

3/7/21 - 1 Thes. 4:1-8 - "Progress in Sanctification"

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[0 : 00] Today is a day where we'll enter into a section of passage among a whole letter that we see a transition in thought.

We see that there's something that Paul has been building upon up to this point, and he's transitioning at this point in the letter with some instructions concerning ongoing growth in their faith. This is a process known as sanctification. Sanctification refers to that process of being set, the state of being set apart from sin to holiness, from the world to God, from death to life.

It's the process, the ongoing process in this life, and that it is a process. From the moment that a Christian turns to Jesus Christ by faith, and they're baptized all on this mountaintop sort of experience, just learning who God is and growing in his word and those first steps of faith, all the way till our last breath upon this earth is a segment of time known as sanctification.

And the Holy Spirit transforms at our very faith. The moment we trust in Jesus Christ, he transforms our thoughts, motives, and behaviors to then conform to Jesus Christ.

[1 : 33] Sanctification involves a progress. This progress has failures. It has successes. It has our falling in this life, and it has our victories.

And there is nothing Satan would like more than to see God's church unthriving in sanctification. There is nothing that would make the devil more happy.

So let's pray as we get into the word and see what Paul is getting at when he's talking about this, specifically as he's transitioning his thought into a little bit more instructions in his word.

Let's pray. Father, we ask for help today to guide our thoughts and to help us know true wisdom as we look upon your word.

Jesus Christ, thank you for the opportunity to see you today in this text. We ask that we don't only see you, we see grace and we see truth.

[2 : 46] And Holy Spirit, help us at this moment. Make yourself known to us today as you bring clarity into our lives and to adjust our perspectives and our viewpoints and opinions and things of that nature and adjust them and align them to yours.

And may our hearts break for what breaks yours today and help us be changed together through the preaching of your word. Give me the words to speak exactly what this church needs to hear to grow in their faith.

And Father, give me the words to speak. Empower me at this moment. I need you, Lord. We praise you in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. I'm going to break this up into a couple different sections today as we go through these verses.

The first section, I've just put a simple title for any note takers in the room, remembering and progressing. Let's look at a couple verses here from verse 1 to the first part of 3.

And verse 1 says, Finally, then brothers. Some translations say sister. We ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus. Paul arrives at a point in his letter where his transition of thought is occurring.

[4 : 05] There's a flow change in the nature of his writing. He says, finally. He makes this clear by using that word, finally. That's capitalizing on sort of like a hinge in his writing in this letter and basically saying, now is a time that I'm going to give you instruction.

Okay? And he says this instruction. He says this as making this clear, saying, I'm asking and we ask and we urge you in the Lord Jesus. This is done with a little added weight in the Lord Jesus to give his words a little bit of extra weight, essentially saying, don't take it from me.

If you have a problem with this, take it up with God. It's in the Lord Jesus. This is the very authority of which I preached you the word of God today. And we see something within just these two quick verses.

While Paul is providing this additional instruction, we know that he is not starting from the very ground zero, essentially. He's not starting with a clean slate.

Because he uses past tense in this passage, which suggests that what he's indicating here, finally, in this letter to this church, is that based on the foundation that he's laid in this church in Thessalonica, in this new church plant, that he's building.

[5 : 26] He's starting to lay bricks upon this building. Finally then, brothers, we urge you in the Lord Jesus. And we see the progressive thought in this passage, that it says that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing and do so more and more.

For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. You sense that past tense. He's saying, guys, you should be growing in this nature. You haven't arrived.

Remember our passage last week of arrival, that false sense of Christian maturity of like, man, I've arrived. I can relax and take my shoes off and dig my toes in the sand.

Man, I've reached the pinnacle of what it means to be a Christian. I can, Lord, you can take me. You know, just as you took Enoch, we've arrived. Remember that last week, that fallacy with that. And so he's continuing that work. He's building the convictions within this church of what's began leading up to his forced departure in Thessalonica.

[6 : 36] And just as we too today devote ourselves to the instruction of the word, we know that we're not starting from always from the ground zero.

