Tedd Pullano

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***Proverbs 3:7-8; 4:20-23***

***3****7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil. 8 It will be a healing for your flesh and a refreshment for your body.*

***4****20 My child, be attentive to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. 21 Do not let them escape from your sight; keep them within your heart. 22 For they are life to those who find them, and healing to all their flesh. 23 Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.*

***1 Corinthians 6:19-21***

*19Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.*

***My Heart Belongs to God***

Our worship today is a little unique – it is centered on a theme – and a theme which may surprise you – the theme of our bodies, our health; and specifically the health of our hearts. Today in worship, in God’s presence, we talk about our bodies and our hearts and celebrate them – and celebrate ways to get, stay and be healthy. Now, it may seem strange to talk about our bodies and our health in the context of worship – but I would assert that worship is the exact right place to talk about our health, for two reasons. First, I firmly believe that worship and the sermon should be spiritual and thoughtful, but they also need to be valuable to our everyday living. I try very hard to make the sermon applicable to our daily lives. And what is more important to our everyday living than our bodies and our health?

And second, I believe the Bible is pretty clear on how God feels about our bodies. God has created our bodies; they are a gift from him. Because of that they are something to be respected and honored by us and used to God’s glory and to the benefit of those around us. If you were to search the Scriptures you will find many places where God speaks of the beauty and purpose of our bodies – and the call to care for them as best we can. If we look at the particular witness of the Apostle Paul in Scripture, we find that he had much to say about our bodies. For him, our bodies were the place of union with Christ – in our bodies we meet Christ. Look at our passage today from Corinthians where he writes that our bodies are “*temples of the Holy Spirit*.”That is a significant statement because we must remember Paul was Jewish, and for him the Temple was a sacred, holy place in Jerusalem which was God’s house – the temple is where God lives. So when he says that our bodies are a temple of the Holy Spirit, he is telling us how sacred and beautiful our bodies are and that God lives in us. Through the Holy Spirit our bodies are God’s house.

Again I want to emphasize that that’s a pretty significant idea. Our bodies are the house of God. Just think about what that means for you. Our bodies are God’s home. That makes our bodies holy and very important to God. And as we think about that, our bodies being God’s home, what does Paul say we should do with our bodies? In our passage today he writes that we should “*glorify God in our bodies*.*”* Well, what do you think that means? I believe that means that the way we treat our bodies and what we do with our bodies should bring God glory and honor. One scholar I read this week said that based on this passage and other writings by Paul, all the activities we do with and in our bodies should be oriented to God; that is, all that we do to, and with, our bodies should be activities which God would be happy with and which would honor God. And if they aren’t, if those activities don't honor God, then we have to rethink whether or not we ourselves are really oriented to God fully. Those activities we do that don't glorify God – they skew life – they diminish and take away from life. And we should probably stop doing them.

That includes not just the things we do with our bodies, but the way we treat our bodies. God wants, hopes, and expects that we will treat these gifts we call our bodies with honor, respect and reverence – just like God does. God expects us to treat our bodies well – they are the home of God. So, its just like we go out of our way to treat our houses well – or we try so hard to treat this house right here so well and keep it up so well. The same goes for our bodies. God wants us to care for our bodies and be able honor him with them. And I know, doing that can be difficult and it does take work. It is not easy. Sometimes honoring God by treating our bodies right requires making lifestyle changes. Which is hard, but, with God’s help we can find courage and strength to take action. And it is so important, because we want to honor the gift of our bodies by caring for them properly.

And so today we celebrate the message of our bodies as gifts from God; and we celebrate a message of health and hope for our hearts. And we speak specifically about the heart today because the number one killer of men and women around the world is Heart Disease – and I think that makes God sad. I believe God is sad and stressed that this beautiful organ he created and this intricate circulatory system he created for our blood is not working right in so many people. And in many cases that can be fixed – or even prevented. So I want to share a few things I learned recently while preparing for today. If you look at the PowerPoint you will see the:

Ten Commandments for a Healthy Heart. *(discuss)*

I. Know your risk factors for heart disease.

II. Talk to your doctor about how to lower your risk for heart disease.

III. Have your blood pressure checked regularly.

IV. Know your cholesterol numbers. [These include total cholesterol, HDL or "good" cholesterol, LDL or "bad" cholesterol, and triglycerides.

V. Have your blood sugar level checked for diabetes.

VI. Do not smoke cigarettes or use other tobacco products and limit your exposure to secondhand smoke.

VII. Have a healthy diet eat to protect your heart health.

VIII. Get regular physical activity. [At least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity each week.]

IX. Aim for a healthy weight and maintain it.

X. Know the signs and symptoms of a heart attack and the importance of calling 9-1-1 immediately

I also learned about the risk factors for heart disease:

Risk factors for heart disease

◦ High blood pressure

◦ High cholesterol

◦ Diabetes and pre-diabetes

◦ Smoking

◦ Being overweight or obese

◦ Being physically inactive

◦ Having a family history of early heart disease

◦ Having a history of preeclampsia during pregnancy

◦ Unhealthy diet

◦ Age (55 or older for women)

*Discuss Heart Healthy Lifestyle Handout.*

Ok, I'm not a doctor – and I'm not pretending to be one. But I care about you – souls and spirits yes, but bodies just as much. This stuff is real and really important. We live in our bodies. Our bodies are temples for God – homes for God. God wants us to take care of our bodies as best we can. Let us do our best to do just that and honor him with them. And today we give thanks be to God for the gift of our amazing bodies. Amen.