

The Gospel of Matthew

Title: Personal Relationships - Part 2 Adultery

Text: Matthew 5:27-30

Introduction: Jesus makes reference to the 7th commandment in Exodus 20:14. Adultery is being unfaithful in a marriage. Unlike the NT word "*porenuo*" which is to indulge in illicit sexual intercourse, and is clearly forbidden in the NT. 1 Corinthians 6:18-19 "*Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own*"? John makes reference to Numbers 25:1-9 in his letter to the church at Pergamum in Revelation 2:14 "*But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit acts of immorality.*" Cf. Numbers 25:1-9, the Israelites joined in sexual immorality with the Moab women, since Baal of Peor was a part of the cult worshipped by the Moabites, Israel joined in these idolatrous practices. They yoked themselves together thus violating the first commandment.

Point 1 - Do Not Commit Adultery

Mark, Luke, Romans and James all mention the OT commandment. But Jesus is going a bit deeper here. He is getting to the heart of the matter. Yes, the OT and NT command is not to commit adultery. The physical act is a violation of the commands of God. We see three aspects in this passage, the deed, the desire, the deliverance.¹

Point 2 - The Deed

In both of these commands (vs. 21-26) the murder command protects the sanctity of human life, and this command protects the sanctity of marriage. 2 Timothy 3:13 "*But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.*" Our culture is a culture of unbridled lust, sin, immorality and evil. There seems to be no limit to the depths of man's depravity. People promote immorality through means of advertisements, TV, commercials and propaganda. The media industry normalizes adultery, fornication and sexual sin.

2A - You cannot normalize sin. Yet, the culture and even the church has made attempts to soften and realign what God has clearly stated. The church at Corinth was known for its trouble. In 1 Corinthians much of the book is spent addressing issues from their pagan past. Some of those things had made their way into the church body. 1 Corinthians 5:1 "*It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife.*"

¹ In John MacArthurs sermon on Matthew 5:27-30 he identifies the deed, desire and deliverance

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2B - The world has distorted what God designed. We are in the world, but not of the world, cf. John 17:15-18. This has been skirted in the church, the subject of sexual purity in the bonds of marriage. God created sex between a man and a woman in the bonds of marriage. This issue was also addressed in 1 Corinthians 7:3,5. Furthermore, Proverbs 5:18-19 describe the loving, God designed relationship between a husband and a wife. Not to be polluted by filthy waters of adultery. The solution to sexual impurity is not to be found externally. Job understood the issue was a matter of the heart and must be corrected, Job 31:9-11 *"If my heart has been enticed by a woman, Or I have lurked at my neighbor's doorway, May my wife grind for another, And let others kneel down over her. For that would be a lustful crime; Moreover, it would be an iniquity punishable by judges."*

The OT law portrays adultery as hideous and punishable by death, Leviticus 20:10 *"If there is a man who commits adultery with another man's wife, one who commits adultery with his friend's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death."* Deuteronomy 22:22 *"If a man is found lying with a married woman, then both of them shall die..."*. Throughout the NT prohibitions are just as clear, 1 Corinthians 6:9 *"Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals."* Cf. Galatians 5:19-21; Revelation 2:22 *"Behold, I will throw her on a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds."*

Point 3 - The Desire

The phrase is indicative of an *"intentional looking with the purpose of lusting."* He is speaking of the person who looks to be satisfied, rents or watches a movie or show with explicit implications in it. Dr. John MacArthur in his sermons says, *"Looking at a woman lustfully does not cause a man to commit adultery in his thoughts. It is not lustful looking that causes the sin of the heart, it's the sin of the heart that causes lustful looking."* Jesus isn't speaking of unexpected and unavoidable exposure to sexual temptation. It is the continuing to look, to plan to think that leads to spiritual adultery. Someone once said, *"Sow a thought and reap an act. Sow an act and reap a habit. Sow a habit and reap a character. Sow a character and reap a destiny."* Galatians 6:7-8 *"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life."*

Application: An adulterous heart plans in advance lustful satisfying things, the godly heart plans to avoid such. This is the implication of Jesus' statement.

Point 4 - The Deliverance

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Jesus isn't speaking of a literal mutilation here, but a figurative one. In Jewish culture the right hand and the right eye were the strongest. Jesus is saying we should give up whatever is necessary, even the most cherished things, in order that we do not sin. Whatever it is that is the channel to your lust and sin, it must be cut off and plunged out.

Stumble - basically means to cause to fall. Whatever it is that causes you to stumble, to fall into a trap must be removed. Many of you know that. And many of you know that there are avenues which feed an adulterous heart. Yet, you let them live on.

Application: Just getting rid of outward influences won't change an adulterous heart. But an outward act of forsaking whatever causes you to sin reflects a heart that is seeking God's righteousness. I think we can understand truly what Jeremiah was saying, "**The heart is more deceitful than all else, And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?**" Cf. Matthew 5:6

Concluding Application

Your thoughts are a product of a bad, adulterous heart. Let me ask, what's feeding your heart? TV, movies, texts, print, emails? What avenues are you letting run into your heart? If whatever you identify that's causing you to stumble then tear it out or cut it off. Fear God and His judgement. Fear disappointing your Father in heaven. And hunger and thirst for righteousness.

For those today, who are guilty and have no hope in Christ, I say to you, today is the day of salvation. You can't overcome temptations and not be a born again, atoned child of God.