

The Body

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[0 : 0 0] Thank you, Andrew. It would have been great if I just said, no, it's not me. You go for it. I bring greetings from Moorhead City. My name is Brian, and I'm one of the pastors. If you're new to One Harbor, we're one church in four different locations, and so my post on a Sunday morning is typically down there, but it really is a privilege to be with you today. And I'm going to be—well, we've been in this series that we just started recently. We typically preach through books of the Bible. We've spent most of this year going through the Gospel of Mark. We've taken a break, as I think most of you know. We wanted to preach into some areas of life, like what does the Bible say about the different aspects of your life so that you can make the most of them? And so we've looked at a few of those already. Today, I'm here to declare what does God's Word mean for your body. If the Gospel is good news, it should be good news—well, the way that we talk about it, it's good news for everything. And it's actually good news, believe it or not, for your body. Earlier this year, some of our elders heard a teaching from a pastor named Sam Albury on this very topic.

And that teaching was a big inspiration, not only for the sermon that I'm giving you this morning, but really for this entire series that we're in. And so I'm greatly indebted to him. I want to share a little bit of what we heard from him, but I also want to expand upon it with the hope that you will leave here more grateful for the body that God has given you and with more vision and conviction on how to use it for great things. And I don't think that will be very hard to do. I don't think that's a very high bar because I think most of us have rather complicated relationships with our bodies. There are certain foods that when I eat them, what happens in my body is regrettable. Our bodies often do things we don't want them to do. But more seriously, think about how much human suffering is connected to the body. I have precious friends who suffer with chronic pain and have for decades every day. They're tormented in their body. You think of those who endure disease and serious injury.

So there's a physical pain by definition is connected to the body, but then there's also emotional and psychological pain. Who has not struggled with disappointment about the appearance of their body? Whose body looks exactly like we want it to look? No, I mean, none of us. After I graduated high school, I had a pretty serious corrective and cosmetic surgery done to my head because I was born with a condition that left my head fairly deformed, very lopsided and asymmetrical. And I kind of looked like Quasimodo from the cartoon, which is the nickname I was given in school. And so I grew up seeing caricatures of my face drawn on the walls of the school and the stalls in the bathroom being called Quasimodo or Square Face. And so I grew up with a very awkward relationship with my body, very insecure about my body. And then as I got into high school, I got a little more confidence. But in my sophomore year, a girl who I had a serious crush on made the comment that I, you know, she was just joking.

And that's how these things often go. But she made a comment that I'm sure she thought was innocuous and probably never even remembers making this comment. But she made this comment about me that I was all skin and bones. And she was absolutely right. I was a scrawny cross-country runner. I was nothing but skin bones. But that put me on a trajectory of the next 10 years lifting weights in the gym, not because I particularly like lifting weights, but because I had a new reason to be embarrassed about my body.

And so you may not have had those kind of experiences, but I know that every single person in this room can relate in some way to some kind of disappointment or pain around your body. Some of us hate going to the beach because it means we will have to take off some of our clothing and we will expose what our bodies really look like. And we're mortified. Some of us look in the mirror every morning and are tormented by what we see. We all have expectations for what our bodies should look like, but we did not come up with those things. Those were handed to us by the world we're swimming in, and they are not making us happier. They are not blessing us. They are not helping us. Friends, Jesus is great news for your body. There's no part of your life that is not touched by the gospel, and that includes your body and what it looks like. So I'm going to read from two different passages that I think speak a great word about the dignity and the glory and the beauty of the body. The first is from Psalm 139, starting in verse 13.

[5 : 53] For you formed my inward parts. You knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works. My soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes saw my unformed substance. In your book were written every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them. The second reading is from 1 Corinthians chapter 6, starting in verse 12. All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be dominated by anything. Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food.

Yes, and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power.

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never. Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it's written, the two will become one flesh. But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body. But the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. 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 context for what we just read, there's a whole bunch of background for this little interchange that Paul is having with the Corinthian church. And we're not going to get into it all, but it's around strange views of the body that the Corinthians had. And so there's this misunderstanding around that they seem to have around the body. You know, they say, hey man, we're just, what we do with the body, it's just, the body is just stuff. And so if you have desires to eat and you have desires for sex, it's all the same. It's just anatomy. It's just biology. And you know, Paul could have responded to that in a number of different ways. He could have just said, no, don't do those things because they're sinful. And that would have been true. But he actually responds with a really profound theology of the body. He says, the body isn't meant for sexual immorality.

