

# The Gospel and Purity - Matthew 5:27-30

## The Joy Of the Lord Is Your Strength!

Hardly anything beats a "radiant face"

1. WELCOME TO THE BRIDGE - I'm Jared and here's why we're here.
2. VAULT SHOE DRIVE - ONLY 94 TAGS of 350 LEFT! - June 21 and 28th are drop off! (Box Truck)
3. STARTING POINT TONIGHT @ 5:00 - Warehouse - just sign up.
  
1. I'm notoriously terrible at having hard conversations.
2. When I have to have a hard conversation, I will generally do one of two things:
  - a. Figure out a way NOT to have that conversation or...
  - b. Talk through it in my head over and over until my hands get sweaty.
3. I'm learning that it's probably what Proverbs talks about - being fearful of man or conflict.
4. But, here's what I've learned as I've gotten older - HARD CONVERSATIONS ARE ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY.
5. In fact, the longer you avoid having them - the worse a situation gets.
6. And - in order to have a hard conversation - you have to start with WANTING the BEST for the person you're about to have that conversation with...
7. Here's the thing I LOVE about Jesus. He is not ONE BIT afraid of having the hard conversations with us.
8. AND, when he has the hard conversation - HE WANTS THE VERY BEST FOR US.
  - a. That's why he asks them - and has them often :)
9. WE ARE IN THE SECTION OF HIS SERMON WHERE HE HAS HARD CONVERSATIONS.
10. Like a loving Dad or a faithful friend - he pushes past the awkwardness and gets right to the heart (both figuratively and literally).
11. Last week Jesus addressed our Anger... and today, Jesus addresses a topic that is hardly ever talked about in the Church - LUST.
12. And as He does, He shows us something that is both deeply humbling AND incredibly hopeful.
13. Let's read Matthew 5:27-30.

"You have heard that it was said, Do not commit adultery. But I tell you, everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of the parts of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of the parts of your body than for your whole body to go into hell." (Matthew 5:27-30)

## Jesus Exposes the Real Problem: The Heart

1. Like He did with anger, Jesus moves beneath behavior and into the heart.
2. The Pharisees were experts at external righteousness.
3. As long as they hadn't physically committed adultery, they believed they were innocent.
4. Jesus says the issue goes much deeper.

5. Adultery begins before the act.
6. It begins in the heart.
7. The word Jesus uses for "looks" is not describing a passing glance.
8. It describes a deliberate, sustained look that entertains sinful desire.
  - a. The first look may be temptation.
  - b. The second look is often a choice.
9. Jesus is describing the gaze that lingers.
10. The thought that is welcomed.
11. The fantasy that is entertained.
12. Kent Hughes writes in one of my top 5 favorite books - Disciplines of a Godly Man:
 

"Every act of moral failure begins as a thought that was welcomed rather than resisted."

1. Now, Mr. Hughes can be a bit academic - so I'll tell you what my Papa used to say...  
 You can't stop birds from flying over your head, but you can stop them from building a nest in your hair.

### *A Working Definition*

***Lust seeks to fulfill a God-given desire in an ungodly way.***

1. At its core, lust takes an image-bearer and turns them into an object.
2. It asks: "What can I get?"
3. Rather than: "How can I love?"

### *Lust vs. Love*

1. Here's a way I want us to think about it...
2. One of the things I think we've gotten wrong is thinking that *Lust and Love* are essentially the same thing.
3. Lust is not love and love is not lust...
4. Jesus is teaching us that they are actually moving in completely different directions..
- 5.
6. Lust is fundamentally self-centered.
7. Love is fundamentally other-centered.
8. Lust asks, "How can this person satisfy me?"
9. Love asks, "How can I serve this person?"
10. Lust wants gratification.
11. Love embraces sacrifice.
12. Lust seeks to consume.
13. Love seeks to contribute.
14. Lust sees a body.
15. Love sees a person made in the image of God.
16. That is why lust is so destructive. It takes someone created by God and turns them into an object for personal pleasure.
17. The tragedy of lust is not merely that it breaks God's commands. The tragedy is that it slowly teaches us to become less loving people.

18. Jesus is not simply trying to stop immoral behavior. He is transforming selfish people into loving people.
19. Because the opposite of lust is not merely abstinence.
20. The opposite of lust is Christlike love.
21. TO TRULY LOVE WITH A PURE HEART...

1. Now, the Sermon on the Mount is widely misunderstood and translated incorrectly.
2. Before we look at what Jesus IS SAYING, let's look at 2 things He is most certainly NOT saying...