This is a continuous nature of God's word of receiving his instruction and devoting ourselves to that instruction. That includes, for us in our church, not only just showing up on Sunday morning, whether it being in person or on the live stream.

In person trumps live stream. Sorry if that offends you. But gathering as his church designates a community, a physical community of Christians who are united, who stand out from the world, who take and partake in the Lord's Supper as we saw today.

And this is a process of devoting, a continuous devotion to the teaching and instruction of the word. We learn that from just a short segment of passage here, and that we too are building.

So it's true that we will never arrive in our faith. We're never going to arrive at this. We're not working towards a certain climax or plateau in our faith. It's a continuous upward uphill climb until our last breath upon this earth, where we will arrive with him in glory.

[7 : 51] Amen? So we'll never arrive on this side of history. And then we ought to be diligent to submitting ourselves to Lord Jesus through the preaching and the teaching of God's word.

And so Paul continues in how he intends on encouraging this progression in this church's faith. It is through the process of progression that Paul boldly states, is the will of God.

Look with me in your word. It says in verse 3, for this is the will of God, your sanctification. The Greek word here for sanctification is mutually exchanged with all these words in the passage.

If you can circle sanctification that you see in this passage, and also circle holiness, those instances of holiness. That is the same repeated word in Greek. And repeated words mean emphasis.

Paul's drawing upon an important feature within this letter today for us, even as the church for 1 Thessalonians. And it's mutually exchanged with the word holiness.

[8 : 54] And so obviously Paul is highlighting something imperative. And what I want us to grasp today is the aspect that the will of God is made known through the instruction of the word of God in order to effectively carry out the work of God.

The will of God is made known through the instruction of the word of God in order to effectively carry out the work of God. And that's a continuous endeavor. And now as you can imagine, when we are limited in time, that is usually a time where we skip the formalities and get right to the heart of the matter, right?

Forget the introduction. Kind of, I'm known for maybe like a three to five minute introduction. I basically did that today. I'm just like, screw that. We're going into the text here because there's a lot of meat.

There's a lot of rich content in here. So let's get right to it. And so Paul does this very clearly in detailing sanctification ought to look like, what it ought to look like and what we're striving for.

And so as we get into the second section today, Paul gets into the meat of content. It is a precautionary message concerning the danger of sexual immorality.

[10 : 09] And unlike the issues that were going on in the Corinthian church, if you can recall that the Corinthian church's attitudes were sort of loose with sexual immorality.

It was running rampant in the church in Corinth. And we don't see an indication of that in this church. However, it's more of a precautionary warning of the possibility of sexual immorality growing and manifesting in a similar way of the Corinthian church.

And so we don't necessarily have these Thessalonians acting out, but what is a precautionary warning to the church in Thessalonica is a precautionary warning to us today. And so this is why we enter his word expositively for us.

So let's continue as Paul gets into the bulk of content. And we're going to see in the second section here, and we're going to spend most of our time today in this section, which is noting God's will, abstaining from sexual immorality.

And we're going to be going from verse three to verse six in this section. It says, for this is the will of God, your sanctification. And he doesn't put a period there, but he continues.

[11:25] He says that you abstain from sexual immorality. And there's nothing, church, nothing that will tarnish the witness of the gospel so quickly than that sin of sexual immorality, than the sin, sexual immorality, and not only that, but also gossip and slander.

We see Colossians 3, 5 points out both of those sins. We see in Colossians 3, 5, it says, put to death, therefore, what is earthly in you, sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

And then continues in verse eight, but now you must put them all away, not only sexual immorality and all these sensual desires, but put these relational issues away too.

Anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Now, what Paul's getting at here is saying that the devil is really good at doing what he does and his tactics are nearly as old as the Bible.

We see this in Genesis 3, 6. Remember, so when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and it was a delight to the eyes and the tree was to be desired, to make one wise, pulling on the sensual heartstrings of Eve.

