

Battling Sexual Lust and Sin

I Corinthians 6:12-20

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Well, as we prepare for the Lord's Table this morning, I want to step away from our study of Paul's letter to the Romans, and I want to address a sin that affects every person here. There are sins like that. There are of course some sins that are, while common to mankind, are not common to all of us. We aren't all tempted in the same ways. But there are certain temptations that are to universal human sins. For example, pride. There isn't a single human being who has ever lived, apart from our Lord, without sinful pride. Another example would be lying. Again, not one person, apart from our Lord, has ever lived a life free of lying and deception and dishonesty to some extent at some point. The same could be said for selfishness.

This morning I want to look at another one of those pervasive temptations, and it's the temptation to sexual lust and sin. In our technological age, I think it's safe to say that this sin has come to mark our culture in a unique way. Entire industries exist—ultimately created by Satan himself and by his demons—but entire industries exist to prey on, to attempt to satisfy, man's fallen, sexual lust. Of course, those lusts are truly insatiable. They cannot be satisfied, and that's the cruel reality. Nevertheless, they exist to that end.

This week I reviewed some statistics from the internet protection service, Covenant Eyes. This is what I learned in the report that they put together, a report that's well documented from reputable sources. Here are just a few of the things I learned. Internet pornography has become a three-billion-dollar-a-year industry. But experts tell us that doesn't even begin to tell the true story, because nine out of ten pornography users only access free material and never the materials that require money. Thirteen percent of all web searches are pornography related. One in five (20%) of all mobile searches are related to pornography. By the way parents, let me just warn you. If you've gotten a smart phone for your child, you better put some protections in place. The age is coming down when they're exposed. Tragically, because of this pervasive nature in our culture, since January 1, 2015, there have been 1.4 billion searches for pornography. It's become morally acceptable.

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A survey of young adults discovered that 67% of young, male adults and 49% of young, female adults say porn is an acceptable way to express one's sexuality. Surveys of usage certainly bear that out. Surveys of men 18 - 30 years of age tell us that 79% of them view pornography at least once a month. Sixty-seven percent of 31 - 49-year-old males have seen pornography in the last month, and 49% of 50 - 68-year-old males. The numbers aren't much better for women. Seventy-six percent of 18 - 30-year-old women say that they have viewed pornography in the last month, sixteen percent of 31 - 49-year-olds, and 4% of women over the age of 50. It has become an absolutely pervasive issue. Even if those numbers are exaggerated high because, perhaps they include those who didn't go searching for it but simply stumbled across it, even so, it has become pervasive in the culture.

It's so important for us as Christians to think Christianly, biblically, about this. You understand that before our conversion, lusts of various kinds were part of our unregenerate condition. This described all of humanity. In Ephesians 2:3, Paul says every human being (And he includes himself, by the way.) was like this. He said, "We too all formerly lived in the lusts of our [fallenness], indulging the desires of the [body] and ... the mind." This is how we were. This is who we were when Christ found us. But now that we're in Christ, it's to be different. The New Testament tells us regarding sexual lust and sin in Colossians 3:5, "Consider the members of your earthly body as dead [to what you used to do] to immorality, [to] impurity, passion, evil desire, and [sexual] greed, which amounts to idolatry." First Thessalonians 4:3, "For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality."

Another one of those key texts is here in 1 Corinthians 6, that I want us to look at this morning. The key that unlocks this paragraph is found in verse 18 in two words, "Flee immorality." Flee immorality. The word "flee," you understand, both in Greek and English simply means "to seek safety from something by running from it." To seek safety from something by running from it. And what are we to run from for safety? Immorality. The Greek word is "pornea", from which we get of course the English word "pornography". This word includes every form of sexual aberration, every sexual thought or act outside (but particularly act) outside of the parameters of God's Law. It includes premarital sex, for example. It includes adultery, homosexuality, incest,

bestiality, and the list could go on. Paul says, I want you to run for safety from these sins. And of course, that means—if we're going to run for safety from these sins, it means not accommodating, not cherishing, not feeding, the lusts of the mind that ultimately give birth to these sins, according to James 1.

