

# Male and Female He Made Them

## Christian Sexuality in a Decadent World

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### A. The Body Created and Redeemed

1. Sticker: ***Your body may be a temple, but mine's an amusement park.***
  - Common notion of bodily autonomy
    - God as sexual killjoy rather than the Creator of sexuality for our enjoyment
    - Quest for guilt-free sexual enjoyment by rejection of God's law and Christian teaching on sex
    - What I do with my body does not matter spiritually!
    - I can do what I like with my body because it belongs to me!
  - Christian teaching: owned body
    - St Paul in 1 Cor 6:19-20: ***Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.***
    - Given by God its Creator as His gift: body that belongs to Him and my spouse
    - Redeemed by Jesus, united with him and destined to be raised together with him
    - Temple of the Holy Spirit: physical shrine for triune God
    - Ordered sexual intercourse: protection of God's gift and its enjoyment by His law
2. My God-given sexual body
  - God's creation of the whole person in his image for eternal life with Him (Gen 1:26-28; 2:1-3; 5:1-2)
    - Statement about primeval parents and all mankind
    - Both male and female in his image: singly and together
    - Creation as male and female: terms for sex and gender in Hebrew and Greek
    - Self-identified rather than self-identifying
    - Creation of whole person with body in God's image
    - Our resemblance to the invisible God (1:26)
      - Procreation and rule like God

- Righteous and holy like God which we have lost
  - Incarnate Christ as God's image (Rom 8:29; Col 1:15; cf. Eph 4:24; Col 3:10)
- God's provision for a cosmic habitat and ecological order for the human body in Gen 1:1-2:3
- Assessment as very good (Gen 1:31)
- God's creation of Eve from the man for one flesh union with him (Gen 2:4-25)
  - Original solitude of Adam: basis for single life before and apart from marriage
  - The need for sexual companionship: provision of coworker/work mate and opposite/complement
  - Construction of Eve from Adam's ribcage: body mate with same flesh and bones
  - God as the marriage celebrant who joins them together: emphasis by Jesus in Matt 19:6: ***So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no one separate.***
  - Ordered process for sexual union in three stages
    - Husband's leaving of his parents to start a new household
    - Husband's cleaving to his wife: sexual safety of permanent commitment
    - Both becoming one flesh with sexual intimacy and birth of children
- Sexual shame and guilt as a result of sin: disorder

### 3. Our Bodily Makeover: the Redemption of the Body

- The makeover of the body by God's embodied Son with his redemption of the whole person
- The incarnation of God's Son for our bodily redemption
  - His bodily conception and birth by a woman
  - His bodily ministry on earth: teaching and healing
  - His bodily resurrection and ascension
  - His purification and sanctification of the whole human life cycle in the body by his incarnation
- Luther on Christ's bodily participation in our whole life cycle for our purification and sanctification (WA 37.57:15-25; 61:41-62:4): ***For he (Christ) has purified everything with his body, so that through him nothing that belongs to our old birth and this life damages us at all; but everything is considered to be as pure as his own (body), because through baptism and faith I have been clothed with his birth and life. Therefore everything I do is pleasing to God and is called holy walking, standing, eating, drinking, sleeping, and waking, etc. For each Christian***

***everything becomes a completely holy, even though he still lives in the flesh and is quite impure in himself; through faith, everything about him is pure. This, however, is an alien holiness and yet our own, because God does not want to see anything that we do in this life as impure in itself; but everything becomes holy, precious, and acceptable to him through this Child who makes the whole world holy through his life...So do you want to boast of something holy? Why don't you boast of the holy thing that Jesus Christ, God's Son has touched with his body? What then has he touched? My living and dying, my going and standing, my suffering, trouble and temptation, all of which he has experienced, endured, and undergone.***

