

ASTONISHED prt 8

Matthew 5:27–32

MPS: **Covenantal love makes you a committer rather than a consumer**

INTRO

- Review
- Today's topic of adultery has affected so many people in the world, in the church AND in this room.
- What was so astonishing about what Jesus had to say about it? What does it mean for you and me?

OPEN

- Our internet provider that was terrible. I was frustrated because I had no options. I was completely limited.
- We sometimes treat our modern relationships like consumer transactions –like restaurants, grocery stores, or service companies like landscaping or even an internet provider.
- In a **consumer relationship** with a company, you say, “I’ll be in a relationship with you as long as you’re giving me good merchandise or good service for a fair price. Of course, if you stop giving me good merchandise or service for a fair price, I’ll go to some other company.” (This isn’t necessarily bad when we are dealing with business issues – but it’s bad when we start treating our relationships that way.)
- But if I worked for the company, high up in the decision-making ranks, I wouldn’t have been so frustrated.
- I would not be a frustrated consumer I’d have been a committed fixer, I’d be committed as a one trying to make it better.
- In a **consumer relationship** you sacrifice the relationship to meet your needs. If your needs aren’t being met, you’re out.
- In a **covenant relationship** you sacrifice your needs to sustain the relationship. You serve and you maintain that relationship, and you’re committed to that relationship even when it’s not meeting your needs - making us committers rather than consumers.

MPS: **Covenantal love makes you a committer rather than a consumer**

Vs 27 *“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.*

- You can’t cover the topic of adultery without talking about marriage.
- Marriage is not consumeristic instead it’s based on covenant.

- Marriage according to God is not simply a civil contract. Marriage is a Biblical covenant.
- Unlike a mere contract (which is conditional, performance-based, and can be dissolved if benefits fade), a covenant is voluntary, promise-driven, and rooted in self-giving faithfulness. It secures a deep, mutual relationship of blessing and obligations, even when circumstances are hard or one party fails.
- God initiates covenants with His people (e.g., Abrahamic, Mosaic, New Covenant), and marriage mirrors this as a covenant before God (Malachi 2:14; Ephesians 5).
- **Covenant love always limits you.** It limits your freedom which is good. Covenant love in marriage limits you to be solely intimate with your spouse. It feels like the opposite of freedom, when in fact, it's the greatest freedom!

In this message we will cover:

Why does God condemn adultery,
 How do I safeguard against adultery,
 How to embrace God's grace if I've committed adultery,
 how do I respond if I've been the one affected by an adultery?

Vs 27-28 *"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*

- Adultery is cheating, but it's more.
- Adultery is breaking the covenant of marriage for the sake of self-satisfaction by having sexual relations with someone other than one's spouse
- Jesus is speaking not just about physical acts, but lustful intent
- The word LOOK is present tense participle *blepōn* and refers to one who continues to look rather than just casting a passing glance, and in either case the mere viewing or mental imagining of a naked body is not under consideration.
- Lustful intent is the word *epithymēō* meaning an **intense, passionate, consuming desire**
- Jesus is condemning adulteress actions AND lustful thoughts

Why does God condemn adultery?

- Marriage isn't just a human institution—it's a profound signpost to the gospel. God designed it to mirror His unbreakable, faithful love for His people. Throughout Scripture, God portrays Himself as the faithful husband to an often unfaithful bride (e.g., Hosea; Ephesians 5; Isaiah 54).

- God condemns adultery because it violates the covenant that marriage represents: exclusive, permanent, self-giving faithfulness.
- Think of it this way: God could have "traded us in." He could have chosen animals, angels, or even aliens as His beloved. But he didn't. In Christ, He pursued us—rebellious, wandering, idolatrous us—with relentless love. He never leaves, never forsakes (Hebrews 13:5). He stays faithful even when we aren't.
- Adultery mocks this divine reality. It says, "I won't be faithful to another like God is to me." It treats the covenant as disposable, like a consumer product rather than a sacred sign of the gospel.
- Jesus, the true Bridegroom, remained perfectly faithful. He didn't abandon us in our unfaithfulness; He died for it. Marriage points us to this greater covenant—God's unbreakable commitment to His people. Condemning adultery protects that picture and calls us to reflect God's steadfast love in our relationships.

Covenantal love makes you a committer rather than a consumer

- Jesus is using a literary device known as hyperbole in the next two verses where he lays out the importance of radically killing temptation and sin.
- He covers both heart adultery and hand (bodily) adultery here.

A. Heart adultery

29 *If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell.*

- We need to remember here, when we consider the phrase, "thrown into hell" that we are NOT saved by refraining from sin, but by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone (Eph 2:8-9)
- Though we are to fight sin we are aren't saved by refraining from sin.
- The idea is that a person continues rebelling against God, choosing self over savior. That is what causes a person to go to hell.
- The major point is that lusting after another person other than your spouse is sin and that we are to be radically fighting that temptation and sin before it grows into something worse.

