

BODILY TEMPLE

¹³ *The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.* ¹⁴ *And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables.* ¹⁵ *And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables;* ¹⁶ *and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a place of business."* ¹⁷ *His disciples remembered that it was written, "ZEAL FOR YOUR HOUSE WILL CONSUME ME."* ¹⁸ *The Jews then said to Him, "What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?"* ¹⁹ *Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."* ²⁰ *The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"* ²¹ *But He was speaking of the temple of His body.* ²² *So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken. John 2:13-22*

Beloved in the Lord,

How do you view your physical body? What do you think about your physical self? In our Scripture reading today we find that Jesus viewed His physical body as a Temple. He said to the Jews:

"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews did not understand what He was talking about. As they were at the time in the Great Temple in Jerusalem, they naturally assumed that Jesus was talking about that Temple. That is why they reacted: ***"It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"*** Then comes the explanation: ***"But He was speaking of the temple of His body."***

The Holy Spirit was residing in Jesus body and so His physical body was a Temple. On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the believers. Since then, the Holy Spirit resides in the body of every true Christian. If we are born again, if Jesus is our personal Saviour, then the Holy Spirit resides in us. Our body is therefore a Temple. It is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit.

In writing his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul wrote in chapter 6:19-20: ***"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?"*** ²⁰ ***For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body."***

The Corinthians needed to be reminded of this truth, because they had fallen into error regarding the use of the physical body and its relationship to the soul and spirit, and also God's Holy Spirit. They believed that the spiritual life could be separated from the physical. They believed that as long as you were spiritual, it didn't matter what you did with your physical body. This led to all sorts of problems like drunkenness, associating with harlots and other such sins. This is why Paul spent a considerable amount of time addressing this issue. Corinth was a harbour city and so it had the usual set of problems associated with a port city. We also live in a port city and it is not dissimilar to Corinth in Paul's time,

A few verses earlier Paul wrote: ***"All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything."*** ¹³ ***Food is for the stomach and the***

stomach is for food, but God will do away with both of them. Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body.” 1 Cor.6:12-13

If we can comprehend and embrace this truth, then we are blessed and we are free. I would like to underline or emphasise the words: ***“I will not be mastered by anything!”*** So many people live in slavery to their desires and passions. Some are slaves to alcohol; some to drugs; some are slaves to food; some are slaves to exercise; diet; sexual lusts; gambling and so forth.

The good news is that Jesus came to set us free. If we are in Him, then we should not be mastered by, or be slaves to any addiction. If we are addicted to something, then we should run to Jesus and pray that He set us free. He can and will, if we desire and believe.

Very often you hear me quote Romans chapter 12. I will do so again today:

“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:1-2)

The invitation and encouragement here is that we surrender all to God. That we surrender our bodies to Him. If we do, then our thinking is transformed. We begin to rightly understand life, to view things from God’s perspective. We know what is good and acceptable and perfect.

The worldly, carnal person, the unbeliever does not have a right perspective on life. The majority of people in the world think: “It is my body and I can do with it as I please.” This is a lie from Satan himself. It is not your life, it is not your body, and you cannot do as you please. Yes, on one level you think you can, but the reality is this: If your life is not committed to Jesus, then you are enslaved to the Devil. If you are not fulfilling God’s will, you are a slave to Satan’s will. He comes only to steal, kill and destroy.

This is why so many families fall apart, so many marriages are failing, there are so many drug and alcohol related problems, so many suicides. People are living enslaved to sin.

Jesus taught: ***“Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. ³⁵ The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. ³⁶ So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.” (John 8:34-35)***

We are freed from the bondage of sin, when we believe on Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour. His blood breaks the bondage, cleanses us and sets us free. Our old self is crucified, executed and we are clothed with Christ.

This is why Martin Luther stressed that we must daily return to our baptism, where the old man of self was drowned and we were clothed with Christ.

It is vital that we understand that the battle ground is in our head. The slavery begins in the mind. The battlefield is our thoughts. This is why we must fill our minds with good and wholesome things, with the Word of God, with all that is good, acceptable and perfect. We must daily renew our minds and bring our thinking in alignment with God and His Word.

His Word tells us that our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. That means that we should treat our body as such. The onus is on us to be good stewards of the temple. We are taught to glorify God in our bodies.

The words that immediately precede this are: ***“For you have been bought with a price”*** then he goes onto say: ***“therefore glorify God in your body.”***

The price was tremendous. It cost God the blood of His innocent Son Jesus. God poured out Jesus blood on the cruel cross of Calvary, in order to redeem us (buy us back) from darkness, sin, slavery, death, the clutches of the Devil. The price was great, but greater was and is God’s love for us. He was prepared to meet the cost because He loves us.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” John 3:16

One very powerful way in which we express our gratitude to God, for His love, is that we glorify Him with our bodies. Last Sunday we reflected upon David’s prayer in Psalm 139 where he prayed:

***“Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me and know my anxious thoughts;
24 And see if there be any hurtful way in me,
And lead me in the everlasting way.” Ps.139:23-24***

This is a prayer that not only we can, but should apply to our physical bodies as well as our mind. Search me O God and show me if there are any changes I need to make in regards to the maintenance of Your Temple- this residence of the Holy Spirit.

It may be as simple as a change of attitude towards your physical body. In verses 13 and 14 of this Psalm we read: ***“13 For You formed my inward parts;
You wove me in my mother’s womb.
14 I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
Wonderful are Your works,
And my soul knows it very well.”***

One sure way to improve the Temple of our body is to quit complaining and to begin to thank and praise God for our body.

This week I challenge you to take time alone with God and to ask Him to show you how you can glorify Him in your body.

Amen.

Pastor Colvin S. MacPherson Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sydney.

All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.