[8 : 48] You know, the Corinthians seem to be thinking like it's no big deal. And it may seem strange, like the whole prostitutes thing, you may not connect with that because we live in a time where that's pretty much frowned upon. But they were living in a day when it was totally normal, especially for young men. Even if you're married, you'd go to the temples and have sex with prostitutes. Everyone did that.

And it's hard to imagine that that would have been a normal thing. But that was the context. Totally, totally normalizing behavior. And Paul is saying the body is not meant for that.

The body is meant for the Lord. The body is for the Lord and the Lord is for the body. Have you ever thought about the fact that God is for your body? That is an amazing thing to say.

God has very high regard for your body. Your body matters to him. We saw in Psalm 139, he makes bodies and it seems like he likes making them. You formed my inward parts. You knitted me together. I praise you because I'm fearfully and wonderfully made. So even though it's the act between a man and a woman that biologically brings bodies into existence, Scripture is clear that God is the one who does the making. That means that none of you were a mistake. Even if the pregnancy was unplanned, you were not a mistake because God put you here. And we can say, according to the Bible, He wants you to be here. So however you feel about yourself in the stillness of your heart, maybe when you put your head on the pillow at night, however you feel about your body when you look at it in the mirror, however you feel about your own existence, God wants you to be here. He meant for you to be here.

And your body is a marvel. Regardless of who your biological parents are, regardless of what you look like, regardless of your shape, your size, your body is a marvel. Not perfect. Tainted with sin, yes. But our bodies are awesome. So I want to, with these passages in mind, I want to offer one truth and three encouragements regarding your body. So the truth is this, your body is part of who you are, which is like the most captain obvious thing I've ever said from a stage at One Harbor Church.

[11 : 23] But I want to unpack this because I'm not sure that we fully, I don't, I'm sure in fact that some of us don't realize the degree to which this is true. Your body is you. Paul in 1 Corinthians chapter 6, he uses the words you and your body interchangeably. Your body is a member of Christ and you were bought with a price. Now there's a tension to hold here, okay? Because the Bible says that even though you are your body in a sense, your body isn't the whole of who you are. Your body isn't everything, in other words. The body's not everything. It's part of who you are. It's not all of who you are. And that's why you don't cease to exist when your body is destroyed. It's why, you know, we have stories in the Bible where you think of Samuel going to find the next king of Israel. And he's very impressed with some of Jesse's sons. No one thought that David was going to be king. And that's because Samuel was frankly deceived by the appearance of the body. But God sees beyond the body, doesn't he? God sees the heart. So the body is not everything. But it's also not nothing. It is not even a small part of who you are. It's not accidental or even incidental. And a lot of times Christians have seemed to believe that kind of thing, that your body is just atoms and molecules and the soul is what counts. No, that's that's not true. In fact, that's a very pagan idea, that your soul or spirit matter more than your body.

The Bible is very clear that you're an integrated being and your body and soul are both made in the image of God. And that is actually the legacy of Christian burial. Now, before I comment on this, I want to just say right out of the gates, there's nothing morally wrong with cremation. Nothing at all.

So I don't want the point of what I'm saying right now is not to trigger anyone into insecurity because a family member has been cremated. However, there is a reason that for most of human history, Christians have preferred to bury their loved ones. And that is because something that used to be the case that maybe isn't so anymore is that in most pagan traditions, burning the body was a sign of judgment on the body so that the spirit could be released from the mortal coil. You remember that the Shakespeare's Hamlet? Oh gosh. You know, you don't, right? I should, I should not be extemporaneously trying to recall high school. But there's that line in Shakespeare's Hamlet about shedding off this mortal coil. That's the pagan idea that your body is a prison. And so Christians said, it's not a prison. It's a gift. And even when someone dies, we're going to take care of it. And so they buried them. And there's actually evidence to believe that there are places in the world where the gospel spread largely on account of the burial practices because people had never seen the body cared for the way that Christians cared for it. And it says something great about God, that these, that this person who has died in a sense that they've left, but in a sense, this body is still them. And we're going to treat this body with dignity and respect. And like 1 Corinthians 6 says, our view of the body is tied up in the resurrection. Paul's like, don't you know you're getting another body? And so in Christians, it's like the whole seed thing. 1 Corinthians 15, you know, the, we go in the ground like a seed to be, burial is actually an act of faith. We're planting someone knowing that one day God's going to call them forth in a brand new body. And so that's an amazing thing that has really captivated the imaginations of people throughout history. Your body is you, or at least a big part of you, and death will separate you from it. But one day you're getting it back. You're not going to float around in the ether for eternity. N.T. Wright says, like, we don't believe in life after death. We believe in life after life after death. What happens when you die is really a big mystery? We know more about what will happen when Jesus returns. And when he returns, you get back into a body and you will never be out of it ever again. It will be your eternal home in the body with the Lord. So in light of these things, a few encouragements. The first one is this, express gratitude for your body. For some of this, for some of us, this, this will be hard.

