

# “Christ in a world given over to sensuality”

Ephesians 4:19-20

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## Preface

A generation ago, over 80% of the world’s pornography was made in Japan, but now it’s said that about 60% is Japanese-made.

The fact that Japan’s share, often referred to as the leading nation in the sex industry, has declined might indicate that the global sex industry is thriving, suggesting a widespread and robust demand for sex across the world.

However, when we look at the Bible, such conditions are not new; they are written to have started as far back as the time of the first humans, Adam and Eve, and it’s clear that this began the moment humans became sinners.

Last week, we discussed from Ephesians 4:18 how humans have reached the ultimate ignorance, unable to recognize the one true God.

We also confirmed that this ultimate ignorance is a state of being far removed from the life of God.

In the words of Ephesians 4:19, which we read today, the symptom of being far removed from God’s life and denying His existence is described as “insensitivity.”

The linguistic meaning of the word translated as “insensitivity” involves being dull to feeling shame or remorse of conscience.

So, in what are we becoming insensitive?

“Having given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.”

In other words, it says we are becoming insensitive in the disorder of sexual mores.

## Part One

In Ephesus, the place to which the Ephesians were sent 2000 years ago, there was a temple called the Temple of Artemis, which was dedicated to Artemis, a goddess with many breasts.

I have never been there, but it seems one can still visit these ruins in Turkey today.

The temple always had women, known as temple prostitutes, waiting to perform sexual acts with them, and they believed that by performing these acts, they would receive the blessings of the goddess Artemis.

By intertwining sexual desires, which were somewhat incorrect and guilt-ridden, with the religious beliefs of their own man-made religion, they legitimised their desires and turned them into a profitable trade or business, a major undertaking under the name of the religious sex industry.

Senselessly, they had created a social structure that followed Satan's current of exploiting the precious and beautiful sex originally given by God.

It's a cultural thing.

A custom.

People came to accept it, were made to accept it, and kept others in that mindset.

It seems to have been ingrained in the populace as something inevitable since "everyone is doing it."

The disarray of sexual mores apparent back then mirrors what we see in modern times.

Paul, without shying away from these errors, pointed them out decisively.

In Acts 19, there's a record of severe persecution Paul faced from the people around the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus. Please read this when you get home.

Over the past few weeks, we've been considering Ephesians 4:17-19, which discusses how people have darkened in their understanding and hardened their hearts, giving themselves up to sensuality. This content is similar to what we observed last week in Romans 1, which discusses these issues in more detail.

## Romans 1:21-28 (PowerPoint)

Despite humans claiming wisdom, they did not honor or thank God, leading their thoughts to become futile and their hearts hardened, unable to see the essence of things. This foolishness is expressed through the disruption of God's created sexual order between man and woman.

This letter to the Romans, written by Paul to the Christians living in Rome, addresses an audience in a city where some emperors were known pedophiles and temples housed not just female but also male prostitutes. If Paul's words were perceived as demeaning to the emperor or the masses, he could have easily been arrested and executed.

But Paul, according to God's Word in the Bible, firmly and straightforwardly tells us that what is different is different, and what is against God's created order is against it.

In this letter to the Romans, I see the resolute figure of Paul, living a life in line with his faith declaration in Galatians 2:19-20, unafraid of martyrdom, saying, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me."

Even in today's era that advocates sexual freedom, Christians might still find themselves in a similar situation.

### Part Two

People have become ignorant and insensitive by distancing themselves from God and thinking themselves independent, ultimately substituting the happiness derived from maintaining the sexual order of one man and one woman united physically, mentally, and spiritually for life, with a direction that loses sight of this sexual order in favor of indulgence in stimulation. This is reiterated by Paul, Moses, the Bible, and God Himself.

As briefly mentioned earlier, the disorder in sexual mores isn't a new phenomenon; it dates back to the first humans, Adam and Eve.

The first symptom of sin manifested in Adam and Eve, who broke

their promise to God, who told them not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, when they voluntarily and willingly fell into the temptation of Satan disguised as a snake, and became sinners who lost their eternal life, was sexual.

Before they sinned, they were naked, they had nothing to hide from each other, physically, mentally or spiritually, and they had never been ashamed to see each other naked, but the symptom of their sin, which manifested itself immediately after they committed the greatest sin of breaking God's promise, was that they were ashamed to see each other naked.

Therefore, in order to cover each other's nakedness and to hide each other's genitals, they made a loin cover out of fig leaves, which covered their loins.

Adam and Eve, having lost sight of God, began to harbor feelings of sexual shame towards each other.

The act of wearing clothes in our society, if we go back biblically through the history of mankind, is ultimately a sin concealment and an expression of the unwillingness to admit to being a sinner.

The fact that we compare and contrast, and try to show how cool we are, while rushing to find out how cool the clothes we are wearing are, or what the trends and fashions are, is ultimately an expression of our human feelings as sinners who do not want to admit that we are sinners.

Let's look at Genesis.

