Sermon: **Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit** (1 Corinthians 6.19)

Greek philosophy –God can’t make direct contact with creation as it will mar his purity.

This implied that the spiritual was greater than the physical. Thus God would not be interested in bodies, which are part of an impure creation.

To *some* extent we agree – our most basic needs are food, water, shelter, heat. But the needs that more define us are spiritual – emotions, sense of purpose, hope, trust, etc.

Some took this to extremes – neglecting their bodies to help the spiritual – hermits, Simon Stylites 37 years on pillar, medieval flagellants. Not that all these are wrong, but extreme.

As a reaction, others go to other extreme – vegan diet, detox diets, body building, beauty pageants, colonic irrigation, etc. Not that all these are wrong, but extreme.

What is Paul getting at? **All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God** (Rom 3.23). Salvation is God’s alone. It makes no difference to God. Thus some Corinthians said: ‘**I am allowed to do anything’** (1 Cor 6.12)! Paul agrees (!), but **‘not everything is good for you’** (1 Cor 6.12).

To save ferry costs, I could swim from Bluff to Stewart Island, but not a good idea and I will come to grief.

So Paul declares that our bodies are not our enemies. All are interlinked – eg physical exercise helps the mind. Doing things that bring harm to our bodies is not godlike. God blesses our bodies, which should make us think about issues of drugs, smoking, immoderate drinking, sex (see 1 Cor 6.15f), obesity.

Taking care of bodies is a godly activity, as is looking after our emotions, minds and spirits. As we offer our *whole* selves as kind of prisoners to God, God will bless us. And so *all* can be used for the glory of God.

Sharon and I enjoyed walking round Stewart Island, and my legs are today in fine shape. Now I’m back in flat Invercargill our TEXT asks me ‘what is God saying to me about how I can continue to take care of my body when there are no hills?’

We praise you with our bodies, Lord,

that once were fit and strong;

and even when their powers wane,
to you they still belong.

We praise you with emotions, Lord,
with every twist and turn;
in times of joy and sadness too,
through each we grow and learn.

We praise you with our thinking, Lord,

the truth we strain to find;
in stretching our horizons, we
more closely know your mind.

We praise you with our spirits, Lord,
and seek your heavenly realm;

we catch a foretaste on this earth

when hearts you overwhelm.

We offer you all that we are,
and all we hope to be;
as prisoners of your holy love,
we’ll know we’re truly free.

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