

From Immorality to Gratitude

Ephesians 5:3-7

Halifax: 4 May 2008

Introduction

Today, we come to a topic in our study of Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians about which there is always much interest—the topic of sex.

- In our society, there are few topics that are more able to grab our attention than this...
 - We are very sexual creatures.
 - Sexuality is God's gift to us and it is good.
- But as with all of God's other good gifts to us...
 - Our rebellion against our Creator has caused us to pervert this precious gift, and our ingratitude for it has caused us to make an idol out of it.
 - For those who understand the will of God,
 - the ravages of sin upon the human race are as evident in our bedrooms as they are on our battlefields.

But our gracious Lord calls us to a better way.

- In His precious Word, He tells us how to be reconciled to Him through Jesus Christ,
 - And having been reconciled, He tells us how to live in the way of love before Him, and that includes living in sexual glory instead of in perversity.
- In our study of Ephesians we have seen how this whole letter is about God restoring His elect to full communion with Him and with each other through Jesus Christ...
 - In the first three chapters, He showed them how God had called them out of the world to be restored to Himself...
 - How He had poured His grace on them, bringing to them the complete forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ, and giving them life by His Spirit.
 - He shows how the Lord has even brought all who believe to live in His very own house as His own sons and daughters!
 - That is your calling if you are Christian!
 - Ever since we got to chapter 4,
 - The Lord has been showing us how to walk worthy of our calling in Christ—how we ought to live now that we have been made God's sons and daughters.
 - How we are to put off the old ways and put on the new way...

- And this week, we come to look at the sexual purity to which He calls us.
 - We need not shy away from this topic.
 - It is one that we need to speak about with frankness and candour.
 - It is one that we need to speak about to our children—
 - It is clear that Paul intended this letter to be read when children were present because in chapter 6, he addresses them in particular.
 - I say this because there have been times when there was a certain prudish sentiment that would oppose the reading of such things to children, but that was not the sentiment of the holy apostle.
 - We are to speak to our children of God’s good way so that they will be put off by the perverted ways of the world.
 - But we are not to speak of this topic in a tantalizing way—that is one of the very things that is forbidden in the passage before us.
 - We are to speak about it with modesty and care.

So let me show you what our Lord says to us about this matter.

- First of all, see here that:

I. Sexual immorality is to be completely eliminated from your life.

A. Look at what an exhaustive list is given to us here in verses 3 & 4:

- Eph 5:3-4: But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.
 - Nothing is left out!
1. Fornication heads up the list—but just what is fornication?
 - a. Fornication (*porneia* in the original) is a very broad term that includes every form of illicit sexual conduct—
 - Our Creator has specially endowed our bodies with the ability to find great pleasure in sexual contact...
 - But He did not give us this precious gift to be used in casual relationships...
 - Not at all...
 - This special gift is to be reserved exclusively for that special relationship that He instituted between one man and one woman called marriage.
 - From the beginning,

- marriage was designed by Him to be a permanent relationship of love and mutual care between one man and one woman—
 - a relation that was never to be broken.
 - And it is here and here along that sexual pleasures are to be enjoyed.
- To take this precious gift and to use it in other relationships is to pervert it!
 - It is to take God’s holy gift and to make it common...
 - It is like taking a priceless Persian Rug and using it as a door mat between the barn and the house...
 - It is to make common what God has made special.
 - The rug might work just fine as a door mat, but it loses its unique character and becomes mundane.
- An illicit use of sex is unlawful use or an unauthorized use...
 - It is a use of it in a way that is contrary to our Creator’s design and to His revealed will.
 - It is to take His precious gift and make it ordinary.

TRANS> But what all is considered under the word fornication?

- b. To get an idea of what is included in the word fornication,
 - I think it is helpful to look at the Moses describes illicit sexual relationships in Leviticus 18.
 - 1) We read this chapter a moment ago, and again and again, you hear the words repeated,
 - “You shall not uncover the nakedness of...”
 - This is a very literal rendering of what we have in the Hebrew.
 - Some modern translations render as “have sexual relations with.”
 - That certainly gets at the idea of what is being spoken about, but I think something is lost by this translation...
 - 2) These words, “uncover the nakedness of” teach us that we are neither to sexually look upon nor sexually touch any one other than our lawfully wedded husband or wife.
 - You can uncover nakedness with either your hands or your eyes.
 - I like this definition because it gives legalists less room to manoeuvre.

