

Whose temples?

By [Cynthia D. Weems](#)

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It's hard to believe that any preacher would choose to preach on this week's epistle reading. There are words here rarely spoken in our sanctuaries, and using this text might get a preacher sent to denominational reform school.

I do not recommend this passage. And that is why it should be preached.

There are myriad ways this passage has been used to scare the "living daylights" (as my grandmother would say) out of impressionable parishioners tempted by the things of the flesh. I cannot say I spend any significant time preaching about the sins of this very flesh. Although perhaps I should.

Like most places in our culture, the congregation I pastor and the community I serve are inundated with images that present our bodies as our own temples, not the temple of God. Here in South Florida, I see more flesh each day than I care to--flesh in an array of tones and colors, flesh that has been wonderfully made by the God whom Paul so powerfully defends in this letter to the church in Corinth.

But so often the flesh I see is bruised, broken, marked, stretched and given away like a set of worn-out clothes than can easily be replaced. Paul knew what we so often forget: that our bodies are more than flesh and bone. They are gateways to a temple, sanctuaries for our Spirit-filled, blessed and beloved souls. And they are of God.

What would it take for us to preach boldly about bodies? How might our parishioners, broken and bruised and stretched, enter a worship service that allows them to feel physical wholeness while singing, praying and hearing the word of God proclaimed? How might we all leave worship more committed to a soul and a body that honor the God who created them?