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Sermon Notes

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Job's Commitment to Absolute Sexual Purity

Job 31:1-12

One of the central warnings in the New Testament concerns what the Apostle John calls “the world” ... the elaborate system of evil allurements and enticements and temptations masterminded by Satan himself... the world as John described it in 1 John 2 is a relentless threat to our souls. Central to the world's attack is LUST... the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, the boastful pride of life. John called on all Christians to guard their hearts and not love the world or anything in the evil world system.

So the world – that diabolical system of temptations – has always been a threat to the souls of Christians. But never in the history of the church has the world had so many ways to fire flaming arrows of temptation into the souls of God's people. And many of those flaming arrows are directed to sexual sin. From the moment that Adam and Eve fell into sin and their eyes were opened, they were corrupted in their minds and had to cover their naked bodies. From that point until this, sex has been a massively vulnerable place in the souls of human beings. John Bunyan wrote an allegory of the Christian life called *The Holy War* in which he represented the soul of a man as a walled citadel under siege. In that powerful image, sex is like a section of the wall that has crumbled down and the besieging army is concentrating many of his most violent efforts at that section of the wall.

The prevalence and devastation of sexual sin should be obvious to anyone who is aware of current events or recent history. So many of God's choicest servants have fallen in this area. To put it simply, we need help! And Job is like a father figure

spiritually, a mentor, a role model, in our fight for righteousness. Today, I am asking the men in this room in particular to sit at Job's feet and drink in his wisdom. For he was a veteran of that war in his day and fought valiantly.

Last week: Job 31 as an overview of Job's astonishing record of personal holiness

Job 1:1 In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil.

As we saw last time, the elements of his righteousness are comprehensive and astonishing:

- A commitment to absolute sexual purity (vs. 1-12)
- A pattern of just treatment for his servants (vs. 13-15)
- A lifestyle of active service to the poor (vs. 16-23)
- A rejection of all idols, especially wealth (vs. 24-28)
- Graciousness to enemies, hospitality to strangers (vs. 29-32)
- Righteous business practices (vs. 38-39)

Last time, we flew over the vast expanse of this amazing final statement... looking at each of these elements in their vast scope

Now this week I want to zero in on Job's commitment to absolute sexual purity

I. Our Present Sexual Crisis

A. Job 31 comes in just in time

1. The existence of digital technologies—especially smartphones and the apps that reside on them—have given the world a continual access to our brains

2. It's almost like we're all in some opium den laying on beds with a constant IV drip flowing into our souls from the world
 3. The addictive nature of these smartphones is evident for all to see; I was recently waiting for a plane at the crowded Atlanta airport; I looked around me and at least 90% of the people sitting around me were looking at that moment on their phones
- B. The World's Allure Generally... But Sex in Particular
1. There is no doubt that the world and all its allurements and enticements is available continually
 - a. Possessions... all manner of items continually on sale with the swipe of a finger; investing in the stock market has never been easier; continual access to our funds
 - b. Power... the ability to run an international company continually, giving orders, charting direction, evaluating performance, making deals, exerting influence, shaping opinions...
 - c. Pleasures... entertainment, gaming, movies, livestreams
 - d. Pride... social media apps that pander to our egos as we shape the way our followers perceive us
 2. Certainly the world generally is threatening us
 3. But no threat is greater than the allure of illicit sexual pleasure
 - a. Who can measure the damage and heartache sexual sin has caused in redemptive history
 - b. Imagine if you could stand by the bedside of King David and talk to him in his final days; if you were to ask him of all his greatest moments, probably his slaying of Goliath would rank as the most spectacular; more subtly, he might tell you of the moving of the Spirit in his soul as he wrote the 23rd Psalm
 - c. But if you asked him, "Of all the moments in your life, which do you regret the most?", there would not be the slightest hesitation... "The moment I saw Bathsheba from my roof and did not instantly turn away in holiness. I can't accurately tell

you how much pain and damage that one night cost me, my family, and my nation.”