Again, many of us have serious pain, forms of illness. Some of us experience pain because our body doesn't feel like who we feel ourselves to be. Some of us experience pain because what we've done with our bodies. Some of us experience pain because what others have done to our bodies.

So I don't want to sweep any of that under the rug. We're looking at it in the face. We're going to acknowledge the pain that we feel in our bodies, and yet we can still say the body is a gift. Even when we're bullied as children, like I was, the body is still a gift. They were fearfully and wonderfully made. In the psalm, it is this reason that prompts praise. I praise you. Why? Because of how you've made my body. Because I'm fearfully and wonderfully made. It's a great gift. And there are some, I'm sure, who struggle to think this way, who might think that maybe your body has been disqualified for this kind of purposeful gratitude because of what you have done in your body.

[17:06] Oh, Brian, if only you knew how much I've sinned with that part of my body. I could never, I'll never be able to use it again. Friends, Jesus is good news for our bodies even when we sin with them.

Romans 6, Paul says this. In verse 12, he says, Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.

So you see, if Jesus saves you and redeems you, that must include your body because your body is you, or at least a big part of you. And so the members of our bodies that were once given over to sin, they are now to be used by God as instruments of righteousness. So how do you hear that? I think sometimes we hear that as just a burden. Oh, I'm now obligated to use my body for righteousness. And I would say, actually, I think there's some truth in that. I think that the gospel does give us some weighty burdens, and they are a privilege, not a pain. It's good to feel the sense of duty that we have as believers. But it's not only a burden to use. I mean, what this is saying is that regardless of what you've done, it's not just that you have to use your body for righteousness, you get to.

Regardless of what you've done in the past, if you've been forgiven, your body can be used for righteousness. God does not save you in parts. He saves you as a whole. And he is saving you, and he will one day fully save you. Your body is a gift. And so we should thank God for our bodies.

And if that is hard to do, I want to pass on the encouragement that I heard from this Pastor Sam Alberry. He said, try to practice the discipline of thanking God for what you see in the morning when you look in the mirror. And if you don't feel like, if that doesn't feel like natural, to do, then that's all the more reason to do it. If when you look in the mirror, you don't feel grateful, then all the more reasons to say the words anyway. I mean, the psychology totally supports like the way that people change according to the Bible. Like in the Bible, when you step into obedience and you step into the ways of Christ, your emotions will catch up with you. And psychology has affirmed that. Like how you speak and how you act changes how you feel. So express gratitude. Maybe,

[19 : 51] I mean, this will sound very cheesy to some of you, but maybe take a post-it note and write on it, you are fearfully and wonderfully made, and put it on the mirror and say it to yourself in the morning. Because it's true. Even if you don't feel like it, it is true. Your body is a gift. Express gratitude for your body. Because it's a gift, this really leads into the next encouragement. You should take care of it. Cultivate bodily care. The things you do to your body affect you, and what affects you affects your relationship with God. Now in 1 Corinthians chapter 6, the issue is sexual immorality.

But elsewhere in the Bible, we are also cautioned about other things that we do to our bodies. We're warned about not drinking too much wine. We're warned about not eating too much food. Why would God care about those things? I mean, we probably all can come up with a lot of good reasons, right? I mean, it's not a total mystery to us why it's good for us to be mindful of those things, but God may have reasons we don't even know about. The point is, he's told us to be careful with things like eating and drinking.

A popular misconception about the eating side, the word for that is gluttony. A popular misconception is that gluttony has to do with your waistline. It's not what it's about. It's about your relationship with food. You can be very fit and be a glutton. Because drunkenness or gluttony is the abuse of things, trying to scratch an itch that the Lord has meant to not only scratch, but satisfy.