[13:01] And not only that, he didn't stop there, but that then caused relational strife. Remember, when God approaches them, what is this that you have done? The man says, the woman whom you gave me, she gave me the fruit of the tree and I ate.

And the Lord said to the woman, oh, what is this you have done? The woman said, the serpent deceived me and I ate. Because blame, blame, blame. There is nothing, church, nothing more swift to the distortion of the gospel witness of a church than the two departments, and there's many more, but specifically the two departments of division and sin that are rooted in sexual immorality, the sensuous desires, and also relational turmoil that we see through gossip and slander.

And so Paul calls upon this church at this time to remember their instructions and to keep progressing in their walk with Jesus, never to be complacent.

Because often we can go through this life and feel good about maybe, you know, you got the goosebumps from Jesus and, you know, it's good music and everything. And, you know, and you just kind of like take a break from your walk.

And then all of a sudden Bible reading starts to be reduced and things of that nature. But Paul's instructing at this time. Remember, he finally is turning to instruction for this church.

[14:29] And the nature of that call is to abstinence from immorality, sexual immorality. And as a church, we learn a great deal.

Even in such an instance in Scripture like we have today, we learn something about sexual immorality in two instances. And I want to talk about that in depth today.

And I'd be a fool to gloss over that for us today. And so what I want us to see is the individual nature of sexual immorality. The individual nature of sexual immorality.

We see this as he continues in verse four. He says that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness.

Also sanctification and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God. Let's pause there for a moment.

[15:27] The individual nature of sexual immorality. There's a saying out there that goes something like this, that anybody can drive a car, essentially.

But not everyone can drive a car well. Okay? As Christians, I want us to understand this.

That we're all given a car to drive, essentially. It's a car that we see in this passage, that each one of you know how to control your own body.

The word for body is also translated as vessel. So we're given this vessel or car to drive. So we fuel the car with what it needs to run.

We take care of that car. We get a few engine checkups once in a while. Take it in. We keep it nice and shiny, some of us.

[16:32] But unfortunately, not everyone driving this car has the self-control to stay under the required speed limits, to obey the traffic signs.

As Christians, this verse informs us of this car-like vessel in verse 4, which is what we see as body in this passage.

And so if we could imagine that our lease term of this car, this process of sanctification, this lease term, has an individual responsibility for us.

There's a certain level where we can't blame anybody but ourselves. Paul makes it clear that we ought to drive our cars in holiness, in honor, not in passion of unbelievers who don't know God. It doesn't matter what the other drivers are doing, how fast they're going, and what they're getting away with. We have limits. We have signs. We have rules and commands to obey which keep us safe, church.

[17:44] That's the individual nature of sexual immorality. And we also see, in verse 6, a corporate nature of sexual immorality as well.

Verse 6 says, And still yet, we know that it is not simply just us who are in danger of driving our cars recklessly.

We're surrounded by other people if we drive our cars recklessly, right? It endangers other people as well, our recklessness. And in this, Paul makes it clear.

Immorality, sexual immorality, takes two to tango. And it involves two parties. And when the church participates in sexual immorality, there's great collateral damage.

Not only to people on this earth, but the name of Jesus Christ. The collateral damage of falling for sexual immorality makes God look like an absolute fool and the gospel look like a joke to the watching world.

[19:07] We're experiencing that in evangelical history right now as all of these scandals are coming out with Ravi Zacharias. If you've seen any headlines, if not, go ahead and do a little Google search after church to see what exactly is going on.

But the secret sins that were lurking behind a man who was in a pulpit and has accredited a lot of people's advancement in their sanctification to his preaching and teaching, all the while he was living a double lifestyle.

And now it tarnishes the witness of the gospel. It also is a shared sin.

It's a shared sin against another image bearer. Whether you physically have affairs in this life with another physical human being or a virtual one.

And we're going to get into that in just a moment. This is a warning of Paul's that echoes throughout scriptures, various scriptures. One of them being Matthew 18, the corporate sense of sin.

[20:17] In Matthew 18, verse 6, it says, whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

How about that for a light passage? Meaning that you are better off dead than to lead someone else into sexual immorality.