But the questions always is—And this is the question I get when I am interacting with someone struggling with this sin—is, how? How do I run from sexual lust and sin? Well, there're a couple of answers to that question. There is, first of all, the answer that you're to put those things off. Or to use the words of our Lord in Matthew 5, you are to, if your right hand offends you, cut it off; if your right eye offends you, pluck it out. He doesn't mean maim your body. He means, when it comes to the sin of lust and sexual sin, be willing to take radical steps to address this sin in your life. It means, certainly, making sure there's accountability when it comes to your internet access points. Accountability software perhaps, or partners. It means, for some people who aren't able to control themselves even with that, getting rid of the internet. It means changing jobs. It means whatever is required. You say, wow, that's radical! Not as radical as cutting off your hand or plucking out your eye, which is what Jesus says to do. We must put off these sins.

In addition, we must put on. We must pursue the positive virtues that replace them. Second Timothy 2:22, Paul says to his young son in the faith, I want you to flee, run for safety from the sins or (literally) the lusts of youth, those cravings that are associated with youth. Run from them. And instead, I want you to pursue; I want you to run after, righteousness, faith, love, and peace. It's not enough to put off. You have to put on something in place of what you put off.

But even that really isn't enough. As important as putting off and putting on are—and they are crucial, by the way. Don't kid yourself that you're going to deal with this sin in your life if you don't take those steps. Nevertheless, combating lust is more than putting off and putting on. Even unbelievers attempt to do that. You see, true biblical change, listen carefully. True biblical change, according to the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 4, includes three elements.

It includes putting off, yes, putting off those patterns of sin and of thinking. It includes putting

on new patterns of thinking and behaving, secondly.

But thirdly, it includes renewing your mind. In other words, your thinking has to be reshaped about these issues for true biblical change to take place.

Defeating sexual lust and sexual sin requires that we allow the Spirit of God to renew our minds with the truth of God's Word. That is the only way you and I will ever change in any area, is when our thinking is adjusted by the Word of God used by the Spirit of God. And that's why I love this text in 1 Corinthians 6, because here Paul does just that. He provides us with what we need to know to renew our thinking so that we can successfully battle sexual sin (that is, the actual acts) as well as sexual lust that fuels it.

Now it's important, first of all, to see the context, the flow of Paul's thought. In verses 9 - 11 (as I read them to you just a few moments ago) you noted that Paul says that those who are unrighteous, those whose lives are characterized by these sins (and he starts out with a list of sexual sins) will not inherit the kingdom of God. In other words, they're not Christians. Don't be deceived, he says. People engaged in unrepentant patterns of these sins, whose lives are characterized by these sins, are simply not Christians. You see, there were professing Christians in Corinth who practiced these sins as an unrepentant pattern of life and yet thought they were still Christians. Paul says, such people are deceiving themselves. Where there is an ongoing, unbroken, unrepentant pattern of lust and sin, the person is simply not a true Christian. According to chapter 5, such a person is to even be put out of the church in church discipline and treated as an unbeliever. That's the line Paul draws.

However, when we come to 6:12, Paul's pastor's heart comes out. And he reminds us that while true Christians do not engage in sexual lust and sin in an ongoing, unrepentant pattern, true Christians do have serious ongoing battles in this area and with these sins. And so, Paul here helps us to gain ground in this ongoing struggle. And, remarkably to me, he explains the key is how we think, and specifically how we think about our bodies. He uses the word "body" nine times in the paragraph I just read for you. And three times he says, "Do you not know, do you not know, do you not know?" He says the key here is your thinking. It's what's going on

between your ears. You need to think entirely differently about your body.

Specifically, here in this paragraph there are seven essential truths about our bodies that can help us in battling sexual lust and sexual sin. Now if you've been in our church any time at all, you know the thought of my covering such a large portion in such a short time—it's not likely to happen *well*. So, my goal here today is not to cover this passage in the detail that it really deserves, to bring out the fullness of the Spirit's meaning. My desire this morning is simply to give you an outline of the flow of the Apostle's thought, to give you some hooks on which to hang the meaning of this passage, and then encourage you to go and study and meditate on these issues. Because I promise you, if you will, it will change your thinking. It will renew your mind and give you fresh ammunition in the battle with sexual lust and sin. Let's look at it together.

The first truth that we need to know to successfully battle sexual lust and sin is this: your body's lusts and sins must never be rationalized or excused. You see, the unbelievers in Corinth (And they were unbelievers.) who professed Christ, but who are described in 9 - 11 as not being Christians, apparently used two slogans to defend their sexual sin. They were libertines, but they had these two slogans that they loved to recite in defense of their sexual sin.