### *Jesus Is Not Teaching Moral Perfection*

1. At this point many people feel crushed.
2. Because if Jesus is talking about the heart, who can stand?
3. Who among us can honestly say we've never sinned in thought, desire, imagination, or motive?
4. That's exactly where Jesus wants us.
  - a. Not in despair.
  - b. But in honesty.
5. Jesus is not handing us a ladder to climb into heaven.
6. He is exposing our need for a Savior.
7. The crowd may have thought:
8. "I've never committed adultery."
9. Jesus says:
10. "Let's talk about your heart."
11. Suddenly all self-righteousness disappears.
12. Nobody gets to boast.
13. Nobody gets to claim perfect obedience.
14. Jesus is showing us that our problem is deeper than we imagined.
15. And therefore our need for grace is greater than we imagined.

### *Purity Requires Radical Action*

1. Then Jesus says something shocking:
2. "If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out."
3. "If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off."
4. What does He mean?
5. Certainly not self-mutilation.
6. **Church history proves that physical surgery cannot solve a spiritual problem.**
7. **ORIGIN OF ALEXANDRIA? (became a Eunuch at a young age and then said that was a "mistake")**
8. The issue is not ultimately the eye or the hand.
9. The issue is the heart.
10. Jesus is using intentional hyperbole.
11. He's saying:
  - a. Sin is serious.
  - b. Sin is deadly.

- c. Sin must not be negotiated with.
12. The problem with many Christians is that they are trying to manage something Jesus says must be killed.
13. John Owen famously said: "Be killing sin or it will be killing you."

What Does Radical Action Look Like?

### **Guard Your Heart**

1. Proverbs 4:23 says,
2. "Guard your heart above all else, for it is the source of life."
3. Notice that Solomon does not tell us *to guard our reputation*.
  - a. He does not tell us to guard our image.
4. He tells us to guard our heart because the heart is the control center of the human life.
5. Everything eventually flows downstream from what we love most.
  - a. Our words come from the heart.
  - b. Our decisions come from the heart.
  - c. Our desires come from the heart.
  - d. Our worship comes from the heart.
6. *Many people assume lust begins with the eyes.*
7. Jesus says it begins much deeper than that.
8. It begins with misplaced affection.
9. Very often lust is not ultimately about sex.
  - a. Sometimes lust is an attempt to medicate loneliness.
  - b. Sometimes lust is an attempt to escape stress.
  - c. Sometimes lust is an attempt to avoid pain.
  - d. Sometimes lust becomes a counterfeit comforter.
10. The problem is that counterfeit saviors never deliver what they promise.
11. *They offer temporary relief but never lasting satisfaction.*
12. Guarding your heart means regularly asking difficult questions.
  - a. What am I craving right now?
  - b. What am I running toward when life becomes difficult?
  - c. What do I believe will finally satisfy me?
13. It also means feeding your soul healthy things.
14. *A heart that is constantly fed by entertainment but rarely nourished by Scripture will struggle to remain spiritually healthy.*
15. The heart always moves toward what it treasures.
16. If Christ becomes your greatest treasure, obedience becomes much more than duty.
17. It becomes delight.

### **Protect Your Eyes**

1. Job said,
2. "I have made a covenant with my eyes."
3. That is intentional language.
4. Job was not waiting until temptation arrived before making a decision.

5. He had already decided what kind of man he wanted to be.
6. One of the greatest mistakes Christians make is assuming they can repeatedly expose themselves to temptation without eventually being affected by it.
7. Jesus understood something that neuroscience now confirms:
- 8. Attention shapes affection.**
9. What we continually focus on begins influencing what we desire.
10. Our eyes are often the doorway to our hearts.
11. This is why wisdom requires practical boundaries.
12. Sometimes spiritual maturity looks very practical.
  - a. It means deleting an app.
  - b. It means unfollowing an account.
  - c. It means moving a television.
  - d. It means putting accountability software on a device.
  - e. It means refusing to watch certain movies.
  - f. It means changing routines.
13. Those actions are not signs of weakness.
14. They are signs of wisdom.
15. Listen, I would never criticize you for NOT getting a pet rattlesnake.
16. You'd never hear me give you a hard time for NOT allowing a black bear to roam your home.
17. Likewise, followers of Jesus should not be embarrassed about taking practical steps to protect their souls.
18. The goal is not legalism.
19. The goal is freedom.