Now, praise God that we have an advocate, church, who died the death that we deserve. We're not supposed to take this literally and go find a millstone.

I don't know if they make them anymore, but go find something, strap it to your neck, go out to the Atlantic and just be done with it. Follow scripture's command, right? No, scripture has an advocate who died the death that we deserve, who took our pain, who took the grief and our shame and bore it upon the cross.

However, the weight of immorality still does not escape our lives today through passages like that. In a highly sexualized culture, I mean, the world celebrates what the Bible condemns.

[21:34] There's no other way to put it. And church, I'm gonna be as blunt as possible today, and I'm not gonna sugarcoat things for you at all. But maybe you're a checklist person and you're certain in your life that you're not guilty.

You're like, man, Brent, what are we even wasting all this time? You know, I'm fine. But Jesus even said that even if you look upon a woman or a man in a lustful way, and this is very easy in our

culture today, especially with Instagram, you scroll through and you're just like, whoa, okay, moving on.

Obviously, that would be temptation. That's not falling for sin. That would be a temptation. But as you do a second glance at various things, I mean, that is when lust begins to take root.

That's a point where we commit sexual immorality. Something as slight as that. And then we can't go on our spiritual high horse and think that we're completely, our hands are off of this subject. Because not only is it within, it's not only within our physical grasp that we can act upon our sinful desires and cause great destruction in other people's lives.

[22 : 46] It can happen within an instant. But it also is more prevalent in our technological lives right now, and it's at our fingertips. If you think for a moment that an evening with you and your virtual men or women on your favorite porn site is a personal sin that nobody gets hurt in that sin, you're dead wrong.

You are absolutely dead wrong in that. Your closed doors or private browsing at night are seen through the eyes of God, and it can only go on for so long.

The truth about sexual immorality is that while it feels like an individual endeavor, nobody gets hurt, it's always a corporate endeavor. Always a corporate endeavor because of the nature, the corporate nature of sexual immorality, as the verse says today, even consuming porn, and I'm going to prove that to you today.

Have you ever thought for a moment that we drive by, let's talk about like, I don't know, Taco Bell, it's pretty gross. Can we collectively maybe come to that agreement?

No, it's not gross? All right, well, obviously, not everyone is free of sin today. Okay. You're right.

[24 : 09] There was a time where that did taste pleasing, but that reinforces my point anyhow. That sin sometimes looks good and tastes good, right?

I don't know how they get that stuff to taste good or the chicken nuggets at McDonald's to taste like chicken, putting chicken flavoring in basically bone marrow. throw. Anyhow, we drive by these fast food restaurants all the time, right?

And if you're like me, you drive by and you're just like, how in the world does McDonald's stay open? How in the world does Taco Bell stay open?

Literally, it's slop that tastes good somehow. That should worry you. Those chicken nuggets at McDonald's, that should worry you.

I tell my kids, they love them. So what do I do? How do they stay open? Taco Bell actually released a statement a couple years ago that indicated an off-base quote that said, we're proud of the quality of food that keeps satisfying our millions of customers that brought about this revenue this year.

[25 : 27] I read that, I'm like, are you kidding me? You guys are known for like a dollar burrito that fills me up but I'm eating death. Seriously. How do you stay in business?

In all seriousness, church, with every click, with every view, with every login to a pornography site, it is another shackle that's added to the ankles of a sex slave.

Your clicks, your views, are keeping the human trafficking market alive as if there's a consumer-driven interest in it.

There is an absolute problem in our culture today. When I was growing up young, I mean, it was not so accessible. This was something that you might find in your father's closet or something like that, you know, a magazine or something.

Now, you're within two clicks of typing in a couple words and phrases and boom, you're into this massive, million, billion dollar market. And one of six Americans regularly visit a porn site.

[26 : 46] That's 40 million people. One of six. You could do the math in here of statistically speaking how many of us are prone to this. For anybody with young kids, age 11 is the average age.