- Legalists are those who like narrow (rather than broad) definitions so they can look for loopholes.
- Of course you can't really win with them—
 - not until their hearts are turned to God and they come to delight in His will...
 - but at least they have less room to manoeuvre.
- Besides, we all have too much of this legalism...
 - You see it in the two year old who,
 - being corrected for kicking his sister insists that he has done nothing wrong because he was only instructed not to hit her—that nothing was ever said about kicking her...
 - And so it is with sexual legalists who justify pornography because they were only looking...
 - or, those like Bill Clinton who claimed that he did not really fornicate because it was only oral sex, not sexual intercourse.
 - He uncovered the nakedness of Monica Lewinski—and that was sin.
 - If you use the definition of fornication in Leviticus,
 - it excludes sexually uncovering the nakedness of anyone except your lawful spouse—
 - And it is not lawful to uncover the nakedness of a near relative, an animal, or a person of the same gender.

TRANS> So there you have spelled out to you what God considers fornication.

- And of course His law is the one that stands...
 - Human judges are supposed to uphold His standard,
 - and in as much as they don't,
 - they will be judged for misrepresenting the one who appointed them to be judges.
 - Regardless of what our human courts say, we must draw the lines where God draws the lines...
 - Fornication includes quite a lot!
- But you see that Paul does not stop with the word fornication...

2. He adds to this uncleanness...

- a. The word uncleanness refers to that which makes you unfit for communion with God...
 - It is a word that is used extensively in the Old Testament for those who could not come before God because of defilement.
 - In the context of our passage,
 - uncleanness would include, perhaps, those illicit sexual behaviours such as sodomy that can even be brought into a lawful marriage.
 - Such behaviour is condemned in scripture because it is unnatural—
 - It is a perverted use of body parts in ways that the Creator did not design them to be used.

- b. Then covetousness is mentioned which speaks of greed...
 - 1) This is not the word that is used in the tenth commandment, but a word that means, “overreaching” or being greedy...
 - It would certainly include a desire for sexual relations before or outside the bounds of marriage...
 - but it also includes a selfish demand within marriage that is insensitive to one’s spouse.
 - There is a balance here.
 - In 1 Cor 7, Paul insists that spouses should not deprive one another of sexual contact except when they both agree to devote themselves to prayer and fasting...
 - To deprive your spouse is itself selfish behaviour...
 - but it is also possible to become greedy in such a way that too many demands are made.
 - The rule is to have mutual respect and regard to one another and to be kind and sensitive in the love of Christ.
 - 2) And of course covetousness refers not only to greedy actions, but also to inordinate desires...
 - That is a huge problem in this area of sexual sins...
 - Relationships are damaged much more than we realise by illicit fantasies.
 - You must remember the words of our Lord Jesus who said that to look on a woman to lust after her is to commit adultery with her in your heart.
 - It is true that it is worse if you go on and commit the act as well,

- But you must always remember that God sees and judges not only your actions, but also your thoughts!
- You must see your evil thoughts before Him and repent of them and seek God's forgiveness.
 - In this you can surely see how much you need a Saviour!

TRANS> But Paul does not stop with this either.

3. He also includes sexual perverted behaviour in your communication...both verbal and non-verbal.
 - a. The word translated filthiness refers to anything that is obscene—
 - This would include such things as immoral books, letters, notes, signs, symbols, clothing, music, movies, pictures, dances, movements of the body, gestures, and so on.
 - As believers living in a society that is increasingly perverted, we need to use great care that we are not swept in.
 - We can become so saturated with these things, that our consciences go to sleep.
 - Christian men will sometimes watch movies or read magazines, not so much because they are interested in the movie or the magazine,
 - but because they delight in the obscene parts that are found...
 - You can deceive others, but you cannot deceive God.
 - And you women, watch how you dress!
 - It is not that you are to try to make yourself unattractive—no, beautiful women glorify God—
 - but it is that you are to keep your nakedness reserved for your husband—
 - You are not to flaunt it about with suggestive or immodest apparel...
 - If you wear the attire of a harlot, don't be surprised if you are treated like a harlot.
 - And you fathers and husbands, it is up to you to insist that your wives and your daughters are modest.
 - But men, you must watch yourself too—
 - just because a woman is dressed immodestly does not give you any license to sin...

