

South Bay Community Church
Sermon Reflections
Life Reimagined: Caring for our Bodies
30 October 2022
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Scripture Text: 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Listen Up: https://youtu.be/h_4noaeDBfs

Sermon Preamble

In this series on Life Reimagined, we have seen how our resources, relationships, and caring for the earth can accomplish God's mission to reconcile, reunite, and restore the brokenness of this world. As Pastor Stan Long shared with us last week, we are to be the embodiment of the Kingdom of God. God has given us all the resources we need to fulfill God's mission. We live a life reimagined in alignment with God's vision for us. In worship, we move our bodies. In this message, we will focus on the resources of our bodies in three parts. First, we will meditate on our scriptural text to listen to what God says about our bodies. Then, we will consider an interview with a fitness trainer to help us become better doers of the Word. Lastly, we will have a special time of prayer for anyone in need of healing in their bodies.

Listen for what God's word or phrase God is inviting you to notice in the scripture text

Let us take a deep breath in, exhale, and hear the Word of the Lord. "Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Whatever words or phrase the Spirit may have highlighted for you, we invite you to hold on to it, and allow the Spirit to continue to speak to you.

If we look at verse 18, we will notice that Paul is specifically addressing sexual immorality. "Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body" (1 Corinthians 6:18).

We are stewards of our bodies that belong to God

Paul is telling the Corinthians that they can't just do anything they wish with their bodies, because their bodies are not their own. Our bodies belong to God. We are to be stewards of the gift God has given to us. We are to care for, manage, and tend to our bodies as a resource that God has entrusted to us for God's glory.

God's Spirit resides in a believer's body, a temple of God

Once we make a decision to follow Jesus, our bodies are a special and unique resource. Our bodies are different from any other resource when God's Spirit comes to reside in our bodies. The Holy Spirit abides with us to dwell with us in the most personal and intimate way. The residence of the Holy Spirit cannot be said about any other part of God's creation. It is a mystery that we can't fully understand. What does the divine mystery mean that the Spirit of God is living in my body? The truth is that God's Spirit has a unique connection with every follower of Christ in and through our bodies.

The scriptural text refers to our bodies as temples of God. To use the word, "temple," feels different than simply saying our bodies are a house for God or the dwelling place of God. It appears that Paul used the word, "temple," intentionally. A temple is a sacred space; a temple is a place of worship; a temple is holy; a temple is not to be defiled, abused, or treated any old way. A temple is to be treated with reverence, care, respect, and love.

Our bodies are part of God's mission to reconcile, reunite, and restore this broken world

Paul is telling us that our bodies are part of God's mission of restoration. God is doing a work from the inside out as the Spirit of God personally dwells within us and transforms us. Our bodies are not our own because, for whoever believes in Jesus, Jesus' death paid the price to reunite and restore all things back to God.

We are to care for creation until Jesus returns with the promise of a new creation. In the same way, we are also to care for our bodies until Jesus returns with the promise of new bodies. Our bodies do not belong to us; they belong to God. Like all the resources from God that we have discussed thus far, our bodies are to be deployed to accomplish the mission of God for the glory of God.

In considering shortcomings in caring for our bodies, IT IS US

Just as we don't always do a good job in caring for the earth, we don't always do a good job of caring for our bodies. There are sobering facts and statistics about disease, illness, obesity, and the various ailments our bodies face. It is true that we live in a broken world, and some of the diseases and illnesses we face are due to the fallen world in which we live. However, it is also true that some of the things our bodies face are because of the ways we use and abuse our bodies, in ways God does not want for us. IT IS US!

Followers of Jesus should be on the front lines for environmental care because we understand the earth belongs to God. In the same way, believers should be among the fittest and healthiest human beings on the planet. We get that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit, but in our humanity, we struggle just like the next person.

Focus on physical fitness to accomplish the mission of God with our bodies, God's temple

How can we truly live a Life Reimagined with our bodies? How can we accomplish the mission of God with our bodies, the temple of God? That is a big question to tackle, so we are going to start smaller. Diet, sleep, limiting stress, mental care, emotional care, and self-care are all factors in caring for our bodies. In this message, we are focusing on physical fitness.

Applying faith and fitness

Let us apply faith and fitness based on an interview with a fitness trainer, Tina Long. There are so many items to take away from that interview, including practical things we can start doing today. There are aids to help us with our upper and lower bodies, like exercise bikes, stretching bands, grips, and weights. Even without these aids, there are many things we can do for movement and keeping the blood flowing, in caring for bodies.

Exercise is distinguishable from simple movement. Both are beneficial, but some people have an exercise routine and then sit for the rest of the day. The solution is to both exercise and incorporate movement throughout the day. What can we do to have movement throughout the day? Exercise and movement can both be hard work. The body wants comfort rather than the discomfort of actually doing exercise and hard work. The body may want to stay in bed and be comfortable. As we get older, exercise and movement can get harder. With exercise and movement, we feel good about what we have done.

The "Why" of caring for our bodies needs to be aligned with the "Why" of God?

In a Life Reimagined of caring for our bodies, the key question is "Why?" If we are to truly live a Life Reimagined (embracing the abundant and flourishing life God has for us), then we need our "why" to be aligned with God's "why," including the why when it comes to our bodies. Caring for our bodies is so much bigger than our own health and wellness. It is so much bigger than how we look, feel, and fit into our clothes.

