



Part 12 – What it Means to be Human (1)

Genesis 2:18-25

Earth is tailor made for human life. Everything from the content of our air, the angle of the earth's axis, the size of earth's moon, our distance from the sun, and the thickness of the earth's crust is perfect for sustaining human life.

God made mankind in his image, male and female. What is more, God gave to the man and woman great dignity and purpose. Only to mankind did God grant the capacity to know and relate to him. Only to mankind did God give the great creation mandate to fill the earth and have dominion over it. The man and woman are quite literally the handiwork of God, having been created supernaturally.

1. We are embodied

- The purpose of Genesis 2 is in part to give us a closer look at the creation of the man and woman and the significance of the human person. That significance begins with the fact of our bodies. Our bodies are not incidental to our being but an essential part of our being. Reflecting on the wonder of God's creation of the human body the Psalmist writes: "I praise you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (139:14). The human eye, the circulatory system, consciousness, and creativity are not results of a random evolutionary process. The human person, of which the body is inextricable, is the crown of God's creation.
- Being embodied entails certain confines. We are not limitless eternal spirits. However, God created us as embodied beings, therefore our bodies matter. Our bodies are not simply husks for our spirit. It is true that our bodies are fallen and therefore temporary (2 Corinthians 5:1-4). Nevertheless, our bodies remain good and will be redeemed in the age to come.
- Moses tells us how God created the woman. First, he caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, the Lord God took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man (Gen. 2:21&22). Is God able to do that? Is the God who created the universe and everything in it able to do just exactly as Moses described? Like the man, the creation of the woman was by an immediate and miraculous action of God.
- When God saw that man needed a helper he didn't provide an angel or some disembodied spirit to help Adam. Rather, God presented to the man an embodied woman. Throughout the creation account we see that God is concerned with physical realities. How significant it is that in the fullness of time God sent an embodied Savior; the Almighty came to us in flesh and blood.

Since our bodies matter, let us honor God with our bodies – 1 Corinthians 6:12-20:

A) Act in accordance with the purpose of your body.

"Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food"—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body" (Vs. 13).

- The body is not meant to serve its appetites but to serve the Lord. We are not free to do anything we like with our bodies precisely because our bodies are "for the Lord." Be careful what you put into your body. Beware of any excess. Do not be mastered by your appetites.

B) Treat your body as one who has been joined to Christ.

"Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never!" (vs. 15).

- Obviously, we cannot literally make Christ participate in our sin. However, as "members" of the "body of Christ" what we do with our bodies is of significant spiritual importance. What we do with our bodies will either honor or dishonor our Lord.

C) Guard your body especially from immorality.

"Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body" (vs. 18).

- The Bible is clear that while all sins are equally damning, not all sins are equally damaging. Some sins cause greater damage to us and to those around us than do other sins. Sexual sins are especially grievous in the damage they do.
- Since the fall, mankind has suffered great confusion about the nature and acceptable uses of the body. That confusion is with us still today. Sexual immorality has been ruining people for thousands of years. Sexual immorality favors no class or nation or race. The Apostle tells us that there is something especially damaging and degrading about sexual immorality. These kinds of sins are sins against the body. The same point is made in Romans 1 where Paul lists sexual immorality as the grievous outcome of a rejection of God's truth. Sexual immorality represents the lower rungs of human degradation. These types of sins have cost untold multitudes of lives and destroyed innumerable relationships. The physical diseases and disorders which result from sexual immorality, along with the emotional destruction of such sins, continues to destroy lives. From AIDS to STD's to abortion, the body count of sexual immorality is enormous.
- Sexual immorality typically involves the use and misuse of other people's bodies. It is almost never a "private" sin. For instance, sexual immorality contributes to human trafficking. The multibillion dollar pornography industry requires the degradation of other people's bodies. It teaches us to see other humans as objects existing for selfish pleasure. God gave clear boundaries for physical intimacy not to diminish our joy or limit our bodies but to cause us to thrive.

D) Treat your body as a temple of the Holy Spirit.

"Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body" (vv. 19-20).

- God by his Spirit lives within all of his people. Think of it! Paul is comparing the bodies of God's people with the most holy of all places in Israel's history: the temple. As God dwelt among his people by means of the temple, now he dwells within his people. Our bodies are sacred ground for the Lord dwells within us. Let us treat our bodies as sacred space committed to the Lord's glory.
- The very help we need to overcome sin and temptation has been supplied by the indwelling Holy Spirit. By God's Spirit we have sufficient help right now to live for him in the body. There is no temptation so great that it can overpower the power of God's Spirit who dwells within his people.

E) Consider your body's future

"And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power" (vs. 14).

- Our Lord possessed a body. Think of this extraordinary thought. God Almighty – God who is the perfect, free, limitless, unbounded, everywhere present Spirit – stooped low in love for us and took on flesh and blood. He did this that he might be our faithful Second Adam. He did this that he might be the perfect sacrifice for our sins; the Lamb of God. "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed" (1 Peter 2:24).
- Jesus bore our sins in his own body so that we could be redeemed, body and spirit. The wounding of our Savior's body holds the key to the eternal healing of our fallen bodies. Not only that, but the same body which was beaten nearly to death and then finished off on a Roman cross on the killing grounds outside Jerusalem – that same body was raised up glorified and immortal – our risen and reigning Lord Jesus. And in our Lord's bodily resurrection lies the promise that he will raise us up as well.

Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

Death is swallowed up in victory.

O death, where is your victory?

O death, where is your sting? (1 Corinthians 15:51-55)