

## Overcoming Sexual Sin – 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8 – December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019

- I want to talk with you today about the touchy topic of sexual sin and more importantly how we as Christians can have victory.
- Here in our text, the Apostle Paul is seemingly addressing this matter in order to answer a number of questions that they had.
- What I hope to do is first; give three reasons why sexual sin is so bad, then, at the end offer hope to those who are struggling.

### 1. It displeases God (Verses 1-2)

1 As for other matters, brothers and sisters, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. 2 For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. -

- Here Paul seems to begin by commending them for living their life pleasing to God, but urges them to take it to the next level.
- This would suggest that Paul was not rebuking them for some specific sexual sin like he did in both letters to the Corinthians.
- It seems instead, that Paul wants to prevent sexual sin, knowing full well that the society at that time was fully given over to it.

### 2. It defrauds others (Verses 3-6a)

3 It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; 4 that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, 5 not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God; 6 and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister.

- If you want to know what God's will is for your life, you need look no further than to verse three concerning sexual immorality.
- Here, Paul is very clear that it is the will of God that we be sanctified, by avoiding sexual sin, and controlling our own bodies.
- Starting in verse six he tells them why saying that, "in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister."

### 3. It brings punishment (Verses 6b-8)

6b The Lord will punish all those who commit such sins, as we told you and warned you before. 7 For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. 8 Therefore, anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God, **the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit.**

- This is very interesting for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that God has to punish those who commit such sin.
- It's almost as if God is saying that He doesn't want to, rather, He has to punish sexual sin because in so doing we reject Him.
- But God, the very God, Who gives us His Holy Spirit, does so in order to empower us and enable us to overcome sexual sin.

As one commentator so aptly put it, "We have been given the Holy Spirit, who empowers the willing, trusting Christian to overcome sexual sin. By His Spirit, God has given us the resources for victory; we are responsible to use those resources."

- Herein lies the answer to overcoming sexual sin, such that, we have God, the Holy Spirit in us, to both enable and empower us.
- In other words, we cannot overcome sexual sin in our own strength! It has to be in the power of the Holy Spirit God gives to us.
- The problem is that we have been deceived and believed that if I just try harder I won't fall, then when I do, it gets even worse.

Romans 6:14 - For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

- Paul is saying the condemnation of my sins shall no longer be my master because I'm not under law, but under grace instead.
- This is exactly what Satan doesn't want me to know. He wants me to think that I'll be controlled by sin and as such, fall into sin.
- Then when I fall Satan is right there to condemn us, so as to deceive us, into hiding our sin and keeping our distance from God.

I'll bring it to a close with a quote from Roy Hession who of this writes; "In that condition of despair we have little motivation but to commit further sin. Our spiritual situation is so dead and unsatisfying that we feel a further act of sin is not going to make things much worse – so why not? ... The most we can hope for in this situation is to try to hide some of the more shameful [sins]. But the longer we hide sin, the longer it goes on condemning us and we get more and more under its dominion. Is it not obvious from all this that the real purpose of Satan in provoking us to commit sin is not merely that we might do something unethical, but that when we have done it, he might have the opportunity to accuse us (he is called the accuser of the brethren in Revelation 12). And then in that condition we are rendered powerless... The Christian who has committed an impure act feels himself the next day an utter dog; he does not want to look God or his fellow-Christians in the eye; and as for undertaking some spiritual service – he would rather run away and hide. This is just the result the devil intended when he provoked that Christian to sin."