

Freedom from Sexual Sin and Shame

I. Introduction

- A. Since Easter, we've explored how Jesus sets us free from sin, shame, strongholds, unforgiveness, jealousy, counterfeit spirituality, and more.
- B. Today, we're going into a place many people would rather keep hidden: **Sexual sin. Porn. Hookups. Crossed boundaries. And the shame that keeps us chained.**
- C. Some of you are in a compulsive cycle:
 - 1. You slip up, promise God you'll never do it again.
 - 2. You cry alone, feeling filthy, worthless.
 - 3. You get a few days of victory, then the temptation comes back, and you fall again.
 - 4. You wonder, "Does God still love me? Is there something broken in me that can't be fixed?"
 - 5. Others have felt enslaved, isolated, and ashamed most of their lives. They were victims of crime, abuse, and exploitation.
- D. Sexual sin is a common foothold the enemy uses to enslave believers.
 - 1. The average age of exposure to porn is 8 years old
 - 2. 70% of men and 40% of women use porn annually
- E. It carries unique shame, secrecy, and a sense of defeat.
- F. The enemy doesn't play fair. The reality is that scars on your soul can exist long after repentance, leaving people with a spiritual and emotional aftermath
 - 1. Memories, fears, old hurts and wounds, emotional pain
- G. The enemy uses sexual sin to keep believers enslaved, isolated, and ashamed.
 - 1. But **Jesus didn't come to shame you → He came to set you free.**
- H. I don't know what your history has written in it, or what your future holds, but as your shepherd, I think it is necessary to talk through these things
 - 1. What is God's design for sexuality?
 - 2. What is the enemy's strategy within sexuality?
 - 3. How does the gospel restore and free us?

II. What is God's design for sexuality?

- A. God is not anti-sex; He created it as a gift, but it must remain within His design to flourish. Like fire in a fireplace brings warmth, fire outside the fireplace brings destruction. That said, God has a wonderful plan and intention in sex.
- B. *Genesis 2:24-25 (ESV), "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed."*
 - 1. Context of Genesis → Creation, "Good," "Very good," Image bearers of a communal God, perfect partner, from Adam's rib
 - 2. "Leave and cleave": God institutes marriage as a covenant, promise
 - a) It's more than a contract or an agreement (Islam)
 - b) It's a binding agreement before God and man
 - c) Here, it's marriage; a sacred relationship before God

- d) In the Bible, covenants were confirmed through an action (e.g., the Last Supper). The marriage covenant is “confirmed” with sex
 - e) This is why it says that they shall...
- 3. “Become one flesh” → This isn’t just the physical act of flesh. Something supernaturally changes in you when you get married, and specifically in the covenant-confirming act of sex
 - a) To be technical, sexual intercourse signifies an ontological and covenantal union (H20)
 - b) In other words, something actually changes in the substance of who you are as a person in the unseen world when you have sex.
 - c) What does that mean? It’s a lot more than just physical interaction
 - d) The biblical idea is that there is a holistic joining of lives—spiritual, emotional, physical—and this process is a covenant before God.
- 4. “Naked and not ashamed” → But sex – untarnished by sin, shame, insecurity, and the curse of the fall – is beautiful and safe.
 - a) In our culture we have no shame b/c of numbness – this is different, a complete absence of guilt, fear, and hiding
- 5. Not to get too weird, this mystical union between a husband and wife, authenticated by sex, is a biblical signpost pointing to Jesus
 - a) A husband and wife’s sexual union is a foreshadowing of Christ and the Church (Eph 5:31-32)
 - b) In other words, marriage and the sexual union are for more than just pleasure or making babies
 - c) The “one fleshness” of sex points beyond marriage to the covenant faithfulness and church’s intimate union with Christ.

