**Ephesians #53**

**March 24, 2019**

**“Out of Place”**

**Sexual Immorality - Part 1**

Ephesians 5:3-10

**WHY ADDRESS SEXUAL IMMORALITY?**

**1. Sexual immorality has done great harm to marriages, families, and cultures.**

* It assaults the image of God and attacks the dignity of man.
* Our culture is ‘normalizing’ it thru the media, educational institutions, political movements, and even churches.

**2. Sexual immorality has a real and growing presence even among the LORD’s people.** (I.e., Christians)

* Confronting sexual immorality—when done Biblically—is a ministry of mercy.

**3. Sexual immorality needs to be addressed by the church.**

* The church has remained largely silent—in the pulpits, in the pews, and in the public square.
* False dichotomy: ‘We should care more about the poor & the vulnerable than we should immorality.’
* Sexual immorality is addressed many times in both the Old and New Testaments.

→ Ephesians 5:3-4

**SEXUAL IMMORALITY AND THE DANGER OF SELF-RIGHTEOUS COMPARISON**

→ ‘This message is for someone worse than me.’ ‘I’m not as bad as they are.’

**1. No one has escaped fallen sexuality.** Romans 3:23

* Remember the background of the Christians in Ephesus (and ours as well!). Ephesians 2:1-3; 4:17-19

**2. Scripture warns us against comparing ourselves with others.**

* The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Luke 18:9-14)

**SEXUAL IMMORALITY AND THE DANGER OF CULTURAL ACCOMODATION**

→ ‘We shouldn’t be so uptight about this. We live in a sensual world. Let’s not go overboard here!’

**1. God’s Word clearly and unequivocally calls the Christian to total purity and holiness of life. Eph. 5:3**

* Colossians 3:5-6: Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.
* 1 Peter 1:13-16: Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”
* Matthew 5:27-30; Romans 12:1-2

**2. God’s Word teaches that sanctification (growth in holiness) transforms life in real and tangible ways.**

* 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5: For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own body in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God.
* 2 Cor 5:17: Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has gone and the new has come.
* 2 Corinthians 10:5: We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.
* 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 10:13

**3. God’s Word teaches that the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit is evidence that our faith is real.**

* 1 John 5:4: Everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.
* Luke 6:43-44; Hebrews 12:14-17; Matthew 7:21-23; 5:8: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

**APPLICATION: Ephesians 5:3-4**

**1. “This doesn’t fit anymore…” v.3**

**2. Thanksgiving… v.4**