### ***Watch Your Hands and Feet***

1. Jesus moves from the eye to the hand because purity involves more than what we see.
2. *It also involves where we go and what we do.*
3. Many Christians focus entirely on resisting temptation while ignoring the habits that continually place them in temptation's path.
4. That is like standing in front of a fire and wondering why you keep getting burned.
5. Wisdom asks a different question.
6. Instead of asking, "How close can I get to temptation without falling?"
7. Wisdom asks, "How far can I stay from temptation while remaining faithful?"
- 8. If there are places that repeatedly lead you into sin, stop going there.**
- 9. If there are conversations that repeatedly pull you into compromise, stop participating in them.**
- 10. If there are habits that repeatedly weaken your resolve, replace them.**
11. The Christian life is not merely about saying no to sin.
12. It is about **saying yes to something better.**
- 13. GUYS - We MUST fight boredom.**
- 14. A BORED MAN IS A DANGEROUS MAN...**
  - a. Serve people.

- b. Invest in your family.
  - c. Disciple someone.
  - d. Join a ministry team.
  - e. Share the gospel.
  - f. Build something meaningful with your life.
15. One reason temptation grows so powerful is because many people leave their lives empty.
  16. An empty life creates space for temptation to flourish.
  17. A life filled with purpose creates far less room for sin to grow.

1. *Think about it this way...*
2. MY NEXT HOME, a fireplace is non-negotiable.
3. I dream about those two days a year when it's cold enough to light a fire.
4. On those evenings, a fireplace will do EXACTLY WHAT IT'S DESIGNED TO DO:
  - a. *brings warmth, comfort, joy, and life to a home.*
- 5.
6. But - as wild as it sounds - *imagine taking those same burning logs and placing them on your couch.*
7. The very thing designed to bless your home would destroy it.
  - a. You see, fire in a fireplace is good.
  - b. But, fire on a couch is devastating.
- 8.
9. The same is true of God's design for sexuality.
10. Sexual desire is not evil.
11. God created it.
12. Within His design it brings life, intimacy, joy, and flourishing.
13. But when that desire is taken outside of God's design, *it becomes destructive.*

### ***Only the Gospel Gives Us Power for Purity***

1. Now, hear me out: this is where many sermons stop.
  - a. "Try harder."
  - b. "Be more disciplined."
  - c. "Do better."
2. But that's not Christianity.
3. Willpower is limited.
4. Eventually it runs dry.
5. The gospel gives us something stronger than self-discipline.
6. It gives us a new heart.
7. Augustine said:
 

**"Our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee."**

  1. Jesus knew something every listener needed to learn.
  2. He was the only person in the crowd who would perfectly obey this command.
  3. Every other eye had wandered.
  4. Every other heart had failed.

5. Including ours.
6. Yet Jesus lived with perfect purity.
7. Then He went to the cross for impure people.
8. He took our guilt.
9. He gave us His righteousness.
10. As Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:21

"He who knew no sin became sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

1. We do not fight for God's acceptance.
2. We fight from God's acceptance.
3. That changes everything.

1. The tragedy of lust is not merely that it is sinful - it certainly is...
2. *The tragedy is that it promises satisfaction and never delivers.*
  - a. It always leaves us wanting more.
  - b. Always craving more.
  - c. Always emptier than before.

**3. But Jesus finally and fully satisfies.**

4. The freedom He offers is not the freedom to do whatever we want.
5. It is the freedom to become what we were created to be.
6. So if all you hear today is:
  - a. "Stop lusting,"
7. you've missed the point.
8. The point is:

**9. Look to Jesus.**

10. The One who exposes our heart is also the One who came to save it.
11. The One who calls you to purity is also the One who provides forgiveness, power, and joy.
12. What do I mean?

THE GOSPEL: Jesus Christ is the ultimate hope for every person. Though we are all sinful and our sin separates us from God, God made a way for us to be in right relationship with him again. That way is Jesus. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus was the perfect sacrifice for our sins. God promises that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ will be saved. This is the good news of the Bible.

COMMUNION: 1 Corinthians 11

<sup>23</sup> For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread, <sup>24</sup> and when he had given thanks, broke it, and said, <sup>[b]</sup> "This is my body, which is <sup>[c]</sup> for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

<sup>25</sup> In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." <sup>26</sup> For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

"May the Lord bless you and protect you;  
may the Lord make his face shine on you  
and be gracious to you;  
may the Lord look with favor on you<sup>[b]</sup>  
and give you peace."