C. The Internet and Smartphones have indeed brought sexual sin to levels unseen before... a staggering percentage of people confess to viewing internet pornography

D. But... there truly is “nothing new under the sun”

1. The lasting power of the Bible is two-fold: 1) the unchanging nature of God; 2) the essentially unchanging nature of the human condition
2. The Bible clearly addresses sexual sin and its remedy... and it gives us everything we need for complete sexual purity

II. The Good Origins of Marriage... and the Fall that Ruined It

A. From the Beginning: God Created Sex Within the Context of Marriage

Jesus, when asked about divorce went back to God’s intentions at creation:

Mark 10:6 at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.'

God created the first woman to be a helper suitable to the first man:

Genesis 2:18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

Adam’s reaction to what God made and brought him was overwhelming and powerful... utter delight:

Genesis 2:23 The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman', for she was taken out of man."

As Jesus made plain, this was to be the timeless, lasting pattern for marriage in every generation, in every culture all over the world:

Genesis 2:24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

The beautiful unity that Adam and Eve felt in their marriage and in their marital one-flesh union was clear from these words:

Genesis 2:25 The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame

B. The Entrance of Shame into the Marriage Bed

1. But the pure pleasure and perfect union God intended for marriage was destroyed by the Fall into sin
2. The word “shame” in Genesis 2:25 was actually ominous... though Adam and Eve would not have known what that word meant before the Fall, when Moses wrote his account, he certainly knew it... and so do all his readers
3. Shame entered the world with sin
4. Once Eve and then Adam ate the forbidden fruit:

Genesis 3:7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

5. From that moment until this, the marriage bed had been under continual assault by the devil
6. All manner of perversions entered in
 - a. Fornication: sex between unmarried persons
 - b. Adultery: sex between people of whom at least one is married to another
 - c. Homosexuality: sex between people of the same gender
 - d. All other forms of perversion which I will not utter here

C. Worst of All: The Corruption of the Human Heart

D. So... This Battle for Sexual Purity Has Plagued Every Generation Since Adam and Eve

E. And Job was a Holy Warrior Who Can Teach Us to Fight

III. Job's Commitment to Absolute Sexual Purity (vs. 1-12)

A. Let's Just Read it In Order Before We Take it Apart

Job 31:1-12 "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl. ² For what is man's lot from God above, his heritage from the Almighty on high? ³ Is it not ruin for the wicked, disaster for those who do wrong? ⁴ Does he not see my ways and count my every step? ⁵ "If I have walked in falsehood or my foot has hurried after deceit-- ⁶ let God weigh me in honest scales and he will know that I am blameless-- ⁷ if my steps have turned from the path, if my heart has been led by my eyes, or if my hands have been defiled, ⁸ then may others eat what I have sown, and may my crops be uprooted. ⁹ "If my heart has been enticed by a woman, or if I have lurked at my neighbor's door, ¹⁰ then may my wife grind another man's grain, and may other men sleep with her. ¹¹ For that would have been shameful, a sin to be judged. ¹² It is a fire that burns to Destruction; it would have uprooted my harvest.

B. Intense Awareness of the Omniscience and Judgments of God

1. He mentions God immediately

Job 31:2-4 For what is man's lot from God above, his heritage from the Almighty on high? ³ Is it not ruin for the wicked, disaster for those who do wrong? ⁴ Does he not see my ways and count my every step?

2. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of sexual wisdom

3. This is the consistent pattern of the Bible... speaking of the terrible judgments that are connected with sexual sin

4. Our "lot" from God, our "heritage from on high" would be JUDGMENT for the sexual sinner... ruin and disaster

5. And God's omnipresence and omniscience make it impossible to escape this judgment

Job 31:4 Does he not see my ways and count my every step?

In the movie "Greater" about a Christian football player named Brandon Burlsworth. He was one of the most relentlessly dedicated athletes ever as he made himself into a first-round draft pick of the NFL from being an overweight, unathletic high school kid. It was his faith in God more than anything that allowed him to excel, to push himself through the long hours of training needed to mold his body and perfect his football technique.

At one point, the new college coach at Arkansas heard noises late at night in the gym. He went and found Brandon working on his steps as a blocker, perfecting his technique in the darkened gym. His coach was impressed and said, "**Character is what you do when no one is watching.**" Brandon responded with his simple and true theology: "**Coach, Someone is ALWAYS watching.**" By that he meant God... everything Brandon did was for the eyes of God first, then for others second.

