

1 Corinthians Part 2

A 50 Minute Teaching Script

BIG IDEA Because believers have been washed, sanctified, justified, and bought by Christ, they honor God in their bodies and relationships, practice restorative discipline, and receive both marriage and singleness as opportunities for faithful service.

BEFORE CLASS Write on the board: What does it mean to say that a Christian's body and relationships belong to Christ? Under it write: How does belonging to Christ reshape the church's response to serious sin, conflict, sexuality, marriage, and singleness?

0:00-5:00 Opening question prayer and connection

Good morning. Last week Paul confronted a church that measured leaders, wisdom, and success by the surrounding culture's standards. His answer was Christ crucified: leaders are servants, God gives the growth, and the church belongs to Christ.

In chapters 5-7 Paul applies that same ownership to uncomfortable areas of life. The subjects seem scattered: church discipline, lawsuits, prostitution, marriage, divorce, singleness, and social status. Paul keeps returning to one fact. The church belongs to Christ, and Christians belong to Christ in their bodies and relationships.

Our opening question is: What does it mean to say that a Christian's body and relationships belong to Christ? Allow several answers. Then point to the controlling question: How does belonging to Christ reshape the church's response to serious sin, conflict, sexuality, marriage, and singleness?

Let's pray. Lord Jesus, you washed us, set us apart, and bought us at a price. Give us courage to hear your Word clearly and humility to apply it first to ourselves. Make your church holy, merciful, truthful, and safe for those who need protection. Teach us to honor you in our bodies and relationships. Amen.

5:00-14:00 Restorative holiness in the church

Ask one reader to read 1 Corinthians 5:1-8. A man is living sexually with his father's wife, probably his stepmother. This violated biblical law and was scandalous even by the standards of the surrounding culture. Yet Paul is also outraged by the church's pride or complacency. They should have grieved and acted.

Paul tells them to remove the man from fellowship and hand him over to Satan. The most likely social meaning is exclusion from the gathered church into the world outside. 'Destruction of the flesh' may describe severe physical consequences, or it may describe the breaking of sinful pride and self-reliance. We should not pretend the phrase is easier than it is.

The purpose, however, is explicit: that his spirit may be saved on the Day of the Lord. Discipline is not revenge, humiliation, or a declaration that someone is beyond grace. It makes the seriousness of unrepentant sin visible and seeks repentance and restoration.

Paul then uses Passover and yeast. Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore the church removes the old yeast and lives with sincerity and truth. A little yeast spreads through the dough. Sin that a church celebrates or excuses begins shaping the whole congregation.

Ask the reader to continue with 5:9-13. Paul does not command Christians to avoid every immoral unbeliever. That would require leaving the world. The church is accountable for fellowship among those who claim Christ's name. Christians are not assigned to police every outsider's morality; we must take persistent public sin inside the church seriously.

Paul mentions a previous letter in verse 9. That confirms that 1 Corinthians was not necessarily his first communication with this church. It is worth noting, but we do not need a detective board with red string to teach the paragraph.

ASK How can church discipline communicate both the seriousness of sin and the hope of restoration?

14:00-20:00 Conflict lawsuits and gospel identity

Summarize 6:1-8. Believers are taking one another before public magistrates. The disputes appear to concern money, property, fraud, or personal advantage. The church that boasts in wisdom cannot find one wise and impartial person to help settle the conflict. Worse, members are wronging and defrauding one another.

Paul would rather see a Christian absorb a loss than wrong a brother or sister to win. That does not mean every victim must quietly accept harm. Criminal conduct, abuse, threats, child endangerment, and situations requiring legal protection are not merely private church disputes. Crimes should be reported, vulnerable people protected, and civil authorities involved when appropriate.

Now read 6:9-11. Paul lists ways of life that contradict God's kingdom. The list includes sexual sin, idolatry, adultery, same-sex sexual conduct, theft, greed, drunkenness, slander, and fraud. We should read what Paul says without embarrassment and without circling one group as though everyone else can relax.

Verse 11 controls the tone: 'That is what some of you were.' Then Paul names what God did. They were washed, sanctified, and justified in Jesus' name and by the Spirit. The gospel neither calls sin harmless nor calls sinners hopeless. Grace forgives and creates a new identity that begins changing how people live.

ASK Why is verse 11 essential when we teach verses 9 and 10?

20:00-31:00 The body belongs to the Lord

Ask the reader to read 6:12-20. The phrases 'I have the right to do anything' and 'Food for the stomach and the stomach for food' probably repeat Corinthian slogans. They treat bodily desire like appetite: satisfy it, and move on. Paul answers that Christian freedom has limits. Not everything is beneficial, and he will not be mastered by anything.

The Corinthians may have assumed that bodily activity does not matter spiritually because the body will eventually disappear. Paul answers with resurrection. God raised Jesus, and he will raise us. The body is part of God's saving future.

Paul then uses the language of union. Our bodies are members of Christ. Sexual intercourse creates a one-flesh union, so it cannot be treated as a meaningless transaction. A believer joined to Christ cannot pretend bodily union has no spiritual significance.

