

**Christ Community Covenant Church**  
**Stewardship of Life: Your Body and Mind Matter to God**  
**Pastor Dave Scherrer - November 4, 2012**

Our stewardship series has taken us down a good road. Stewardship of Life means time, talent and treasure but so much more. Do you remember we began our series with one of the Kingdom parables from Matthew 13? Parables are stories with a hidden meaning and the Kingdom I am referring to is the Kingdom of God. The two parables we looked at early in the series have set the tone for us. The parable of the hidden treasure and the pearl of great price helped us understand that the rule and reign of Christ, the life spent with God and happily under His authority is worth spending everything you have to get. The second point is that we are stewards or trustees of God's stuff – and everything is God's stuff. So our job seems to be that we must divorce ourselves of everything that distracts us from giving our heart and soul and mind and strength to the pursuits of God. It is a very big idea! I guess I am taking you down what seems like a dangerous and expensive road.

Now for this morning there is another dangerous and expensive verse. It challenges us to place our bodies and our mind under the authority of God and to see ourselves as stewards even of a body that is not actually ours! It is somewhat famous; let's look at it together for a fresh read:

**Romans 12:1–2**

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

**Stewardship of our Bodies**

Along with time, talents and treasures, caring for the physical body is also a matter of stewardship. Obviously, everything we possess actually belongs to God. But we tend to forget that this includes our body. We are to present our bodies to God. This is not so much like "Presenting the Duchess of Arvada - Ta Da" as it is "Your Majesty, I present myself to you your servant. I am prepared to die at your command. I will serve you to the death." Something like from the movies.

The Apostle Paul makes the point again and again. "We are the Lord's" and to hold firmly to this mindset changes our lives. It changes how we understand time and talent and treasure. It changes our values and it changes our choices. Even choices about our bodies!

**1 Corinthians 6:12, 17-20**

"All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything.

But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. **Flee from sexual immorality.** Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that **your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit** within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for **you were bought with a price.** So glorify God in your body.

**1 Peter 1:18-19**

Knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

As trustworthy stewards we must place our bodies under the command of Christ. We must discipline our body every day through proper rest, diet, and exercise. Paul said, "I discipline my body and make it my slave."

**1 Corinthians 9:24-27**

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

We are to exercise "self-control in all things" in order to become fellow partakers of the Gospel Paul tells us to care for our bodies **"so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body" (2 Corinthians 4:10)**. The greatest compliment anyone could ever receive is, "I can see Jesus in you."

Things have changed; we don't envision ourselves respectively but actually we treat life and live casually.

**Illustration: the difference between coat and ties by the last generation and A "Pharm Party" or the "Pharming Game of this generation.** "Instead our verse this morning calls us to be living sacrifices (Rom. 12 v1).

So what is the nature of this self-control? Is it merely the athlete-like discipline so that I am healthy and finely toned? Or is it more than that? According to the Romans passage we were looking at it is much more; we are to present ourselves as living sacrifices.

**Present our bodies as living sacrifices; Dead to sin but alive to God (Romans 6:11)**

What is a living sacrifice? Think of it as contrasted from a dead sacrifice. A dead bull was once offered as a sacrifice to God. The bull gave its life, most likely quite unwillingly, so that God might be glorified. A "living sacrifice" would voluntarily live dead to the world but alive to the sacrificial service of God.

**Run:** Obey the command to flee all immorality, which is sin against the body. (1 Cor. 6:18)

**Remember:** Our bodies are the temple of God's spirit. (1 Cor. 6:19)

**Ransomed:** We have been bought with the blood of Jesus. (1 Cor. 6:20)

We are not to be like everyone else. How we live is different now than the values and choices of the world.

**Not conformed to the world: Because the world and all its pleasures are passing away**

This speaks to our understanding that this world is not our home and that we are to be laying aside treasures in Heaven by loving and knowing God and living lives that glorify Him.

"If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31).