The first of those slogans is a perversion of Christian liberty, perhaps even a distortion of something Paul himself had taught about Christian liberty. Notice verse 12. Twice it's repeated. "All things are lawful for me ... All things are lawful for me." In other words, they took what Paul taught about Christian liberty—you understand that in the Scripture there are things God directly commands; there are things God directly forbids; and everything else, every other moral choice, falls in the area of Christian liberty. And Paul teaches us about that in Romans 14; 1 Corinthians 8-10. And undoubtedly, he taught the Corinthians about that. They took Christian liberty, and they tried to rationalize their sexual sin as if it were an issue of Christian liberty: all things are lawful for me, it's not that important, I love Christ, I'm still a good Christian, I'm still committed to Him. Now Paul's already addressed this in verses 9 - 11. He said those involved in unrepentant, ongoing, sexual sin are simply not Christians.

But here he adds, even if it were a legitimate issue of Christian liberty (which it's not) it still has

to meet a couple qualifications. Look at verse 12, “All things are lawful for me.” That’s true when it comes to Christian liberty. But even in Christian liberty “not all things are profitable.” Paul uses this word “profitable” to mean “benefiting others.” So even in matters of Christian liberty, I can’t do whatever I want. I have to consider even then whether it benefits or hurts someone else. He adds another qualification in verse 12. “All things are lawful for me.” There’s their slogan. That’s true. “But [even in Christian liberty] I will not be mastered by anything.” In other words, Christians are not allowed to do anything (even something God allows) that will bring them under slavery, that will master them, that will enslave them. You can’t do anything with your body that will enslave you or master you. And of course, sexual lust and sexual sin do exactly that. They enslave.

By the way, let me just say in passing ‘cause this is an issue that’s getting traction in our culture, this is one reason that recreational drugs like marijuana are sinful to the believer—because they easily enslave or master. But frankly, they’re also wrong for us because they’re illegal, and we’re told to obey the government. You say, yeah, but maybe someday Texas will make it legal. Even if they become legal, we will still be sinning to partake. Why? Because Paul says in Ephesians 5:18, don’t come under the influence of anything but the Spirit of God. He says don’t be drunk; don’t allow yourself to be under the influence of anything but the Spirit of God. So, if you take of a substance (alcohol, drugs, whatever it may be) and you become, even according to secular authorities, drunk, under the influence, you’re not only breaking the law, you’re sinning against God. This is the command. Except for genuine medical necessity, we are never to be under the influence of anything except the Spirit of God.

But what Paul is saying here with these slogans is, he’s saying don’t make excuses for your sin by trying to argue that it’s an issue of Christian liberty. And in this context, he’s saying don’t rationalize your sexual lust and sin. And isn’t that the temptation? I mean, when we face something that’s a recurring struggle, that’s an ongoing fight in our lives, it’s very easy for us to begin to rationalize and to make excuses. Paul says, don’t ever do that, don’t ever give up the fight. As Jonathan Edwards said in his resolutions, “Resolved, never to give up my fight with my corruptions, however unsuccessful I appear to be.” Don’t ever start to rationalize. Don’t ever give up the fight.

There's a second key truth in the battle with sexual lust and sin: and that is, your body was made for Jesus Christ. Your body was made for Jesus Christ. Verse 13, "Food is for the stomach and ... stomach is for food, but God will do away with both of them." Now it's likely that this is a second slogan that the libertines in Corinth used to excuse their sexual sin. They argued like this: "Just as God made food for the stomach and He made the stomach for food, God made the body for sexual intimacy. So, (they said) that means indulging the body's sexual desires in whatever way I choose. Why, that's as natural as eating. God made me like this. And besides, (they went on) both the body and its needs (both the stomach and food, and the body and sexual activity), God's going to destroy both of them. It's only for this life, so it doesn't really matter." This was a kind of platonic dualism in which they said, "What I do with my body doesn't really matter to God. It's what I do with my soul. That's what really matters." Paul's not buying it. Look at his response in verse 13, "Yet the body is not for immorality." God did not make the body for sexual sin like He made food for the stomach.

And then he makes this extraordinary statement. See it at the end of verse 13? If you're in Christ, God made your body to serve Jesus Christ. Look at what he says: "The body is ... for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body." In the same way that God made food for the stomach, God made your body for Jesus Christ so that you could serve Him through it. Your body doesn't exist for you. Think about that for a moment. Your body doesn't exist for you. It exists for Jesus Christ.