- You can't blame the loose woman for your lack of self-control.
- She will have to answer to God for her immodest clothing, but you will have to answer to Him for your immodest gazing.
- Like Job, it is a good thing to make a covenant with your eyes that you will not look upon a maiden to lust after her.

b. The next two words in Paul's list are also about communication...

- **Foolish talking** is the kind of talking you expect to hear from a drunkard...
 - And when it comes to sexual perversity, men don't have to be drunk to talk like drunkards—
 - They are carried away with their perverted desires.
 - However, drunkenness can make you less restrained and is to be entirely avoided.
 - And women also give themselves over to sensual speech...
 - You have all heard women in popular songs who sing drunken with sensuality—sometimes even with so-called Christian music.
 - This is foolish talking...
- And **coarse jesting**.
 - This is what we might call a contextual translation...
 - The word used here literally means wit—
 - It refers to a person who is quick-witted...
 - to one who can quickly turn a phrase or a situation to give it a double meaning.
 - Playing with words like this can be done to the glory of God,
 - but in the context here, it refers to those who spew out phrases in which the double meaning is sexually suggestive.
 - Again, you know what I am talking about...
 - These sins of the tongue have a very corrosive effect and are not fitting for those who belong to Christ.
 - We are not to laugh at sin, for it wears away the shame in it and makes it seem acceptable.

TRANS> You see then that Paul's list here is quite exhaustive—

- It forbids all unchaste thoughts, words, and deeds.

B. And I want you to notice how he reinforces the absolute prohibition of these perverted behaviours in three ways...

1. First, in verse 3, you will notice that adds the word “all” before the word “uncleanness.”

- This is to remind us that we are to entirely eliminate every form of sexual misconduct from our behaviour...
- It is not acceptable to indulge just a little in it!
- Would you be content with a doctor who told you that you only have a couple of spots of cancer on your lungs,
 - so you need not worry about it?

TRANS> The Lord is not pleased when you pervert His gift of sex—

- Whether a little or lot, you show contempt toward Him.
 - I am concerned that many of us want to draw our own lines of what is acceptable instead of submitting entirely to God in this matter.
 - We forget that He is the LORD, not us.
- Notice further what Paul says at the end of verse 3...

2. “Let it not even be named among you!”

- One version paraphrases this,
 - “Let there be no hint of it among you.”
- That is the idea.
 - You are not being instructed to never speak about this sin or to name it when you see it...
 - That is the very thing that is being done in this passage!
 - But you are being told that this sin is one that we, as God’s people, are in no way to be characterised by...
 - No one should be able to rightly describe us as fornicators or filthy talkers...
 - We should conduct ourselves in such a way that such labels do rightly belong to us—that we cannot be named or classified by these sins.

3. Paul says that such things are not **fitting** for us a Christians.

- He speaks of the fitness or the appropriateness of our behaviour in verse 3 as well as verse 4.
 - He is telling you that it is not at all appropriate for those who have been redeemed by Christ and brought to live in God's house to pervert His good gift...
- He says that it is not fitting for saints...
 - Saints are those who have been set apart to God by the salvation of Jesus Christ...
 - In the Bible a saint is any person who professes to be a disciple of Jesus Christ—anyone who makes a credible profession of faith...
 - It is just plain inappropriate for such a one to take the precious gift of God and drag it through the mire!

TRANS> So what are we to do instead?

II. What is to characterise us instead of sexual perversity?

- What is fitting for us as saints?

