

LUST OR LOVE?
Matthew 5:27-30

The Sin of Adultery

Like last week, because of the upside down world in which we live, we need to define some basic terms –

- What is adultery?
 - The word occurs 4 times between verses 27 and 32.
- The sin of adultery is very much like the sin of murder –
 - Murder is an assault on God because it ends the physical life of an image-bearer that God created for His glory.
 - Murder is such a grave sin that it is prohibited in the 6th of the 10 Commandments.
- In a similar way, adultery is an assault against God because it is an attempt to destroy God's design of marriage – which He established for His glory.
 - The 7th of the 10 Commandments prohibits adultery.
- Murder and adultery both assault God by destroying His creative work and they are prohibited in the 10 Commandments.

We can't understand adultery without understanding marriage which is what adultery destroys –

- According to Genesis 2, God made His image-bearers as male and female – and the reason He did this was for marriage.
 - This does not mean that everyone has to be married – but the Genesis story is clear that the reason God made them male and female was for marriage.
- Genesis 2:18-23 –
 - v. 24 – “**Therefore** a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”
 - “Therefore” is the commentary of Moses in which he is saying the reason God made them male and female was for marriage.
 - v. 25 – “And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.”
 - This references the physical intimacy of the man and woman who live together in the covenant relationship of verse 24.
 - Sexual intimacy is God's gift to a husband and wife not only for procreation but for their joy and oneness.
- While the blessings of God's design is seen in the OT, the ultimate purpose isn't revealed until Christ.
 - The marriage relationship illustrates Christ and the church!

As it relates to adultery, the marriage math is critical –

- 1 man + 1 woman = 1 flesh relationship

Adultery is the introduction of a third party into the one flesh relationship.

- This is such a violation of God's design that it is one of the “10 Big Ones”!
 - In the OT it was punishable by death – Lev. 20:10

- Prov. 6:32, 33 – “He who commits adultery lacks sense; he who does it destroys himself. He will get wounds and dishonor, and his disgrace will not be wiped away.”
- It is a big deal to God!

Read Matthew 5:27-30

Pray

The Status Quo of the Scribes

Like the first issue, the Scribes and Pharisees wanted to narrow the scope of God’s moral and ethical boundaries –

- So they said, “Don’t commit the act of adultery.”
- Some Rabbis even taught that the adultery could only be committed with the wife of a fellow Israelite – thus a sexual act with a Gentile’s wife was technically permissible.
- There’s a lot wrong with that – just go back to the math – 1+1=1!
- But see how narrowly the sin was defined by the religious leaders –
- Narrowing the scope of the sin makes it much more doable.
- So –
- v. 27 – “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’”

The Exceeding Righteousness of Jesus

Jesus broadens our understanding of sexual purity so such an extent that we are all left drawn to the foot of the cross for forgiveness and spiritual power to live righteously.

-read verses 28-30

Jesus makes three things vividly clear –

- One – “But I say to you that **everyone (any man)** who looks at a **woman** with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”
- Notice that we aren’t just talking about husband and wife but any man who looks any woman.
- The scope widens!
- Two – “...everyone who **looks...**”
- We aren’t just talking about the physical act of adultery – but a lustful **look**.
- The scope widens even more!
- Three – “...with **lustful intent** has already committed adultery in his heart.”
- The intent of the heart is using the God-given gift of imagination to sin.
- Imagination is a gift and it is part of the blessing of being made in the image of God.
- This sets humans apart from the rest of God’s created life.
- Example – We were dog owners for 11 years...
 - While he had a certain level of intelligence, he had no imagination.
 - Balls were for chasing; anything chewable was for eating; anywhere remotely comfortable was for sleeping.
- So Jesus again broadens our understanding of sexual sin to include the sinful use of the mind to fantasize a sexual relationship with someone to whom you are not married.

There's a fourth point that Jesus makes that maybe isn't as clear but I think is still taught –

-Four – “...has already **committed adultery...**”

-We know that the Bible word for any sexual immorality is “fornication.”

-But, while Jesus is describing fornication, He uses the more specific word “adultery” – why?

-To show that the root problem with all sexual immorality is that it is an assault on God's design for marriage.

-Sexual immorality of any kind belittles, marginalizes and disfigures the God-given gift of sexual intimacy which is for the joy of those committed to each other in the covenant relationship of marriage.

So, Jesus broadens the definition of immorality to include –

-Adultery plus – pornography; seduction – intentionally acting or dressing in a way to seduce even the heart.

-Anything erotic that is outside the covenant relationship of marriage.

What we get in verses 29 and 30 is hyperbole –

-If your right eye causes you to sin...

-Your eye can't cause you to sin – only your heart can.

-Looking at a woman with your eye isn't sinful – but looking with lustful intent is!

-If your right hand causes you to sin...

-Your hand can't cause you to sin – only your heart can.

-I'm calling it “Hyperbolic strategy and reasoning for eyes and hands.”

Verse 29 – “If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away (strategy). For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell (reasoning).”

-It is the principle of “radical amputation” –

-It's not literal amputation but radical amputation which means doing anything necessary to keep your eye from looking lustfully at a woman.

-Filter or some kind of lock on your cell phone.

-Don't watch sexually explicit TV shows or movies.

-We see it again in verse 30 –

Verse 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.”

-The hand represented the power of life – how you got things done.

-A business lunch or trip could be represented by the right hand...

The Message for Us

1 – Guard your eyes

2 – Teach and practice healthy sexual relationships in marriage

3 – Don't fall prey to the devil's sexual strategies
-10 Lies

4 – Get help

5 – Rest and rejoice in God forgiving and life-changing grace