- His bodily presence with us in the church as the temple of God (John 2:22)
- The bodily ministry of the risen Lord Jesus in the church
  - Christ's flesh as the new and living way into the Father's presence: two way bridge (Heb 10:19-22)
  - His use of physical means to minister bodily to his disciples in the divine service
    - Water, spoken words and human hands in baptism: bodily union with Christ
    - Spoken words from a human mouth in absolution, proclamation, instruction, and benediction: bodily communication of Christ with them
    - Bread and wine, spoken words and human hands in Holy Communion: bodily gift of Christ's body and blood for body and soul
    - Luther: the embodied word (*das leiblich Wort*)
  - The means of grace as the physical means of the Spirit
    - Christ's words as Spirit and life (John 6:63)
    - Gift of Holy Spirit in baptism (Acts 2:38; 1 Cor 12:13)
    - Body and blood of Jesus as spiritual food and spiritual drink (1 Cor 10:3, 4)
  - Luther on Christ's bodily interaction with us (LW 22:420-21): ***God has given us Baptism, the Sacrament of the Altar, and absolution to bring Christ very close to us, so that we can have him not only in our heart but also on our tonque, so that we can feel Him, grasp Him, and touch Him...He wants to come to you, plant Himself before your very eyes, press Himself into your hands, and say, "Just listen to Me and take hold of Me, give Me eye and ear; there you have Baptism and the Sacrament of the Altar. Open your mouth, let Me place My hand on your head. I give you this water which I sprinkle over your head."***

- Our bodily participation in the divine service
  - Obedient bodies offered as living sacrifices (Rom 12:1-2)
  - Presentation of our bodies with their members for purification and sanctification (6:11-23)
  - Our bodily participation in Christ's resurrection through faith in him
- The spiritual transformation of our bodies through our reception of Christ's body: see Luther in LW 37: 100-01: ***Christ's flesh...is a spiritual flesh that does not let itself be transformed but transforms those who eat it, and it gives them the Spirit...And that is what this spiritual flesh does. When the body eats it physically, this food digests the body's flesh and transform it so that it becomes spiritual...It is as if a wolf devoured a sheep, and the sheep was so powerful a food that it transformed the wolf and turned the wolf into a sheep. So when we eat Christ's flesh physically and spiritually, the food is so powerful that it transforms us into itself. It makes us spiritual, holy, living people out of fleshly, sinful, mortal people.***

## B. The Great Mystery: The Undeclared Marriage Bed

1. The mystery of pure and holy sexuality in Heb 13:4: **Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be kept undefiled, for God will judge fornicators and adulterers**
  - Focus on marriage as God's gift in the order of creation
    - Something to be prized as very valuable and source of great blessing
    - Paradoxical recognition by same sex couples who desire it
  - Doubly precious as something pure for all married couples and something holy for Christians: sanctified by the word of God and prayer
  - Pollution by fornication and adultery that disorder and desecrate it: damage to marriage, family, community and congregation
  - Prohibition of fornication as a Jewish and Christian teaching
    - Mark of paganism with its idolatry
    - Condoned by ancient and modern pagans: healthy sexual outlet
  - Satan's attack on it as a divine gift: sexual killjoy who defiles what is clean and desecrates what is holy
  - God as the Guardian of marriage: protection through His law by which judges offenders and calls them to repentance
  - Secret of sex with a good conscience: marriage in its proper context as holy matrimony
  - True sexual revolution by God's sanctification of marriage
2. The teaching on sexual sanctification in 1 Thess 4:1, 3-8: ***Finally brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from fornication; that each of you know how to control his own body (Gk. vessel, instrument, penis) in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and greedily cheat his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger of all these things, as we have told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.***
  - Instruction on honorable, God-pleasing sexual behavior: sex with a good conscience
  - God's will for us who know Him: our sexual sanctification by Him
  - Call from sexual impurity to sexual sanctification: holy chastity as a gift from Him