**Stewardship of our Mind**

What does that mean? To be a steward of God's intellect and mind in you does not mean to just get good grades and learn your music theory, though all that is good. It is mostly about making a decision to live a Kingdom Life. Having a renewed mind especially speaks to our ability to choose good over evil, blessings over curses, truth over a lie, eternity over the temporary, life over death. The mind dedicated to Christ is choosing well. When we are transformed by the renewing of our mind, it changes the way we think and what we think about:

**Transformed by a renewed mind: Change the way we think and what we think about**

Why must we change the way we think? Because the Prince of the Power of the Air is a liar and the world is filled with lies. If we are not careful we will believe a lie and then we will begin to live upon that lie as though it were truth. Then we will be self-deceived and in a very dangerous place because the lies of this world can kill us.

***Illustration: Performance and appearance lies and abortion***

This is not easy but it is important. We are not to be conformed to the world – music, video games and movies are largely a culture of death. I am told that the military is using war video games to hone killing skills. Certainly the studies say that a constant diet of war and death desensitizes us to real war and death.

And then there is pornography. This is a culture of false intimacy and breeds indifference and self-centeredness. It debases women and gives a false impression of manhood. Romance novels and supermarket magazines have the same kind of impact on women. They give a false sense of what love is and how it is attained and nurtured.

We are charged with setting our minds on things above. Our culture is a culture of taking, where the ends justify the means. It is easy to give into a spirit of materialism of having and hoarding. But God's culture is one of giving and sacrifice. These two systems are opposed to each other. So when I use the words sacrifice for the Kingdom, some people, perhaps even some of you here will take offense to this idea. Remember it is not my idea, but God's. Our world is materialistic and selfish. We are to take all these thoughts captive. They are lies and must not have authority in our lives. God's world puts the Spirit first.

Transformed: In the Greek the word rendered "transformed" is *metamorphoo*. It is closely related in meaning to our English word 'metamorphosis.' It is the idea of the chrysalis and the butterfly - where the little worm becomes a 'new creature'. If anyone is in Christ they are a new creature. Transformed.

Remember when Jesus was transformed right before the eyes of the disciples?

***Matthew 17:2***

And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.

***Matthew 13:43***

Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

Day by day, through Divine assistance, we are transformed, growing in heavenly knowledge and the graces of the Holy Spirit. A special spiritual treasure is being developed in our earthen vessel, and the earthbound, grub-like tendencies are to be put to death. We are to "put off," according to the former course of life, that "old person" which is corrupted by deceitful desires, and we are to "put on the new man - the new woman," which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Do you remember the song we sing at Christmas time, the little children's song "Away in a Manger?" This is the third verse:

*Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay  
Close by me forever; And love me I pray!  
Bless all the dear children, In Thy tender care,  
And fit us for Heaven, To live with Thee there.* (Recently we changed this to 'take')

This is how we are ***fit for Heaven***, we cannot take this mind and this body to heaven. We will get a new body and our minds must be transformed as well, or we will not make it in Heaven. All this is an act of grace on God's part. The sacrifices and choices you make now are important because ***they fit you for Heaven***.

- If you long to break loose from conformity to the world,
- If you long to be transformed and new from the inside out,
- If you long to be free from mere duty-driven Christianity and do what you love to do because what you love to do is what you ought to do,

- If you long to offer up your body as a living sacrifice so that your whole life becomes a spiritual act of worship and displays the worth of Christ above the worth of the world,  
***Then give yourself with all your might to pursuing this—the renewal of your mind.***

By yielding to the Holy Spirit's power and influence in your life:

***Titus 3:5***

He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,

***John 14:6***

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

***John 8:32***

"And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Finally this brings us to the table this morning by understanding not only a stewardship of body and mind but also of purposes. You see even our hopes and dreams and wants and purposes are His.

***Stewardship of our Purposes***

***That we might know the will of God: What is good, acceptable and perfect***

This is the desire of God for us, that we know and share the purposes of our Father who is in Heaven. And this is the will of the Father:

***John 6:40***

For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

On the night that Jesus was betrayed and carried away for trial. Do you remember how he prayed? "Let this cup pass from me but nevertheless not my will but thine." Even Jesus' purposes submitted to the purposes of God, even to the death.

Communion