

Rev. Janet Doyle
Elmer Presbyterian Church
Sunday, August 7, 2022
Scripture: 1 Corinthians 3:16-17

Sermon: Caring For the Temple

Americans spend \$264.6 billion per year on fitness. Each year 45 million people in the U.S. go on weight loss programs. Diet and weight loss have grown to be a \$71 billion industry, yet according to studies, 95% of diets fail. Substance abuse costs our Nation over \$600 billion annually, but treatment can help reduce these costs. Cigarette smoking remains the leading cause of preventable disease, disability, and death in the United States, accounting for more than 480,000 deaths every year or about 1 in 5 deaths. In 2020, nearly 13 of every 100 US adults aged 18 years or older smoked cigarettes. That means as of 2020, an estimated 30.8 million adults in the United States currently smoke cigarettes. More than 16 million Americans live with a smoking-related disease. As Americans we spend billions of dollars trying to help our body and billions of dollars causing self-destruction of our bodies by how we live our lives.

Americans are very body conscious. New research reveals American women spend nearly a quarter of a million dollars on their appearance in their lifetime. An average woman will spend an average of \$3,756 per year on their appearance, which adds up to \$225,360 throughout their entire lifetime. 30% of women said they would consider cosmetic surgery to help maintain a youthful appearance. 30% of women often worry about their appearance compared to 21% of men. Top concerns for both men and women are #1 weight, #2 hair, #3 skin quality.

Psalms 139 makes it clear that “We are fearfully and wonderfully made; and that God’s works are wonderful”. We are fueled by oxygen and food, kept alive by blood circulating through us, and everything has to be in balance to keep us healthy. We are complex systems that God created. The human body and mind are still mysteries, and no one has found a way to keep us alive forever, except God, who gives us eternal life after death of our earthly body.

Because we are so intricately made, our bodies contain the Spirit of God when we become one of his children and belong to him. We are planned by God, made in his image, whether people believe that or not.

The human body is a creation of God, reflecting His glory; and should be treated with respect and used morally and responsibly, and used for His glory.

People need food, air, water and shelter around them in order to survive, so we must be very careful how we treat our bodies. We must take care of our bodies physically and avoid anything which harms our body, even though it is tempting and it smells, tastes, or feels good.

Drinking alcohol, abusing drugs, smoking, overeating, all these harm the human body. So, to take care of the body, we must try to avoid things that harm us mentally, spiritually and physically. How we feel affects how well our body functions. To keep our body healthy, we must watch our diet and our attitudes that affect our mind and spirit.

Our scripture lesson for today is reminding us that our bodies are the Temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in us when we become new creations in Christ. When he pours his Holy Spirit in us we are changed. The old clothes are to be put away, as we talked about last week, and we put on the new clothes that God gives us. We were bought with a price. Therefore, we need to honor God with our bodies that are cleansed, forgiven, holy and acceptable to God.

In the Old Testament, before the Israelites had a temple, they had a tabernacle. In Exodus 25:8, God commands Moses, "Have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them." But the tabernacle wasn't just beautiful. It was holy. The purpose of the tabernacle was to be mobile and a place where heaven met earth so that God could commune with his people unobstructed by sin. Wherever the Israelites went, God wanted to go, too.

When Jesus came, there was no need for a temple being in a single location. Christians became the temple of God, a house for his Holy Spirit. Because of his blood that makes us clean, we can be pure and holy to have his Spirit live in us. We have become a meeting place

between heaven and earth to bring other people into community with God.

The building or the place we call 'the Church' is not God's temple. When we connect with the Spirit of God and accept Jesus, the Spirit of God dwells within us and we are cleansed.

The temple in the Old Testament was given great care in its design and construction. The people were to know that God lived there. When Jesus came to the earth he referred to himself as the Temple. Jesus said, "destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." He was speaking of his body and when Jesus had risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this to them, and they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken to them.

Now after Jesus' ascension and the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Temple is you. We need to be careful where the Temple goes and what it does and how it reacts to the things of life. The Holy Spirit is in you wherever you go, and we are called to glorify God with our Temple.

When our bodies are Temples of God, we should keep our mind on the things above opposed to giving into fleshly temptations we talked about last week.

We are called to make healthy choices with our mind, body and soul, and as we see in our world, most people aren't making healthy choices. People think they can live forever and do whatever they want and there will be no repercussions for their actions.

See your body as a gift from God, whatever age you are. The world will tell us we need to look a certain way and dress a certain way, but if we view our bodies as a gift from God, we will use our Temple to serve the Lord in all that we do.

Romans 12:1 says, "And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice – the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him."

As you come to the Lord's Table today, come knowing you are the Temple of God, loved and created for a purpose and dedicate your life to God to be holy and acceptable unto him.

Serve the Lord with your whole mind, body, and soul and fill it with good things to keep it holy and clean. Don't get entangled with the ways of the world but be drawn closer to Christ, becoming more and more like him every day.