C. Hebrews 13:4 (ESV), “Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.”

- 1. Building on a WEALTH of teaching about sex throughout the Bible (Both the OT and the NT; ~175 verses), the author of Hebrews throws this out there in his final breakdown of commands to the reader
- 2. The verb tense signifies that we have an ongoing communal obligation in the church to value marriage as sacred.
 - a) In other words, we are commanded to hold marriage in honor among all... always... as the culture shifts and changes... despite the chaos of the time... despite how you feel... despite struggles.
- 3. “The marriage bed” means sexual relations within marriage.
- 4. What is God’s design for the marriage bed? That it would be undefiled. What does that mean? He explains by telling you what would defile it
 - a) “Sexual immorality and adultery” defile it. In other words, any sexual activity outside covenant marriage is defilement
 - (1) Jesus said that to “think” or “look” with lust is defilement
 - (2) Paul says, “Not even a HINT” of sexual immorality is okay

5. What's the threat looming overhead? "God will judge." There is divine accountability for sexual sin, and there are spiritual consequences
6. After all, sexual sin is *different*. 1 Cor 6:18, *the sexually immoral person sins against his own body*. → Which leads us to question #2

III. What is the enemy's strategy within sexuality?

- A. The enemy wants you to believe sexual sin is harmless and without consequence. He is working hard to normalize all levels of sexual immorality.
- B. Why? Proverbs 5:23, *"[The one who falls into sexual sin] dies for lack of discipline, and because of his great folly he is led astray. (ESV)"*
- C. Some examples:
 1. Using porn to cope with loneliness, anxiety, or stress leads a person to gradually become less and less comfortable around other people, leading to isolation and deeper shame.
 2. A teenager, so driven by social media and the culture, views her body as nothing more than that - a body. She sees nothing wrong with texting inappropriate pictures or swiping right for a hook-up
 3. The enemy uses secrecy and shame to keep people trapped...
 - a) A couple has been happily married for years, but random memories of previous sexual encounters still plague both of them.
 - b) For the husband, he doesn't want these old memories to come into his mind, but they do
 - c) For the wife, she finds herself less and less interested in sex, her body almost becoming paralyzed when her husband approaches her (and she doesn't know why)
 4. Satan wants to ruin your sex life with your spouse, and ruin your life through sex with people who aren't your spouse!
- D. *1 Corinthians 6:13-20 NLT 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. Context: Paul is quoting the Corinthians and using their logic back at them.
 - a) Corinthian believers rationalized sexual sin with dualistic thinking ("food for the stomach"), separating the body from spiritual significance (early Gnostic tendencies).
 - b) Paul counters with a resurrection theology of the body (v14), teaching embodied holiness
 2. "The body is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord" (v13): The Greek "porneia" encompasses all sexual activity outside covenant marriage.
 - a) In other words, The body's purpose is for the Lord's purposes, one of which is sexual holiness (as a covenant sign) within marriage

E. 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. V15, Since we are in union with Christ, members of his body, partakers of this mystical union, sexual sin is egregious.
 - a) It violates the union, making it not just a physical issue, a pleasure issue, or even a moral issue
 - b) Sexual sin becomes a CHRISTOLOGICAL issue
 - (1) V16 → to join CHRIST with a prostitute
2. Paul explains this by quoting Genesis 2:24, affirming the "one flesh" reality, indicating that sexual union creates a real, covenantal bond even in sin, which is why porneia is profoundly defiling to everyone involved.
3. This union in sin is contrasted with the mystical union we have with the LORD in v17, reflecting the superior covenant bond we are to guard.

F. 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.

1. Paul's conclusion? "Flee sexual immorality" (v18)... continuously
 - a) Sexual sin uniquely damages one's body, which is God's temple.
 - b) Internal tarnishing takes place
 - c) It's not like getting angry or saying a swear word
 - d) Sexual sin is uniquely catastrophic on you and those around you!
2. Temple of the Holy Spirit (v19): This is OT temple theology, reminding the reader that now God's indwelling presence is in the believer's body, therefore raising the stakes of sexual sin to a matter of sacred space violation.
3. Again, w/ severity → "Bought with a price" (v20). Christ's substitutionary atonement is the ground for sexual holiness, if you need more motivation
4. **Satan wants to lie to you, destroy you, kill you, & sex is an easy way.**