Job lived that out more vividly than anyone else of his time.

Job 31:4 Does he not see my ways and count my every step?

Anyone tempted to commit illicit sexual sin should start there!!

God is meticulous in his watching of every moment of our lives... Job says he "sees my ways and counts my every step."

Jesus said:

Matthew 10:30 even the very hairs of your head are all numbered

Every single moment of every single day, God is watching carefully:

2 Peter 3:8 But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years

It's as though God sees every single moment of our lives in SUPER SLOW MOTION... every glance of the eye, every motion of the

hand, every click of the mouse or touch on the screen of a smartphone... SUPER...SLOW... MOTION; nothing is missed

- a. Part of Satan's great deception about sexual sin is the possibility of escaping detection and then the bad consequences that will come

Isaiah 29:15 Woe to those who go to great depths to hide their plans from the LORD, who do their work in darkness and think, "Who sees us? Who will know?"

- b. It is right in this passage by Job... the idea of lurking by his neighbor's door at night

Job 31:9 "If my heart has been enticed by a woman, or if I have lurked at my neighbor's door

- c. It is also implied in the walking in deceit that Job speaks of

Job 31:5 "If I have walked in falsehood or my foot has hurried after deceit

- d. It's as though night were somehow a cloak that perfectly covers all actions
- e. The sexually immoral person thinks they will get away with it... but the Bible makes it plain that this is impossible

Proverbs 6:27-29 Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned? ²⁸ Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched? ²⁹ So is he who sleeps with another man's wife; no one who touches her will go unpunished.

Satan works to deceive us on this point: "I can cover it up! I can get away with it!"

So King David sought to cover over his adultery with Bathsheba by bringing her husband, Uriah, in and tricking him into sleeping with his wife so that the true father of her baby would be concealed; then when that failed, had Uriah killed – again to cover over his sin.

As God said through Nathan the prophet, “You did it in secret...”

Therefore, all truly godly men who successfully flee sexual temptation do so in light of the presence of a holy God:

6. Harsh Judgments for Sexual Sin: An Uprooted Harvest; A Lost Wife

Job 31:7-8 if my steps have turned from the path, if my heart has been led by my eyes, or if my hands have been defiled, ⁸ then may others eat what I have sown, and may my crops be uprooted.

Job 31:12 ... it would have uprooted my harvest.

Everything you work for can be taken from you through illicit sexual sin

Some time ago, I came across a secular article on a website that spoke of the dangers of sexual office relationships. It was based in London, England, and it focused on a man who was homeless, living under a bridge. He had been a wealthy account executive making a lot of money, with a wife and two daughters. He had had a one-night stand at an office Christmas party. His wife found out and promptly divorced him, took his daughters and most of his wealth. Soon after, as he was drinking more and more to drown his sorrows, he lost his job as well. Within a number of months, he had lost everything and ended up homeless.

Everything he ever valued was uprooted.

Years ago, as I was meditating on this passage I thought about my experience driving through the state of Indiana to take a class in Grand Rapids, Michigan. As the Interstate in Indiana passed through massive cornfields that stretched as far as the eye could see, I wondered what it would be like if a farmer got up one late summer day and walked out on his porch and saw all the stalks of corn lying FLAT on the ground... uprooted... destroyed. Everything he worked for from the late winter, gone in an instant.

7. The loss of his marriage

Job 31:9-10 "If my heart has been enticed by a woman, or if I have lurked at my neighbor's door, ¹⁰ then may my wife grind another man's grain, and may other men sleep with her.

- a. Sexual sin is the number one cause of divorce
- b. Job realized that it would only be justice if he slept with another man's wife, and then lost his own wife as a result
- c. This was terrifying to him

8. The Ultimate Judgment for Sexual Sin: Eternity in Hell

Job 31:11-12 For that would have been shameful, a sin to be judged. ¹² It is a fire that burns to Destruction; it would have uprooted my harvest.

