

16th November 2023 Glorify God in your Body...
1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Many thanks to Brother Ken, for the good introduction.

Our Brother has taken the time to show how that this can relate to the Ecclesia as the One Body of Christ, and also to our own literal personal bodies. Seeing as he has spent the most time talking about the wider Body – the Ecclesia, may be some more points about how we should glorify God in our literal bodies might be useful.

One of the first thoughts is how could our literal bodies possibly glorify God in any way. But the Apostle is most definitely speaking about our literal bodies, as well as the Ecclesia, as the context shows.

However in another place – Philippians 3:21, the Apostle describes our natural bodies as vile! *Who shall change our vile body ...* We will return to this passage in a minute, but only to say that in fact, this should better read who shall change our body of humiliation... But, still – how can a body which is humiliating, and weak, glorify God. We remember that in 1 Corinthians 15:50: it says *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.* If it cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, again how can it possibly glorify God?

Brother Ken referred us to Romans 7:14-25, and he quoted the whole section – it is easy to see why, as it again emphasises the weakness of our bodies. However the Apostle makes a distinction. He talks as well about the mind. He says that though the body can be weak and failing, and makes us a prisoner to sin, another law is working in his mind. In his mind he can serve God, even though his body disobeys his mind sometimes, he can use the same mind to love and obey and glorify God.

Our mind, is part of our body – of course! It is actually our brain, and how we think. We can train our brains, and how we think. Through

habit, we can create pathways of thought, that we become familiar with and we slip into these neural pathways subconsciously, without even realising. Such as when we drive a car, or tie our shoe laces. But this same force of habit in how we think also applies to what we think about. Our thoughts shape our characters. If we are always thinking about how to increase our finances, we can become greedy. If we are always thinking about how we look, we can become vain. If we are always thinking about lustful pleasures, we can become adulterers. If we are always thinking we are better than we are, we become arrogant – and so on. So our minds, which can be trained, can in fact also train us! Are we allowing ourselves to be led about and formed by the natural or the spiritual. This is what the Apostle is talking about in Romans 7 – that it is possible to manage our minds, and control our thoughts. Whilst our bodies are built to swiftly react, to our thoughts, and actually carry out the sinful thoughts, and put them into action, before we even realise it – like taking a wrong turn when we are driving the car – having a spiritually active conscience will immediately cause an alarm to be sounded in our mind! Danger! Even though we may have gone down the wrong path, the good conscience will cause us to turn around again. The law of the spiritual man in our mind has overcome the law of sin in our flesh.

Returning to Philippians 3, where we read about the vile body which cannot glorify God, we can see that the Apostle is saying that actually our bodies of humiliation can be changed! And he tells us by who! Verse 20....*the Lord Jesus Christ: 21 Who shall change our vile body, [body of humiliation] that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

Jesus had a natural body, which was also humiliating and humiliated. He felt the same urges and temptations as we do, because he had the same body, and similar thoughts and lusts. He found it humiliating to have to deal with his own mind which would wander off, when he had far more important things to think about. But he trained his mind, that when it began to wander off, he was able to

notice it, as he learned to be so disciplined. He dealt those wayward thoughts such a blow, that often they never recovered... He said It is written... and he raised his thoughts to a much higher level. He became so skilled at doing this, that he avoided committing any sin. He did this, because he wanted to, not because he had to. He obeyed all that His Father asked of him. Therefore, he glorified God in his body – because he obeyed! He actioned good thoughts and killed the bad thoughts.

“Fine. That is straightforward enough, but it was alright for Jesus, he had God for his Father, and he had the Holy Spirit. But we are on a much lower level, and so what about us?” - it might be asked.

With a negative attitude like that, nothing will be glorious! In fact God has called us to be His faithful children. Jesus teaches us to pray... *Our Father who art in heaven...* And although Jesus had the power of the Holy Spirit, he was limited in how he could use it. He has enabled a limited portion of the Holy Spirit to be available to all who would avail themselves of it – even the Word of God. The Lord Jesus has promised that after we are resurrected and given eternal life – should be adjudged worthy – (we hope and pray) that we will be changed in a twinkling – 1 Corinthians 15:51-53: *but we shall all be changed, in the twinkling of an eye, ... for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.* Of course then, our changed bodies will certainly glorify God.

But in the passage we are looking at, Paul is talking about our bodies glorifying God now. The clue as to how, is given by Paul -*that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.* If the Spirit of Jesus Christ is working in us, through the new habits formed by the Holy Spirit in the Word of God, we will also begin subduing all things, which would cause us to sin. Allowing instead for new behaviours to blossom: Galatians 5:22-24: *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*

This new lifestyle, this new behaviour pattern is the result of a mind under control. It takes time but is certainly possible – even though there will be wrong turns taken at times. Thinking before we act is the key, as the Apostle observes in 1 Corinthians 10:31 ... *whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God*. Over time, such consistent behaviour will be noticed by others:

Matthew 5:16: *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

Now we can see that our bodies have changed even in this *day of small things*. Though weak and frail can in fact glorify God through good works, because of the determination and faith within our minds – if we allow Jesus to dwell there.

Brother Terry