It's making food or drink essentially an idol. It's about disordered loves, craving things more than we should, wanting things more than we should. And so giving into drunkenness or gluttony or sexual promiscuity, it affects you. And don't be like, don't do what the Corinthians did. Don't take the bait that, oh, it's just stuff. No, your body is you, or at least a big part of you, and what happens to the body affects you, and what affects you affects your relationship with God. That's the whole logic here to what Paul's saying in 1 Corinthians chapter 6. Abuse and neglect of the body, even in regard to sleep or diet or exercise, it's a big deal because of how those things negatively affect us, particularly in the mind. Now that's easiest to see with alcohol, right? But it's of course true with food and sleep.

1 Peter, in 1 Peter 5, it says that we should be sober-minded and be watchful. The devil is lurking. The mind is where the greatest battles are waged. How are you going to resist temptation, which is coming for you like every moment of the day? And it's so subtle. How are you going to resist it if your mind has been compromised? The mind is the seat of, so when the Bible talks about your heart, it's just using a different kind of metaphorical image. It's really talking about what we would today talk about the mind. The mind is the seat of not only your ideas and your thinking, but your feelings, your affections, your loves. And so, you know, what happens in the mind affects everything, and these insights are being captured in all kinds of fields and different disciplines. There's now psychiatrists who recommend exercise. I was reading one the other day who recommends exercise, but he says that building muscle and conditioning the heart and the lungs are actually secondary benefits. According to him, the primary benefit is building and conditioning the brain. Exercise makes us feel better because the brain is functioning best when our blood is pumping and being worked. Your brain is the organ from where your heart, mind, soul, and strength operate from. You will think better and feel better and worship better and obey better when you have cared for your body. Your body is a temple, so it's good to take care of the thing. That's the, really, I think that's what that whole metaphor is meant to conjure up, is like, think about how the Israelites, the care that went into the temple, well, if that's you, how do you care for it? How do you mind it? How do you take care of it?

[24:14] You can have the best devotional practices, but dishonor your body with habits and practices which dishonor it and therefore dishonor the Lord. Care for your body. But of course, care of the body can go sideways. We need to be wary not only of bodily neglect, we must also be aware of bodily worship, which is what happens when the body becomes too important and it becomes an idol. And the idolatry of the Bible needs to be resisted and avoided at all costs. And I think the best way to do that is to cultivate bodily modesty. Now, just don't check out on me because I know that word is not, well, people don't seem to love it. And it kind of has, it comes with a bit of a humdrum sort of, I think a lot of people, when they think of modesty, they think of dreariness, drabness, or even ugliness. In our attention-seeking age, our social media and expressively individualistic age, modesty is not really in, is it? I want to try to just persuade you with a biblical view of modesty that is beautiful and life-giving. And it's more than how much skin does your outfit show.

Now, it includes that, but it's more than that. How much skin your outfit shows is not really even addressing the main principle of what modesty is getting at. Modesty is like maintaining a healthy diet. It's about a kind of self-control that is meant to lead to more human flourishing, that's meant to lead to joy. I would say modesty, a way of thinking about it, is it is about quiet and peaceful living? And I'm using quiet in the metaphorical sense. To have a loud life or to be a loud person is to be an attention grabber. Someone who is loud is wanting always to be seen, wanting always to be noticed, that craving for attention to be quiet is to refrain.

Modesty is about the direction you want people's attention to go. When you're modest, you don't want everyone else's attention coming to you.

In fact, it's the other way. Modest people put their attention on everyone else. Modest people are interested and aware of who's around them and what's around them. And frankly, they're happier for it. So I want to read to a verse that was originally written to women. But the wisdom, I think, is for all, especially in our age where both men and women are pressured to have beautiful bodies, maybe more than anyone ever has in the history of the world. And so I think the wisdom of this bears saying to all, 1 Peter 3, do not let your adorning be external, the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry or the clothing you wear, but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious.

Do not let your adorning be external, the braiding of hair, the putting on of gold jewelry, the size of your muscles, the shape of your figure, the fullness of your lips, the smoothness of your skin, the location of your hairline. We could go on and on. Don't. So you see, these things are not all bad.

