



Series: Ruin to Renovation	Reference: 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 & Romans 6	Title: Body Language	Date: 06.10.18
Website Writeup:			
In the process of spiritual formation the Body must come to serve us as a primary ally in Christlikeness, this week we explore this very important topic.			

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Thanks to Dallas Willard, this series is born out of his book, *Renovation of the Heart*. Many of his thoughts & words make it into these sermons; read the book as you follow along.

(1st slide up during introductions)

Plato wrote an Allegory of a Cave where he imagines people imprisoned from birth. Chained & forced to gaze at the wall in front of them, unable to look around at each other, or themselves. Behind them is a fire. In front of that, there's a puppet show being played out. They're only able to see the shadows cast upon the cave wall in front of them. The Puppeteers voices echo off the walls which they believe come from the shadows. These shadows are the only reality the prisoners know - they've never seen anything else & don't realize they're shadows of objects in front of a fire, much less that these objects are inspired by real things outside the cave up on the surface which they can't see.

Plato then supposes one prisoner's freed. He'd look around & see the fire which would hurt his eyes making it difficult for him to see the objects casting the shadows. If he were told, what he's seeing now is *real*, instead of the other version of reality on the wall, he wouldn't believe it. He'd run back to that which he's accustomed; his chains & the shadows. If he did so, Plato suggests someone could drag the man by force out of the cave where the sun would blind him. Eventually his eyes would adjust & he'd think the world outside the cave was superior to the world inside. He'd pity the other prisoners & desire to bring them out of the cave into the sunlight as well.

He'd be blind as he re-enters the cave & the other prisoners would infer from this, the journey out had harmed him & they shouldn't go. Therefore, Plato figures they'd kill anyone who attempted to drag them out.

The cave symbolizes the world, and the prisoners, those who inhabit it. The chains represent ignorance which interferes with seeing true reality. The shadows represent what people see in the present world. The freed prisoner represents those in society who see the physical world for the illusion it is.

Ideas are powerful. This allegorical idea rooted itself into our World View & has influenced humankind for centuries. Outside of Jesus, Plato may be the next most influential person in history. Platonic Thought birthed Gnosticism, which many of the New Testament writings preach strongly against & which the Church battles to this day; the thought that the bodily reality isn't the true reality. That the body is evil & this world is only a shadowland, a falsehood - and there's some special truth we need to find outside of the one in which we live.

This is why the New Testament's claim that Jesus came in bodily form, God incarnate, was so unique & shocking to the people of the time. Because, in their estimation, God would never commingle with this ignorant unreal world, but is on some higher plane of reality unattainable without a special knowledge. This thinking deemed the physical world as evil or base. And only through some special knowledge do you climb out of this unreal world to attain the Divine. But the Christian worldview is, this world's created by God & one in which he interacts, loves & deemed good. So it was revolutionary when *John wrote in his Gospel (1:14), ¹⁴The Word became flesh & made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one & only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace & truth.*

*We're embodied beings - living life in created bodies, not a shadowland. Jesus came in a body. God incarnate - God in the form of man. And, He's constantly incarnating himself even now. As we come to Christ, being filled with the Holy Spirit, we see the life of Christ incarnated in our bodies. In that light, the importance of Romans 12:1-2 takes on more significance, *Therefore, I urge you, brothers & sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy & pleasing to God - this is your true & proper worship. ²Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test & approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing & perfect will.**

We talked last week of our will & how it's integral in forming character. We seek to conform & surrender our will to his. That includes being responsible with what we do in our bodies. That has largely to do with where we place our mind - to what we set our will. Our part in spiritual formation is to *not* actively conform ourselves to the patterns of this world. In other words, take every thought captive to Christ making it obedient to him (2 Corinthians 10:5). That's in the active voice.

The passive voice reveals, in this process we'll be transformed by the renewing of our minds - God's part. We are, in other words, participatory with God in the process of being changed, but ultimately, it's his work in us which brings renewal. We actively turn away from, or repent from the wrong patterns & arguments of this world, submitting ourselves to him, and in the power of his Word & Spirit we're changed.

Today there are two passages which govern our time together, firstly...1 Corinthians 6:19-20 - ¹⁹Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

As we said last week, when we come under the Lordship of Christ, we're given the Holy Spirit who takes up residence in our bodies. Constantly leading us back into Truth - counseling & guiding us to place the focus of our minds eye on Christ.