Now that introduces us to a third truth in verse 14, and that is, your body is eternal. Now before you write me off as a heretic, stay with me a moment. Your body is eternal. Look at verse 14: "Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power." He's talking about the resurrection of Christ and our own resurrection, our own physical resurrection. Your body matters so much to God that God will make sure you have a body forever. You were made not to be a disembodied spirit, but you were made to be a two-part being: soul and body. And that will be true eternally. And that eternal body is the body you have now, but transformed, transformed. You see, redemption, the redemption Christ has accomplished, is not just part of you. Jesus didn't come just to redeem your soul. He came as well to redeem your body.

Romans 8 says we are all waiting for “the redemption of the body.” You know, we talk about getting a new body. And in one sense, of course, that’s true. But it won’t be entirely different. Our Lord’s body demonstrates that. In fact, Paul says in Philippians 3:21, our Lord “... will transform the body of our humble state.” That’s your current body. He will transform it “into conformity with the body of His glory.”

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul says it’s like this: your eternal body bears the same relationship to your current body that the seed bears to the plant that grows from it. Paul’s point is that what you do with your body today matters, because you will take, in a new form, that very body into eternity. Your body’s not disposable. It’s not something you just use up and use however you want here because you’re going to get rid of it anyway. Your body is eternal. In a new, transformed form, it will be with you forever. So be careful. Be careful how you use it here.

A fourth key truth to understand in the battle with sexual lust and sin. and this one is shocking. Your body’s members are members of Christ. Your body’s members are members of Christ. Look at verse 15, “Do you not know?” This is what Paul says when it’s something they ought to know, likely something he taught them, and he’s just reminding them. He’s saying you ought to know this, ‘cause I taught you. “Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?” The New Testament makes it clear that every single Christian is inseparably united to Jesus Christ. We talk about being “in Christ.” That’s the condition of every true believer. Or in 1 Corinthians 12:27, “Now you are Christ’s body.” He’s talking about the Church. But then he says, “And individually members of it.” You, as an individual, are a member of the body of Jesus Christ. Galatians 2:20 says, “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but [Listen to this.] Christ lives in me.” Christ lives in me, in His Spirit. So here, Paul adds that not only is your soul united to Christ (which we sort of understand and expect), but your body is united to Jesus Christ. Our bodies are members of Christ.

Now let me just make this a little more poignant for you. Take a glance down at your hand, your arm, your leg. Your limbs, your organs, that physical body that you have, is permanently connected to Jesus Christ. That’s what Paul’s saying. What’s the implication of that? Notice verse 15 goes on, “Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a

prostitute?” Shall I take my members that are now members of Christ’s body and join them to a prostitute? Of course, in Corinth the temptation was to do exactly that because of the pagan temple worship. Paul says, “May it never be!” Never in a million years should a true Christian contemplate doing such a thing. And then he explains why in verse 16, “Do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body with her?”

And then he uses Genesis 2. He says, because Moses wrote, “The two shall become one flesh.” Now that is a powerful point. Do you see what Paul is saying here? He is saying that sexual intimacy, whether that intimacy is sinfully committed outside of marriage or beautifully done within marriage, sexual intimacy intimately unites two people. But verse 17, “But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him.” In other words, you’re already united to Christ. And so, if you then take your members and unite them in sin with someone else, you’ve united Christ to that person.

Now, don’t you love it when a passage doesn’t seem to apply? You know, very few of us here this morning have ever been physically involved with a prostitute. Certainly, I would trust that’s true after Christ. But this passage doesn’t merely apply to the act. It also applies to lust, and especially, honestly, it applies to internet pornography. Remember what Jesus said? Jesus said, he who looks upon a woman to lust after her—what? Has committed adultery with her already in his heart. In other words, the mental lust is the mental equivalent to the actual act. And so, to mentally be involved with a prostitute is the mental equivalent of prostitution. And, without question, let me tell you that the men and women on the internet who sell their bodies to be used in the pornography trade (even if they have been used and abused, and many of them have) they are, by definition, prostitutes. And so, if you sit in front of a computer screen and you mentally engage in sexual sin with them, you are mentally involved in prostitution. Let’s call it what it is. It’s a mental form of prostitution. And Paul says, far worse than that. If you are a Christian, your body’s members are connected to Jesus Christ, so in your lust it’s as if you’re uniting Christ to that prostitute. Amazing truth. Your body’s members, your limbs, your organs, are members of Christ, and you take Him wherever you take your body.

