**Instruments of Righteousness**

**The Word**

Read together Romans 6:1-14

**The Big Idea**

Discipleship to Jesus is a very integrated experience of soul and body. We are called to actually offer our bodies to God, presenting the various parts of our bodies as instruments of righteousness that would be faithful to his bidding.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. Last Sunday we were encouraged to have a “sensual experience” (an experience in the senses. Take a moment to share any intentional experiences you’ve had this past week along those lines.

2. Verses 1-10 of our passage are chock-full of spiritual realities that require a constant renewing of our minds to embrace. What phrase or idea from those verses is standing out to you most, and why?

3. How is the central idea from Sunday’s sermon sitting with you: that our discipleship to Jesus is a very embodied journey that involves habituated practices of the body. Does that challenge your way of thinking? Do you have any push-back on that premise?

4. What do you think of this idea from Sunday that sometimes we need to “lead with the body?” Can you think of a time in your own life when “leading with the body” actually led to a change in your heart over time?

5. Consider the challenge this week to practice a daily prayer of offering the various parts of your body to God as instruments of righteousness. If you’ve been practicing that so far, what has come from that experience? Is there a particular area you’d like to focus on this week (such as your mouth/speech, or your ears/listening, etc.)?

**Sermon Outline**

I. Introduction: God’s plan for the body

A. Creation: We were created as spirit-and-body-integrated creatures. God was to reign in our hearts, and worship of God was to get expressed through our bodies (hands for working the garden, eyes for taking in the beauty of creation, mouths for speaking loving words to God and each other, etc.)

B. Fall

1. The fall began with an idea (= God is withholding good things, you can’t trust him, so you need to make your own way) that got expressed in the body (walking over to a tree, grabbing its fruit, eating it).

2. Now this good body God gave me is described as “the body of sin” (v. 6). Our bodies have become habituated and conditioned to sinful actions over time (ex: honking your horn as a conditioned embodied response)

C. Redemption

1. Christ came in a body and bore our sins in his body so we could experience forgiveness and salvation

2. The task then is to learn how to live as forgiven people and learn how to recondition these bodies so that they become instruments of righteousness as God originally intended them to be

II. The context: vv.1-10

A. The theme of grace (v. 14, v. 1).

If we are under grace, what is to prevent us from sinning as much as we want?

B. Paul’s Answer (2-10)

1. Something has happened to you spiritually. By faith you are IN Christ. You have died In Christ and been raised to new life in Christ.

2. Your “old self” that was part of the fallen system of this world was “crucified” with Christ. So you are no longer that self-centered, sin-seeking creature. You are a forgiven child of God.

III. Application: Now be who you are. Live out practically what you are spiritually (v. 10-14)

A. Think differently in your mind (v. 11)

- “count, consider, reckon” yourself as God does. Know yourself in that way.

- it’s a mind shift.

B. Act differently in your bodies (v. 12-13)

1. This is almost warfare language

a. Our bodies are like castles where a king “reigns” (either sin or God)

b. God or sin is a “master” and we are “slaves”

c. Our body parts are offered as “instruments” to whoever reigns (elsewhere Paul uses this word “instrument” to describe “weapons”)

2. So imagine we are like knights in a castle coming to our sovereign, offering ourselves in service to him, and offering the parts of our bodies as weapons devoted to his good service. (John Piper)

3. Notice how we are making choices every day with your bodies in terms of who we are presenting them to, and these patterns become habituated as we become enslaved to them over time (v. 16)

-Consider the example of “unintentionally” watching 3 hours of tv at the end of a long day. This wasn’t so much a thought-out plan of the mind, but rather a conditioned habit of the body.

C. So Paul’s view of discipleship is a very integrated one involving mind and body

D. Other parts of Scripture are similarly integrated

1. Consider Jesus’ words in the sermon on the mount (Mt 5:21-24, 27-30)

2. Consider James comments about the tongue (James 3:1-12)

3. Consider the Psalms’ call to worship in heart, mind, and body

E. Perhaps we are sometimes actually “too spiritual,” and we need to think in more practical and embodied ways. For example rather than spiritualizing your challenge with vegging in front of the tv, maybe you need to develop a different embodied pattern of walking out of the house and taking a short walk at night.

F. Since we are very integrated beings, sometimes our minds need to lead the way in our transformation, but sometimes we can lead with our bodies even when our hearts/minds aren’t fully “into it.”

IV. Conclusion

A. One day stand before Jesus and give an account of how we conducted ourselves in the body (1 Cor 5:10)

B. Let’s practice a daily morning prayer this week where we offer the parts of our bodies to God (hands, feet, eyes, ears, mouth, etc.)