Average age that a child is first exposed to porn. And 94% of children by the age of 14 will have seen porn.

94%. The porn industry, there's 42 million porn sites out there with 370 million porn pages.

The porn industry's annual revenue is compared to the combined revenue of NFL, NBA, and MLB. Also, the combined revenues of ABC, CBS, and NBC.

This is big money industry. And by some estimates, 4.8 million people are trapped or forced into sexual exploitation globally.

[27 : 59] 4.8. Sex trafficking generates 99 billion in revenue annually just from commercial sexual exploitation alone.

And in one survey, 63% of underage sex trafficking victims said they have been advertised or sold online. And in nine countries, 47% of sexually exploited women said that pornography was made of them while they were being sold for sex.

you want to tell me again how sexual immorality has this individual nature, that it's not causing harm to anybody.

Tell me that again confidently. You might say, why do I even say this? Because it's a problem in the church.

68% of men in the church regularly use porn and women. 76% of young adults from 18 to 24 actively use porn who are calling themselves Christians.

[29 : 27] 50% of pastors view porn on a regular basis. 59% of pastors said that married men seek their help for porn use.

57% of pastors say porn addiction is the most damaging issue in their congregation. And 69% say porn has adversely impacted the church. But only 7% of pastors say that their church has an actual program instituted to help with this problem.

Only 7%. Why do I say this? It is heartbreaking. It's heartbreaking to know that the church contributes a portion whether great or small to this problem.

And you want to know what's fueling this industry? Every click every view. If it's true if these statistics are true with the victims that most of these victims who are in human trafficking and slaves modern day slaves not just out beating fields and gathering vegetables from a field.

These are people who are forced into sex. Every click every view that we embark on is adding to the problem not helping it.

[30 : 56] church embarking in porn you are sinning against every person made in the image of God. All the men or the women that pop up on your phones or screens are made in the image of God.

They have a father in heaven and you are using it as your own disposal and pleasure objectifying image bearers sex.

And objectifying sex. Moreover, as you are driving your car recklessly as vessels, this illicit sexual involvement affects not only the consenting parties.

Sexual immorality is a corporate endeavor even if it's just you and your phone. This affects spouses, families are wronged, friends are wronged, and fellow Christians are shamed.

We see that in Ravi Zacharias' exploitation of his own struggles in his life that he never repented of. And ultimately these sins, like many others, are sins against God.

[32 : 04] They must be confronted, they must be repented of. End of story, church. And now, I want to remind us that this is a precautionary message in 1 Thessalonians.

I believe here with all my heart that it is precautionary for a majority of us here today. And I want us to know the hardest reality. God sees it all.

God sees it all. There's no private browsing that can hide his knowledge. There's no door that you can shut to isolate his awareness. Sexual sin is first and foremost an affront to God who made the body and who gave commandments concerning sexuality.

All reality is defined by God and that being specifically sexual reality and sexual commandments. Why am I making such a big deal about this church?

Because the Bible makes a big deal about it. We can't just ignore it. We can't just minimize it in the name of grace.

[33 : 12] What did Paul say to the church in Romans? Maybe we should just keep on sinning. That grace might abound. Let God's grace lavish upon us.

He says, by no means a stark and stern form of rebuke. By no means. Our culture numbs us often to the point that we're desensitized to what the Bible condemns.

That we start to become, our minds become normalized to walking past Victoria's Secret in the mall and seeing a half-naked woman. That would have been unheard of even just 50 years ago.

The culture numbs us, unfortunately. And the world will slowly chip away, slowly chip away at biblical convictions by normalizing it.

And if they slowly chip away over a long period of time, within just a generation, you look back and you see something unrecognizable of biblical Christianity. All of a sudden, it's like, what have we

become as a church?

[34 : 24] I'm not here for my health. I think you know that. I'm not here to lower my blood pressure or things like that. I'm here for your health. I'm here for your spiritual health, to care for you, and at this point, to warn you.

Paul makes the antidote of that numbing agent that the world gives you, us, and that's found in the word of God. It makes us feel the conviction of that sin.

