

It's always interesting to me that different things catch my attention every year on my annual Journey through the Bible. This year, as I made my way through Genesis, I was struck by how many times sexual temptation and sexual sin were reported in those few pages, and we thought for a while about sexuality on the Wednesday night before the snow.<sup>1</sup> On that occasion, I passed out "Good is the Flesh," a most interesting hymn by Brian Wren, and a handout on "Scripture & Sexuality," both of which are attached with this *Laptop*.



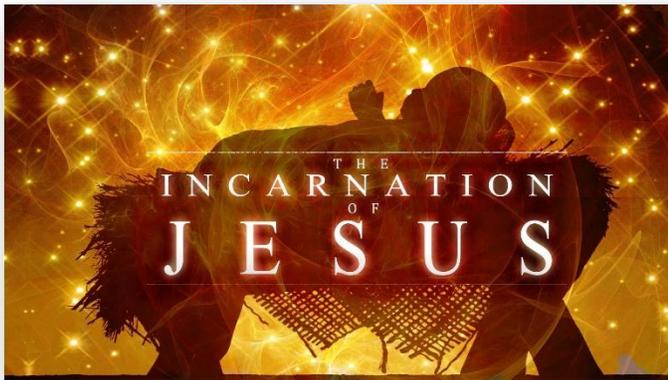
I pointed out that "sexuality" is not the same thing as "genital sexuality," or "intercourse." Neither is "sexuality" the same thing as "gender roles." We humans are psycho-sexual-spiritual wholes, and our experience of ourselves as sexual beings cannot be separated from our experience of ourselves as spiritual beings.

Whether we like it or not, our sexuality is not something on the sidelines of our experience, but something that affects all that we know and all that we are. James Nelson noted that "sexuality is not a separate compartment of human life, but a radiance pervading every human relationship."<sup>2</sup>

Our sexuality is something created by God, and about which God said, "*It is very good*" (Genesis 1:31). And of all the religions in the world, Christianity ought to take embodiment and sexuality seriously, because the Bible tells us that "***The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth***" (John 1:14).

It should say something important to us that our Creator chose to experience life

in human flesh. The Incarnation (the Enfleshment of God) means many things, and one of the things it means is that Jesus was well-acquainted with what it means to be a sexual being. Jesus knew what it's like to be a teenage boy and a young man, and he knew what it means to be tempted in sexual ways. Hebrews reminds us that "*we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin*" (4:15).



This idea is in fact so radical that some early Christians felt compelled to deny that Jesus actually inhabited a physical body. These believers—called Docetists—said that Jesus only *appeared* to be flesh and blood.

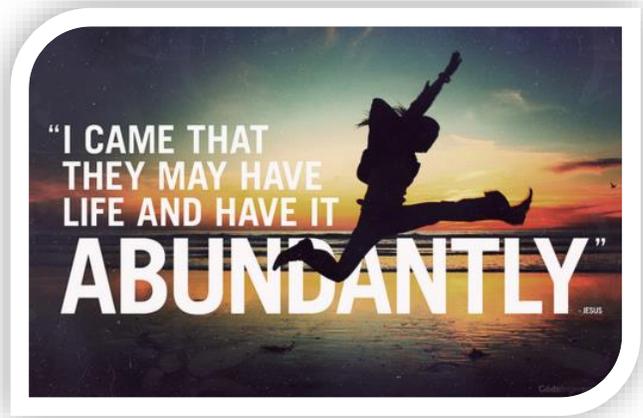
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<sup>1</sup> On the Wednesday of the snow, we were supposed to talk about Joseph's dreams. We'll still do that at some point before long, and I encourage you to continue to be curious about your dreams and to record anything that catches your attention.

<sup>2</sup> James Nelson, *Embodiment: An Approach to Sexuality and Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1978), p. 91.

But Jesus was not only flesh and blood before His death; He was flesh and blood after His resurrection, too. “*Look at my hands and my feet,*” Jesus told His astonished disciples. “*It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have*” (Luke 24:36-43).

Jesus told us that He had come in human flesh so that we might have “*abundant life*” (John 10:10), and we may presume that if Jesus could give abundant life to us, He himself lived such a life. And on the present subject, this means that while Abundant Life does mean life as a sexual person in a physical body, Jesus himself demonstrates that **it is not necessary to experience genital sexuality or intercourse in order to have Abundant Life.** This is a crucial point.



This is a crucial point because there are some very important things NOT being said in our current political process as it relates to the overheated discussions about abortion and Planned Parenthood. From my perspective, at least, once a human egg has been fertilized, it is manifestly God’s purpose to create a human person from that zygote, and it is completely artificial to try to establish any later time as the time when the fetus “becomes human.” There are many who do not accept this presupposition, but for those of us who do, all abortion involves taking a human life. The question then becomes one of when, if ever, such taking is morally justifiable.



While I do think some circumstances may justify such taking, statistics indicate that one in five pregnancies in this country ends in abortion, and that 86% of those abortions are completed by women who are not married.<sup>8</sup> In addition to this, a poll of 36,000 obstetricians some years ago indicated that perhaps as many as **95% of abortions in this country have no medical or moral justification other than birth control**.<sup>9</sup>

Given all this, it would appear that much of the hue and cry about “a woman’s right to choose” really grows out of the assumption that intercourse is essential for full humanness, that every person has a right to “all the intercourse they want,” and that we ought not have to take any responsibility for the consequences of those actions. Whether we understand ourselves to be heterosexual or homosexual, **we have made an idol of intercourse**, and were it not for this particular idol, much of the evil we decry in the world would not exist at all.

If every person on the planet practiced **chastity before marriage and faithfulness in marriage**, there would be no pornography. There would be no sexual abuse of persons

<sup>8</sup> 21% [www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb\\_induced\\_abortion.html](http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb_induced_abortion.html)

85.5% unmarried <http://dailycaller.com/2014/11/28/cdc-18-percent-of-all-pregnancies-now-end-in-abortion/>

<sup>9</sup> *Physician*, March, 1995.

of any age. There would be virtually no abortion. There would be no sex trafficking and sex tourism. And there would be no “Planned Parenthood.”

I appreciate (a little bit) the underlying sense of unfairness that leads some to campaign for “a woman’s right to choose,” but the unspoken assumption in that campaign is that women as well as men ought to be able to live thoroughly immoral lives and experience no consequences for those choices. My friends, our sexuality truly is a Good Gift from God; but if we choose not to live the Abundant Life that only Jesus gives, rejoicing in our lives as redeemed persons with eternal purpose, then we are left with living as the animals we also are.

Trying to legislate morality has never worked very well. But telling the truth about what’s really going on and pointing our friends toward Life that is truly Abundant is still able to change the world.

May it be so in our time.

Dave