- Result of our baptism (Eph 5:25-27) and participation in the divine service (Rom 6:12-23)
  - Three aspects
    - Avoidance of fornication for single members: something unholy and shameful
    - Exercise of sexual self-restraint that honors the spouse rather than indulgence in sex as a natural, divine cosmic force like the Gentiles
    - Prohibition of lustful, sexual abuse of fellow members: crossing boundaries
  - Judgment of sexual abuse by Jesus: rights what is wrong by punishing the abuser and vindicating the abused person
  - Sexual sanctification as the work of the Holy Spirit: gift to be received
3. The sanctification of marriage in 1 Tim 4:1-5: ***Now the Spirit expressly says that in the later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, through the insincerity (hypocrisy) of liars whose consciences are seared, who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.***
- Wrong asceticism from seared, desensitized conscience: pursuit of higher levels of spiritual consciousness
  - Abstinence from marriage by people who regard sex and certain foods such a meat as unclean and unspiritual: pursuit of disembodied, demonic spirituality
  - Sex and marriage as a good gifts from God in creation that are under attack by demons
  - Sanctification of marriage by the word of God and prayer
    - In the Christian rite of marriage
    - In the divine service
    - In daily devotions
  - Transformation of marriage to holy matrimony: holy estate that is naturally good and spiritually blessed
  - Reception with thanksgiving as a gift from the triune God
  - Thanksgiving as the fruit of sexual sanctification in Eph 5:3-4: ***But all fornication and impurity, or lust, must not even be named among you, as fitting for saints, nor obscenity nor foolish talk nor coarse joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.***

- Evidence of sexual ambivalence in the way people speak about sex as something disgusting, unclean and shameful: sign of a bad conscience
  - Inappropriate behavior for saints as a rejection of sex as a good gift from God: no right to sexual intercourse
  - Replacing disappointment and dissatisfaction by thanksgiving to God and to spouse: antidote to lust
4. The mystery of holy matrimony as a reflection of Christ's bodily union with the church
- God's presentation of Eve to Adam for his admiration in Gen 2:22
  - Christ's presentation of the church to himself as his Bride in Eph 5:25-27: ***Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.***
    - Our unpresentable selves with our sinful souls and bodies: unworthy bride for God's Son
    - Normal self-preparation of bride for her wedding in the ancient world
      - Bathing of body with perfumed water
      - Clothing with bridal gown
      - Application of makeup to cover spots, wrinkles and blemishes
      - Application of expensive perfume
      - Decoration with expensive jewelry
      - Presentation to her husband as lovely bride
    - Christ's preparation of his unworthy bride like Cinderella for union with him in baptism
      - Reason for her makeover: transforming love for her to make her lovely despite her appearance
      - Washing with water in baptism to cleanse her from the sin
      - Clothing with his purity and righteousness
      - Adornment with his holiness and glory
      - Result of makeover: unblemished and lovely
    - The purpose of his presentation
      - Acceptance and approval
      - Appreciation and admiration as in the Song of Songs
      - Demonstration of his love and regard for her
    - His heavenly vision of us: seeing us as we will be

- Christ's presentation of the church to God the Father in Col 1:21-22: ***And you, who were once alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he (Jesus) has now reconciled in his body of death by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach in His sight.***
  - Picture: Jesus as our high priest and his body as a sacrificial offering
  - We as God's enemies
  - Our reconciliation with God by his body that atones for our sin and reconciles us with God
  - His presentation of us as a perfect offering to God for His approval and use
    - Holy by participation in Christ's holiness
    - Blameless by cleansing from impurity
    - Above reproach without accusation and condemnation from pardon for sin

5. Conclusion from C. S. Lewis: ***If we let Him – for we can prevent him if we choose – He will make the feeblest and filthiest of us into a god or goddess, a dazzling, radiant, immortal creature, pulsating all through with such energy and joy and wisdom and love as we cannot now imagine, a bright stainless mirror which reflects back to God perfectly (though of course on a smaller scale) His boundless power and delight and goodness. The process will be long and in parts painful; but that is what we are in for. Nothing less. He meant what he said. (Mere Christianity, Glasgow: Collins, 1977, 172.)***



## C. Living Sexually as Lights in a Dark World

### 1. Sexual frustration as the cost of 'sexual liberation'

- Quest for guilt-free sex by the rejection of God's law and Christian morality
  - Battle between the sexes
  - Sexual abuse
  - Sexual confusion
  - Sexual desensitization with a loss of normal sexual desire
- Longing for pure and ordered sexuality: wholesome, natural relationships