He's provided us the antidote. You know, when you go to the dentist and they numb your face and you're drooling all over the place and there's nothing that can bring back that sensation? Well, while the world is giving us that numbing agent as a church, God is saying, no, read my word.

I'm going to bring that sensitivity back as I intended. This is reality. Pay attention, church in Thessalonica. Pay attention, Youngstown Metro Church.

Why does this matter? Because God has called you to be set apart. We're going to see that in section three today. That's titled God's will abstaining from sexual immorality.

[35 : 37] I'm sorry, that was section two. God's will living spirit empowered lives. God's will living spirit empowered lives. And we see in verse seven as we continue, it says, for God has not called us for impurity but in holiness.

Holiness also being interchanged with sanctification. The church has the same designation in this life today as the nation of Israel had in centuries past.

The nation of Israel had a demarcation line from the world. Known as the Canaanites, the Hittites, all the ites in the Bible. And we see in Deuteronomy seven, it was reiterated, when the Lord your God brings you into the land and you are entering in to take possession of it and clears away many nations before you, then you must devote them to complete destruction.

You shall make no covenant with them and show them no mercy. You shall not intermarry with them because then the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you. And in verse six it says, for you are a people holy to the Lord your God.

The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. And in the same way, if we aim to please God, to do the work of God, as verse three talked about just a moment ago, then the vital aspect in our sanctification journey is accomplished only through the obedience to the word of God.

[37 : 09] It's not drifting from the left or to the right. It's not just accepting what the culture says we need to accept. It's having the word of God being supreme over our lives and our convictions.

Church, within the pages of God's word, we are reminded about life's reality that the culture distorts. And as we're reminded, we are empowered to continue to boldly live our lives, set apart as God's chosen nation, the church.

Paul finishes with great emphasis upon neglecting this instruction. He says, therefore, whoever disregards this, in verse eight, disregards not man, but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you. In this, we are solemnly warned, just like verse six says. To disregard obedience to the word of God, we disregard our devotion to the work of God.

It won't exist. In other words, we live for ourselves if we disobey this. The work of God is not done simply by our best efforts either.

[38 : 28] This verse makes it clear. Right? Look with me. It says, therefore, whoever disregards this, disregards not man, but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

We don't do this by our best efforts. We do this by spirit-empowered dependency to give us that strength to turn away from sexual sin, to ask God in those moments temptation.

God, I need help right now because I am doomed by my own strength. We need help and God sent us a helper.

And this help will give us an appetite. An appetite is known as a hunger or a desire for something, right? Although the primary reference of this term is used for food, food, but it can also refer to human desires, having an appetite for human desires.

And scripture distinguishes between healthy and unhealthy appetites, indicating what's appropriate to be seeking after. Isn't it refreshing to your soul to hear the words from Psalm 143, verse 6?

[39 : 44] I stretch out my hands to you. My soul thirsts for you like a parched land. Or Psalm 119, verse 20.

My soul is consumed with longing for your rules at all times. Psalm 119, 131. I open my mouth and pant because I long for your commandments.

A growing appetite for the word of God will run parallel in a growing appetite for your heart to abstain from sexual immorality.

It is possible to do this. And in fact, we must do this. There's no option. Church, what do we crave? What are you hungry for? What are your spiritual desires swaying at? What are your physical desires? Because often our spiritual desires will dictate where our physical desires are, of what we look at in private, of how many successful battles we have against our flesh and sexual immorality. [40 : 58] Our flesh may cry out for the things of this world, but the world will never satisfy our longings that are deeply engraved within our hearts that were created to love God.

Progress, church. Progress. Progress. couple points of application as we close. This should encourage us to arise in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Arise in the power of the Holy Spirit in a couple different instances. In our individual lives specifically, we live in an age of sexual apostasy. You can find it everywhere, billboards even. It doesn't take signs and wonders anymore to display God's people. It doesn't take these crazy stories of God's power being laid out for people to believe and for the church to be distinguished. All it takes in our world today is to say no. Think about that. It doesn't even take signs and wonders. It just takes you and your self-control to say, I am not going to participate in that.