G. James 1:14-15 (ESV), "But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death."

1. Look at temptation's progression: Lured and enticed are fishing and hunting terms. The enemy baits believers into sin.
2. Once the desire impregnates the mind, sin is personified as being "conceived" and "bringing forth" death
3. This is an inevitable end result *unless interrupted by repentance*

IV. But we have GOOD NEWS! The gospel can restore and free us!

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

1. To confess your sexual sin is to say, "You're right, God. I did all those things, and it is as serious as you say it is," vs. trying to justify, "It's just sex, NBD, my wife had postpartum, or whatever other excuse."
 - a) It's also saying, "You're right. You can and DO purify me!"
2. God is faithful and just to forgive you.
 - a) Why just? Well, God has already poured out his wrath on Jesus! Therefore, God isn't just ignoring your sin, he already punished Jesus for it so he can be JUST.
 - b) Why faithful? He wouldn't be faithful to his promise if he then punished you AGAIN! That would be double jeopardy.
3. Cleansing goes beyond pardon to purification
 - a) Remember that you are a temple
 - b) The temple had to be pure
 - c) Cleansing addresses your guilty conscience (cleansed), the pollution of sin (cleansed), and the removal of shame (cleansed)

B. 2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV), "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

1. As a believer, you are IN CHRIST. This is that mystical union we mentioned. It is WHO YOU ARE. You have a new headship, a new humanity, a new future in Jesus, a new union.
2. This is summarized as a "New creation" → The old has passed away. The old age, the old Adamic lifestyle, the old reigning of sin and condemnation
 - a) IT'S GONE
3. I don't know your sexual history, but I can tell you that in Christ you are a clean, pure, spotless bride, empowered by the Spirit, and you are transformed and being transformed in every facet possible
4. The gospel is not behavior modification; it is transformation.
 - a) Jesus cleanses your shame and breaks your bonds, enabling you to walk in purity not by willpower alone but by the Spirit's power.

V. Steps to Freedom

- A. I spent a lot of time laying the foundation for what sex is all about and why it matters b/c I think that's lost on our culture
 1. The gospel makes you clean. The gospel makes you free. The gospel removes all sin and shame. The gospel alone purifies you, repairs you, remakes you, can reconcile your marriage, restore your purity, etc.
 2. You are free and forgiven in Jesus if you are a follower of Jesus.
 3. But sometimes the enemy has a wedge, a spiritual foothold. At some point in time we gave him dominion in an area and we never repented of that or took it back.
- B. So, how do you know if the enemy is exploiting in this area? How do you know if your sexual sin is just temptation or something more?
 1. Are you habitually stuck in sin?
 2. Are you plagued by memories that haunt you?
 3. Does your body physically shut down around your spouse?

4. Is it a compulsion or a temptation?
5. Are you completely overwhelmed by shame?
- C. **Repent:** Turn from sin, agreeing with God.
 1. Stop feeding it. Cut off the food supply.
- D. **Confess:** Bring sin into the light, breaking secrecy and shame.
 1. Confess to a trusted believer for prayer and accountability (James 5:16).
- E. **Renounce shame, lies, and ties:** Verbally break agreements and ties with past sexual partners.
 1. The lie: "I am dirty and beyond forgiveness."
 2. The truth: "In Christ, I am cleansed and made new."
 3. *"In the name of Jesus, I break every bond formed through sexual sin with [Name/Unknown]. I renounce these ties and command any spiritual connection to be severed by the blood of Jesus."*
- F. **Receive cleansing:** Trust Jesus' finished work for your forgiveness and purification.
 1. 1 John 1:9 promises cleansing.
 2. Psalm 51:7: "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."
- G. **Walk in newness:** Renew your mind, pursue accountability, and trust the Spirit's power.
 1. Guard your eyes, mind, and body.
 2. Replace lust with worship and gratitude.
 3. Get accountability to walk in ongoing freedom. Galatians 5:1: "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free."