

MINISTRY BY MAIL
Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship
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Eighteenth Sunday After Trinity, October 4, 2026

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)

Hymns: 201, 3:4, 446, 398, 419:3.

Lessons: Psalm 40, 1 John 4:7-14, John 11:1-16.

Sermon Text: 1 Corinthians 6:9-14.

Sermon by Pastor M. H. Eibs

Dear Fellow Redeemed:

The Word of God, especially in Ephesians chapter 2 emphasizes that we are not justified by our own works, but rather that we are declared righteous by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith. There we read ***"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."*** Ephesians 2:8–9.

If this gives anyone the idea that the Christian may be lax in good works, this certainly is a deception of the devil. In Ephesians chapter 2 we also read: ***"We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."*** Ephesians 2:10. God specifically made us believers in Jesus so that we might serve Him with a God-pleasing life. In fact, only a Christian can do good works pleasing to the Lord, for the Scripture says: ***"Without faith it is impossible to please God."*** Hebrews 11:6. Furthermore, Christians have the only proper motive for living a life that pleases the Lord. For they believe Christ died and shed His blood for them. In other words, they know that a very precious price has been paid for their redemption. They, therefore, should certainly want to please the Lord and serve Him.

The devil, however, works overtime to deceive Christians and make them think they can be careless about living a Christian life of God-pleasing works. To Christians, then, Paul gives:

A WARNING: "THE WICKED WILL NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD."

1. Immoral deeds are not in harmony with the Christian faith and sanctification worked by the Holy Spirit;
2. Christian liberty is not to be used as a license to sin, but we should serve the Lord in hope of the resurrection to glory.

To the believers in Christ at Corinth the Apostle Paul wrote: ***"Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God."*** Paul tells the Corinthians not to be deceived. The fact is that they had been deceived and had become careless about immorality. In the chapter before our text Paul had to admonish them: ***"It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife. And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this?"*** 1 Corinthians 5:1–2.

Is it not true today, too, that because the world has accepted immorality as a way of life, also Christians can easily be deceived? Accordingly, they may think that they can adopt the ways of the world in committing immoral deeds. When we hear the list of immoral deeds mentioned in our text, does it not sound quite familiar? Four different terms in our text speak of sexual immorality. The sexually immoral are fornicators, those who believe that sex outside the marriage relationship is perfectly acceptable. Adulterers are those who are unfaithful to their marriage partner, either the wife or the husband, those who are cheating on those to whom they promised

love and faithfulness. The male prostitutes and the homosexual offenders are specifically denounced in the Bible as being guilty of sexual perversions. They are an abomination in the sight of God.

All of us are in danger of being deceived in these matters. One reason is that the sins of sexual immorality are constantly paraded in front of our eyes on the television and movie screens and in magazines and via the internet. Another reason is that a great many people have simply accepted immorality as 'a different life-style'. Even those guilty of the perversion of homosexuality have boldly come out into the public to demand acceptance of their sinful way of life. They are legally entitled to marry. Governments have granted this to them in contradiction to what God's Word forbids.

What does God's Word say about these things? About marriage it says: ***"Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral."*** Hebrews 13:4. Marriage between one man and one woman is not man's idea nor a product of historical development through the years. It is a holy estate instituted by God. God expects men and women to live together only in marriage, and under no other circumstances, whether it be for a night or for a longer period of time. As for homosexuality, the Book of Romans speaks of the ***"degrading of their bodies with one another,"*** of exchanging ***"natural relations for unnatural ones,"*** of ***"indecent acts,"*** or ***"perversion."*** Romans 1. The Book of Leviticus says: ***"If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable."*** 20:13a.

In addition, our text warns against ***"idolaters"*** - those who worship someone or something other than the Triune God. It warns against ***"thieves ...greedy ...drunkards... slanderers ...swindlers."*** Thieves steal from others secretly when no one is around. Swindlers steal by deceit and fraud, extorting money or property from others. Drunkards may spend their time in bars where the atmosphere is decidedly of this world. Wherever they drink, they drink to excess and bring about the ruination of both their body and soul. Slanderers ruin the reputation of others by speaking behind their back without any regard for the truth. The greedy worship the 'almighty dollar' and are not satisfied with what they have, but always desire more. The Lord in our text lumps all these sinners together and says none of them ***"will inherit the kingdom of God."*** Such wrongdoers will never enjoy the blessings of having eternal life in heaven. Their conduct places them on the same level with heathen.

Now, we as Christians should realize that such wickedness as described in our text is not in harmony with the Christian way of living. It is contrary to the Christian faith we profess. It is not that we never do anything wrong. We sin daily, and we, no doubt, have done some of the same sinful things as mentioned in our text. But, we also have repented of them, and daily ask God for forgiveness for Jesus' sake. We believe as the Bible says: ***"In Him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins."*** Ephesians 1:7.

So also, Paul reminded the Corinthian believers that their former life as heathen was a thing of the past. He said: ***"And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."*** The Holy Spirit did His work of sanctification in the hearts of the Corinthians who had formerly led a heathen life. Their sins were washed away in Holy Baptism. They were sanctified, that is, brought to faith in Jesus, separated from the sinful world and made holy through the blood of Christ. Most important of all is what Paul mentions when he says the Corinthians were justified. They were declared righteous for the sake of Jesus' redemptive work. God declared them free from all sin and guilt. Like the Corinthians, we also rejoice in this precious redemption by Jesus and our sanctification by the Holy Spirit. We, by the grace of God, believe and confess: ***"He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life."*** Titus 3:5-7.

If we truly appreciate what the Lord has done for us in Christ, we will not think of sin lightly. We will not go on sinning. With Paul we ask: ***"What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?"*** Romans 6:1-2. So, in a similar way, our text teaches that Christian liberty is not to be used as a license to sin, but we should serve the Lord in hope of the resurrection to glory.

2.

Paul says: ***"Everything is permissible for me'- but not everything is beneficial. 'Everything is permissible for me' but I will not be mastered by anything."*** In saying this, Paul was warning against the

mistaken idea that Christian liberty might be used as a license to sin. Paul had emphasized in his preaching how works could not save them, that the believers in Jesus had Christian liberty now and were no longer subject to the Old Testament regulations like observing the Sabbath Day on Saturday. Paul wrote: ***“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.”*** Galatians 5:1.

This wonderful Christian liberty we have in Christ, however, is not to be used as a license to do as we please. What God forbids in His Word is never to be allowed. What God has commanded no one is allowed to set aside. It is true that in things God has neither forbidden or commanded, we have liberty. But we cannot claim that we have liberty to practice sinful deeds. We have no right to practice sexual immorality to satisfy a need we feel, as, for example, we eat because we feel hungry. If we give in to our sinful cravings and desires, we will be overcome and they will gain the mastery over us. That certainly will not be beneficial for us or for our spiritual welfare.

The Apostle Paul uses the example of eating: ***“Food for the stomach and the stomach for food.’ But God will destroy them both.”*** Food is eaten and digested, but then the body gets rid of the rest. The body itself finally disintegrates in decay in the grave. The use of food for the body is in itself not wrong. But it is wrong to abuse the body by eating and drinking to excess and make ourselves sick.

Of a more serious nature is sexual immorality. Paul says: ***“The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also.”*** No one can argue that the sacredness of the institution of marriage can be violated just because He has given the ability to have children and the natural desire to satisfy our sex urge. Our body belongs to the Lord. The Lord created us so that we might serve Him, not our sinful desires. Therefore, when we are tempted to commit sexually immoral acts, let us remember two things. They are both mentioned by Paul in this passage following our text: ***“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.”*** I Cor. 6:19-20 The Holy Spirit dwells in us when we have Christ as our Savior by faith. How dare we desecrate His dwelling-place? And the Lord Jesus paid for our redemption with His most holy and precious blood as the ransom price. How dare we, then, dishonor our body by immoral deeds? A believer in Christ knows the answer!

This should be of even greater importance to us, for we have heard and learned how God raised up His Son from the grave, and as believers in Christ we look forward to the great Day of Resurrection when we will bodily enter upon eternal existence in the glory of heaven. Paul says: ***“Our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.”*** Phil. 3:20-21 May this glorious promise so strengthen our faith in Jesus, so that we avoid all immorality, and by God’s grace and strength serve the Lord in all we do. Amen.

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