Verse 18 explains another key truth about sexual sin: your body is dishonored by sexual sin. The

key passage, of course, that unlocks this passage there, “Flee immorality.” Run away for your own safety from every sexual sin and the lust that fuels it. Why? “Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.” Now this is a difficult verse to understand, because there seem to be a number of sins that are against our body. And yet Paul here is making a differentiation. He’s saying immorality is different than other sins. And I think his point is this: sexual sin dishonors the body in a unique way.

You remember what we saw in Romans 1? In verse 24, there Paul talks about God, as result of paganism, abandoning pagans to sexual sin. Listen to what he says. Romans 1:24, “God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to [sexual sin], so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.” There is something unique about sexual sin in dishonoring the body. Contrast that with the command to “possess” our “vessel” (1 Thessalonians 4:4), our body. Possess your vessel, he says, “in sanctification and honor,” as opposed to the sexual sin that dishonors your body. Sexual sin dishonors the body in a way that other sins do not.

There’s a sixth key truth about our bodies found in this passage: and that’s that your body is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Your body is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Verse 19, “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?” Now this isn’t the first time Paul has mentioned this idea. Go back a couple of pages to 1 Corinthians 3:16. It’s different here though. I want to show it to you. First Corinthians 3:16, he says, “Do you not know that you”—plural pronoun. He’s talking to all the believers in Corinth. “You [collectively together, believers, in that church] are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” Plural pronoun “you.” In “you” the church, the people of God. Paul is here saying that collectively every local church (the church in Corinth, our church) is a temple in which God Himself dwells, not this building. You know, we sometimes talk about, some people will talk about this being God’s house. This isn’t God’s house. We, the people of God are the temple of God in this sense. We’re the place. We, the people of the Church, we’re the people among whom God dwells. We are the temple.

But turn over to chapter 6 again, because here Paul takes this idea a step further. He says in verse 19, “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit?” Here he tells us that

our individual bodies are temples in which the Holy Spirit dwells, the Holy Spirit whom the Father gave to us at the moment of conversion, that specially manifests His presence in us individually, that is, in our bodies. You know what's amazing about this verse is the word Paul uses here for "temple." There are two Greek words that are used commonly for "temple" in the New Testament. One of them describes generally that sort of entire temple complex that was there on top of Mount Zion. That's not the word Paul uses here. Instead, the word that he uses here is a word that is used most frequently for the building itself, for that massive building which housed the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. Think about this, Christian. Paul is saying your body is like the Holy of Holies in which God the Holy Spirit Himself dwells.

Now that is a powerful truth. It's why we often quote this verse; people memorize it. It's a powerful reality, but it's even more powerful in context. Think about this. When people pursue sexual lusts, and when they commit sexual sin, what do they most want? They want to do it in private, in secret, in darkness, shielded from whoever might see. Paul is saying that's impossible if you're a Christian. Paul says, Christian, your body is like the Holy of Holies. So, if you're going to commit sexual sin, you might as well go proudly striding right up to the entrance to the temple in Jerusalem, throw open the doors, walk through the Holy Place, tear apart the curtain into the Holy of Holies, and commit your sin there. Because that's the reality. Take your computer into the Holy of Holies. Take that person that you shouldn't be involved with sexually into the Holy of Holies and commit it there, because that's what's happening.

You never sin in secret. It's always committed in the glorious presence of the Holy Spirit who dwells within our bodies. It's a sin against Him as well as against the person with whom we're involved either physically or mentally. Your body is a dwelling place of God, so be careful what you do with your body. Don't do anything with your body that you would be ashamed to do in the Holy of Holies.

There's a seventh and final truth that will renew our minds and help us in the battle with sexual lust and sin. It's found in verse 20, your body belongs to Jesus Christ. Your body belongs to Jesus Christ. Did you notice that throughout this passage Paul keeps talking about "your body," "your bodies," as if it belongs to us? And Paul says, you know, let me just finish this thought out

and make sure you don't misunderstand. It's not your body. Look at the end of verse 19: "You are not your own." Why? Verse 20, "For you have been bought with a price." You know the picture. It's the picture of the slave market in the ancient world. By the way, one of the largest of them was in Corinth. They got this picture. They understood this. Paul was saying listen, you were being sold in the slave market of sin and the slave market of God's impending justice against your sin. And Jesus came walking into that slave market, and He bought you. And He didn't just buy your soul. He bought you lock, stock, and barrel. He bought you body and soul. There's been a change of ownership.