Then Paul says the body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. Notice the change from chapter 3. There the congregation together was God's temple. Here the individual believer's body is the Spirit's temple. Both the church and the Christian belong to God.

The climax is ownership: you are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies. Christian sexual ethics begin with what Christ has done and who now owns us. Christ bought us, joined us to himself, placed his Spirit within us, and will raise our bodies.

Paul tells Christians to flee sexual immorality. He is not saying sexual sin is unforgivable or that a repentant person is permanently damaged. The same passage proclaims Christ's ownership, the Spirit's presence, resurrection hope, and the possibility of honoring God now.

ASK How do resurrection, union with Christ, and the Holy Spirit answer the claim that bodily choices are merely private?

31:00-35:00 Marriage and mutual care

Chapter 7 begins, 'Now for the matters you wrote about.' The statement that it is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman may be a Corinthian slogan favoring abstinence. It may also be Paul's statement that he immediately qualifies. In either case, Paul rejects both sexual license and the idea that married Christians become more spiritual by withholding normal marital intimacy.

In verses 2-7 Paul gives husband and wife equal and reciprocal obligations. Each owes loving marital care; neither has unilateral control. Any temporary abstinence must be by mutual consent, for a limited time, and for prayer.

This passage cannot be turned into permission for coercion, entitlement, or assault. Mutual authority is not one spouse's weapon against the other. Paul gives both spouses responsibility to serve rather than exploit.

35:00-40:00 Divorce mixed marriages and peace

In verses 10-16 Paul first applies Jesus' teaching against divorce to Christian spouses. Then he addresses a situation Jesus' recorded teaching did not directly discuss: a Christian married to an unbeliever.

When Paul says, 'not I, but the Lord,' he points to Jesus' recorded teaching. When he says, 'I, not the Lord,' he is applying the gospel apostolically to a new case. He is not dividing the chapter into inspired commands and optional personal opinions.

Spiritual difference alone does not invalidate the marriage. If the unbelieving spouse is willing to remain, the Christian should remain. The spouse and children are set apart through their relationship to the believer; that does not mean they are automatically saved.

If the unbelieving spouse abandons the marriage, the believer is not bound. Interpreters debate whether that wording explicitly includes freedom to remarry. The Reformed tradition has generally treated willful desertion as dissolving the bond while still making reconciliation the hope when possible.

Paul is not answering every case involving danger or abuse. A person may need immediate separation, civil protection, and serious pastoral help. Scripture must never be used to send someone back into danger or to hide criminal behavior. The class can study Paul's principles together, but it should not adjudicate anyone's marriage publicly.

40:00-43:00 Faithful calling marriage and singleness

In verses 17-24 Paul tells believers to serve Christ where God called them. Conversion does not require a new spouse, ethnic identity, occupation, or social rank to become spiritually legitimate. That is contentment and faithful presence, not passive submission to sin or danger. Paul allows an enslaved person to take freedom when possible.

In verses 25-40 Paul recommends singleness because of the present crisis, the passing form of this world, and the opportunity for undivided devotion. He does not tell us exactly what the crisis was. His counsel may reflect local hardship and the pressures of living in the closing age.

Paul repeatedly says that marriage is not sin. Singleness is not a higher class of Christianity, and marriage is not the cure for loneliness, temptation, or every emotional need. Both are gifts and callings to be lived under Christ with contentment, community, self-control, and faithful love.

ASK How can the church honor marriage without treating singleness as an incomplete Christian life?

43:00-47:00 The Gospel Then and Now

Return to the controlling question: How does belonging to Christ reshape the church's response to serious sin, conflict, sexuality, marriage, and singleness?

The Corinthians tolerated public sin, took believers to court, treated bodily appetite as spiritually irrelevant, and argued about sex, marriage, divorce, and singleness. Paul did not answer with disconnected rules. He reminded them who they were and whose they were.

They were Christ's church. They had been washed, sanctified, and justified. Their bodies were members of Christ and temples of the Spirit. They had been bought at a price and would be raised. Their marriages, singleness, conflicts, and social situations therefore belonged under Christ's lordship.

Churches today can confuse grace with approval, conceal abuse as a private matter, treat sexual ethics as a political weapon, idolize marriage, or treat singleness as failure. A gospel-shaped church tells the truth about sin, offers the hope of transformation, protects vulnerable people, and helps married and single believers honor Christ.

47:00-50:00 Summary homework and prayer

Here is the lesson in one sentence: Because Christ washed us, bought us, joined us to himself, and gave us his Spirit, our bodies and relationships belong to him.

Before next week, start with 1 Corinthians 8-10 and continue through chapters 11-14 if possible. Watch for two questions: What builds up the church, and how must love govern freedom, worship, and spiritual gifts?

Let's pray. Lord Jesus, thank you for washing us, setting us apart, and paying the price for our salvation. Teach us to take sin seriously without losing sight of grace. Protect those who are vulnerable. Give wisdom to your church, faithfulness to married believers, dignity and community to single believers, and holiness to all of us. Help us honor you in our bodies and relationships. Amen.

FINAL LINE Because Christ washed us, bought us, joined us to himself, and gave us his Spirit, our bodies and relationships belong to him.