

Matthew 5:27-37 “What Causes You to Sin?”

Stand Read Pray

As we continue our study of the Sermon on the Mount entitled “A Message from the King” we come to the next three ways Jesus fulfills the Law. He skillfully shows us that the Law could never make you righteous and only shows you your need and how there needed to be a sacrifice to pay for our sin. Just a reminder of the context...

Matthew 5:17

Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.

And

Matthew 5:20

For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

Last week we listened to Jesus take the one law that most people can say they have kept and killed us with it by showing that it is a heart issue. He said this with authority as He is God and was the One Who gave us the law to begin with and has the right to tell us. If that wasn't enough, He goes on...

Matthew 5:27

You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’

Out of all ten commandments He chose two that are from the second half of the two tablets. These are those that deal with our relationship with others. The first half deals with our relationship with God. Here is another one of those that most people would say is wrong. Now I am sure we will find more people that have committed this than that of Murder but compared to stealing and lying it is way farther down this list. We can find many more excuses for stealing and lying but not with another person’s spouse. That is off limits in any culture even one like ours that has redefined marriage.

Exodus 20:14 and Deuteronomy 5:18
You shall not commit adultery.

This is number six of the ten and if we were go around the room with the two we are covering last week and this we would be feeling pretty good about yourselves. Hey, I have never killed anyone and would never think of sleeping with another man’s wife. Wow, this keeping the law stuff isn’t too bad! This is why what Jesus says next will floor everyone...

Matthew 5:28

But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Uh oh! We are in some real trouble! If you are breathing, you have committed this act. We need to remember sin starts in the heart. We don't sin and become a sinner; we sin because we are a sinner! This is the point He is trying to make! As way of reminder James 1:12-16

Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. 13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. 16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

James is picking up on this same teaching of Jesus. It is a heart issue. Jesus will say at a later time to his disciples...

Matthew 15:16-20

16 So Jesus said, "Are you also still without understanding? 17 Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated? 18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. 19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. 20 These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man."

We are in some real trouble! Jesus gives us some radical advice...

Matthew 5:29-30

If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

The word used for sin here is:

skandalizo = A snare/trap or stumbling block, to give offence.

Where we get our English word for scandalize.

Now is Jesus really telling someone to go and put out your eye or cut off your hand? Of course not! Put away your knives as Jesus is not being literal. He is using an awful extreme to show us how bad our sin is and to get us to think. There is an underlying truth here. There are outside influences that can cause a person to sin. You fill in the blank. Are you willing to cut off that which causes you to stumble? We love our sin so much we never really want to let go of it. Even if we do, we will stand a distance and look at it. We entertain it in our minds and sometimes glorify our past as not being that bad. Jesus is shocking the hearers that our heart is so bad that we need to be able to do the most unthinkable thing to put it in check. Paul would use this same idea when he wrote...

Galatians 5:24

And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Do you know there is nothing redeemable in your flesh? You can never recover or rehabilitate the old person. You have to die and have a second birth.

Again, Jesus tells us the final outcome of our sin...hell. This is language the original hearers would understand. That is what makes His teaching so shocking and offensive.

Now He is using other places in the law of Moses that applied to them as Jews under the law. These are places that have been reinterpreted by rabbinical law to mean something that it did not. We will look at two today. First...

Matthew 5:31

Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.'

Jesus is referring to...

Deuteronomy 24:1

When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house...

What the rabbis had done was determined what an “uncleanness” was. There were two schools of thought. One was for anything. If she burned the toast that, was it, you’re out of here! The other said only for adultery. Jesus seems to agree with that as He goes on to say...

Matthew 5:32

But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.

The word for “Sexual Immorality” is the Greek word “Porneia” where we get our English word for Pornography.

Biblical Sexual Immorality is ANY sexual activity outside the confines of marriage between one man and one woman, period.

He is using it here in the context of unfaithfulness.

Of course there are many differing reasons people get divorced and we always take into account every detail. Paul gets into this in 1 Corinthians 7 and we get a little more detail from Jesus in Matthew 19:3-9:

The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?”

4 And He answered and said to them, “Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ 5

and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? 6 So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

7 They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?"

8 He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. 9 And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."

God only allowed it because of the heart problem we all have. Sin has destroyed more than a few marriages. It will destroy yours if you let sin reign in your life. God takes a high view of Marriage because it is the perfect picture of Christ and the Church.

Ephesians 5:28-32

So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. 30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

Finally, we look at one more law that they had reinterpreted...

Matthew 5:33

Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.'

This is speaking of Numbers 30:2

If a man makes a vow to the Lord, or swears an oath to bind himself by some agreement, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.

Now of course like any lawyer they added a lot of fine print to this that made excuses of why someone could not keep their word. He alludes a little to it in the next couple of verses.

Matthew 5:34-36

But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; 35 nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black.

We say things like "I swear on my mother's grave" but we know we only say that because we can't be trusted. We wouldn't need to say it if we had always kept our word. Jesus, again, gives us some more details on how they had worked around these things...

Mark 7:1-13

Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem. 2 Now [a]when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, [b]they found fault. 3 For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands [c]in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders. 4 When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, like the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.

5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, “Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?”

6 He answered and said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:

‘This people honors Me with their lips,
But their heart is far from Me.

7 And in vain they worship Me,
Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’

8 For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—[d]the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.”

9 He said to them, “All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. 10 For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘He who curses father or

mother, let him be put to death.’ 11 But you say, ‘If a man says to his father or mother, “Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban”—’ (that is, a gift to God), 12 then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, 13 making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.”

We are always trying to find a work around. We are quick to give people our word to make us look good but inside we immediately try to figure out how to get out of it. God is big on oaths and in the Old Testament they were required to keep them even if they were wrong to begin with. Jesus makes it clear for us...

Matthew 5:37

But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

Why is this so important to God? Because He keeps His word! Aren’t you glad God is not like us. One day we are yes and the next no. He has promised you and He will keep it!

2 Corinthians 1:19-22

For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—by me, Silvanus, and Timothy—was not Yes and No, but in Him was Yes. 20 For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us. 21 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, 22 who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

God wants you to know that He is keeping His promises to us and if we are to be the Salt and Light to this world, He wants us to keep our promise to one another.

Before we leave have you received the promise? Do you know what that promise is?

Romans 10:9-10

...that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

You can receive it today and never have to worry that it will be taken away from you!

Stand Pray Song