

2nd Sunday after the Epiphany

January 15, 2012

Does the Bible have anything authoritative to say about human sexuality???

Please turn to page 1042 in the Pew Bible. I want us to find **I Corinthians, Chapter Five (5)**.

Hopefully it is found on page 1042 or on a page close to it.

What is the **BOLDED TOPIC** at the beginning of Chapter Five (5) of I Corinthians?

SEXUAL IMMORALITY DEFILES THE CHURCH right?

And the Second **BOLDED TOPIC** of Chapter Five (5) is?

SEXUAL IMMORALITY MUST BE JUDGED right?

In Chapter Six (6) the **BOLDED TOPIC** for today's New Testament Reading is:

GLORIFY GOD IN BODY AND SPIRIT right?

In another Bible Translation, today's New Testament Reading is **BOLDED** as:

FLEE SEXUAL IMMORALITY.

And in another it is:

FREEDOM AND SEXUALITY.

So it seems that the Bible has something to say about the use of our sexuality and it is often **BOLD** and **TO THE POINT**, so much **TO THE POINT** that we humans want to change it or at least have the interpretation of it take on **the meaning we want expressed** concerning our human sexuality.

So today we are going to deal with **GLORIFY GOD IN BODY AND SPIRIT, FLEE SEXUAL IMMORALITY and/or** deal with the **FREEDOM** we have in reference to our body **AND** the use of our **SEXUALITY**, as per the **BOLDED TOPICS** given in the various translations of the Bible's Second Lesson for today.

The slogan that the Corinthians are using in defense of their pursuits of sexual immorality is: **ALL THINGS ARE LAWFUL**. And Paul puts that in quotation marks for us to know that he is quoting the slogan they are using **BUT** then he adds: **BUT NOT ALL THINGS ARE HELPFUL**.

They are making the case that since they have now been consecrated in Christ Jesus; they have the **FREEDOM** to do anything they want with regards to their bodies. They claim they have this **FREEDOM** since their bodies are in the transient physical realm just as is their bodily functions of eating food, digesting it, and then eliminating the waste. And since the eating of foods, and having those foods in the body does not raise a moral issue with being

Christian, then any chosen sexual conduct does not raise a moral issue with being Christian either.

To this line of thinking by the Corinthians Paul asserts two contrary limitations on Christian Freedom:

- 1) From a societal point of view Paul asks: **Is the act helpful or harmful to society?**
- 2) From a personal point of view Paul asks: **Will the act make us slaves to sexual passions and thus destroy Christian Freedom altogether?**

Romans 6:12 states: *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body; to make you obey its passions.*

Now Paul grants that the eating of foods and the process in the body of digesting those foods is part of the transient physical realm and therefore has no powers to defile the spiritual nature of a Christian.

But Paul denies the parallelism that the Corinthians are making with their sexual exploits and the eating of foods.

Satisfying one's sexual desires anyway one sees fit **is not** the same as satisfying one's hunger by eating a previously forbidden pork loin.

Christian **FREEDOM** was not given through God's GRACE to be overcome by the fulfillment of **anything sexual** that humans can think-up and then desire to do.

Paul is pleading for the Corinthians to live life disciplined by the MORAL BOUNDS of God's Holy Spirit, for God's Holy Spirit does not lead people away from their body, but defines existence in the body as existence before God.

The body is the place of **humanity's Divine Service** to God.

As Paul writes:

God raised the Lord and will also raise us by His power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? ... Shun fornication! ... Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.

That is the result of our Baptism!!! Our body has become **Nothing Less** than part of the Body of Christ Jesus.

And if we are united to the Body of Christ Jesus, we will use our Christian **FREEDOM** quite opposite of that to fulfill any immoral sexual desire.

One Bible translation's **BOLDED TOPIC** summed up this passage from Paul with these words: **FLEE SEXUAL IMMORALITY!!!**

Some temptations are so insidious that they cannot be tempered by any of our own abilities, we need God's Holy Spirit fighting for us and when God's Holy Spirit tells us to take flight away from that temptation, WE HAD BETTER PAY ATTENTION AND **FLEE!!!**

To those who contend that Christian **FREEDOM** allows them to do whatever it is they want to do with their own bodies, Paul strongly replies:

You are not your own!

You do not belong to yourself!

You have been bought with a price!

So now glorify God with your body!

I think that if this was clearly understood and firmly grasped by all in **The Faith**, Christian Teaching concerning Christian **FREEDOM** and Christian **SEXUALITY** might possibly have been more effective than it has apparently proven to be.

Let us **FLEE SEXUAL IMMORALITY**.

Let us rightly use our Christian **FREEDOM AND** our Christian **SEXUALITY** with the guidance of God's Holy Spirit.

Let us **GLORIFY GOD IN** our **BODY AND** in our **SPIRIT**.

Amen.