### **Genesis 2:17-3:12 (PowerPoint)**

The first song/music in human history was a love song.

Eve, who was created by God from a part of Adam's body, was exactly like Adam himself, and they were one.

For Adam, Eve was the one and only precious being whom he loved as if he loved himself, and for Eve, Adam was the one and only precious being whom she loved as if he loved himself.

And they rejoiced in the fact that they were one physically, mentally and spiritually.

This joy was expressed in the words of Genesis 2:23:

**Genesis 2:23 (PowerPoint),**

**"This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."**

Every time they became physically united, they rejoiced in being united by God.

There is not the slightest feeling of shame there.

There is no sexual desire for other women or other men.

However, when they become sinners who have broken their promises to God, they are ashamed of their nakedness and cannot look at each other's genitals in the sun, but cover their loins with fig leaves.

Moreover, when he pleaded before God, Adam, who had uttered such a beautiful love song, which was also the first music in the history of mankind, said, "It is because of this woman! This woman you gave me seduced me and this is what happened!" He blamed not only God but also Eve, and his beautiful thoughts of oneness with her flew away and his heart and body were filled with hatred towards her.

This is the beginning of the disturbance of the sexual order of mankind.

When the problems of this world are eventually pinned down, the smallest unit of these problems will be men and women.

They are problems between men and women.

No matter how much we talk about politics, power, wealth, fame and love (romance), the smallest unit that always becomes the root, foundation and starting point of these problems is the problem between men and women.

Even today, former presidents of a certain country, symbols of power and wealth in the world, are now placed in the difficult position of having to stand trial for the issues between men and women.

The Bible speaks first and foremost about the problem of men and women, which is the origin of all problems.

It tells us that all the problems of the world, all the buttons that are crossed, are due to the problems of men and women who have excluded God and refused to allow God to intervene.

The Bible tells us the very first thing in a calm and sober way that is quite straightforward.

Solomon's words in Ecclesiastes 9 are great words that get to the heart of things.

### **Ecclesiastes 9:9 (PowerPoint)**

He says that peace between men and women is the greatest share that can be given to man under the sun.

### Part Three

If we go to Genesis 6, we see a world that has moved on from the time of Adam and Eve, a world in which sexual relations between men and women have been carried out freely, or to be more precise, out of order, in order to satisfy their own sexual desires, to satisfy the sexual desires they see in their eyes, and as a result God has given a judgment on such a world.

### **Genesis 6:1-3 (PowerPoint)**

The meaning of the Word here is that the Spirit of God cannot abide in a person as a result of sexual relations being carried out of order, without awareness of God's presence. And:

### **Genesis 6: 5-7, 11-13 (PowerPoint)**

What happened in this way was Noah's flood, in which people other than Noah, who walked with God as a believer in such a world, were judged by the floodwaters.

And this Noah's Flood was a foretaste and a foretaste of the fact that our world will now be destroyed with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, this time with fire and sulphur and not water, and a new heaven and a new earth will be created, and the judgment of Noah's

Flood was a foretaste and a foretaste of the fact that salvation is being placed in that new heaven and new earth.

And so, as a sign to mankind to remember that there would be a final judgement, an ultimate destruction, He gave us the rainbow, a natural phenomenon that occurred after the judgement of the flood.

### **Genesis 9:11-17 (PowerPoint)**

There were no rainbows in this earthly world before Noah's flood, but in the world after Noah's flood, God created rainbows by reflecting light on the moisture in the air with a message.

Whenever we, human beings, see a rainbow in the sky, we say to ourselves, "Ah, God has prevented the destruction by water like in the time of Noah, but He is telling us that a greater destruction will occur later. There is a way to be saved from that destruction. We must walk with the Way of Jesus Christ, who has prepared for us a way out of that destruction!

Now, however, the rainbow is used not as a symbol of God's grace, salvation or destruction - of the precious sexuality of male and female, which God created, and which perished as a result of man's disruption of that unity of male and female, disrupting their path on earth and increasing their evil - but as a symbol of the It is used as a symbol of something called "sexual diversity."

As a pastor and a speaker of God's Word, I believe that here is Satan's clever substitution and replacement.

If I am criticized or bashed for saying this, or if I am said to be saying things that are out of step with the times, well, I think it is inevitable.

I believe that this is a sign of the end of the world, and I cannot help but think that we are being kept alive in the end times.

The hymn to man without God will not cease, the preaching of man-made culture will not cease, and the destruction of the order and environment of the first natural world created by God will not cease.

Some may say, "Why are you being so pessimistic?", but without seeing this reality, it would be impossible to judge the world of today from the perspective of the God of the Bible in a calm and sober

manner, or to read and trust the certainty and realization of the Bible's Word.

The Apostle Paul did not avoid this, but spoke about it squarely and straightforwardly.

Moses, the man of God who wrote Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, was also told by God about the disorder of the original order of the earth and the disorder of the sexual order, and he told people what he had been told straight away.

