

Sermon-“What will you do with the Body?” Epiphany 2 Jan. 15

In one of my first pastoral circuit meetings there was discussion on what to do with the left-over wine at the bottom of the individual cup after communing someone in a hospital or convalescent home. It bothered one of the Pastors to simply wash out the cup in a bathroom sink, after all,..... in, with, and under the wine had been the blood of Christ.....do we dare just throw it down the sewer? Here at first Good Shepherd we have a separate drain that goes directly into the ground where used communion wine is disposed of. We do this because connected to the wine in a special way had been Christ’s blood and for that reason that wine is different and should be treated with respect.

Today’s Epistle lesson tells us that our physical bodies are special, that the physical body God created us in is special and should be held in respect for the simple reason that it was created by God and because our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit of God dwells within us!

The physical Body of Christ was knitted together by God for Jesus to live in. It was through a Physical body like ours that Jesus himself carried out his ministry in. The physical body of Christ was special because it was not tainted by sin. There was no sin in him; neither was found any guile in his mouth. The power of the most high overshadowed Mary and the infant Jesus was born sinless. His body, like ours had two hands, two feet, two ears, two hands, one nose, and one heart. The physical body of Jesus didn’t radiate with light and he didn’t have a halo over his head. His body was just like ours, only

without sin, which is something we can only imagine. In a similar way the body of a baptized believer is special also because it has been set aside by God for his glory. We are fearfully and wonderfully made, and our bodies do not belong to ourselves, but unto the Lord. We have been bought with a price; we have been redeemed at great cost! The moment we were baptized or came to faith, our body became the temple of God because the Holy Spirit dwells within us. Thus, our body is sacred and should be treated as so.

As believers the question we should be asking ourselves everyday is how best we can use our bodies that bring glory to God. The believers in Corinth were misusing their bodies in all sorts of ways from divisiveness to immorality. 8 times Paul uses the expression, "What? Don't you know"! Didn't anyone ever tell you about these things? Don't you know it's wrong to disrupt the Body of believers, causing hostility and division? Don't you know that drunkards, fornicators, and adulterers, those who misuse their own body will not enter the Kingdom of God? Don't you know that your body was purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ, that God wants to use your body for his glory?" Didn't the Christians in Corinth know better? Were they not informed? Did they not know how to behave as Christians? Were they simply ignoring the information Paul had already given them? They were not obeying Christ; neither were they maturing in Christ. The Apostle Paul wanted to give them the meat of God's Word but they were not ready for it, they were still infants who were being influenced by the world, the flesh, and the Devil. Paul had to give them baby food.

Paul tells them and Paul tells us that our body is a temple. Your body is a house that was erected for the purpose of worshipping God. This

is what made Christianity so unique especially in Corinth. The city had many shrines where various gods could be worshipped. The Christians shrine is not in a building built with human hands, our body is God's shrine. After Solomon had built the tabernacle of God, he says, "Behold, the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, how much less this house that I have built." At the moment of our baptism, at the moment of our regeneration by God's Spirit our body becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit. He cleanses our hearts for his holy habitation, sinful though the body is.

It is so easy to allow sinful habits, practices, and ways of life to control us and master us; (ILLUS: From leaky tents we struggle in to a new resurrected body.) God's Holy Spirit has been given to us allowing us to overcome the guilt and shame of living in this earthly tent. We no longer have to be enslaved to the appetite of our flesh, our instincts, or desires which only bring heartbreak and ruin. Instead we yield our lives to the one who can do exceedingly, abundantly, above and beyond what we can imagine or think. The Holy Spirit abides in us today to glorify Christ, our Savior from sin.

Paul had to remind the Christians in Corinth that for this reason they should not use their bodies for immoral acts in the worship of pagan Gods. Instead, "Glorify God with your body" says Paul. "Present your bodies as a living sacrifice to God"! (Gospel ILLUS- the way Paul opens his second letter to the Church in Corinth.)