A. The answer is given at the end of verse 4 in one phrase...

- “but rather giving of thanks!”
 - Instead of being sexual perverted, you are to be grateful!
 - Now that's an interesting and helpful contrast, isn't it?

1. Sexual sin grows out of ingratitude, doesn't it.

- a. It grows out of being unhappy with what God has given you,
 - or, to put it another way, what you have in Him.
 - Sexual perversion is always a reaching for sexual pleasures that God has not authorised you to have—He has not given you liberty to have them...
 - If you were truly grateful for what He has given to you, you would not be reaching for more.
 - You would be too busy enjoying and giving thanks for what you have.
- b. This is true of many of our sins...
 - If you are not grateful for your material provision, then you begin to covet and to cheat and steal...
 - In your pride you feel that you are entitled to more than God has apportioned to you.

- You feel sorry for yourself—poor little thing!
2. Now I know that some of you may feel that you have good reason to complain!
- a. You feel deprived sexually...
- 1) Your spouse seems dull and uninteresting—not like those exciting seductresses on the television screen!
 - Or perhaps your spouse is insensitive and doesn't really seem to care for you.
 - Or maybe you don't even have a spouse...
 - What do you have to be thankful for?
 - 2) Sexual perversity is what discontent people fall into...
 - They want the pleasure without having to give of themselves.
 - This is what men love about pornography.
 - They have women with whom they have invested no effort fawning all over them in their own little dream world!
 - Or they have loose women who are willing to fawn all over them when they have invested nothing...
 - And these women—they will do anything to get a little attention from a man.

TRANS> It may be true that you do not have the sex life you really want...

- b. I will grant that—but I have two things to say to you about it!
- 1) First of all, you must remember that we live in world that **we** have ruined by our sin...
 - This is a fallen world under the judgement of God.
 - Our relationships as sinners in a fallen world are never going to be all that they would have been... not as long as sin remains.
 - It is not for you, my friend, to be bitter toward God about this!
 - He put us in paradise to start with where we would have had a perfect relationship with our spouse—
 - I might say, “the kind of relationship we all dream about...”
 - but that would not quite be accurate.
 - It would not be accurate because in our sinful condition,

- we dream about a relationship in which we are still selfish and everyone else pleases us and delights in us and where our spouses are always ravished with us.
- If we were yet in paradise, it would not only be your spouse that would be different...
- **You** would be different!

TRANS> So when you want to feel sorry for yourself about your sex life,

- remember that what you have is not what God gave us to start with—
 - It is what we brought on by our sins.
 - You have no grounds for complaining.
- 2) The second thing I want to say is that you need to be grateful for what God **has** given to you.
 - After Adam, in whom the whole human race was represented, rebelled against God,
 - if it had not been for the mercy of God,
 - Adam would have been cast into the Lake of Fire right from the start...
 - But instead, the gracious Lord put a curse upon his labour and upon his relationships,
 - but nevertheless promised that his labour and his relationships would still continue.
 - They would not be like they were, but he would still have them—
 - And in addition to that,
 - He promised that He would send a Redeemer who would restore all things!
 - I say then!
 - It is a great mercy of God that we fallen creatures are still able to enjoy intimacy at all!
 - It is a great mercy that we do not deserve—just as we don't deserve food and gladness and health—not at all!
 - And if you have been redeemed,
 - then our gracious Lord is working in you to make you the kind of person that can truly bring delight to your spouse—

- and if your spouse belongs to Him, He is doing the very same in him or her!
- And even if you are not married at all,
 - It is a wonderful mercy of God that He is making you into the kind of person that would bring delight to your spouse if you had one!
 - God is fitting you to live with Him in heaven!

TRANS> The point is, God has been merciful to you in the extreme!

