

Slaying Gluttony and Lust, Training for Temperance and Chastity  
1 Corinthians 6:9-20  
Lent III Midweek  
March 11, 2026

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

In the first two weeks of our Lenten midweek meditation, we have considered how New Adam is to intentionally exercise fruit of the Spirit with which he has been blessed so as to drown, slay, kill Old Adam and all his desires to serve Self rather than serving God by loving neighbor (sanctification, not justification). And, in these first two weeks we considered the 8<sup>th</sup> commandment, so as to fight against envy with kindness, then the 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> commandments so as to fight against greed with generosity.

This evening, we consider the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment which, in our generation, just as throughout all of history, has abundant reason for us to meditate on this commandment by itself; and yet, it also seems to be the one topic no one wants to discuss... perhaps because we know Christians should not be found sinning in this way, and yet we struggle with it! Yet, what comfort that Paul who says "You were washed, you were sanctified" then has to say to the Corinthians, "Flee immorality." In other words, still wrestling!

While it may be oddly *comforting* for us in 21st century Elgin that Paul must address sexual immorality in the 1<sup>st</sup> century life of the Corinthian congregation, it also ought make us quite sober about the

temptations and sins that abound and how necessary it is for every pastor of every congregation to speak of them directly, for the hearers to repent of them, and for all Christians to wrestle, and help each other wrestle, against them.

And yet, as we meditate on just this commandment this evening, you'll note that the title/theme for the evening includes a particular sin that we would not consider a part of the sixth commandment... indeed, it might seem difficult to even find gluttony in the commandments. The Scriptures *say* gluttony (including its 'liquid counterpart,' drunkenness) is wrong – whether such Scriptural rebuke be found in Moses' sermon in Deuteronomy, in the gospel accounts wherein the religious leaders opposed to Jesus accused him of being a glutton and drunkard, or even in the epistles, as St Paul warns against those who serve their bellies – “their end is destruction; their god is their bellies,” he warns the Philippians.

But why tie in gluttony here? Perhaps we would think of it as a matter of the first commandment (which, ultimately, all sins *could* rightly be tied to)... especially as we just heard Paul diagnose it, “their *god* is their belly.” But, here, coupling gluttony with sexual sins shows us the deeper fleshly desire of Old Adam and may help us better understand today's societal addiction to sexual sin. Indeed, the deeper Old Adam issue is an insatiable appetite for the flesh's pleasure.

That's how society 'clinically' says you have a problem, isn't it? Addiction. But such a clinical diagnosis almost paints one as a victim, not a sinner. Instead, addiction (which *is* real, but how do you understand addiction *theologically*?)... addiction is really about the insatiable appetite for the flesh's pleasure, for old Adam's "need" to serve Self, not neighbor.

That's really what's at the heart of the sixth commandment, isn't it? – to be sure, we can rightly speak of the commandment protecting a divine institution, holy matrimony. But marriage is more than an estate of theological concept; God puts together *people* into that estate, man and wife to serve *each other*.

But the old man that wants to serve Self *loves* (is addicted to) the unchastity... whether that unchastity be lust or gluttony. How can I serve my neighbor when lusting after an excess of God's good gift of daily bread? – and that daily bread (as Luther explains in the Catechism) includes not just food and drink (the excess of which is gluttony), but also includes *spouse* (and the 'excess', the fleshly serving of Self at the spouse's expense *is* adultery in many and various forms), whether that be at the expense of the spouse to whom God has already joined you or even the as-yet unknown spouse to whom God will one day join you... you owe that spouse (current or future) your chastity... whether single, married, even widowed... chastity. Even if you say, "I will never marry, this doesn't apply to me", you are still in the marriage of Christ to His Church –

thus, chastity. And you are still there to support the fellow members of the Church – therefore, chastity.

Just as God fills up the marriage estate with what He plans for you, so also He fills your belly with good things, and gluttony is simply another variant of the same fleshly desire for excess and intemperance. How can I serve my neighbor when I simply eat or drink to gorge myself? How will that possibly leave me in a preparedness to serve my neighbor? Just another form of excess, isn't it?

In fact, Luther spoke of these two sins together, calling gluttony and lust “weapons of unchastity.” And he was not unique or first to pair these two fleshly desires, against which we must daily fight. Notice how, in our text, St Paul addressed the arguments of the Corinthians, who made an appeal to “food for the stomach” as a reason to allow that sexual desire which, as is so often argued, ‘is only natural. If it feels natural, it must be good... and if it feels good, it must be natural.’ And that’s how one arrives at gluttony, drunkenness, sexual immorality, all forms of unchastity.