### 2. Similarity with situation of the Early Church

- See Kyle Harper, *From Shame to Sin: The Christian Transformation of Sexual Morality in Late Antiquity*, Harvard University Press
- Countercultural appreciation of sexuality and the beauty of marriage
- Rejection of fornication: association with slavery and prostitution
- Spiritual value of celibate single people: devotion to Christ like his devotion to his Father
- New understanding of chastity as purity rather than mere physical virginity and celibacy
- Call for sexual chastity of both men and women before marriage
- Call for fidelity of both husbands and wives in marriage
- Call to live as unblemished, blameless, innocent children of light in the midst of a crooked, twisted generation, among whom we shine as bearers of light in the world by holding fast to the life-giving word (Phil 2:15-16)
- Luther in LC 218: "I say these things in order that our young people may be led to acquire a love for the estate of marriage and know that it is a blessed and God-pleasing estate."
- My conversation with a Muslim girl on a flight to Malaya

### 3. The attractive virtue of sexual chastity

- Sexual impurity from sexual disorder
  - Cause: disordered heart with its disordered desires (Mk 7:2-23)
  - Pollution of the whole person by sexual lust
  - Damage to natural sexual ecology: disorderly, addictive, destructive, life-diminishing, depersonalizing, and desensitizing (Eph 4:19)
  - Rejection by NT as a work of the flesh (Gal 5:19) that is improper for God's holy people (Eph 5:3)
  - Connection with idolatry (Rom 1:22-25; Eph 5:5; Col 3:5)

- Cause for disqualification from God's kingdom (Eph 5:5)
- Need for repentance and cleansing (2 Cor 12:21)
- Cleansing by Christ (1 Cor 6:9-11; Eph 5:25-26; cf. Tit 2:11-14)
- Possible restoration after loss unlike virginity
- Chastity as sexual purity rather than virginity as with chastity pledges
  - Call for all Christians to "lead a chaste and decent life"
  - Luther in LC 219: ***For marital chastity it is above all things essential that husband and wife live together in love and harmony, cherishing each other wholeheartedly and with perfect fidelity. This is one of the chief ways to make chastity attractive and desirable.***
  - Chastity as physical and mental, personal and spiritual
  - Condition for life-enhancing, fruitful sexual enjoyment
  - Aspect of sexual ecology: works best when done with the right person, at the right time, in its right place, and in the right way
  - Moral chastity: sexual integrity and faithfulness to spouse
  - Spiritual chastity: heart devoted to Christ that is governed by his self-giving love and his Holy Spirit rather than possessive lust
  - Two sides
    - Sexual self-reservation for spouse in marriage
    - Total self-giving to spouse in marriage
  - Avoidance of sexual defilement as the desecration of both body and soul (1 Cor 7:1) as well as of holy matrimony (Heb 13:4)
  - Reflection of the one flesh union of Christ with the church (Eph 5:25-32)
  - Connection with the resurrection of the body (1 Cor 6:12-20)
  - Restoration of sexual chastity through the cleansing blood of Jesus (1 Jn 1:7-9)

#### 4. Guilt-free sexual enjoyment in a world of sexual decadence

- Repentance and reception of forgiveness
- Cleansing by the blood of Jesus in HC
- Protection by God in the sixth commandment
- Learning from the affirmation of sexuality in the Song of Songs
- Sexual appreciation in marriage
- Luther in WA 34:15.15-19: ***When a husband looks at his wife as if she were the only woman on earth, and when the woman looks at her husband as if he were the only man on earth; yes, if no king or queen, not even the sun itself sparkles more brightly and lights up your eyes more than your husband or wife, then right there you are face to face with God speaking. God...actually gives your spouse to you, saying; "The***

***man shall be yours; the woman shall be yours. I am pleased beyond measure! Creatures heavenly and earthly are jumping for joy.”***

5. Conclusion from C. S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity*, 88: ***The old Christian teachers said that if man had never fallen, sexual pleasure, instead of being less than it is now, would actually have been greater. I know that some muddle-headed Christians have talked as if Christianity thought that sex, or the body, or pleasure, were bad in themselves. But they are wrong. Christianity is almost the only one of the great religions that thoroughly approves of the body – which believes that matter is good, that God Himself once took on a human body, that some kind of body is going to be given us even in Heaven and is going to be an essential part of our happiness, our beauty, and our energy.***