We love God with all of our minds, hearts, souls, and bodies. Therefore, caring for our bodies is about being available for how God wants to use us in the world. However, it is difficult to accomplish the mission of loving our neighbor when we are hurting and in constant pain. Ministries in loving actions towards our neighbors require our bodies need to be healthy enough to do things and participate in acts of love for our neighbors. How can we be God's hands and feet literally as we move, serve, and share the love of God? We are to take care of our bodies as a gift from God to accomplish God's mission. We need our bodies to be as strong as they can be to live into that mission.

Praying for Healing

We have to be committed to do our part in caring for our bodies well. That can be hard. The truth is that disease, illness, aches, and pains are part of this world. God knows that. When Jesus was on earth, we see him healing the sick. While Jesus did not heal everyone, Jesus was giving us a preview of God's Kingdom as Pastor Stan Long shared with us last week.

Since the days of the early church, Christians have used the laying on of hands and anointing with oil as a sign of the working of the Holy Spirit. When a member of the community was in need of healing, the priests and other members of the community gathered around the sick person to pray for healing.

"Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord" (James 5:14). For the last part of our worship service, that is exactly what we are going to do as a community. We are inviting God as the Great Physician to touch our bodies. We trust that God hears our prayers to care for our bodies, so God can use us for God's mission and for the glory of God.

The anointing prayer is: I anoint you with the oil in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And by the grace of God, may the Lord in His love and mercy heal you by God's Spirit, and lift you up to do God's mission. Amen.

Closing Prayer for Anointing Prayer Time

Lord, you are the ultimate source of health and healing. We come to you today as the Great Physician and ask that you lay your healing hands upon all those who are sick. We plead your mercy for those who are suffering, who are dealing with chronic pain, and aches that make it challenging to live into your mission. We ask that you guide medical professionals, and that you touch those areas where healing is needed. Touch our muscles, bones, ligaments, cells every part of our body that needs your healing touch. Gives us the strength we need to preserve and endure until we receive the victory of your promises in this world or the world to come. And Lord, in the meantime, teach us how to best care for our bodies, not for our sake, but so that we may deploy the resource you have given us to accomplish your mission for your glory!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Sermon Preamble

-In what ways might our bodies, as a resource entrusted to us by God, help us steward and be deployed to accomplish the mission of God for the glory of God?

Listen for what word or phrase God is inviting you to notice in the scripture text

-What word or phrase strikes you, as you listen to 1 Corinthians 6:19-20? In what ways has the Holy Spirit brought additional clarity in applying that word or phrase to your life?

-Paul is following up on an earlier statement in 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 in which Paul says that the community of believers, as well as each individual, is a temple of God. "Do you not know that you yourselves (plural) are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's

temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are" (3:16-17). As applied to the church community, why is this a fitting warning against false teachers?

-As applied to each individual, every sin has an outward aspect and effect. But the sin of sexual immorality is against the very nature and purpose of the human body for the mission and glory of God. In justice and holiness, God will not allow any part of the holy work of God to be damaged without retribution. Why is this a fitting warning to all Christian ministers and workers?

We are stewards of our bodies that belong to God

How and why are we to care for, manage, and honor God with our bodies?

God's Spirit resides in our bodies, a temple of God

Why should Christians consider their bodies the temple and sacred dwelling place of the Holy Spirit?

What difference (s) does it make in your life that the Holy Spirit resides in your body, a temple of God?

Our bodies are part of God's mission to reconcile, reunite, and restore this broken world

-Christians have no right to misuse their bodies, for the body is not their own, but their body has been purchased by God with a price (1 Corinthians 6:20). That price is the blood of Christ (Ephesians 1:7, 1 Peter 1:18-19). In the purchase, considering Romans 6:17-18, 1 Corinthians 7:23, and Colossians 1:13, from what forms of slavery have Christians been freed? With the purchase, considering Romans 1:1 and Romans 6:18, what forms of servanthood/slavery have Christians entered?

In considering shortcomings in caring for our bodies, IT IS US

-What challenges do you face in caring for your body?

-Which challenges are due to the fallen world we live in?

-On the other hand, which challenges are because of us from the way we use and abuse our bodies in the ways God does not want for us?

Focus on physical fitness to accomplish the mission of God with our bodies, God's temple

- For God's mission, why should Christians consider that their body, their personality and other items beyond the physical fitness of their bodies form God's temple?

Applying faith and fitness

-What practical actions can you start doing now to help you with your upper and lower body?

The "Why" of caring for our bodies needs to be aligned with the "Why" of God?

-Why do we need to care for our body to be available for how God wants to use us in the world?

-How can we be literally God's hands and feet as we move, serve, and share the love of God?

Praying for Healing

Why and how do we pray for healing of our bodies to care for our bodies, so that we may accomplish God's mission for God's glory?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR FAMILY GROUPS INCLUDING TEENS AND CHILDREN

- In what ways might our bodies, as a resource entrusted to us by God for us to steward, be deployed to accomplish the mission of God for the glory of God?
- What word or phrase strikes you, as you listen to 1 Corinthians 6:19-20? In what ways has the Holy Spirit brought additional clarity in applying that word or phrase to your life?
- How and why are we to care for, manage, and honor God with our bodies?
- What challenges do you face in caring for your body?
- What practical actions can you start doing now to help you with your upper and lower bodies?