

Sunday, July 26, 2020 am

TEACHINGS OF JESUS (12)
Sermon on the Mount (11)
Adultery and Lust
Matthew 5:27-32

We are continuing our study of the teachings of Jesus with a current emphasis on the Sermon on the Mount. We have begun a section of, "You have heard...But I say to you..." examples of the righteousness that is expected of us. As I have noted in this, I believe Jesus was both emphasizing the true understanding of the LOM (unmanipulated) AND the coming kingdom. What they both have in common is the heart behind our actions. That is what Jesus is focusing on and what we need to understand if we are to be pleasing to God.

In our last lesson on this subject we discussed murder and anger. Jesus was teaching – don't let it get to the point of murder by controlling your anger, your tongue and dealing with your faults before others. Today, we want to address adultery and lust.

NOTE: This is an uncomfortable and sensitive topic, but it is one that is addressed in scripture and we cannot ignore it. I have determined that in systematic textual studies, I would not avoid the sections that make us uncomfortable. But still, I will try to be as sensitive as possible as we deal with what God's word actually says.

- I. **You have heard that it was said... You shall not commit adultery**
- a. **What is adultery?** It is unlawful relations with one married to another. It is a form of fornication – which is defined as ANY unlawful sexual relations.
 - b. **Clearly part of the LOM** – Exodus 20:14, Deuteronomy 5:18 - the 7th commandment. So it was something understood early on.
It was also a capital offense – showing how serious God takes marriage vows. Leviticus 20:10-14 Vs. 10 says, *'The man who commits adultery with another man's wife, he who commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress, shall surely be put to death.* This is followed by several examples involving various family relationships that show adultery carried the death penalty for BOTH parties.
 - c. **How had they corrupted what the LOM taught?**
 - i. Possibly much like today – by thinking that everything else is ok.
As long as you do not actually engage in the actual act, you are not guilty of adultery, up to and including lustful looking. And while legalistically that might be true, it posed big problems with the Law of Moses (and today), not to mention problems within the marriage itself.
 - ii. By making exceptions. Some might have viewed the man as guiltless, but the woman guilty. In John 8 we find a recorded example to consider – the woman is brought to Jesus, but where is the man?
 - iii. Add to this the sin of divorce which Jesus addresses in vs. 31-32. They would allow divorce for many unjustified reasons. Jesus clarified what God intends – marriage is to be for life, and it is to be a relationship of fidelity. This factors in to a discussion of adultery and will be addressed in our next lesson.
 - d. **The sinfulness of adultery has not changed.**
Under the law of Christ, adultery is STILL sin – 1 Corinthians 6:9, Hebrews 13:4 – adulterers and fornicators God will judge.
 - e. **This is about the sacredness of the marriage vows and marriage bed** - Hebrews 13:4. One thing that is clear in the NT, and under the LOM is the sacredness of the marriage relationship. Genesis 2:24 notes that they are to become one flesh. In Matthew 19:3-6 - When asked about

divorce for any cause, Jesus was CLEAR that God intended it to be for life and that the two become one flesh.

Paul in Ephesians 5:22-33 began to talk about the marriage relationship and how the husband and wife are to view and treat each other. 1 Peter 3:1-7 also deals with this.

II. **But I say to you...**

- a. While this is not a lesson about husbands and wives per se, adultery is a violation of that sacred bond. Thus Jesus expresses His concerns about the legalistic approach.
- b. ***Whoever looks upon a woman to lust for her...*** Jesus goes further, in addition to not committing the act, don't commit it in the heart either. That is where lust occurs.
 - i. ***What is lust*** – to strongly desire or crave after something that doesn't belong to you or that you cannot have it. It is often associated with a sexual connotation, as in this verse. But it can be that craving for anything – cf. 1 John 2:15-17. I believe that every sin we commit involves some degree of lust or pride.
 - ii. ***Looks*** is a word that can mean more than a mere glance. It is the leering or the second look or watching one.

Beauty is something to be appreciated, with modesty. But this doesn't end at with an appreciative glance, rather he looks to lust for her – now he is entertaining impure thoughts about her. He has desires for her that he has NO right to! That's the lust.
And it so often gets one into trouble. Rarely does it end with an "look"!
 - iii. ***We live in a society that thrives on sensual lusts*** – we are bombarded with immodesty (one who draws undue attention to themselves – in this case, by wearing clothing that is too revealing – cf. 1 Timothy 2:9-10), our sexually charged society – with immodest images everywhere both in attitude and visually (it's everywhere – in advertisements, on television, in the movies, as you walk around and see immodest outfits, on the computer, etc.), we have immodest activities all around us with sporting events and other avenues that wear outfits and make moves that are seductive and designed to make the eye "look" (see above), as well as access to virtually anything immoral that one can think of often piped into our homes via the internet, cable and premium channels that offer uncensored choices.

Pornography is a scourge on our society that is purely lust driven and has done great damage to marriages, homes, in workplaces and in the eyes of many as they view women as objects. And we can add to this a man who lack self-control and restraint. NOTE that it is the man who looks that is addressed in the text (though all parties involved would bear some guilt).
 - iv. Thus we need to heed the warnings against lust in scripture.
- c. ***This too was covered in the LOM*** – commandment 10 – Exodus 20:17. Deuteronomy 5:21 – *you shall not covet your neighbor's wife*, (or anything else for that matter). Isn't it interesting that Moses includes someone else's wife in warning man not to covet?

The best-known example was David and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11) – David saw her and lusted after her. He then sent for her and committed adultery (she was complicit).
Solomon also warned about women who seduced men with "the attire of a harlot" (Proverbs 7:10, 19 – she's married; context 6-27)
- d. ***And it is part of the New Law as well*** –

1 Thessalonians 4:3-7 – we are to be sanctified and abstain from fornication, by:

 - i. *Possessing our own vessel in sanctification and honor*
 - ii. *Not in passion of lust like those who do not know God*
- e. ***Adultery of the heart*** – again, this is where sin begins. Recall James 1:14-15, each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed...

NOTE again Matthew 15:18-19 – out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, etc. IF you never lust you will not commit adultery (or fornication).

NOTE: That Jesus is not saying they have committed the actual act (any more than anger and name calling makes one guilty of murder), but in their hearts they have sinned and possibly imagined or thought about that act. This is not a passing glance! And it is EQUALLY sinful and must be repented of.

Remember, the heart MUST be at the foundation of our lives as Christians.

- f. ***Take drastic measures to prevent it*** – Vs. 29-30 find Jesus giving a solution to prevent both adultery and lusts. CUT OFF whatever causes you to sin.

Jesus is NOT teaching literal self-mutilation. That typically doesn't solve the problem.

Rather, Jesus is saying that you take whatever steps you have to, so that you avoid being condemned to an eternity in hell because you gave in to your lusts.

Cut off the avenues that drive you to sin, whatever they may be. *If you have a problem with the lust of this text* - you may need to cut off television or the internet, or at least put filters in place that keep you from being tempted.

Do like Job – *"I have made a covenant with my eyes; Why then should I look upon a young woman?"* (Job 31:1)

And this applies to many other areas of life as well – financial spending, taking care of our health, those who struggle with gambling or alcohol, etc. Take drastic measures – quit going places that tempt you, change your friends if needed, remove the temptations from your home, etc.

Again, the point Jesus is making, OVER AND OVER, is our need to live godly from the inside out. If the inside is clean, the outside will take care of itself. That is CLEARLY a way to have a righteousness that "exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees." (Cf. Matthew 23:25-28). Are you striving for righteousness according to God's standard? Think about it!