### **Leviticus 18:1-30 (PowerPoint).**

God commanded Moses to. 'Do not be tainted with incest, adultery, sexual relations with anyone other than your wife or husband, paedophilia, same-sex sexual intercourse homosexuality, sexual relations between man and animal bestiality, or any other disorder of the sexual order of the unity of man and woman that God has created, because it is a disorder of the natural order, and consequently the earth/land will lead to them spitting out.'" Moses, who was commanded to do so, spoke them as the word of God to the Israelites.

The content of Leviticus is not only a story from the Middle East 3,500 years ago, but also a reflection of the modern world, and it is God's unchanging word.

#### Part Four

Is there anyone in the world who is completely clean from the sexual disorder of the world?

Are there any of us who are spotlessly clean in the matter of giving ourselves over to lust?

For example, Jesus said that even the mere sight of the opposite sex and lusting after it constitutes the sin of adultery, but is there anyone in this world who has never had such a thought in his mind or even dreamt of it?

In a sermon a few months ago, the pastoral studies teacher at the



seminary where I graduated, who taught pastoral studies in the seminary where I graduated, said that in one of his classes, he wanted to join his heart with the praise of the choir of the church he was pastoring, and while he was listening to the praise from the pulpit looking towards the choir, a woman suddenly came into his eyes and the image of having sexual relations with a certain woman suddenly flashed through his mind. Do you remember?

None of us in our natural state of flesh, born of the lineage of the first humans, Adam and Eve, including of course myself as a pastor, are innocent in sexual temptation, amorousness or sexual disorder.

This is well illustrated in Jesus' encounter with one woman with whom he came into contact 2000 years ago.

### **John 8:1-12 (PowerPoint).**

All those who had tried to frame Jesus, and all those who had tried to show their innocence by seizing a vulnerable woman, a woman who had committed the sin of adultery, and even using her as if they were trampling on her character, surrendered and left at a single word that Jesus threw at them.

'He who is without sin among you, let him first throw a stone at this man.'

Then all the people there, starting with the elders, except Jesus, left the place.

Jesus knows very well that we human beings are descended from Adam and Eve, and that we are naturally vulnerable to sexual temptation and cannot live without sexual sin, and yet he forgives, loves, encourages, comforts and labours with us.

On the other hand, He spoke to us with words that may be harsh but should be firm and proper, and He taught us that we must not stop fighting against sin.

'I will not bring judgment on you either. Go. From now on, you must never sin.'

The words 'Never sin' may sound like harsh words that we can never keep and that condemn us to sin. But the true meaning is:

"Remember that you are still sinners, and, recognizing that you are

sinner, confess your sins to God the Father and to me, but never give up being transformed by God and by the Holy Spirit, and walk with the Lord Jesus." It is a consolation, encouragement, forgiveness and empowerment.

He also spoke one more important thing to us.  
He said, "I will not judge you either".

Who can fearfully dare to condemn another when Jesus says, "I will not judge you"?

We human beings are instinctively guilty of sexual sin because we are children of God's wrath from the moment we are born in our mother's womb.

Therefore, driven by the desire to claim our own innocence, we have a hypocrisy that makes us want to put ourselves on the shelf and above all to pass judgement sensitively on the sexual sins of others.

If we are not humble and firmly aware of this fact, we will be prideful and arrogant enough to set people up for sin, contrary to the words of Jesus.

You will not even realize that you are feeling "I am right."

I think we need to bear in mind the words of Solomon, "You shall not be too righteous, nor too wicked; There is no one righteous on earth."

In the Old Testament, God once forgave and loved David, who willingly became entangled in lazy and arrogant sexual desires, deceived people, abused his power and even killed the life of his precious subordinate.

Of course, there was David's honest confession and sincere repentance, but He never cut David down before his repentance.

The same is true of Sodom and Gomorrah.

God spoke to them first, without destroying them unnecessarily.

In a world that was given over to lust and devouring all kinds of filthy deeds, Christ, Jesus Christ, treated them with love and forgiveness.

Of course, He did not sweep sin under the rug, but recognised it as sin first and foremost, and then showed us the way to forgiveness, embrace and acceptance.

This is what today's verse, Ephesians 4:19-20, is all about.

### **Ephesians 4:19-20 (PowerPoint)**

I believe that this is what is meant by the words.

#### Conclusion.

We are all vulnerable to sexual sin.

That does not mean that we should give ourselves over to sexual sin, and at the same time, it would not be following the example of the Lord Jesus to judge the sexual sins of others wantonly.

So we pray.

We pray, we eat the Word, we seek God's will, we repent according to the Lord's will, we treat others according to the Lord's will, and we ask God to enable us to live out this world as Christians.

We face God.

We pray to live with love as those who have been given love, and we pray to live with a tough but gentle love.

There is no doubt that we live in a chaotic world.

Then, in that chaotic world, we pray that the Word will teach us what the Bible says about living with intelligence, illuminated by the light and abiding in the life of God, and that the Holy Spirit will show us how to live.

Let's pray.

Benediction : Ephesians 4: 19-20.