

Waiting for the Son (1 Thessalonians)

Sex: Holiness and Wholeness (1 Thess 4:1-8)

1 Thessalonians 4:1-8 New International Version (NIV)

4 As for other matters, brothers and sisters, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. ²For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.

³It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; ⁴that each of you should learn to control your own body^[a] in a way that is holy and honorable, ⁵not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God; ⁶and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister.^[b] The Lord will punish all those who commit such sins, as we told you and warned you before. ⁷For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. ⁸Therefore, anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God, the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit.

Introduction

-reports of bizarre sexual behaviour

-the Romans and Greeks were much like our society in this area!

A reputable citizen of Athens in the fourth century BC, the famous orator Demosthenes, casually referred to the way that the well-off Athenian gentleman lived in this way:

We keep mistresses for pleasure, concubines for our day-to-day bodily needs, but we have wives to produce legitimate children and serve as trustworthy guardians of our homes.¹

1. Keep on keeping on!

(a) Paul had previously told the Thessalonians how they ought to live.

- a. Following Jesus makes a difference to life
- b. But sexual purity does not save us, faith in Jesus does!

(b) He did so with the authority of Jesus!

(c) They were already well on the way!

¹*Against Neaera*; quoted in Bruce, Word Biblical Commentary 45 (1982) at 87.

2. Sex

a. Sex is good, but sex is not god!

-Sex is part of God's good purpose for humanity:

"Be fruitful and increase in number" (Gen 1:28).

-see also Gen 2:24, 1 Cor 7, 1 Tim 4:3:

"everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer"

-but sex can be distorted into an idol!

b. Holiness and Wholeness

c. Recipe for Sexual Wholeness

- i. Avoid immorality
- ii. Control your body

d. Reasons for living "wholy" lives

- i. It matters to others

-Paul

-Jesus

"when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus". [2 Thess 1:7-8]

-God

-see God's will in v 3: our sanctification (holiness)

-other people

- ii. God's call

-see v 7

- iii. God's authority

e. What about the past?

-see 1 John 1:9:

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

3. The will of God

- A challenge
- A great promise!