- The appropriate response is not fornication, but thanksgiving for what you have!
 - Yes, you are not heaven yet, it's true
 - but God has taken you as His own...
 - He has pardoned your sins...
 - And He has promised that you an everlasting inheritance!
 - He is graciously working in you (and in all His other people) to make you into the kind of person that will have perfect relationships with everyone.
 - And into the kind of person that will enjoy to the fullest whatever our sexually grows into when it reaches its perfect state in heaven!
 - I have no idea what that will be, but I know that it will be glorious.
- But now, this brings me to the second thing you ought to do instead of fornication.
 - The first is to give thanks...
 - The second is to labour at becoming, by the gracious working of God, that man or that woman that is the kind of person who is able to bring perfect delight to your spouse, whether you have one or not...
- Perhaps I need to simply that...
 - Okay, the first thing you are to do instead of fornication is to give thanks...

B. The second is to seek to love the way Jesus Christ loves.

1. If you look at verse 3 where Paul begins speaking about sexual sin, you see that he begins with the word "But"
 - That is significant because Paul is setting sexual sin in contrast here with what he has said in verses 1 & 2...
 - Eph 5:1-2: Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

- I showed you last time that the call to imitate God as dear children and to walk in love as Christ also has loved us is set in contrast to bitterness and malice and all that spoken of at the end of chapter 4...
 - Verses 1&2 do double duty!
 - Just as malice was contrasted with the sacrificial love of Christ,
 - So fornication is contrasted with the sacrificial love of Christ.
2. You can see how this ties in to what I have just been saying to you about gratitude!
- a. Our gracious Lord, if we have come to Christ, is making us into the kind of people who are able to bring perfect delight to our spouse...if we have one.
 - And as long as we live in this fallen world,
 - becoming that kind of person involves learning to love my neighbour sacrificially...
 - to love them even though they are not all that they ought to be.
 - b. Men and women, as a general rule, have their own challenges...
 - 1) Men want women to fawn all over them even though without having to invest anything into the relationship.
 - This is why pornography is often such a temptation for them.
 - 2) Woman, on the other hand, want men's attention—they want men to take an interest in them as persons...
 - And in order to gain that attention, it is their temptation to give themselves sexually to men who are not really committed to them.

TRANS> This is the dynamic that often characterise sexual relationship in this fallen world.

- 3) And it is this dynamic that brings frustration in marriage...
 - a) The man wants his wife to have strong desires for him sexually, but he does not want to invest in the relationship...
 - b) And the woman, growing increasingly irritated with this, begins to hold herself back from him.
 - c) Soon, both are tempted to look for what they want outside of marriage...
 - and both find new relationships much more exciting than old relationships because both expect to get what they are looking for,

- but once the new relationship has gone on a while, they despair again and start to look for another.
- c. So what is to be done?
- Both the man and the woman are to learn to give themselves to each other sacrificially.
 - The man is to take a real interest in his wife, to love her and understand her and get to know her...
 - And the woman is to warmly give herself to her husband.
 - And both the man and the woman are to learn to do this, not just to get what they want out of the relationship,
 - but in order that they may please the Lord who calls us to love each other sacrificially—
 - even when we are not getting what we want...
 - We are not to run off to another relationship, but we are to concentrate on doing our part to love our spouse the way Christ loved us.
- d. You see, God's calling is not just to have a good relationship...
- That is not what you are to focus on...
 - You are to focus on loving your spouse, who is a sinner, the same way Christ loves you.
 - Instead of looking for pretended marital bliss in illicit relationships,
 - you are to seek to be all that you can be for your husband or your wife.
 - I will have more to say about this in a few weeks when we get to Ephesians 5:22,
 - but for now I just want you to see that you are to love like Christ in your marriage.
 - He went to the cross for us and bore the pains of Hell for us even though we were wretched sinners in His eyes.
 - In a fallen world, your spouse will disappoint you at times...
 - and that is when you must draw upon the grace of God to give you the strength you need to continue to love him—or her—
 - Husbands, to give yourself for her—to really care for her and treat her like a person—to talk to her and understand her...

- and wives, to submit to your husband even when he's a bonehead. To love him and be gracious to him rather than complaining or pouting or showing your discontent in whatever way you show it.
- Husband you are to graciously give to your wife...
- And wife, you are to graciously receive your husband!

TRANS> My brothers and sisters, this is what is fitting for us as Christians!

