

# Matthew

Sermon on the Mount

May 17, 2024

## I. Introduction

- A. **Matthew 5:27-30**, “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 lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. [29] If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. [30] If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell.
- B. Last week we talked about how the Law dealing with physical murder also applies to relationship murder. The foundational truth in this is that God values relationships as much as He values human life – and so should we. The sanctity of relationships are equal to the sanctity of life.
- C. Today, our focus is on the Law dealing with adultery. We will see that God highly values intimate relationships built on mutual love, trust, and faithfulness – and that includes His relationship with us.
  1. For example, all adultery is rebellion against God – which demonstrates distrust of God and which damages our relationship with God.
  2. All adultery is selfish – which replaces love for our spouse with self-love – thus removing mutual love and trust from the relationship.
  3. All adultery is unfaithfulness – which breaks the bond of our word, the bond of trust, and the bond of oneness. These are all bonds that are necessary for intimate relationships to be mutually satisfying.
- D. God’s OT Law on adultery addresses both parties, because physical adultery is a shared act. Jesus’ explanation of inward adultery addresses just one party, because looking and lusting is a personal act.
  1. In applying the Law to looking and lusting, Jesus appears to be addressing the men. Yet this personal, private form of adultery can be committed by woman, too – though most often for different reasons and in different ways from the men.
  2. Therefore, though what we are talking about today clearly applies to the men, I am urging the ladies to give thoughtful consideration to how it applies to you.
- E. Two definitions from Webster’s Revised Unabridged Dictionary.
  1. **Unfaithful**: Not keeping promises or covenants. Not true to allegiance, duty, or vows; disloyal – such as in marriage.

2. **Selfish:** Caring supremely or inordinately for one's self; directing one's purposes to the advancement of his own interest, power, or happiness, without regarding those of others; regarding one's own comfort, advantage, feelings, or needs in disregard, or at the expense of others.

F. Pray

II. Adultery: the willful breaking of a bond to selfishly gratify a desire.

- A. [27] "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery'; [28] but I say to you that **everyone** (*no exception*) who looks at a woman with lust for her (*looking on her as someone desirable to gratify your sensual desires*) has already committed adultery with her in his heart.
- B. What the Law says (*Remember, the law was given to promote love – within the home and community.*)
  1. **Exodus 20:14** (*7<sup>th</sup> com.*), "You shall not commit **adultery**."
  2. **Exodus 20:17** (*10<sup>th</sup> com.*), "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not **covet your neighbor's wife** or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor."
  3. To confine the application of the 7<sup>th</sup> commandment to the physical act of adultery is to ignore the 10<sup>th</sup> commandment about coveting – which addresses the coveting that is in the heart.
  4. To covet is to selfishly long for what does not belong to us or is against the law, and this selfishness is harbored in the heart and seeks to be satisfied at the expense of others.
- C. Jesus speaks of the heart in relation to adultery because the heart is where evil begins. It is the seat of our character, beliefs, values, desires, fears, and hopes. From the heart comes godliness and sinfulness, love and selfishness, faithfulness and unfaithfulness, or betrayal.
  1. You may never commit physical adultery – and that is good! But if you commit mental adultery (*looking and lusting, mental fantasies, porn*), you are feeding selfishness, double-mindedness, and infidelity – all qualities that strengthen your sinful, selfish nature and war against God, God's ways, personal godliness, love for your spouse, and the sanctity of the marriage relationship.
  2. Though you may never commit physical adultery, if you commit adultery in your heart, it means you would commit physical adultery if you had the opportunity and could get away with it.
  3. Without question, fear of getting caught is a good motive for restraining ungodly desires, passions, and urges, but the motive of fear does not remove the desires or passions or urges of lust.

4. Therefore, Jesus is calling us to deal with all ungodly, love destroying, marriage relationship damaging forms of adultery at its roots, and that is in the heart.
- D. Jesus calls us to address our heart in relation to adultery because it is more than a physical or mental act. It is an expression of our character, beliefs, values, and commitments.
1. Because adultery in any form is rebellion against God and the word of God, it exposes what we believe about God and His ways. For example, if we believe that God's ways are the only way to a full and satisfying life, we will see every form of adultery for what it is – a self-destructive, relationship destructive act.
    - a. In a similar way, adultery exposes what we value most. If we value God, God's way, love, faithfulness, and the good of the family, we will see how selfish adultery is. And we will see how participating in any form of adultery feeds discontent and duplicity (*the act of implying you love your spouse and are faithful when you are willingly acting contrary to love and faithfulness*).
    - b. Every form of adultery exposes our true character, for even hidden adultery requires double-mindedness, double-standards (*i.e., expecting love but giving something less than love*), deception (*hiding a part of our life that breaks the marriage commitment*), and unfaithfulness (*thinking you can serve two masters*).
    - c. This is true for the men and the women. And though a woman may not look and lust with a longing for sensual pleasure, she is likely to look with the lust of longing to feel loved, wanted, or important.
  2. The point is, every form of adultery rejects love in our two most intimate, long-term relationships (*God/spouse*) in order to gratify selfish desires or a temporal sense of need.
    - a. The reality is, whether the physical act or the hidden action of the heart, whether we get caught or our spouse never knows, every form of adultery changes us for the worse, and those changes result in additional selfish and hurtful choices and behavior that affect the way we deal with God and our spouse.
    - b. Therefore, how we deal with what is in our heart is the most important factor in dealing with any form of adultery.
  3. **Ephesians 5:25,28-29**, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her...[28] So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; [29] for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church."