[27 : 52] He literally says, don't let your adorning be in clothes. You're going to wear clothes. But what is it that you think makes you amazing? The adorning should be the hidden person of the heart, a quiet spirit, not a quiet mouth, a quiet spirit, a spirit that's not always trying to get attention, a hidden person or a hidden life in God that isn't screaming for attention because, again, you're too busy giving it. And that's what makes modesty such a loving virtue. Instead of taking other people's attention, we give them ours.

Instead of being seen so I can impress, I see others so I can bless. This is not always true, but it generally is. That if you are impressing other people, you are not blessing them. It's not always true, but generally it is. If you are impressing people, you are not blessing them. The better your, I mean, we know this is true. The better your Instagram feed makes your life look, it is not blessing other people in their lives. You know this. You know the better your life looks, the worse other people feel about theirs. But we're going to make ours look good anyway.

Modesty is loving. Modesty reckons with this reality, which is why modest people are the most approachable people and the kind of people who put us at ease and the kind of people we like being around. Who likes hanging out with people that intimidate us? Like maybe you can imagine yourself wanting to be around someone that you really look up to, like a celebrity or something and getting a picture with them. But who do you want to hang out with on a Friday night and relax? Who can you let your hair down with? You're always going to gravitate to the people who make you feel comfortable in your own skin. And generally it's modest people who have that effect on you. They're the ones you like being around because they actually seem interested in you.

And they don't seem insecure about what you think about them. We enjoy those people because they are so determined to enjoy us. Vanity does the exact opposite of all of this.

The obsession and fixation on how our bodies look, man, it makes us neurotic, it makes us anxious, and it's not blessing anyone else either. Friends, appreciate this. You must reckon with this.

[30 : 19] We live in a day where it is taken for granted that you should make your body look as good as it possibly can look. That is taken for granted. It's even considered practically virtuous that you would do that. You should be as sexy, as beautiful, as handsome, as physically impressive as possible.

Modesty does not mean ugliness. In fact, that's important. Actually, we are meant to, we should look pleasing. The point is to not be a distraction. There are some people who don't take care of their bodies and they themselves become a distraction. We're not talking about ugliness.

Modesty means pursuing beauty in ways that are pleasing but not overwhelming. Presenting ourselves well but not necessarily as well as possible. Exercising restraint for our sakes and for the sakes of others.

And it sounds crazy, but it's an incredibly freeing way to live. It's what C.S. Lewis called the freedom of self-forgetfulness. Not always worrying about what people will think of you. I heard, there's a Christian philosopher whose writings I've really come to enjoy. His name's Peter Kreeft, or Kreeft, depending on how you pronounce it. But I heard a lecture in which he said he thinks that in heaven there's a few things that won't exist and one of them is mirrors.

Because there will be so much beauty in front of you that you'll be captivated with. The last thing you'll be thinking about is what you look like. Now can you imagine living like that? I can't, but I'm trying.

[31 : 44] And we're supposed to be heading in that direction. You know, like I'm not, this stuff is as hard for me as it is for anybody else, by the way. But I've tasted of it. I'm less insecure than I once was, and I think I'm happier for it.

The less I worry about me, the more I happen to enjoy everybody else. It works. Modesty is the posture of someone who knows they're happier being a worshiper of God than being worshipped by other people.

You're not made to be worshipped. You are made to be a worshiper. You will be happy. Happier anyway. When you're not sucking up the attention. And one of the reasons it's hard to talk about these things is that the standards of bodily care and dress code are very subjective.

So if we're going to talk about the modesty of the body, well, who's to say what's appropriate? Who's to say how we should all be dressing and living? And I would like to appeal to the wisdom of C.S. Lewis.

He wasn't writing about modesty. He was writing about another area that's very difficult to say anything concrete because there's a lot of subjectivity involved.

[32 : 52] But he used some principles that were helpful. He was talking about, in his book, Mere Christianity, he addresses the question of, when it comes to charity, how much should we give? Financially speaking, how much should we give?

That's a hard question to answer. And here's what he said in his book. He said, I do not believe one can settle how much we ought to give. I'm afraid the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare. In other words, if our expenditure on comforts, luxuries, amusements, etc.

is up to the standard common among those with the same income as our own, we're probably giving away too little. If our charities do not pinch or hamper us, I should say they are too small. Now that would be my approach on how we should think about the body and modesty.