Then we have, Romans 6:6-14 - ⁶For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin - ⁷because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

⁸ Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹ For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. ¹⁰ The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

Remembering last week, no matter what the naked Emperor, Satan, tells us, sin has no other control than what we give it. And as is the case with Plato's Cave, groupthink isn't necessarily right. We're embodied now with the power of God to overcome & live in victory - we've been crucified with Christ & set free from sin. Since it continues...

¹¹ In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.

¹³ Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. ¹⁴ For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

With these truths in mind, what we seek as followers of Jesus is an inner transformation in Christ - taking on his character so much so that the outer life is affected & formed in him as well. That we naturally, and without thinking, act in the body as Jesus did, or would in his. Christ-likeness, lived in the body, becomes an increasingly natural state of being. Therefore, the unnatural/ungodly inclinations of the body which inhabit it must be eliminated - we refer to this as crucifixion, or dying to Self. Killing off the control of the desires & passions which have usurped the rightful place of Christ on the throne of life within our bodies. Desire & passion isn't evil in & of itself, but they make terrible masters. They're to come under the Lordship of Jesus.

Contrary to Gnostic thought, the body isn't evil. It's good. God created it. It's not even the source of sin, although we sometimes involve it's parts in sinful actions. We train it, even if we don't think about that fact. We condition it, making it used to & dependent sometimes on things which are contrary to the life of Christ in us. These are the result of our desires & passions, the wrongful thoughts we give our minds to, our will set on them which forms our character, all playing out in the body. Therefore, the body, it would seem, becomes one of the greatest barriers to conformity in Christ, although it's more of an internal mental/emotional battle, more than external physical one.

A word of caution, we aren't speaking of a works based righteousness. We're not preaching a legalistic gospel where we have to earn our salvation by what we do. This is beyond mere moralism. **Ephesians 2 makes this abundantly clear...** *⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.*

Salvation is a movement of Grace from God towards us. We did nothing to achieve it, rather, as it says earlier in the same passage, we were *made alive in Christ* in our spiritual deadness. So, we don't achieve right relationship with God by anything we do,

he does the work of salvation in us totally - we only receive it by faith, which is itself a gift of God. But, we can't ignore v10 of that same section, ¹⁰ *For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.* These good works are a result of salvation done in us & a response to it.

Justification is the act of salvation done in us - God justifies us in Christ. Sanctification is the purification process in partnership with God towards good works prepared in advance for us by him. We're growing in Christ towards being of great use in His kingdom, but sometimes the trained habitual inclinations of the body hinder our progress forward.

The wrongly conditioned body runs ahead of good intention, and stands in the way of our doing good - our bodies conditioned inclination towards personal comfort & pleasure stand in the way of a kingdom focus. The body should be seen as a creation of God & cherished as such. It should be cared for & nurtured in healthy ways. It should be a servant of Christ, but so often we allow it to become master. This is where we can thank God for his constant grace upon us, since we often overlook the body & it's role in spiritual formation. We often times place ourselves at the center of the universe & in turn worship the body instead of its Creator. From this is born an addiction to sensuality, the pursuit of physical pleasure, or comfort, in all it's forms. **But as Romans 6:8 says,** ⁸ *Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.*

Meaning we must come to terms with what Paul says in Romans 8:5-6, ⁵ *Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.* ⁶ *The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life & peace.*

Realizing that to live a life in subservience to 'the flesh', that is, with bodily desires as master over us, is to invite spiritual death - an unnatural state of the redeemed person. The mind dulled, becoming lifeless. This is true in the pursuit, or overindulgence, in any sensuality, be it food, alcohol, sex, relationships, or just plain comfort - the more you give yourself over to them, there's a deadness of feeling generated & the expression in these things must become more perverse & extreme.

Think about it in the context of a nice hotel. When you first experience a 5 star hotel, it's incredible, and any small mistake on the staffing part is overlooked since this is such a new experience. All the wonders of it overshadow the fact that they forgot to put a mint on your pillow. Whereas before, you never expected such a detail - as a matter of fact, you've gone to bed every night of your life without a mint on your pillow. But once you've had it & your body's used to these comforts, let the maid forget that mint, and you're on the phone to the front desk asking, "Where's my pillow mint!"

Spend too much time relaxing on the beach eating good food off the hotel menu, and eventually you become bored, needing more & something different. The filet mignon begins to taste like flank steak. It's the natural progression, that's deadness settling in. What's it going to take to satisfy? The answer's always 'more'.