- E. In spite of what is or isn't going on in our heart, the pursuit of godly love, faithfulness in marriage, and purity of mind and heart are made all the harder because the devil and the world are constant proponents of self-gratification – including every form of adultery.
1. For example, we see the reality of this in advertising – be it on TV, billboards, magazines, or the internet. We see this influence in movies, TV shows, books, and the accessibility of pornography. Add to this current clothing fashions – including exercise clothing and beach attire.
  2. In our nation, current cultural norms provide an abundance of temptations to immorality, and those temptations are all around us.
  3. Job spoke of his approach to dealing with such things in **Job 31:1-4**, “I have made a **covenant** with my eyes; how then could I gaze at a virgin? [2] And what is the **portion** of God from above or the **heritage** of the Almighty from on high? [3] Is it not calamity to the unjust and disaster to those who work iniquity? [4] Does He not see my ways and number all my steps?”
- F. Jesus prescribed a way of dealing with such temptations in **vs 29**, “If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. [30] If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell.”
1. Notice, Jesus says that if you want to put an end to the lust that leads to inward adultery, you must take serious action against your eye and hand.
  2. I suspect the men in this room understand that the eye and the hand are the two most prominent body parts involved in producing the gratification lust seeks.
  3. Yet there is a principle here that we all – men and women alike – are wise to understand: To gain consistent victory over any strong temptation or compelling sense of need – so that we change from the inside out – requires a response stronger than the temptation or sense of need. Why?
    - a. Because this war against your ungodly desires is like fighting a cancer that is determined to take over your body and kill you. To defeat such an enemy requires surgery and chemo or radiation therapy – weapons that kill and do violence to your body.
    - b. Therefore, if you want to have a righteousness that surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, this is what is required.

- c. And though you may not like it, is it not better to brutally fight your evil inclinations in this life than to go to hell forever?
4. But, you say, are we not empowered by God, aided by the Holy Spirit, supported by the scriptures, and helped by our brothers and sisters in Christ? Yes we are!! And that is a great blessing bestowed on us by God.
  - a. However, just as Israel had to do violence to the sinful people who inhabited the Promised Land in order to fill it with God's people, so we must go to war in a similar way if we are to (1) die to self, and (2) drive out of our heart any love for anything we ought not to love, and (3) put to death the lustful longings, passions, or evil desires that reside within.
  - b. Though this does not require outward physical cutting, it does require a kind of inward cutting that is just as brutal, just as painful, and just as challenging – for it requires a brutally honest examination of yourself, a brutal honesty with yourself about yourself, and a tireless effort – until you have made so much progress it is as if you've gained the victory. Of course, for this kind of brutal cutting, you need God's empowerment and assistance, His word, and the support of His people.
5. However, to gain and maintain inward victory, you must also cut out those activities that feed your sinful, selfish nature, and that stir your desires, and that lead you into temptation.
  - a. In other words, men, you cannot look at porn or entertain sensual fantasies and defeat the demon of lust that lurks within.
  - b. And if you do not defeat your lustful desires, you will not love your wife as you ought.
  - c. And the reason you will not love her as you ought is because you will see her (*and treat her*) as an object to be used for your pleasure – which means you will be happy when she satisfies you and unhappy when she doesn't – **not just** in the bedroom, but in every area of life.
  - d. And the reason you will see her as an object to be used for your pleasure for your use is because that is how you see all the women you look at with lust.
6. Therefore, do not be deceived, if you treat women outside your home as objects of use, you will treat your wife the same way.
7. But also do not be deceived into thinking (1) that you can change what is in your heart, (2) that you can love your wife as you ought, and (3) that you will see women as women rather than objects without

cutting out of our life those activities that feed your sinful, selfish nature, that stir your desires, and that lead you into temptation.

- a. This principle is true for the men and the women, the teens and the adults.
- b. The scripture puts it this way: “Flee youthful lusts” (**2 Timothy 2:22**); “Do not let sin reign **in** your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, [13] and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin (***outward***) as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God” (**Romans 6:12-13**).
- c. In other words, we must deal with both the outward activities that feed lust and the inward activities of lust.

### III. Conclusion

- A. All that we have talked about today is directly related to, effects, and comes out of our character, our beliefs, and values – that is, our heart.
- B. How we deal with every form of adultery reveals our commitment to love over self, our commitment to the good of the community over personal happiness in the moment, the value we place on God and pleasing God, and our willingness to brutally attack the evil within and replace it with godliness.
- C. There are no other relationships as intimate as that between a husband and wife, and between God and us. These two relationships deserve faithfulness, selflessness, love, and trust.
  1. In marriage, may we – me, you – choose faithfulness, selflessness, love, and trust regardless of what our spouse chooses.
  2. With God, may we choose faithfulness, selflessness, love, and trust because that is how He treats us.