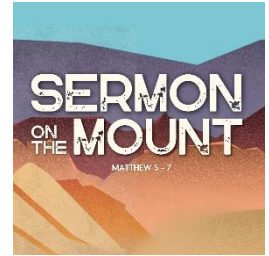


The Sermon on the Mount: Adultery & Lust

Lesson 6: October 20 & 21

Read Matthew 5:27-30



Sermon Reflection Question: What captured your attention from Sunday's sermon?

Observation & Interpretation Questions:

In this second case study, Jesus begins to teach on the ethics of sexual integrity.

1. How do you think Jesus' audience would have responded to his comparison of adultery and lust?
2. 5:28 says, "But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart." How does Jesus' comments on adultery and lust cause his listeners to examine their own hearts and motives?

As murder, anger, and name-calling devalue the life and dignity of another so does lust and adultery.

3. How does lust denigrate the dignity and value of another image bearer of God?

Read vv. 29-30. "If your right hand/eye ... ": Because the majority of people are right-handed, it became a common saying, assuming that the right hand (or whichever is used most) is the most useful. The point is to highlight the extreme nature of the action. Even what is most useful is to be sacrificed when one's life is at stake.

4. How does this intensify the serious consequence of a lack of sexual integrity?
5. What are the practical implications for you to consider in light of Jesus' teaching to tear out your eye or cut off your hand if they cause you to stumble?

The eye and the hand are used together as a common Hebrew Bible idiom to represent both our focus and what we do in response to our ingrained patterns of thinking.

6. Lust captures our focus and creates an ingrained pattern of thinking. Yikes! How have you seen this in your life? Is there a habit, thing, or person in your life that needs to be removed

Jesus' point is to take decisive action against that habit, thing, or person that, though pleasurable and perhaps seemingly indispensable for living, is in fact ruining our lives. Life in the Kingdom will require some degree of loss, of denial, of withdrawing from things that seem fine or even good.

7. Read Galatians 5:13-26. What does this passage reveal about the freedom we can have in Christ as we walk in the Spirit? How does our flesh conflict with the Spirit?

Please note, Jesus is not denigrating sex or sexual desire. There's an entire book of his Bible dedicated to the celebration of love and sexual desire (Song of Songs). Jesus addresses the distorted desire that is aimed at someone you don't love and aren't in a covenant of marriage with.

8. What has the Holy Spirit already revealed to you about yourself through this passage? Take time this week to ask Him to reveal any hidden sin of lust in your life. Will you repent and choose to turn from the sin of lust revealed to you?

9. In a world that says to indulge in sinful imaginations, how does Philippians 4:8 to "think" differently? What practical steps might Jesus be calling you to take to guard your heart and mind?

10. As the church body, what role does accountability or community play in pursuing purity and integrity? Consider sharing your struggle with your spouse, a trusted friend, or church leader.