

Christ Still Appears (1st Corinthians 6:12-20)
For Your Life in Christ the Week of the Second Sunday after the Epiphany
Saint Paul's Lutheran Church of Irvine, CA (LC-MS)
Rev. Dr. Alfonso O. Espinosa
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Introduction: The Many Epiphanies

- A. The word "Epiphany" means "appearing".**
- B. The formal epiphanies that we celebrate in the Church are very important.**
- C. The transition from Advent to Christmas to Epiphany is crucial for knowing the Lord Jesus Christ.**
- D. Christ showed that He was most certainly one of us (a real human being, a man) by virtue of being born, but then the rest of the story...**
- E. The Biblical Epiphanies:**
 - 1. THE Epiphany that we observe on January 6th is the account of the Magi who followed the Star that led them to Bethlehem. And then they worshipped Christ (recall the 3 gifts).**
 - 2. Then as we celebrated last Sunday, we remembered the epiphany that took place at the Baptism of the Lord! It was an astounding epiphany!**
- F. All of these say that Christ is more than a man...He is the Son of God!**
- G. In addition, Christ appears and is given to us through Word and Sacrament.**
- H. But there is yet another way that is easy to forget: Christ "appears" – there is an epiphany of Christ – in and through YOU, the Christian, the Child of God!**

Part I: Christ Appears In and Through You By The Way You Relate To What Is Around You:

A. 1st Corinthians 6:12:

"All things are lawful for me,' but I will not be enslaved by anything."

- 1. Saint Paul reminds us that in regard to our salvation and forgiveness, we are bound to nothing. We are saved as a free gift: by grace through faith in Jesus Christ and Him alone.**

2. Therefore, "all things are lawful." In other words, eating bacon will not get me saved, nor will not eating bacon get me saved; living in South Orange County is not the basis for my forgiveness, nor is NOT living in Orange County the basis for my forgiveness. You see in this respect "all things are lawful for me." [this by the way has important implications for us as a congregation!]
 3. **HOWEVER**, Saint Paul goes on to say that nevertheless He will not be enslaved by anything!
- B. Such a life that is not enslaved by anything is a life that truly knows Christ as one's "all in all."**
1. In other words, when Christ appears in your life and continues to appear in your life as your Savior, then you become increasingly aware of His all-sufficiency!
 2. That means that you know – and it is actually true – that if you have Jesus Christ, then you have everything you **NEED**!
 3. Think of the opening words of Psalm 23 for instance! Think of Matthew 6:33! Think of Psalm 37:4!
 4. *Now this being the case, we don't NEED anything else...so why be enslaved by anything else? Not to be enslaved to things that are here today and gone tomorrow is a way that Christ shows Himself in your life! The contentment, the peace, the quiet and blessed assurance that you can face anything...is evidence of Jesus Christ in your life. In this way Christ appears in you and you know what? When this happens, people can see it!*

Part II: Saint Paul, However, Addresses A Specific and Very Serious Form of Slavery:

A. 1st Corinthians 6:13:

"The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body."

1. A basic sin and fundamental attack of sin, the world, and the devil is sexual immorality.
2. It is something that is used **AGAINST** Christ appearing in you.
3. It is something designed to deceive and to get people to believe they **NEED** something over and above God. [keep in mind that I am not speaking about sex as a gift from God, but about "sexual immorality" or the wrong or sinful abuse of the gift]

4. It is a form of spiritual and emotional slavery. It can become a psychological addiction.
5. So Saint Paul warns against it: your actual body is “meant...for the Lord.” This is an astounding thing to say, but it is true: God does not merely desire to save you, but He desires to be with you and in you. Consider John 14:23:

“If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”

B. But this home is in the context of a larger and greater home and living in this greater home is the key to addressing our temptations and battles in regard to sexual immorality.

1. Because it is something of darkness: be it pornography, abuse of the internet, movies, inappropriate relationships before and after marriage (fornication or adultery), etc.; darkness is chased away through the application of light.
2. The light of Christ is given in His body, the Church.
3. By the time Saint Paul gets to 1st Corinthians 6:19-20, he is teaching about our lives in the greater body of Christ’s Church that all Christians are members of:

1st Corinthians 6:19: “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.” [the Greek “your” = the collective Christians are a temple of the Holy Spirit who is within the body of Christ, the Church]

Conclusion:

1. So there is a vital shift here in 1st Cor. 6. How does one deal with this immorality that we are to “flee” from (run for our lives from, v 18)?
2. Answer: by being in the Church...where the Word and Sacraments shine a radiation therapy that is light upon darkness.
3. Shine the ministry of Christ’s Word upon those things that confront you and threaten slavery...and stand back and watch the light of Christ chase away the things of darkness! One example of this is using the office of the ministry and individual confession and absolution! This chases Satan away...he wants to keep everything that enslaves you hidden, but confession and absolution shines light on what we struggle with and covers us in God’s grace!

- 4. In this way, Jesus shines, He appears! He appears in your life!**
- 5. Can you be sure? Yes, because Christ lived, died, and rose for you, He wants nothing more to keep you in all that He did for you...He does it through His Word! This is how He still appears in your life!**