I do not believe that we can settle what everyone must do in terms of dress and appearance. I'm afraid the only safe rule is to be more modest than we want to be. In other words, if the way we present our bodies is at the same standard of those of similar social standing out there, we're probably doing too little in here.

If our attempts at modesty do not pinch us, if they do not hamper our pride, I should say those attempts are probably too small. The body is for the Lord.

[34 : 07] It's for Him. And believing that means believing that He cherishes you, so you don't have to please anybody else with your body, because He has said He's moving in to you.

He's not just okay with your body, He wants to live in it. So you don't actually have to please anybody else. The reason that we idolize our bodies is because, of course, we do want to please other people.

But the body belongs to Jesus. He paid for it. And so exercise is good. And I'm going to say something now where I'm going to really put my chips on the table if I haven't already.

Exercise is good. Just don't do it for what people think of you on the beach. And I struggle with that as much as anybody else does. That is the wisdom of the world.

And we're warned in the Bible against thinking like that, against using our bodies to be noticed. It doesn't make us happier, and it doesn't make other people happier. We have generations of people living in self-loathing and self-hatred, because the world has told them their body needs to look like the wrong things to please the wrong people for all the wrong reasons.

[35 : 14] Friends, you don't have to look like anything. Human bodies, to include yours and mine, are precious and amazing, and a lifestyle of care and modesty will not only make you holier as a temple, you will be happier as a person.

And that's what I wished I had believed in high school. I wish I could have had a vision for being holier and happier if I could just worry less about what I looked like in the mirror and thought more about what I looked like to my father.

And if that seems hard, of course it's hard. Romans 12 says we present our bodies as living sacrifice. That is like the definition of hard. Yeah, I heard someone say one time, you know what the problem with a living sacrifice is?

It's always trying to crawl off the altar. It's hard, man. Like, the whole thing is hard. It's inherently sacrificial to give your body to God. It means not having sex with anyone you're not married to.

It means not getting drunk. It means not being addicted to drugs or food or anything else. It means not flaunting your body when you know you could. It's hard to resist these things.

[36 : 25] These things are all hard, but these are the best ways to live in our body. A body that pleases the Lord is a body given to the Lord. You have feet. Well, where do they take you? You have hands.

What do you do with them? Do you hammer or type or change diapers? You can do all those things and actually go to the Lord and say, I'm going to use my hands for you today. I'm going to do the same things I would have done, but today I'm doing them for you.

The Bible says that's a gift. It's not hard to please Him, you know. It's like He sets such humane expectations for you. You just offer Him your life as it is.

The words you speak with your mouth. You know, someone could be having the worst day of their life and headed to make a terrible mistake, but one word of encouragement from the lips of your mouth can permanently change their life. You are capable of great things with your body.

Whatever it looks like, He had paid a lot for it, and Jesus has no buyer's remorse when it comes to your body. For the joy set before Him, He endured the cross.

[37 : 25] No one else had their body destroyed so yours could be redeemed. He has given His body to us. It is right and fitting that we give ours to Him. So I'm going to have you stand with me, and we're going to pray.

And typically when I preach, I would just pray a blessing over the congregation, but today we're going to pray together. We're going to pray some prayers about our bodies together.

And so I'm going to, four short little lines, I'm going to say them, and you're going to repeat them, okay? And maybe if it's helpful, you don't have to do this, but it's helpful to hold your hands out and even look at your hands, look at your body while you're praying these things.

You can do that if you like. So let's turn our eyes to the Lord. Repeat after me. Heavenly Father, thank You for my body.

Help me to care for my body. Help me not to idolize my body. Help me not to idolize my body.

[38 : 34] Help me to please You with my body. Help me to please You with my body. Father, I thank You for the prayers that were just prayed, and I ask that You would answer them in the name of Jesus Christ.

For every person in the room who struggles with body image or body insecurity or bodily pain, I pray that You would help us to confess those things and to come to You and to trust the wisdom of Your Scriptures as it pertains to the body.

I pray that this particular body, this church, that You would make us a holy temple and a happy temple. I pray that we would be great encouragers of one another, and I pray that we would push back the darkness as it pertains to the lies about the body and what we must do to find satisfaction in the body.

Help us to trust You, Lord Jesus. And we pray for this meal that we are about to take, that we receive with our bodies. We thank You that You are good news for our bodies, and we pray that this meal would nourish our bodies and our souls.

In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.