to sin against it is serious. God's greatest gifts have the greatest warnings. He will judge, so judge yourself before He does. Trust God, believe God, believe He is wise and good and loves us so much to warn us and protect us. Trust God, love God, love His will for you and your life. Desire what He desires for you more than what you desire for yourself. This is the will of God for you.

Prayer: Holy and merciful Father, have mercy on us and forgive us for our failures in the continual fight against lust. Forgive us for weak, half-hearted efforts and prayers. By the power of your Holy Spirit in us, grant us new resolve and new power and a greater love and knowledge of you. Grant us the will to say no to every temptation and to resist Satan at every turn. Make us deaf to his voice, blind to his enticements, fearful of making shipwreck of our souls. Sever the root of lust in our hearts and replace it with a far greater and purer passion to be like Christ. Help us to see the beauty of holiness, the pure truth of your Word. In the pure and holy and mighty name of Jesus we pray, Amen.