

**Sermon Notes of
Pastor Glen Weber's Sermon on March 1, 2015
"Celibacy and the Christian"**

[In today's sermon, Senior Pastor Glen Weber shows how we can honor God by how we live our lives whether we are single or married.]

Notes:

Introduction:

- “The next wave the church is going to have to deal with is polyamory.” Dr. Stephen Simpson, Professor of clinical psychology at Fuller Theological Seminary.
- Polyamory means multiple loves simultaneously.
- When pastor Glen googled the word to make sure he was spelling it correctly, the first page that came up was a dating site for polyamory!!

- The church, as a whole, hasn't even figured out how to deal with LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning sexual orientation) yet and we are going to be faced with people having multiple partners!

- Last week pastor Glen attended a conference at Fuller Seminary called, “Courageous Leadership in Christian Sex/Gender Conflicts.”
- The primary speaker was a Christian anthropologist from Messiah College in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania – Dr. Jenell Williams Paris.

- She spoke about the current state of the church regarding sexuality. We have NOT set a very good example!!
- Christian divorce is comparable to non-Christian couple divorces.
- Many Christian men are addicted to pornography.
- Pastors and church leaders are having extra-marital affairs, etc.

- Then Dr. Jenell Williams Paris discussed the conflicts that arise within the Christian community over LGBTQ.
 - How do we deal with this group of people?
 - Are gays, lesbians, etc welcome in our churches?
 - Are they allowed to have leadership positions?

Here's the current spectrum of Christian beliefs about LGBTQ:

1. Condemnation – Scripture makes no distinction between same-sex acts and same-sex orientation; both are condemned. (View of most churches).
2. Promise of healing – Through inner healing, gays and lesbians can move into a heterosexual orientation, though a struggle with homosexual temptations may continue. (This theory has been discredited since the 1990's).
3. Call to costly discipleship – Complete healing may not be possible for all; faithful Christians who maintain same-sex orientation commit to lifelong celibacy.

4. Pastoral Accommodation – Committed monogamous same-sex partnerships can be tolerated (not commended or idealized.)
 5. Affirmation – Gay and lesbian relationships can be affirmed as a positive good; like heterosexual relations, same-sex ones can achieve a self-transcending love.
 6. Liberation – Justice insists that the heterosexual majority in the church not dictate to gays and lesbians what they can or cannot do with their sexuality.
- Most churches are somewhere between #3 and #5 on the LGBTQ topic.
 - Holders of #3 are considered narrow-minded and anti-gay. But is that really so?
 - Don't all of these rules also apply to unmarried cohabiting heterosexual couples about church attendance and membership, etc?

Today's overview:

- Pastor Glen is going to talk about personal relationships, and also to celebrate our singles!!
- He then asked for a show of hands – how many singles do we have in our congregation? That includes never married, divorced people, widows and widowers.
- There was about 15-20 in our congregation. (Many of our members weren't here today – so the count would normally be higher.)

Paul's comments to the Corinthian church about being single and married:

1 Cor. 7:7, I wish that all of you were as I am. But each of you has your own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that.

- Under the Corinthian “present distress”, Paul wished all could be single, as he was.

8) Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I do.

- His view was that it was good to remain single because of their situation.

9) But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

- This is not a command, but a suggestion.

1 Cor. 7:32, I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs – how he can please the Lord.

- Paul is saying that single men can focus more on their relationship with God.
- This seems almost ludicrous nowadays!! God is usually not in the thoughts of single men today.

33) But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world – how he can please his wife –

- Married men have to be concerned first about taking care of their wife.

34) and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit

- Paul is saying that a single woman can be more devoted to the Lord.
- Today, that isn't necessarily true – single women have other interests.

35) I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.

- Paul was encouraging people to be in a deep relationship with the Lord.
- Paul was dealing with their “present distress” of persecution and other factors when encouraging them not to marry, but he still considered marriage a “gift.”

Jesus' example for us:

- He lived the single life.
- As Paul Siddall said in his sermon last week, “The Exchanged Life” – Jesus lived through sexual temptation for us, too!

Our Singles:

- Pastor Glen got to thinking about our congregation when he attended the Fuller Seminary conference last week.
- He wants to share a word of blessing with all of you who are single.
- God is blessed by your keeping your sexual purity.
- You are honoring God with your body and how you live your life!

Our Teens:

- How do you consider your body and purity?
- Will you save it for the right time and place in a committed marital relationship?

Paul's comments about how we should live our lives:

1 Cor. 6:13, You say, “Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both.” The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.

- Our bodies are not meant for sexual immorality because they belong to the Lord.

14) By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also.

- Through the Holy Spirit, we are now connected to Jesus.

15) Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never!

- Our bodies are now part of the body of Christ.

16) Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.”

- Sex with a prostitute (which was very common in Corinth) produces bad emotional and spiritual results.

17) But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit.

- We need to consider that we truly are united to Christ.

18) Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body.

- Sexual sin is against our own body.
- Sexual sin not only impacts our body, but also our spiritual walk with God.
- Scars of our previous sexual behavior impact how we think about ourselves and God today.

19) Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;

- Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit.

20) you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

- Since Jesus died for us, we need to honor your God with our body.
- Paul saw a direct relation between our body and our relationship with the Lord.

Concluding comments:

- Jesus became flesh, not just to die for us, but also to live for us – including taking our brokenness and healing it.
- He lived out purity for us in His sexuality!
- We have many couples in our congregation that have been married 40, 50, even 60 years – God is honored by this.
- God is also honored by singles who work hard to be faithful to Him.
- All of us, married or single, need to have as our first priority, an intimate relationship with our Triune God.

Communion:

- When we receive the broken piece of bread, we should realize that we are broken but knowing that Jesus is taking care of us.
- When we receive the cup, we should realize that this represents Jesus’ shed blood which forgives us of our sins and heals our brokenness.

Blessing of the elements and closing prayer: