**Theology of the Body**

**Doxology Insight**

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1. **God’s Remedy for Bodily Idolatry**
2. Present confusion about the human body in our society
* I am nothing more than my body v my body is not me
* Idol v prison
* Obsession with the sexual body → contempt for the sexual body
* Dissatisfaction with the body: 80-90% of females in Australia
* Appearance
* Anorexia and bulimia
* Most extreme with gender dysphoria
* Attempts at bodily makeover
* Bodily self-improvement via diet and exercise
* Decoration
* Plastic surgery
* Transgender assignment
* Transhumanism
* Misplaced guilt and shame from dissatisfaction with myself and what I have done to dissatisfaction with how I look
* Dissociation of self mentally from the actual body
* Pursuit of disembodied intimacy and spirituality: autistic generation
* God’s purpose for us: to become perfectly embodied souls in Christ
1. Human life in the body from birth to death
* Mostly taken for granted
* Constant companion
* Our location with our bodies in the world and in time
* Identification by our bodies: what we are
* Close association with our souls: who we are
* Minds as part of our bodies: embodied minds
* Given rather than self-made

1. Christian life in the body from earth to heaven
* Joined with our bodies to Jesus in baptism together with all believers
* Animated by God’s Spirit through spoken words
* Nourished and transformed by Christ’s body and blood
* Body as temple of the Holy Spirit
* Destined for eternal life with God
* Service of God with the body
1. Our incomplete vision of our bodies
* Our partial view of our bodies and souls: seen only in a mirror and through other’s eyes
* God as the only Knower of our hearts: vision of the whole person
* God’s complete view of us: see Ps 139:13-18

*1****3For you formed my inward parts;***

***you knitted me together in my mother’s womb.***

***14I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.***

***Wonderful are your works;***

***my soul knows it very well.***

***15My frame was not hidden from you,***

***when I was being made in secret,***

***intricately woven in the depths of the earth.***

***16Your eyes saw my unformed substance;***

***in your book were written, every one of them,***

***the days that were formed for me,***

***when as yet there was none of them.***

***17How precious to me are your thoughts, O God!***

***How vast is the sum of them!***

***18If I would count them, they are more than sand.***

***I awake and I am still with you.***

* God’s complete vision of us in our whole life from our conception: acquainted with all our ways (139:3)
* His purpose: to help us review our life in the body by revealing His “thoughts” to us through His word
* Two revised views of life
* Our waking up from sleep to discover God’s hidden presence with us
* Our lifelong journey on the everlasting way that leads from earth to heaven
* His trifocal view of our bodies
* Made in His image for life with Him
* Corrupted by sin
* Redeemed for eternal life with Him
* His vision of the glory prepared for us: see 1 Cor 2:9-10a

***But, as it is written,***

***“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,***

***nor the heart of man imagined,***

***what God has prepared for those who love him”-***

***these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit.***

* Summary by C. S. Lewis

***In fact, however, the value of an individual does not lie in him. He is capable of receiving value. He receives it by union with Christ. There is no question of finding for him a place in the living temple which will do justice to his inherent value and give scope to his natural idiosyncrasy. The place was there first. The man was created for it. He will not be himself till he is there. We shall be true and everlasting and really divine persons only in Heaven, just as we are, even now, coloured bodies only in the light.***(“Membership,” *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972, 41)

1. The theophanic body
* Creation of the human body in God’s image His glory, His visible self-disclosure
* Human embodied soul as the bridge between two realms: earth and heaven
* Creation of the body for bodily access and communion with God on earth
* Bodily reflection of the triune God in some measure by each body with its unique characteristics and unique vocation
* Bodily manifestation of God to other embodied people in the physical world
* Corruption of the body by sin: dirty, cracked windows or damaged musical instruments
* Restoration and perfection by Jesus and his Holy Spirit
* Bodies as God-bearing, God-showing shrines of the Holy Spirit
* Bodies as shining lights that stand in God’s light and reflect it (Matt 5:14-16; Phil 2:15)
1. Purpose of presentation
* Positive vision of the body and its hidden beauty
* Doomed to die and yet destined for glory
* God’s high regard for our bodies
* Hidden glory revealed by God’s word and Holy Spirit
* God’s vision of what our body will be and is already now: see Col 3:3: ***your life is hidden with Christ in God.***
* Call to use our sanctified imagination to see them as God does
* Truthful view rather than idealistic or cynical vision
* See admonition in Phil 4:8: **Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, there is anything worthy of praise, think of (consider/envisage) these things.**
* Praise of God for our bodies which He has so awesomely and wonderfully made.
1. **Given Bodies: God’s Creation of Bodies for Sexual Union in Marriage**
2. St Paul in 1 Cor 6:19: ***You are not your own.***
* Sticker: ***Your body may be a temple but mine’s an amusement park.***
* Common notion: I can do what I like with my body because it belongs to me.
* Christian teaching: owned body
* Given by God its Creator as His gift: body that belongs to Him
* Shared as a gift with my spouse in marriage: belongs to spouse whose body I do not own (1 Cor 7:4)
1. The God’s gift of our bodies
* Teaching of Jesus on divorce in Mark 10:6: ***from the beginning of creation God made them male and female. Therefore a man shall leave (will) his father and mother and hold fast (cleave) to his wife, and the two shall (will) become one flesh. So they are no longer two but one flesh.***
* Paraphrase of Gen 1:27 and 2:24
* Made by God rather than ourselves, our parents, or the natural world
* Created and sustained by God’s word
* Created in God’s image (Gen 1:27)

***So God created the man*** *(Hebrew ha’adam)* ***in His image,***

 ***in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.***

* Statement about primeval parents and all mankind
* Both male and female: singly and together
* Creation of whole person body and soul in God’s image
* Visible resemblance with invisible God (1:26)
* Procreation and rule
* Righteousness and holiness
* Incarnate Christ as God’s image (Rom 8:29; Col 1:15; cf. Eph 4:24; Col 3:10)
* Created as male and female
* Hebrew terms for both sex and gender
* Part of cosmic order with its many polarities: ordered diversity
* Luther: ***God divided mankind into two classes, namely, male and female, or a he and a she…Therefore each of us must have the kind of body God has created for us. I cannot make myself a woman, nor can you make yourself a man; we do not have that power. But we are exactly as he created us; I am a man and you a woman*** (LW 45.17).
1. The location for our bodies as taught in Gen 1:1-2:3
* God’s provision of an ordered habitat for the body in His cosmic ecosystem
* Order in time and space
* Ordered polarities for the maintenance of human life in the body
* Light v darkness
* Sky v earth
* Sea v land
* Cereals v fruit trees
* Sun v moon
* Fish v birds
* Animals v mankind
* Work with God and rest with God
* Ecological order of dependence and rule
* Dependence
* Light ← sky ← land and sea ← vegetation← fish and birds ← animals and humanity
* Odd placement of the sun, moon and stars between vegetation and animal life
* Rule
* Constellations over earth and vegetation
* Humanity over animal life
* God over humanity
* God’s appraisal and approval of His created physical order for human life
* Good creatures: dry land (1:10), vegetation (1:12), constellations (1:18), fish and birds (1:21), animals (1:25)
* Very good whole (1:31)
1. God’s maintenance of the dynamic, natural support system for life in the body even after the fall by his powerful utterances (Heb 1:3)
* The decree that provides light and energy for daily life (Gen 1:3)
* The decree for the earth to produce vegetation (Gen 1:11)
* The word of blessing for reproduction and rule over the earth and the animals (1:26)
* The words that provide food from plants (1:29) and animals (Gen 9:3)
* The ordinance that institutes marriage as a partnership (Gen 2:16)
* The promises to maintain all living creatures on earth (Gen 8:21) and to protect them from inundation (Gen 9:8-16)
* The ordinance that regulates the natural cycles for agriculture, weather, annual seasons, and days (Gen 8:22)
1. God’s creation of male and female bodies for sexual union in marriage
* Original solitude of Adam: basis for single life before and apart from marriage
* The need for sexual companionship
* Provision of helper: partner, helpmate, coworker in common enterprise
* Provision of opposite: counterpart, complement, match
* Building of Eve from Adam’s ribcage to be next to his heart: body mate with same flesh and bones
* Luther in LW 2:134: ***Let us therefore obey the Word of God and recognize our wives as a building of God. Not only is the house built through them by procreation and other services that are necessary in a household; but the husbands themselves are built through them, because wives are, as it were, a nest and a dwelling place where husbands can go to spend their time and dwell with joy.***
* Affinity and admiration: bone of bones and flesh of flesh
* Recognition of origin and orientation: from man and for man
* God as the marriage celebrant who joins them together: emphasis on this by Jesus in Matt 19:6
* Order for sexual union in three stages
* Husband’s leaving of his parents to start a new household
* Husband’s cleaving to his wife: safety of permanent commitment
* Both becoming one flesh with sexual intimacy and birth of children: conclusion by Jesus: ***So they are no longer two but one flesh.***
1. Dividing what God has united
* Separation of husband and wife by divorce and remarriage
* Supernatural union by God as its Maker
* Lifelong one flesh union under God
* Christ’s decree in Matt 19:6: ***What therefore God has joined together, let no one separate.***
* No dissolution by God and no sanction of divorce by Him except for fornication
* Remarriage as adultery in God’s eyes
* Result: impurity of body and soul
* Separation of gender from sex
* Modern dissociation of personal gender from biological sexuality
* Gender as social, personal construct: self-identification
* Range of genders: heterosexual, bisexual, homosexual, asexual, transsexual, queer, intersexual
* Notion of gender fluidity: matter of choice
* Extreme degree: gender reassignment and queer life
* Result: disorder and confusion
1. Uniting what God has divided
* Union of an unmarried man and woman in fornication
* Pagan and modern approval: harmless satisfaction of physical needs like eating of food (1 Cor 6:13)
* Prohibition by God as an act that results in physical and spiritual impurity (Mark 7:21; Acts 15:20; 2 Cor 12:21; Gal 5:19; Eph 5:5; Col 3:5; 1 Thess 4:3; Heb 13:4)
* Life-damaging pollution for body and soul
* Separation of the body from the soul
* Temporary union of body with an alien body
* Negation of union with body and soul
* Diminished capacity for total self-giving and ordinary sexual enjoyment in marriage
* Bad conscience from God’s disapproval (1 Thess 4:3-8; Heb 13:4)
* Result: discarnate spirituality
* Desecration of holiness for Christian: see Paul in 1 Cor 6:12-20
* Union of two people of the same sex in homosexual intercourse
* Pagan and modern approval (Lev 18:1-5, 22, 24-30)
* Bodily idolatry with bodily debasement (Rom 1:22-27)
* Prohibition by God as pollution of body and soul (Lev 18:22; 20:13; 1 Cor 6:9; 1 Tim 1:10)
* Life-damaging disorder (Lev 18:5) and bodily desecration (20:7-8, 26)
* Bad conscience from God’s disapproval (1 Cor 6:9): need for social approval
1. The reflection of God’s image sexually by human bodies
* Single bodies: bodily devotion of men and women to God like Jesus as his brothers and sisters (1 Cor 7:32-35)
* Married bodies: one flesh union in marriage to mirror the one flesh union of Christ with the church (Eph 5:25-32)
* Both single and married bodies: bodily participation in Christ’s purity and holiness
1. **Bodily Redemption by Union with the Body of Jesus**
2. Redemption as full embodiment in Christ: see Lewis on solid, bright people rather than dull ghosts in *The Great Divorce*
3. The incarnation of God’s Son for our bodily redemption
* See John 1:14, 16, 18: ***And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth…For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace… No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known***.
	+ God’s speaking through His incarnate Son: whole human life as God’s speech
	+ The flesh of God’s incarnate Son as the new tabernacle: meeting place of God with us
	+ His flesh as the dwelling place of divine glory on earth: place for theophany
* Our vision of God the Father through the flesh of Jesus
* Our reception of God’s grace through his flesh
	+ The body of the risen Lord Jesus as the temple of the living God (John 2:21)
* See Col 2:9: ***In him (Christ) the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness in him…***
* Location of triune God in the body of risen Lord Jesus: bodily dwelling place
* Our body union with him and body transformation by God with him in baptism: sharing bodily in his death, burial and resurrection
* He shared our dying flesh and blood in order to share his life-giving flesh and blood with us (Heb 2:14).
* Our present bodily participation in the divine, eternal life of God the Father through him
* Luther on our physical access to God through Jesus here on earth (LW 24:65-66): ***He (God) did not bid you soar heavenward on your own and gape to see what God is doing in heaven with the angels. No, this is His command (Matt 17:5): “This is My beloved Son; listen to Him. There I descend to you on earth so that you can see, hear, and touch Me. There and nowhere else is the place for those to encounter and find Me who desire Me and would like to be delivered from sin and be saved.” We should quickly assent and say, “God himself says this, and I will follow Him and give ear to no other word or message; nor do I want to know anything else about God. For as St. Paul declares (Col 2:9), in His Person ‘dwells the whole fullness of Deity bodily’; and there is no God apart from Him where I could come to Him or find Him…Now whenever one hears this Man’s Word and sees His work, there one surely hears and sees God’s Word and work****.*
1. His bodily ministry for us in his earthly life
* Luther on his bodily participation in our whole life cycle for our purification and sanctification(WA 37**.**57:15-25): ***For he (Christ) has purified everything with his body, so that through him nothing that belongs to our old birth and this life damages us at all; but everything is considered to be as pure as his own (body), because through baptism and faith I have been clothed with his birth and life. Therefore everything I do is pleasing to God and is called holy walking, standing, eating, drinking, sleeping, and waking, etc. For each Christian everything becomes a completely holy, even though he still lives in the flesh and is quite impure in himself; through faith, everything about him is pure. This, however, is an alien holiness and yet our own, because God does not want to see anything that we do in this life as impure in itself; but everything becomes holy, precious, and acceptable to him through this Child who makes the whole world holy through his life.***
* Christ’s bodily conception and birth for our regeneration and rebirth
* His bodily baptism for our bodily deliverance from sin in baptism: great exchange
* His bodily ministry for us in word and deed: bodily interaction with us
* His bodily suffering and death as his bodily self-offering on our justification and healing
* See 1 Pet 2:24: *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds we have been healed.*
* His experience of human weakness, suffering and temptation (Heb 2:18; 4:15)
* His bodily resurrection and ascension for our bodily participation in his life and glory: living heavenly lives in the body here on earth
* See Eph 2: 4-6: ***God…made us alive together with Christ…and raised us up with him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus…***
* Luther in LW 22:110: ***Thus the most precious treasure and the strongest consolation we Christians have is this: that the Word, the true and natural Son of God, became man, with flesh and blood like that of any human; that he became incarnate for our sakes in order that we might enter into glory, that our flesh and blood, skin and hair, hands and feet, stomach and back might reside in heaven as God does, and in order that we might defy the devil and whatever else assails us. We are convinced that all our members belong in heaven as heirs of heaven’s realm*.**
1. His bodily ministry with us in the divine service
* See Acts 1:1-2a: ***In my first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day when he was taken up…***
* The earthly work of Jesus as the beginning of his ongoing work between his ascension and appearance in judgment
* His present work in healing and teaching through the ministry of word and sacrament
* The bodily ministry of the risen Lord Jesus in the church
* His presence with his disciples until the end of the world (Matt 18:20; 28:20)
* Christ’s flesh as the new and living way into the Father’s presence: two way bridge (Heb 10:19)
* His use of physical means to minister bodily to us in the divine service
* Luther’s term: the embodied word
* Water, spoken words, and human hands in baptism: bodily union with Christ
* Spoken words from a human mouth in absolution, proclamation, instruction, and benediction: bodily communication of Christ with them
* Bread and wine, spoken words and human hands in Holy Communion: bodily gift of Christ’s body and blood
* The means of grace as the physical means of the Spirit
* Christ’s words as Spirit and life (John 6:63)
* Gift of Holy Spirit in baptism (Acts 2:38; 1 Cor 12:13)
* Body and blood of Jesus as spiritual food and spiritual drink (1 Cor 10:3, 4)
* Luther on Christ’s bodily interaction with us (LW 22:420-21): ***God has given us Baptism, the Sacrament of the Altar, and absolution to bring Christ very close to us, so that we can have him not only in our heart but also on our tongue, so that we can feel Him, grasp Him, and touch Him…He wants to come to you, plant Himself before your very eyes, press Himself into your hands, and say, “Just listen to Me and take hold of Me, give Me eye and ear; there you have Baptism and the Sacrament of the Altar. Open your mouth, let Me place My hand on your head. I give you this water which I sprinkle over your head.”***
1. Our bodily participation in the divine service

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

* Presentation of redeemed bodies to God in the divine service
* Allusion to the service of the word in the synagogue: spoken service with confession of faith, reading of God’s word from the OT, teaching of God’s word, praying and praising God with psalms, and performance of the Aaronic Benediction
* Contrast with the offering of the dead bodies of animals and lifeless foodstuff at the temple
* Bodily offering that is living, holy and well-pleasing to God by participation in the divine service
* Purpose of offering: renewal of minds in order to discern and do God’s will with our bodies
* Access to God in His heavenly sanctuary in the divine service with bodies that have been washed with the pure water of baptism (Heb 10:22)
* Offering our members for purification and sanctification (Rom 6:11-23)
* Attentive ears and perceptive eyes (Matt 13:16-17)
* Receptive hands and mouths in HC
* Hands with gifts of mercy as our offering (Matt 6:1-4; Heb 13:16)
* Responsive tongues: spoken confession, prayer, and praise
* The standing, sitting, walking and kneeling body
1. Luther on our bodily transformation through eating Christ’s body in LW 37: 100-01: ***Christ’s flesh…is a spiritual flesh that does not let itself be transformed but transforms those who eat it, and it gives them the Spirit…And that is what this spiritual flesh does. When the body eats it physically, this food digests the body’s flesh and transform it so that it becomes spiritual…It is as if a wolf devoured a sheep, and the sheep was so powerful a food that it transformed the wolf and turned the wolf into a sheep. So when we eat Christ’s flesh physically and spiritually, the food is so powerful that it transforms us into itself. It makes us spiritual, holy, living people out of fleshly, sinful, mortal people.***
2. **Bodily Sanctification for Eternal Life with God**
3. Secular one eyed view of the human body
* Common pictures: temporary house and set of clothes
* Subject to corruption and decay: life swallowed up by death
* Doomed to die: total annihilation or spiritual disembodiment
1. The promise of full embodiment through Jesus
* Makeover by Christ in life on earth
* New creation (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15; Eph 4:24)
* New Adam (Col 2:10; Eph 4:24)
* New mentality (Eph 4:22)
* New way of life (Rom 6:4)
* Makeover in baptism: undressing and dressing up
* Putting off the body of flesh rather than just foreskin (Col 2:11)
* Putting on Christ (Gal 3:27)
* Putting off old Adam and putting on new Adam (Col 3:9-10)
* Ongoing process of appropriation in the divine service and daily devotions
* Throwing off works of darkness and putting on the armor of light (Rom 13:12)
* Putting on the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 13:14)
* Putting off the old corrupt Adam and putting on the new righteous and devout Adam (Eph 4:20-24)
* Completion of our makeover at our resurrection in 1 Cor 15:49-53: ***Just as we have worn the image of the man of dust, we shall also wear the image of the Man of heaven. I tell you this, brothers; flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven, nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in moment, in the winkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible (body) must be clothed with incorruption, and this mortal (body) must be clothed with immortality****.*
* Makeover of bodies complete at resurrection
* Clothing with Christ’s incorruption, immortality, and glory
* Transformation of natural body into a spiritual body, a body animated by the Holy Spirit
* The hope of full embodiment in 2 Cor 4:16-5:8: ***So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self (Adam) is wasting away, our inner self (Adam) is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to things that are seen but to things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. For we know that if the tent that is our earthly body is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened –not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight.***
* Two selves with two different kinds of bodies
* Outer v inner
* Visible v invisible
* Transitory v eternal
* Mortal v immortal
* Two homes
* Fragile tent v solid house
* Human v God-made
* Destructible v indestructible
* Located on earth v located in heaven
* Two sets of clothing
* Human v divine
* Partially dressed for life on earth v fully dressed for life with God
* Hope of full embodiment rather than naked souls
* Purpose of re-embodiment: overwhelming life and expansive glory
1. The bodily sanctification for eternal life with God
* God’s will for us: our sanctification (1 Thess 4:3)
* Purpose of our justification = sanctification for and by eternal life with God (Rom 6:12-23)
* Purification of body with its members from sin in baptism
* Presentation of members for sanctification in the divine service
* Eternal life with God as its hidden fruit already now
* Our sanctification by Jesus by participation in his holiness
* Jesus as the Holy One of God (Mark 1:24; John 6:69)
* His consecration by the Father for our sanctification (John 10:36)
* His self-consecration for our sanctification (John 17:19; Heb 10:10)
* Jesus as our holiness (1 Cor 1:30)
* We as holy in him (Phil 1:1; 4:31)
* Our increasing participation in his holiness (2 Cor 7:1; Heb 12:10)
* Our sanctification by Jesus (Heb 2:11; 1 Cor 1:2) and faith in him (Acts 26:18)
* Through his word (John 17:17; 1 Tim 4:5)
* Through his name and word in baptism (1 Cor 6:11; Eph 5:25-27)
* Through his body (Heb 10:10) and blood (Heb 10:29; 13:12)
* Through the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:11; 2 Thess 2:13)
* Whole sanctification in body, soul and spirit: gift of full spiritual health for Christ’s advent in glory (1 Thess 5:23-24)
* Result of our participation in his holiness
* Christians as holy in God’s sight (Eph 1:5; Col 1:22): angelic status with access to God
* Holy priestly people (1 Pet 2:9)
* Holy service (Luke 1:74-75)
* Congregation as holy temple of God (1 Cor 3:16-17; 2 Cor 6:14-71)
* Avoidance of desecration
* Separation from idolatry and impurity (2 Cor 6:16-17)
* Cleansing from defilement of body and soul (2 Cor 7:1)
* God’s dwelling with us as His houshold (2 Cor 6:16)
* Pursuit of complete sanctification (2 Cor 7:1)
* Bodies as holy shrines (1 Cor 6:19-20)
* God’s property
* Temples of Holy Spirit
* Vocation: disclosure of God’s glory
1. Bodily presentation
* God’s presentation of Eve to Adam for his admiration in Gen 2:22
* Christ’s presentation of the church to himself as his Bride in Eph 5:25-27: ***Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.***
* Our unpresentable selves with our sinful souls and bodies: unworthy bride for God’s Son
* Normal self-preparation of bride for her wedding in the ancient world
* Bathing of body with perfumed water
* Clothing with bridal gown
* Application of makeup to cover spots, wrinkles and blemishes
* Application of expensive perfume
* Decoration with expensive jewelry
* Presentation to her husband as lovely bride
* Christ’s preparation of his unworthy bride like Cinderella in baptism for union with him
* Reason for her makeover: transforming love for her to make her lovely despite her appearance
* Washing with water in baptism to cleanse her from the sin
* Clothing with his purity and righteousness
* Adornment with his holiness and glory
* Result of makeover: unblemished and lovely
* The purpose of his presentation
* Acceptance and approval
* Appreciation and admiration as in the Song of Songs
* Demonstration of his love and regard for her
* His heavenly vision of us: seeing us as we will be
* Christ’s presentation of the church to God the Father in Col 1:21-22: ***And you, who were once alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he (Jesus) has now reconciled in his body of death by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach in His sight.***
* Picture: Jesus as our high priest and his body as a sacrificial offering
* We as God’s enemies
* Our reconciliation with God through his body that was sacrificed for us (1:22) and his blood that makes peace for us (1:20)
* His presentation of us as a perfect offering to God for His approval
* Holy by participation in Christ’s holiness
* Blameless by cleansing from impurity
* Above reproach without accusation and condemnation from pardon for sin
1. Conclusion from C. S. Lewis: ***If we let Him – for we can prevent him if we choose – He will make the feeblest and filthiest of us into a god or goddess, a dazzling, radiant, immortal creature, pulsating all through with such energy and joy and wisdom and love as we cannot now imagine, a bright stainless mirror which reflects back to God perfectly (though of course on a smaller scale) His boundless power and delight and goodness. The process will be long and in parts painful; but that is what we are in for. Nothing less. He meant what he said. (Mere Christianity*, Glasgow: Collins, 1977, 172.)**
2. **Sex with a Good Conscience**
3. Our sexual ambivalence
* Attraction and repulsion
* Excitement and disgust
* Conflict between mind and the body
* Index of the conscience: need to feel right about sex in order to feel right about one’s self
* Common cause for bad conscience that sabotages sexual enjoyment
* Desire for sexual innocence and sexual approval
1. The virtue of sexual chastity
* Sexual impurity from sexual abuse
* Cause: disordered heart with its disordered desires (Mark 7:2-23)
* Pollution of the whole person by sexual lust
* Damage to natural sexual ecology: disorderly, addictive, destructive, life-diminishing, depersonalizing, and desensitizing (Eph 4:19)
* Rejection by NT as a work of the flesh (Gal 5:19) that is improper for God’s holy people (Eph 5:3)
* Connection with sexual idolatry (Rom 1:22-25; Eph 5:5; Col 3:5)
* Disqualification from God’s kingdom (Eph 5:5)
* Need for repentance (2 Cor 12:21)
* Cleansing by Christ (1 Cor 6:9-11; Eph 5:25-26; cf. Tit 2:11-14)
* Chastity as sexual purity rather than virginity
* Call for all Christians to “lead a chaste and decent life”
* Chastity as physical and mental, personal and spiritual
* Condition for life-enhancing, fruitful sexuality
* Aspect of sexual ecology: works best when done with the right person, at the right time, in its right place, and in the right way
* Moral chastity: sexual integrity and faithfulness to spouse
* Spiritual chastity: heart devoted to Christ that is governed by his self-giving love and his Holy Spirit rather than possessive lust
* Two sides
* Sexual self-reservation for another person in marriage
* Total self-giving in marriage
* Avoidance of sexual defilement as the desecration of both body and soul (1 Cor 7:1) as well as holy matrimony (Heb 13:4)
* Reflection of the one flesh union of Christ with the church (Eph 5:25-32)
* Connection with the resurrection of the body (1 Cor 6:12-20)
1. The teaching on sexual sanctification in 1 Thess 4:1, 3-8: ***Finally brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality (fornication); that each of you know how to control his own body (vessel, instrument) in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger of all these things, as we have told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.***
* Instruction on honorable, God-pleasing sexual behavior: sex with a good conscience
* God’s will for us: our sexual sanctification
* Call from sexual impurity to sexual sanctification
* Result of our baptism (Eph 5:25-27) and participation in the divine service (Rom 6:12-23)
* Three aspects
* Avoidance of fornication for single members
* Exercise of sexual self-restraint that honors the spouse for married members rather than indulgence of sexual lust like the Gentiles
* Prohibition of lustful, sexual abuse of fellow members
* Punishment of abuse by Jesus
* Sexual sanctification as the work of the Holy Spirit
1. The sanctification of marriage in 1 Tim 4:1-5: ***Now the Spirit expressly says that in the later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, through the insincerity (hypocrisy) of liars whose consciences are seared, who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.***
* Wrong asceticism from seared, desensitized conscience: pursuit of higher levels of spiritual consciousness
* Abstinence from marriage by people who regard sex and certain foods such a meat as unclean and unspiritual: pursuit of disembodied, demonic spirituality
* Sex and marriage as a good gifts from God in creation
* Sanctification of marriage by the word of God and prayer
* In the Christian rite of marriage
* In the divine service
* In daily devotions
* Transformation of marriage into holy matrimony: holy estate and sanctified sex
* The importance of thanksgiving to God and one’s spouse in Eph 5:4: thanksgiving rather than filthy talk
1. The transformation of sexual desire
* Warning by Jesus about sexual lust in Matt 5:27-30: looking as secret doing
* Inward imaginary adultery
* Need for radical surgery by Christ: eyes and hand
* Confession and absolution
* The transformation of the imagination
* Connection between the imagination and sexual desire
* The importance and power of visual intimacy: eyes as sexual organs
* Sexual intercourse as uncovering nakedness (Lev 18:6-19; 20:11, 17-21)
* Visual sexual self-giving by physical self-disclosure
* Debasement by sin: fearful prudery and manipulative exhibitionism
* Exploitation by pornography: depiction of nakedness for sexual arousal
* Problem: unreal and not explicit enough
* Growing recognition of its huge damage: pollution of whole person
* Need for cleansing by private confession and absolution and by the blood of Jesus in HC
* An antidote to the corruption of sexual imagination and desire in the Song of Songs
* Woman as the main actor: conversation between her and her lover
* Use of imagery for sexual interaction that appeals to all five senses
* Picture of her body as her garden: admission at her invitation
* Imaginative depiction of male and female nudity by poetic re-appropriation of imagery from pagan idols
* Focus on the whole body rather than genitalia
* Husband’s admiration his wife’s body and praise for her beauty
* 4:1-5: eyes → hair → teeth → lips → mouth → cheeks → neck → breasts (cf. 7:7-8; Prov 5:19)
* 7:1-5: feet with sandals → thighs → navel → belly → breasts → neck → eyes → nose → head → locks of hair
* Wife’s admiration and praise for her husband’s body in 5:10-16: head → hair → eyes → cheeks → lips → arms → torso → legs → whole appearance → mouth
* Model for the healthy exercise of outspoken physical, sexual admiration of the body in marriage
* Purification and sanctification of imagination and desire by God’s word
* Luther in WA 34:15.15-19: ***When a husband looks at his wife as if she were the only woman on earth, and when the woman looks at her husband as if he were the only man on earth; yes, if no king or queen, not even the sun itself sparkles more brightly and lights up your eyes more than your husband or wife, then right there you are face to face with God speaking. God…actually gives your spouse to you, saying; “The man shall be yours; the woman shall be yours. I am pleased beyond measure! Creatures heavenly and earthly are jumping for joy.***
1. C. S. Lewis in Mere Christianity, 88: ***The old Christian teachers said that if man had never fallen, sexual pleasure, instead of being less than it is now, would actually have been greater. I know that some muddle-headed Christians have talked as if Christianity thought that sex, or the body, or pleasure, were bad in themselves. But they are wrong. Christianity is almost the only one of the great religions that thoroughly approves of the body – which believes that matter is good, that God Himself once took on a human body, that some kind of body is going to be given us even in Heaven and is going to be an essential part of our happiness, our beauty, and our energy.***