Turn over to 7:22. Paul is dealing with another issue here, but he makes this powerful point at the end of verse 22. "He who was called." This is talking about the effectual call. This is that moment when God called you effectually, irresistibly, compellingly to Himself through the gospel. If you were "called while free." That is, not in slavery. That's all of us. None of us were called while we were slaves. Then you were called to be—what? "Christ's slave." Ownership's changed. You never really belonged to yourself. You belonged to Satan before Christ. But now the ownership has changed. You belong to Christ. You're His slave. And what was the price? You know the price. A number of passages in Scripture talk about it. I love the one in Revelation 5:9, when you have that scene of worship in heaven, and a new song breaks out among those who are followers of Jesus Christ. And they say, "Worthy are You [Christ] to take the book and to break its seals." That's the title deed to the earth. "For You were slain, [And here it is.] and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation." Jesus walked into the slave market of sin, and He bought you. He bought you at the cost of His own life. If you're a follower of Jesus Christ, your body belongs to Him. He bought it. It's His. And you don't get to decide how you want to use it.

The implication of this comes in verse 20, "Therefore glorify God in your body." Doesn't that remind you of Romans 12:1? "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies [as] a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship." This is a this is a hard, confronting passage. And yet at the same time there's also a great encouragement here.

Can I end with this encouragement to you? If you're here this morning and you're a follower of Jesus Christ and you hate your sin (You once loved it, but now you hate it.); if you're fighting your sin; if you are not letting up in your battle with sin; if you're seeking to put that sin out of your life and you're taking reasonable steps to do so; and if you're trying to be renewed in your thinking about your body and sexual sin and you're trying to put on a life of holiness, but you're still locked in a battle—be encouraged. Christ bought you. You are His. And I can promise you this, He will never give up on anything that belongs to Him.

Today, if you're truly a Christian, you can look back over however long you've been a Christian, and you can see a decreasing pattern of sin in your life, an increasing pattern of righteousness. And that's encouraging. I'm not the person I used to be. And if you're in Christ, you aren't either. But here's the really good news. Someday, because I belong to Him, I will be just like Him in my moral character. I will be and you, Christian, will be just as pure as Jesus Christ. That's His promise because He bought you. And He's not going to let go of what belongs to Him. All of that was made possible, of course, by His death, through which He purchased us and which we celebrate in the Lord's Table.

Our Father, we come to You confessing our sins. We have sinned against You. We have sinned against Your holiness. We have sinned against Your character. We've sinned against Your Word. We've sinned against our own consciences.

Father, forgive us because of Jesus, because of what He did to purchase our forgiveness. Lord, each of us comes confessing to You those universal sins of which we are all guilty. We confess our pride. We have no right to be proud about anything. Anything good in us is something You have done. Father, we come confessing our selfishness. We are prone by nature to love ourselves rather than You and others. Father, we confess as well the temptation to lust, to sexual sin that's universal among us. Father, forgive us, cleanse us.

Lord, use Your truth that we've studied together this morning. Use it to encourage those who are winning the battle with lust in their hearts. Lord, encourage them, but keep them from the pride that would imagine that they stand. May they take heed lest they fall. Father, equip and help

those true Christians who are struggling with sin. Equip them. Renew their thinking through this text to enable them more powerfully to battle the sin in their lives.

And Father, I pray that You would confront those here this morning who claim to know You through Your Son but who've given themselves over to their sin. Father, show them that they are not truly in the faith. And may this be the day when they come in true repentance and faith to receive the gift of forgiveness at Your hand through what Jesus has done at the cross.

And Father, we do thank You for Christ. We thank You that He redeemed us, He purchased us for Himself and for You from the guilt of our sin. And we thank You that by His Spirit He is making us today more and more like Him in our moral characters. And someday, we bless You, O God, that we will be exactly like Him, that we will be pure as He is pure. Father, thank You for this reminder of what He accomplished for us. Receive our worship even as we partake.

We pray in Jesus name, Amen.