

## **Who's Your Daddy?** I Corinthians 6:12-20 6/16/02

Tiacus had become an elder in the church at Corinth shortly after the church was begun. Married for 18 years and the father of three children he was gifted in the areas of leadership and discernment. Life had been rather stressful over the previous weeks and the relationship with his wife was pretty strained. But he was in the mood and fully expected his wife to cooperate but the reality was she wasn't in the mood and she had no intention of cooperating fully and so in a huff he rolled out of bed and said he was going downtown. Her response was expected. Don't wake me up when you get home. And off he went to the place where the temple prostitutes met those coming to worship. A while later satisfied he heads back home and crawls into bed with his wife. Although she knows exactly where he went, nothing is said. Now, I think most of you would say that something was amiss in their marriage relationship if this went on without any comment. Well according to our text, this would have been OK to many in Corinth.

Will you take your Bibles and turn to I Corinthians 6:12-20. This morning I am going to read from The Message. It is a bit more earthy than the NIV but it also grabs our attention, which is Paul's point. The reason there was no problem between Tiacus and his wife was not because they had a weird marriage. The reason there was no problem was that many in the Corinthian church believed that how we lived in terms of our physical bodies was irrelevant once our spiritual soul had been converted.

I am afraid that this text does not break itself down into three easy points that build upon each other. So, what I would like to do is just work our way through it by understanding the context and culture of Corinth that we today mimic in many ways.

Now, we hear on MTV who's your daddy but Paul is asking who's your master? He could have just as easily asked What's your addiction? Now Paul uses the word master, but the meanings are exactly the same. In Romans 7:1-6, Ephesians 2:1-3 and Hebrews 12:1-2 we are called to put aside

all those sins that can entangle themselves around us and strangle our spiritual lives. But it is Jesus who most directly address this in Matthew 6:20-26. He speaks a simple truth. You can't have two masters. And when it comes to the area of sexuality too many here if honest would tell how a one time experience or experiment has become a deeply ingrained habit that has gained mastery. Can I be very blunt this morning. A mutually satisfying sexual relationship between a husband and wife takes constant and deliberate attention. All the other stuff of life gets mixed in and can cause major problems. But there are alternative. Options for a quick hit of sexual pleasure. In Corinth it was the availability of temple prostitutes that were fully legal in that society. Much like Amsterdam or Bangkok today. Our world of technology has made other choices accessible at the touch of a computer keyboard or the punch of the telephone. No one ever anticipated getting hooked but the 12 steps groups are packed with people whose lives are out of control sexually. Paul says, who's your master? Miss July, late night cable station, some web address?

Paul now moves on and corrects a misunderstanding that we in fact often make. Jesus died for both our bodies and our souls. It seems to me that we tend to talk about salvation mostly in terms of saving our souls for eternity but Paul makes it very clear that Jesus died to redeem our bodies also. You see here's the deal. As I have said before the church in Corinth had two very contrasting beliefs. In chapter 6 Paul address the belief that salvation was purely spiritual and once that was taken care of then how we lived in terms of choices etc, only affected our bodies which are decaying anyways. And that is why blatant immorality was not only accepted but almost bragged about in Corinth. Next week we will look at the other opposite idea. That marriage for Christians was only to be spiritual in nature and lived at a spiritual plane therefore there was no need for sexual intimacy in marriage. Getting back to our text this morning Paul makes it clear that what we do with our body is important. Salvation is to impact how we take care of our physical body and most certainly how we express our sexuality. If your body has been saved you don't give it over to habits

and patterns of living that contradict the holiness of God. Paul speaks with great bluntness here. If Christ lives within you. If you have become one with Christ how can you go sleep with a prostitute? Can you picture Christ making that same choice. Years ago when there was the furor over the Last Temptation of Christ I think that what bothered me the most about the movie. The implication that Jesus would be sexually involved with a prostitute. Christ would never treat a woman that way. When you see the respect and value he gave women there is no way he would participate in something that demeans and diminishes them.

In the last paragraph of our text Paul hints at something that I will only develop briefly. Any one who sees sexual intimacy as simply two bodies coming together no different than dogs is sadly mistaken. Now you can live that way. You can believe that but you can also believe that the earth is flat and the moon is made out of cream cheese. Paul says unrestrained sexual expression outside of the context of marriage is a sin against the body. I am not sure I fully understand this but let me illustrate it this way. Let's say I drive a brand new Rolls Royce. And I drive that car 100 mph down 394 and get pulled over. I have used that car to sin but I have not sinned against that car. Or say I use the car as a getaway car from a robbery. I have used that car to sin but I have not sinned against the car. But let's say I need a load of soil to spread in my back yard and shovel the soil into the back seat. I have now sinned against the car. Paul says that when we involve ourselves in expressing our sexuality outside of marriage we not only use our body for sin but we sin against our body. But our bodies are where the Holy Spirit resides and that is why it is a sin against our body and different than other sins. Now hear me carefully. I didn't say sexual sins are worse than other sins. I said that they are different because they involve the very core of our being.

Can I give you kind of a general picture of this as we move into our text next week. The greatest gift that God has given us is salvation through Jesus Christ. But the second greatest gift is the relationship between a husband and wife mutually submitting to one another and giving themselves

even as Christ gave himself for the church. The Scripture also makes it clear that pre-marital sex, extra marital sex and same gender sex is not an acceptable choice for Christ followers. Not because God is trying to deny us but rather because he made us and knows that our full enjoyment of our sexuality is most fully realized within the safety of marriage. Now, we will get more into that next week.

Let me conclude my talk this morning with one more thought from Scripture. And it speaks to the general understanding in our culture that our bodies are our own. Not if you are a Christ follower. That is how Paul concludes. We do not belong to ourselves. We have been redeemed by one who loves us more than we can ever imagine. Bought at a cost none of us fully comprehend. Bought that we might enjoy life eternally and Paul says that the one who has done all of this for us calls us to live like Christ because His way is best.