Of course, such issues may be present in any congregation, not just Corinth. Indeed, St Paul exhorted the Romans,

“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 provision for the flesh, to satisfy its desires.”  
(Romans 13:12-14)

Notice the antidote? – “Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.” Hadn’t the Romans *already* put on Jesus... a good seven chapters earlier, Paul had *already* talked about baptism! But, as Paul and Luther say, we must daily exercise New Adam in his baptism. I could talk all night about how sinful the various forms of sexual immorality are, but what good would that be if we simply ended there. Your conscience doesn’t need to be told to be ashamed of pornography, lewd music and movies, and all forms of premarital, extra-marital and contra-marital sexual conduct and desires. The conscience already is ashamed of that, which is why Christians will admit to one another supposedly lesser sins – perhaps even gluttony! (not seeing the connection)... so as to hide the sexual sins they are more ashamed of.

But to put on the Lord Jesus Christ is not to be prudish about sex, prudish about food and drink... it’s not to take vows of celibacy, vows of fasting... not to start temperance movements or to see alcohol and donuts as evil or the marriage bed as awkward. To put on the Lord Jesus Christ and wrestle against unchastity is to love how God designed sexuality, food, and drink ... or, shall we say, to love

the person for the sexual being and the eating-and-drinking being God designed us to be.

As *He* designed it, God did not create us eating-and-drinking beings so as to gorge ourselves, but to be nourished and strengthened and ready to serve our neighbor. Likewise, He did not create us sexual beings to serve Self, but to serve that one neighbor – that one most special neighbor God gave us – in that holy estate, as St Paul even instructs –

“The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another... so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”

There it is, the lack of self-control because the old man delights in excess, in intemperance, in unchastity... all because he serves *Self*.

But, as the apostle says, “Your body is not your own. You were bought with a price... so glorify God in your body” ... there, again, a common bond between gluttony and sexual immorality – glorifying *Self*... and the common defense against both: looking outside of our self, to the neighbor God has granted us, that we may serve him/her in temperance and chastity.

Thus, the New Adam gets his exercise by first being trained to resist such temptation... but not merely for his own discipline, but for his fidelity to his neighbor. What a horrible tragedy if my

neighbor is in need, and I cannot serve him because I am sick or passed out from my gluttony and drunkenness! What a horrible sin if the spouse God has given me (or will give me) I take no pleasure in saving myself for or care not to please that spouse because I am more interested in something that is virtually real (meaning, not real... meaning, *fake, fraud!*)... or because I am interested in a neighbor God has not given me to love and support and honor with my entire soul and being.

Instead, the New Adam – *he* rejoices in being Christ to his bride (or *she* being the Church to her husband)... fidelity and unity in all things. And, if not married yet, the single New Adam - *she* rejoices in being that Church who awaits her bridegroom or *he* rejoices in being that groom that is faithfully preparing a place that he might come and take his beloved unto himself. Yes, New Adam rejoices that, single or married or widowed, every Christian confesses before and for the benefit of all the world the baptismal life of chastity their dependence upon and cherishing of Christ's marriage to the Church.

Moreover, the New Adam cherishes and rejoices in Christ's promise of daily bread... thus, New Adam does not horde and gorge as if it may be his last meal, but eats faithfully, measuredly knowing that daily bread will come again tomorrow, and that he is to eat and drink 'vocationally' – to be prepared to serve his neighbor. Such temperance and chastity confess before all men – for the education of all the ungodly of society around us – that New Adam is always

ready to serve his fellow man with faith in God and fervent love for one another.

Against such things, Old Adam rages. His belly growls; he claims his throat is invariably parched; he claims to be only sensually desiring what is *natural* – “unhealthy to abstain!” he argues. And as he gorges himself, he is desensitized by and to it all. There’s the danger to our society: completely desensitized to sin.

For example, this generation knows some of the lowest interest in dating and marriage on record... The easy target to demonize is to say the desire for marriage is replaced by the desire for career and its necessary education... But that’s not happening because this generation is suddenly being created by God as sexless beings, but because the world is desensitizing you to the beauty and safety of and need for *marriage*; and it is doing so by feeding you unchastity in ways that don’t lead to pregnancy, so the generation feels that unchastity that supports other idols is consequence-free. Consequence-free to gorge Old Adam privately, with no one (including parents) knowing or caring... because look at how well you are doing for yourself in other ways! – measured primarily by money and career.