Job speaks of a "fire that burns to Destruction" ... the Hebrew word is "Abbadon" frequently linked with hell

- a. As I just said, the Bible consistently warns of the inevitability of God's judgment on sexual sin... it uses PURE FEAR to scare us from it... Jesus linked it to HELL

Matthew 5:29-30 If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

9. Jesus wanted his disciples to fear hell if they fell into sexual sin

C. Battling Sexual Sin from the Heart

1. Job didn't merely suppress external actions, as though that were enough
2. Because he knew that God searches minds and hearts, he had to start within... in his own heart

Job 31:9 "If my heart has been enticed by a woman

3. He speaks of not allowing a woman's beauty to corrupt his heart

Job 31:1 "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl.

- a. Job speaks openly here of the same reality Jesus addressed in the Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 5:27-28 "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.'²⁸ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

4. God searches our hearts and minds and commands purity in the INNER SELF

Revelation 2:23 I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.

D. The Battle for the Eyes

1. Part of Job's strategy was to be careful what he put in front of his eyes

Job 31:1 "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl.

2. That is exactly why Jesus speaks of the eye causing one to sin:

Matthew 5:29 If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

3. This is immediately applicable to all men who yearn to be pure... to make a commitment not to look lustfully at a woman is to battle lust from within the heart, and to make physical commitments with what you won't look at on your electronic devices

E. Holy Habits

1. The final stage of Job's battle for sexual purity was to act in an honorable way at all times
2. All things flowed from his desire to please God and his awareness of God's holiness and omniscience and the inevitability of severe

judgments for sexual sin... this led to Job working on his HEART, seeking purity within; then care for what he put before his EYES; finally, the habitual ACTIONS of the FEET and HANDS

Job 31:4-7 Does he not see my ways and count my every step? ⁵ "If I have walked in falsehood or my foot has hurried after deceit-- ⁶ let God weigh me in honest scales and he will know that I am blameless-- ⁷ if my steps have turned from the path, if my heart has been led by my eyes, or if my hands have been defiled...

Job 31:9 if I have lurked at my neighbor's door

3. We have to set up boundaries for the way we'll live; these fences keep us safe... what you will and won't do with a member of the opposite sex... what you will and won't do with your smartphone

IV. Applications

A. Reviewing Job's Commitments

1. Look upward to Almighty God, the holy Judge of All the Earth
 - a. Be very aware of his omnipresence, omniscience... and perfect justice
 - b. Remind yourself constantly of his open warning that he will judge all sexual immorality
 - c. Be very afraid of those terrifying judgments... the uprooting of your harvest, the loss of your marriage... and most of all, eternity in hell
2. Battle from the Heart Outward
 - a. Understand that the real issue is the corruption of the heart
 - b. Job was careful not to let his heart be drawn away from God by the beauty of a woman
3. Be Careful What You Set Before Your Eyes
4. Holy Habits
 - a. Establish godly boundaries to what you will and won't do

- b. Never deviate from those
- c. Don't let your foot stray or your hand disobey

B. Justification by Faith

1. To implement all of these patterns, we must first be born again through faith in Christ
2. Forgiveness of all sin is available through faith in the blood of Christ

Romans 3:23-25 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵ God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood.

3. Only new creations can live this new life

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

C. Confess your sins to him and receive his cleansing

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

D. Mortification of Sin

Colossians 3:5-6 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.

1. Remind yourself that you are free from all sin as a compelling/commanding force
2. Put sin to death by the Spirit (Rom. 8:13-14)
3. Death by starvation

Romans 6:6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin

E. Accountability

1. Men... find a mature, godly Christian man to hold you accountable

F. Delight

God ordained marriage to be a garden of delights, as shown plainly in Song of Solomon. People search for sinful pleasures when they are empty...

The best thing a married couple can do is fulfill their marital duties to one another... to have a full, rich, satisfying marriage in which love flourishes in all its dimensions. Some time ago, Gary Chapman wrote a book called the Five Love Languages... he posited that each person has one language that especially communicates love to him or her...

I think it's a good list of all the ways Christian spouses can fill each other's lives with love: words of affirmation, quality time, physical touch, acts of service, receiving gifts

Why not speak all these to each other? This way you can protect each other from the onslaught of sexual temptation in this warzone world of ours