Pauls says in Romans 8:7-8, *7The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. 8Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.* If my desires have taken the throne of life, I find myself hostile to God, and the body reinforces this in it's natural inclinations since it's been conditioned in them. It's what I want & expect - becoming a false felt need. And that person, although the lights are still on, given Christ's work on the cross has brought them salvation, lives in a constant state of angst given they simply can't please God; attentions been diverted from their gaze on Christ. Pleasing God is our purpose - our end goal being to worship him in all that we are & do. As Romans 12 puts it, to offer our bodies as living sacrifices holy & pleasing to God.

However, the fruit of the Spirit we spoke of in weeks past, including self-control, or self-denial, enables a person to enjoy life's pleasures without bringing about this lifelessness. Life can be enjoyed in it's fullness, with flavors always satisfying.

Our bodies are energy factories. They take in things to access energy. They must be fed. I can only liberate & use energy through my body. I liberate the energy of potato chips to make my body run, but too many & I flood the engine. I access the energy of my body by choice - it's the place of my dominion & responsibility. It's through my body in which I live & experience the world. It's part of who I am & is essential to my identity. I occupy space & time through this body. Through it I interact with other bodies. I must be responsible with it, making it subservient to Christ in order to be responsible with all those other bodies & influence the world around me for Christ. Paul even speaks of making his body his slave in order to preach strongly in 1 Corinthians 9:27.

One of the problems I face in the body is, I run into other bodies & factors which lie beyond my control. I don't control those bodies, only mine. Like little kingdoms clashing - which is why Christians are called into 'one body' - under one kingdom, the reign of Christ. A kingdom where we follow one voice which dictates that which is healthy & good for all. Often times these clashes produce harsh feelings of jealousy, anger, fear & resentment. If these aren't rectified, or dealt with in love, they settle into our bodies in an outward language we call body language. You've heard people claim they've been hurt by others & as a result make agreements saying, "I'll never let that happen to me again!" These agreements settle into our bodies in language which communicates how open, joyful, loving, accepting, or calm we are. Or, maybe better said in the negative, how angry, bitter, sad, disinterested, or prideful we are. Arms crossed. Rolling our eyes. Not showing eye contact. Standing off alone. Hands in the pocket. The dead stare. Etc. These all communicate.

We develop body armor. Character's seen in how we hold ourselves, in how our bodies are 'at the ready' to interact with others in life. Body language can be clear, or drastically misread. It can also be a sign from another of an issue in us as well. Maybe we are, by how we interact with, or treat someone, helping to develop defenses in them. We can't understand why they're so distant since we're not being honest that we've done things to drive them away. Or sometimes we think there's something wrong, but after clarification

we find out it's not between you & the person, but they're bothered by something else. Body language isn't an exact language art. But suffice it to say, we only have control of our own hearts, minds, will & body, and must think through these things as Christians, which includes using our bodies, from mouth to stance, to communicate well, and to be free of sinful bondage on them.

Christ's incarnation in the world is of paramount importance in all this - not only in the issue of salvation - as John said in 1 John 4:2-3, ² *This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³ but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God.* That's a direct slam on that gnostic thought so pervasive in people.

But His incarnation is also important in the issue of sanctification - how he's being incarnated in me now, in my body, since 1 John 4 also says in v17, *In this world we are like Jesus.* Embodied beings reflecting the love & life of Christ to others around us through our bodies.

Romans 8:10–11 states, ¹⁰ *But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. ¹¹ And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.*

Our mortal bodies will be redeemed completely later, but in the meantime, due to the righteousness of Christ over us, we can be brought into & experience abundant life. Even now we experience *the power of his resurrection* (Philippians 3:10) in our bodily existence. In Christ we are, and can be unshackled & brought to the surface now, realizing this life isn't an illusion to be escaped from, it's important & good. This physical embodied life right now can experience the Kingdom of God, and be participant in bringing that life of the kingdom to others by our responsibility with our bodies. It's a satanic ploy that we should want to sit down & shackle ourselves once again living lives which never satisfy.

So, let's leave here today with two verses to memorize, the first being Romans 12:1-2. Let's read them aloud together - *Therefore, I urge you, brothers & sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy & pleasing to God - this is your true & proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test & approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing & perfect will.*

And the second, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 - ¹⁹ *Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.*

I'd urge you to commit those two to memory & see how your life changes.