B. Hand adultery

30 *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 your members than that your whole body go into hell.*

- Heart adultery and hand (bodily) adultery are equally damning but not equally devastating.
- “Sin thrills and then it kills. It fascinates, then it assassinates.” Craig Grochelle
- “Be killing sin or it will be killing you” John Owen... “cease not a day from this work”
- You’ve got to drag it out into the light to put it to death... preferably in the temptation stage before it reaches heart or hand level sin.

****How do I/we safeguard against adultery?**

(How to tear out your eye and cut off your hand - **Practical "Amputation"**)

- a) fasting – plays into ‘not feeding’
 - Joby Martin said something interesting. If you practice fasting, you are practicing saying ‘no’ to your flesh and when temptation arises, you will say ‘no’ quicker simply because you’ve been practicing saying ‘no’ to your flesh.
 - Starve the desires by not feeding them. (give examples)
- b) Pre-decide
 - making intentional choices *ahead of time* about who you want to be and how you'll respond in key situations.
 - The quality of your decisions shapes the quality of your life, and the best way to make better ones is to decide in advance (pre-decide) rather than waiting until the pressure hits.
 - Examples (when an attractive person shows you attention, when you are feeling some way about your marriage, when someone hits on you – BE READY)
- c) Play the tape all the way through.
 - Consider the fall out – the relationships affected.
 - ILLUSTRATION: Pastor friend who cheated had all relationships affected. Not worth it.
 - Imagine the full consequences, not just the thrill.
- d) Be serious about accountability –
 - You can’t have victory alone you need help
 - Victory isn't solo; invite trusted help.
- e) See others as family.
 - Older men are like fathers, younger men are like brothers
 - Older women are like mothers, younger women are like sisters
 - (There should be a gross factor here...)

1 Timothy 5:1–2 (ESV) *Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, 2 older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity.*

- f) Remember you are into whatever your spouse is
 - If she is skinny, then you like skinny
 - If he is bald, then you like bald
 - If she is pregnant, then you like pregnant
 - If she is strong, you like strong, etc.
 - NOT INSTGRAM GIRLS OR EDWARD FROM TWILIGHT

- g) To singles –
 - don't practice divorce by dating a lot of people. Date with marriage in mind.
 - don't steal from someone's future husband or wife. (you don't own you nor do you have permission to steal from another)

****What if I've (already) committed adultery?**

- If you have fallen in sin there is forgiveness and a pathway to restoration, but not without Jesus.
- Confess, repent, ask for forgiveness, receive God's grace AND accept the consequences.
- You cheat on God before you cheat on your spouse. The progression starts with idolatry then moves to heart adultery then ultimately to bodily (hand) adultery.
- God (Jesus) wants you to abide in Him, be faithful to Him – like he is to you.

****What if I'm tempted to cheat?**

- Recognize it as lust—desiring what doesn't belong to you. Don't minimize; address it radically.
- Notice the signs: You like to linger with that other person, you look for subtle ways to linger around them.
- You start to daydream – (no harm right? NO! that is lusting after another that doesn't belong to you)
- You've got to have some accountability. You need another mature believer you can trust this temptation with and drag it out into the light.
- Confession to temptation is like a disinfectant.

****What if adultery was committed against me?**

- FIRST: I am so, so sorry. I know that is so very painful.
- An adulteress affair is not God's design and that's why it hurts so bad.
- The fact is that we are broken people living in a broken world including our sexuality.
- All of us are tempted in some way here. You first have to understand that.
- Next, we don't want to minimize this sin – we need to acknowledge its harmful and hurtful effects.
- The truth is we all have committed the worst kind of adultery – we've cheated on God.

- Now, this could be your biggest chance to be like Jesus, extend grace and forgiveness,
- if at all possible, reconcile and display the gospel.
- (what if it's happened repeatedly? OR what if its egregious, what if he/she doesn't care or repent?)
 - seek wise counsel, make sure your emotions are not in charge, but objectively look at the situation.

CONCLUSION:

You're not a consumer in a marital contract; you are a decision-maker in a marital covenant. We see this in Christ who was committed to love us unconditionally. God's love that never trades us in. Let's respond by clinging to Christ, pursuing faithfulness, and extending His grace to others.

Jesus exposes our hearts not to crush us but to lead us to His grace. We all need His grace and it's an unlimited well of grace upon grace. Trust Him today.

QUESTIONS FOR GROUPS:

- 1 Do you have anyone you can trust to talk with when temptations knock at your door?
- 2 What are some wise steps to move toward finding friends you can be vulnerable with to help you fight temptation and sin?