- Our marriages need to be manifestly different!
 - They need to be rooted in gratitude to God and in sacrificial love to each other.
 - And if you are not married,
 - you need to seek to become the kind of person that would give delight to a spouse if you had one,
 - and you are to give thanks to God too.
- There is no place for fornication in a believer's life.
 - But sadly, we are so prone to equivocate about this sin—and to make excuses for it and to justify ourselves,
 - that our gracious Lord must provide us with strong warnings about that sin.
 - To those warnings we now turn.

III. Here are two warnings the Lord uses to impress upon you the gravity of sexual sin.

A. The first one is found in verse 5:

- Eph 5:5: For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.
- 1. Paul is saying very simply that you will not go to heaven if you are a fornicator, unclean person or covetous man.
 - He is saying that you will find yourself in Hell for all eternity.
 - There is no way to twist these words.
 - His point is that there is no such thing as a heaven bound fornicator...
 - There are those who **used** to be fornicators who are on their way to heaven, but if you are **still** a fornicator then you are not on your way to heaven.
 - If you are living in fornication,

- Then it is clear that you have never truly been convicted of your sin by the Holy Spirit.
 - If you had, you would have repented of sin and turned to Christ for forgiveness and for a new life.
 - And then you would not longer be a fornicator or unclean person or covetous man.
 - Paul says the same thing to the Corinthians in 1 Cor 6:9:
 - 1 Cor 6:9-10: Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.
 - but then he adds,
 - 1 Cor 6:11: And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.
 - When a person comes to Christ, he is no longer what he was because Christ changes him.
2. But my brothers and sisters, this does not mean that you never struggle with this sin or that you will never fall into it!
- a. Please understand this—
 - It is one thing for a believer to be at war with this sin—
 - fighting against it—
 - looking to Christ for grace to overcome—
 - resting in Christ forgiveness...
 - It is quite another for a person to be at peace with this sin—
 - living in harmony with it—
 - justifying it rather than seeking to overcome it through Christ.
 - b. There is not a one of us that has attained to perfection in this life, and that is not what Paul is talking about here...
 - He is talking about repentance...
 - He is talking about those who have said,
 - “Well, this is just the way I am and I can’t help it.”
 - or “God will just have to overlook this.”
 - If you are talking like that, you have not repented!

- A man like that is a man who has his pornography waiting for him—
 - He has it in storage because it is his intention to come back to it.
 - Or it is the unmarried couple is having regular sexual relations—not that they fell and then repented, but that they continue.

TRANS> It's very important that you understand what real repentance is.

- It is not saying you are sorry with every intention of returning to the sin...
 - It is confessing and forsaking your sin through the grace of Jesus Christ.
 - You may fall into sin and repent many times,
 - and that is a very grievous sin...
 - but if you are without repentance, you will not inherit eternal life.
- That is the first warning to help you learn not to make light of this sin.
 - Now let's look at the second—

B. Secondly, Paul says in verse 6 that God's wrath comes upon them the sexual immoral...

- Eph 5:6: Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.
1. Notice how he begins with the words, "Let no one deceive you."
 - a. He has good reason for saying this.
 - If there were ever sin about which people justify themselves, it is surely this one!
 - It has almost always been that way,
 - expect in those places where the gospel has had a tremendous transforming affect upon the society,
 - to trivialise this sin and excuse it.
 - b. The pagan Greek and Roman society that Paul ministered within were very perverted.
 - There was a little restraint with regard to adultery for a woman,
 - but even that was very slight, and besides that, it was all loose and free.
 - There was a whole lot of homosexuality,
 - and the most common version of it was men with young boys—what we call pedophilia.
 - Our society is quickly moving in this direction.