But, the answer to our sexual temptation and this generation’s sexual sins, the answer to a society immersed in a sensualized internet economy, is not to try to isolate ourselves from the temptation by committing our life to career and financial

wealth... such forced vows of celibacy won't last, but will end in disastrous sin... instead, we ought love and extol the marriage estate.

“But, Pastor, if I don't first focus on wealth, I'll be poor in marriage!” Perhaps (not necessarily), but you'll be chaste... and rich in the blessings of God's holy institution of marriage. Poverty may not help you love *Self*, but chastity and marriage helps you love *neighbor*... and love God's design for His creation.

We know Old Adam's lies, his self-serving narcissism. He must be slain... And he can only be slain if New Adam is trained up *properly... with a proper understanding of chastity.*

Chastity does *not* mean celibacy. Christian husbands and wives sexually faithful to one another are just as chaste as virgins and far more chaste than self-serving monks in their vows of celibacy! Chastity means godly purity, decency, and faithfulness... which also means, by the way, that to be chaste doesn't mean to treat sexuality as taboo.

New Adam should be exercised to love God's plans for his sexually-designed humanity to live out daily life extolling the marriage estate. The new man ought learn to love the *estate* through the *person* whom God has given you or one day will give you – not some deceptively perfect model of computer animation – but a *greater* reality, the beautiful incarnate truth... the ‘perfect imperfections’ of the one person in all the world who – though a sinner – God knew your togetherness could serve you both

beautifully as you care for another with faith in, and together wear the armor of, Christ Jesus.

And, as individuals confess to one another that God gave this estate of marriage to govern all creation, then New Adam must also meditate upon marriage as God's design and normal pattern for each successive generation. (Marriage – God's design! – doesn't get to be redefined for each generation.) And that means, generationally, New Adams should support and encourage one another.

Parents and grandparents, encourage your children's and grandchildren's New Adam to exercise themselves not in prudish avoidance of human sexuality, but in godly and chaste thought and word, so that they will not be prudish and unprepared for that sexual thought and word to maritally and chastely include deed.

Parents and grandparents, speak glowingly of marriage to your children and grandchildren, *especially in their teenage years*; do not be so naive to think your child is the one child who God designed to be some a-sexual fortress against temptation with laser-precision focus on their schooling and career... as if they won't be urged (and aided) by society to endure career-driven monasticism by caving to all the various forms of temptation by which society says marriage isn't needed until you're at least 25. Instead, parents (and grandparents!), be the example before the younger generation of God's wisdom of putting together husband and wife... indeed, even be the visual of loving affection, that husband and wife cherish each

other as God's gifts to one another, not *just* as sexual beings, but in all things to one another.

Young adults, think not of the pleasure you can derive from individual – even secretive and virtual – pursuits, but think of the beauty of God's design of putting two people together who – unlike the other 8 billion people in the world – are given by God specifically for one another, to defend and keep and satisfy and love and cherish one another and, above all, point each other to Christ, His sacramental gifts, and life everlasting in Him.

If we put as much energy into godly preparation for marriage as we put into secular preparation for career, how well-prepared we would be to see the beauty of and live in and be successful at this most highly blessed vocation.

Indeed, *youngest* generation, study that... *see that* in your grandparents and parents, and even encourage them and support them in their marriage... that by taking the focus off yourself and what you demand *from* them for *Self*... and, by honoring father and mother, you will gift them more time and energy, will encourage them, to remember their primary vocation and to live each day with joy in that blessed estate as husband and wife.

And such joy, thanksgiving, godliness, and honor of the marriage estate (and such self-control of the body from all gluttony and drunkenness!) may then daily remind us and confess before all that our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, to glorify God in our

bodies... and that each of us is a member of the body that is the Church in blessed marriage to her perfect bridegroom, Christ Jesus. What purity, temperance, chastity, selflessness belongs to that marriage of Christ and the Church, the mystery profound (St Paul says) by which they are joined together as one flesh to join in the heavenly marriage banquet hosted by the Father and – in the marriage bliss of eternal life – to live happily ever after.

In the Name of the Father  
And of the Son  
And of the Holy Spirit.  
+ AMEN +

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