

Intro. Read Eph. 5:1-14

Sexual immorality is like so many other sins a perversion of the good. Sex is holy. Created and intended by God to be holy, sex within the marriage bond is declared by God to be good. God’s purposes for sex include celebrating a selfless commitment of giving to the one you are in covenant with. Sex in the marital union is a mystery that reflects the mystery of Christ’s love for the church. Sex is holy.

Money is good, but just like money can be perverted into never-have-enough, insatiable greed and independence, so sexual sin creates emptiness and confusion that drives a person to the twisted notion that more sexual immorality is what is needed. God’s gifts are used in ways that do not please him and cause distorted consequences in our lives.

We live in a sexually immoral culture as sexually immoral people who need the transforming and liberating power of Christ to renew our minds and free our enslaved bodies so that we can worship and enjoy that which is holy – sexuality as God created it.

Sexual satisfaction, identity, attraction, pleasure and accomplishments are core values of our world that is vainly attempting to prove life can be lived successfully in full rebellion against God. We could easily turn to a dozen passages in the New Testament alone that would look and sound just like the verses we just read. Our closing the gap between gospel empowered living and the sexual darkness of our world and our past is of great interest to our loving heavenly Father. Using the imagery of 5:1-2, our loving Father often calls us to sit with him and learn how to control our bodies in holiness and honor.

Our subject is still how to live our lives in a way that reflects the glory of God’s saving us in Christ. Our topic for that discussion this morning is sexual immorality. We are called to walk or live in the light rather than the darkness of sexual immorality described in this passage.

Review from 5/15 . . .

1) The darkness of sexual immorality described . . . 5:3-7

In terms of prohibited behaviors. 5:3-4

Sexual behaviors prohibited . . . must not even be named among you 3

- Sexual immorality porneia sexual intimacy outside the marriage bond

Prostitution, homosexuality, adultery, fornication, incest, pornography, etc.

All that works against the intent of God for sexual expression to be reserved and celebrated in a one man one woman bond of marriage

- All impurity unclean purity is the control and use of sexual desires and impulses in a way that pleases God 4:19

- Covetousness greed selfish indulgence at the expense of others 1Cor5:10-11

In terms of inappropriate talk 4

Filthiness, foolish talk and crude joking refer to another way we express our rebellion against

God in the arena of sexuality.

- Talk that has no regard for shame or standards.
- Talk that is on the borderline of impropriety treating that which is holy as lightweight.
- Talk that is suggestive, smutty or crude especially in sexually suggestive ways.
- Talk that makes light of God's designs by cheap words and quick laughs

Instead, let there be thanksgiving . . . a fundamentally different attitude.

In terms of severe consequences. 5:5-7

- Be certain . . . excluded from God's kingdom 5

People who persistently and unrepentantly disobey God in these ways are excluded from God's Kingdom. Idolaters 1Cor.6:9-11

- Don't be deceived . . . under God's wrath 6-7
 - People who make light of sin, live for self gratification and scoff at consequences are subject to the wrath of God. sons of disobedience
 - empty words – make light of, underestimate consequences, condone, excuse, lower the standard. Easily led to believe and think like the surrounding culture and prevailing mind.
 - Sons of disobedience – characterized by disobedience, do not submit to God, prefer self rule

Begin new 5/22

2) Being light in a culture of sexual darkness explained *walk as children of light* 5:8-14

The opening part of verse 8 sets the direction for these behaviors and responses of the life transformed by the Spirit of grace. Note the comparison of 'at one time you were darkness' with the parallel phrase 'but now you are light in the Lord.'

You cannot close the gap in your life regarding sexual issues without the Lord. It is his enabling grace that will change, satisfy, cleanse and empower you to do right. The metaphor used to help us understand our dependence on the gospel and the Lord is that of light and darkness.

Walk as children of light means being what you are. You were darkness and now you are light. You were not able to understand what is good, do what is right or enjoy what was true (5:9). You were enslaved by the world, the flesh and the devil (2:2). Before the light of Christ, our foolish minds were darkened. The Apostle writes in Romans 13:12-14:

The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provisions for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

There is a light that shines from within, the Holy Spirit and renewed mind of Christ. There is the light of the scriptures that shines to light the path. Consider how the basic function of light impacts how you live in a sexually charged world.

Light reveals how things really are (9-10). Because of the gospel your eyes of understanding have been opened to see and appreciate what is true, right and good. You can now hear and receive life giving

truth and grace from God. As you connect with all that is good, right and true, you will be renewed and empowered to walk in that light in three significant ways.

You will express appreciation for God’s perspective of sexuality.

5:4

Human sexuality, when understood and used in the way God intended is an incredibly powerful force for good and the advance of the gospel.

Thanksgiving is the antidote to self centered greed. It is the recognition of God’s generosity.

Thanksgiving is the opposite Christian perspective to pagan immorality, not embarrassment, silence or self righteous standards.

Heb. 13:4

Eph. 5:25-33

marital worship - idolatry

You will make careful decisions to please the Lord.

5:10

The deceitfulness of the world and the pull of sexual selfishness will only be revealed in the light of God’s word and Spirit. Even in the light, careful and thoughtful choices must be made. The light provides direction and the opportunity to make good decisions.

Col.2:23 – legalistic rules/regulations

1Cor.10:13 – means of escape

Prov. 5 & 6 – parental warnings/teaching

Matt.5:29 – radical measures

Romans 12:1-2 – transformed commitment

You will expose the barrenness of sexual darkness.

5:11-14

Your new life attitudes that come from the Lord and his light in your life will reveal and expose the darkness around you in two ways:

1) Your light exposes the shamefulness and emptiness of sexual sin.

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2) Your light exposes the way to come to the light.

13-14

Summary/Review

1) The darkness of sexual immorality described . . .

5:3-7

In terms of prohibited behaviors.

In terms of severe consequences.

2) Being light in a culture of sexual darkness explained

walk as children of light

5:8-14

Light reveals how things really are.

9-10

You will express appreciation for God’s perspective of sexuality.

You will make careful decisions to please the Lord.
You will expose the barrenness of sexual darkness.

Take Aways

1. Acknowledge the reality of your battles with sexual sin. Whether they are secret or public, enslaving or occasional, painful or 'harmless or big or little. Tell God in humility that you are ready to listen to him and obey him regarding your sexual challenges.
2. Renew your commitment to the absolute joy and freedom of the standard of holiness and honor in sexual matters that is only available by walking in the light of Christ. You may be hopelessly discouraged in your battle with sexual sin or the pain of being sinned against, ask God to bring the light of what is true, right and good to your dark and hopeless world.
3. Ask for help with that issue of sexual sin. You know what it is. Ask for help today from one of our Elders or someone you respect in the Lord.
3. Turn from your sin and ask God to save you by faith in Jesus Christ. You have asked enough questions, given enough reasons why you should wait and tried to resist the pull of truth on your heart . . . humble yourself now before God in saving faith and repentance.
4. Thank God for his calling you out of darkness into his marvelous light in Christ Jesus. He didn't merely have to flip a switch to turn the light on, he sent his Son to die for you. Christ's death and resurrection defeated all the enslaving and destructive powers of darkness. Run to and in the light of God's truth and love.