- c. This is fertile soil for deception...
- 1) All around us, there is campaign to legitimise the illegitimate...
 - And it is successful because the sinful flesh loves it!
 - Sex is now seen as perfectly acceptable in even the most casual of relationships...
 - And even a little extra pleasure outside of marriage is regarded as nothing too serious.
 - Homosexual behaviour is more and more accepted,
 - and pedophilia is beginning to break ground also.
 - 2) And this campaign to legitimise the illegitimate is very powerful...
 - It is pushed in our entertainment, in our schools, and in our government.
 - It is even pushed in our churches!
 - These sins are glamorised and dressed up to look as attractive as possible.
 - And of course, there is much that is attractive about it—
 - that you can enjoy sexual pleasure without sacrifice—
 - that is true enough—you can enjoy it for a while...
 - Sex is God’s gift and it is pleasant...
 - But the deception is, that you can misuse God’s good gift and not be punished for it...
 - That you can pervert what He has appointed for marriage and face no consequences.
 - That is the lie.
 - That is the deception!

TRANS> Paul very aptly calls all this propaganda “empty words...”

2. He insists that those who give themselves over to sexual sin give themselves over to the wrath of God...
 - a. Paul is not talking about future judgement when he says:
 - Eph 5:6: Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

- He uses the present tense.
 - It is not just that the wrath of God **will** come,
 - but that it **does come** (it comes now) upon the sons of disobedience.

- b. Perhaps because this sin seems to be one about which we are so ready to excuse ourselves...
 - I mean, most people still think that murdering and stealing are wrong...
 - and there certainly is not massive propaganda to encourage murder and stealing...

 - So perhaps where the sinfulness of sexual sin is often denied,
 - God brings immediate judgement upon it!

 - His wrath is displayed regularly against this sin—
 - and that should be a reminder to us of God's displeasure with it!

 - Sins like murder and stealing are judged by the courts,
 - but sexual sin is usually overlooked so God judges it directly in this life.

- c. What am I talking about?
 - How are these sins judged immediately by God?
 - 1) Well, for starters, look at all the sexually transmitted diseases!
 - The world Health Organisation estimates that about one million people are infected every day!
 - This includes AIDS, gonorrhoea, Syphilis, herpes, and others...

 - This is the one thing that cramps the style of the sexual immoral.
 - It is, according to scripture, a direct judgement of God for this sin.
 - Of course it can be spread in other ways,
 - but these are called Sexually transmitted diseases because they are ordinarily spread by sexual relations...
 - And it is interesting to note that chaste couples are not susceptible to contracting these diseases.

 - This is the wrath of God revealed from heaven against these sins.
 - God reveals His displeasure.

- 2) Besides sexually transmitted diseases,
- There is the misery and sorrow that comes to those who are promiscuous.
 - The happiness they seek is very elusive—their hopes are raised, but soon disappointed—not only at the end, but even in this life.
 - Even the most sexually attractive and glamorous in Hollywood often end their lives in suicide...
 - They have the most shallow, empty relationships...
 - This too is the judgement of God...
- 3) And not only this, but scripture actually teaches that bondage to this sin is itself a judgement of God.
- In Romans 1, sexual sin is described as that which God turns those over to who refuse to give thanks to Him over to...
 - Proverbs 22:14 says:
 - Pr 22:14 The mouth of an immoral woman *is* a deep pit; He who is abhorred by the LORD will fall there.
 - Notice that it is not that God turns against the one who gives himself over to this sin,
 - but rather that God gives the one he despises over to this sin...
 - It takes him.
 - And Proverbs 2:19 says of the immoral woman.
 - Prov 2:19 “None who go to her return, Nor do they regain the paths of life—”
 - Even Plutarch commented the Kings of Persia were “captives to their concubines.”
 - That which was supposed to make them free brought them into bondage.

So what is the Conclusion?

- Look at verse 7...
 - “Therefore, do not be partakers with them!”

Sexual immorality is not at all consistent with a Christian profession!

- This is something that Christ delivers you from if only you will come to Him!

- Do not be deceived!
- If you belong to Jesus Christ,
 - He has pardoned you for all your sexual sins and He is now teaching you to be grateful to your God and to love others sacrificially....
 - A lifestyle of fornication is a lifestyle that is directly opposite to Christ.
- Those of you who are redeemed are His bride...
 - He has loved you with a sacrificial love, and He calls you now to love others with this same love...
 - If you have a spouse, that is the place where this love begins.
 - Let it grow up in you, by His grace, into the beautiful thing that it is meant to be.