

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 'You Were Bought with a Price'

Today is Sanctity of Human Life Sunday. On this day we remember just who we are as God's special creation and what our life in this world is all about. Sometimes we forget the bigger picture of our created value and purpose. God has created this world and He loves it. We are part of this world which God loves. We are create din God's image. We are filled with his own 'breath of life'. Psalm 8:5 declares that God has crowned us with glory and honor. God's intense love for mankind stands as the foundation of self understanding. God's love is the source of our ethical and moral values. Our life, our choices, our decisions, our goals and our dreams are all lived under the umbrella of God's created purpose fo our lives and His great love for us and His entire creation.

When God created the world He declared all things He made to be 'good'. The Hebrew word for 'good' is '*tob*' which means '*that which brings happiness, joy, and pleasure*'. God declared the world to be 'good' in that the world brought God happiness and pleasure. As the 'crown of His creation' Adam and Eve were to give God the greatest joy of all. God created Adam and Eve to have great freedom. It was in their freedom to love God that they brought Him pleasure. Their freedom was the secret ingredient in creation recipe that brought God such joy. But Adam and Eve's freedom came with a warning. God placed a command before Adam and Eve by which they were voluntarily submit their will to the will of God. God structured the way they would daily live this choice by placing a forbidden tree in the midst of His good creation and commanding them NOT to eat its fruit. With this ingenious design God

established that mankind's freedom was a gift of love to be lived under God's holy will. Mankind was given the opportunity to express love for God by freely obeying Him. As long as man voluntarily submitted his will to God's will this perfect balance of freedom and love was maintained.

It is no surprise that Satan deceived Adam and Eve at precisely this point where God's love intersected their individual freedom. Satan lied to them, promising that they could have an even greater freedom if they exercised their own will above the will of God. Satan told Eve that she could 'be like God' if she disobeyed God's will. Eve acted upon this lie and ate the forbidden fruit and gave some to her husband and he ate it as well. Their eyes were opened, but they were opened not to greater freedom but to the imprisonment of their own sin. Their disobedience did not bring new life but the curse of death and with it every sort of symptom of disease and sorrow and suffering. The lie that man can gain freedom by disobeying God continues to spread like wildfire. Mankind still thinks he can find freedom through sin and so becomes ever more deeply imprisoned in sin's entanglements. God continues to love us, even though our sin blinds us to recognize His love for what it truly is.

St. Paul summarized all of this with this simple formulation, "***You are not your own. You were bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body.***" With these three inspired sentences God calls identifies our created purpose to find freedom under God's holy will. We look at each of these statements in turn.

First, "***You are not your own.***" This statement is not well-received by most people. Satan has set his hook in us to believe that we are

our own. How often don't we hear people boast, "*this is my life and my body and I am free to do with it as I choose.*" I recently watched a movie about the life of Ray Charles; that renowned jazz musician who introduced a new style of music to the world. But for the first 10 years of his career he became addicted to heroin. He argued with his family and friends and his business managers that heroin was his free choice and that he could handle it. But his free choice became his prison and almost destroyed his life and his career. Only after he endured a grueling detoxification treatment was he finally set free from the drug and advance his 40 year career. We may think that we are our own person. But in reality we are not. We belong to the God who created us. Violating the will of God is like addiction to heroin. When we think we are acting on our own free will, we are really being manipulated by Satan. God blesses us with great freedom, but He will not reward rebellion against His holy Law. We will never find freedom through disobedience. We are not our own. We belong to God and are subject to His holy will.

Our society today argues that human freedom is advanced when women are given the legal right to choose to give birth or abort the child she has conceived in her womb. We extend that claim to those who want to control their own death as well. But do we find freedom in such claims? What many celebrate as benchmarks in human freedom God defines as enslavement to sin. Sacrificing the life of an unborn child in the belief that such a sacrifice will enhance the freedom of the mother and others involved in that child's life the same deception Satan proposed to Eve in the Garden. It is not a part of God's good design for life. It does not bring God happiness. True freedom is lived within the boundaries of God's ordinance of marriage in which children are born in celebration of God's love and

grace. This is God's good and gracious will. It is within the boundaries of God's holy will that we are free to celebrate God's good and gracious gifts.

Now secondly Paul wrote; ***"You were bought with a price."*** Because we are sinners we are 'slaves' to sin. God sent His Son into the world to redeem us back for the God who loves us. Sin imprisons. Jesus sets us free. When we sin against God we are imprisoned by sin's guilt. God's grace is greater than our sin. Jesus sets us free by purchasing us with the price of his own life. Christ has come to set us free to live a new life through faith in Him. God presents His free gift of forgiveness and life to all who have sinned; yes, even those who have been involved with the abortion of a child. God can forgive every sin. Jesus brings freedom through His grace.

Finally St. Paul wrote, ***"Therefore glorify God in your body."*** With this final statement Paul makes clear that the freedom God restores to us is a freedom lived within the boundaries of His holy will. We glorify God 'in our bodies' as we choose to follow the will of God and rejoice in His will as good and right and true. God has given us His holy Law that we might have His divine guidance to equip us to choose the way that is right in his sight and give God joy in the life we choose to live. True freedom is found as we live to glorify God with the body He has created for us to live our life in this world.

Satan never stops repeating the lie that freedom can be found in disobedience to God. Many people ruin their lives chasing that lie. In Jesus's sacrifice and forgiveness of sin our freedom is restored. God's good and gracious will is fulfilled in the cross. It is our joy to live by faith in Christ, obeying His will, and rejoicing in His gift of forgiveness and life by which we are truly free. Amen.