[42 : 13] This could be in the workplace at work and where you just say, this just doesn't enlighten me. This conversation doesn't edify me. I don't want to talk about my wife in that way or his wife in that way or that person in that way.

Simply living a life steadfast and secure of staying from what the world celebrates declares that demarcation line that was originally set in the nation of Israel from centuries past.

And battling the grain of sexualized culture has not only heavenly victory, but it has the power of shutting down an industry that is fueled by every click and every visit of ours that we contribute to. So I ask you, church, to arise to that battle individually by the power of the Holy Spirit. Maybe you're single, and I know that this probably speaks even louder and bolder to people and folks who are single, but I ask and command you in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Arise to that battle. Might you be so consumed in the word of God that your mind has no other place to go but to God? Devotion to the word of God is the key of abstaining from sexual immorality, even more so when you are single, because sex within its proper context is so worshipful.

[43 : 30] It is beautiful, and don't waste God's great gift in this life for just a couple of little episodes. Rise to that battle by the power of the Holy Spirit in your singleness.

And even in your marriage, you have to know that Jesus is present in your bedroom, and Christian sex should never be a void of Christian values, of love, of patience, of generosity, and of joy.

It should never have pain. It should never have selfishness. It should never have shame or exploitation. And we have to remember in our marriages, church, that you can hide your browser history from your spouse, and you can get away with it for a certain amount of time, but you can't get away with it from God's view.

You have to rise to the battle, and if that is you today, I pray that you confess and repent of that.

And even in your parenting, because this has, if 11 is the average age that a child will view porn, we have to be aware of this, and we have to parent well.

Because how many of you would tell your kids what to do in a house fire at the moment your house is burning down? Right? You do a little bit of precautionary discussions to talk about the dangers of what lurks ahead, because trust me, you will want to introduce your child to this hook, line, and sinker of sexual immorality that the world's going to give to them.

[45 : 03] You want to beat the world to that conversation, because when the world tells them about that, and they are exposed to it by the world, it's going to include probably them shutting down, feeling shameful of what they've participated in.

Begin a healthy discussion about Satan's offensive plays against us as a church, just as Paul taught the church in Thessalonica. Rise to that battle in the power of the Holy Spirit, so we can end this human trafficking industry.

And two points that I want to leave you with as we close. If you struggle with sexual immorality today, whether you're at home on the live stream or viewing this later in the week or here physically with us today, if you struggle with this, there's help with this today.

There's help. I would encourage you, if you need a starting point, I would say text myself or text, if you're a woman, text my wife and just say simply, I need help and we'll know what to do.

And trust me, I don't talk to my wife about what the women that she's talking with. And there's a confidential line in our shepherding roles and responsibilities. And I'm not going to know who reaches out to her.

[46 : 27] She doesn't know who reaches out to me. There's great confidence that we don't share that information. Text me or my wife in that endeavor.

Because simply put right now, there's no shame in confession. There's only freedom. And there's freedom in the Lord Jesus today from the sexual immorality.

And I'm a living testimony today standing before you that it is possible to overcome that very thing. And I can assure you that you will be unable to do it alone.

You can't do that battle alone. Come into the lights. And if that struggle isn't common to you, maybe you're like, okay, great. Thanks. Thanks, Brent, for the little tidbit. I'm just encouraged. I'll keep doing what I'm doing.

It's not a problem for me. I'm asking you to look around at possible other men or women within whatever instance might be appropriate in your life.

[47 : 26] Look around. Who might you be able to strengthen in their failings in this? But let's be reminded, the world is chasing after happiness.

And the world will go to great lengths to achieve that happiness. Great lengths and great expenses to achieve that happiness and results. But church, the highest concern in our life is not striving after happiness, but striving after holiness.

When we do, we are striving to divorce from the sin of the world and conform ourselves in purity of Christ. This is the will of God.

It is our sanctification to abstain from sexual immorality. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Thank you.