

Title: Jesus' Words on Lust and Divorce

Passage: Matthew 5:27-32

Key Truths:

- We cannot prevent certain thoughts from entering our minds, but once they enter, we may either entertain them or cast them aside and turn our minds elsewhere.
- The heart of the problem is the problem of our heart, our sinful heart.
- The key to spiritual victory over lust is not a mutilated eye or body, but a changed heart! any and every sexual practice is immoral not just in look but also in thought.
- Your identity is based on what God has says about you, not about your weakest moments.
- Divorce often begins with a wandering mind due often to marital dissatisfaction and discontent.

Application:

- Recognize yielding to sinful lusts will lead to hell.
- Deal with the real cause of your sin.
- Remind yourself of God's truth.
 - The reality and scope of God's grace.
 - Embrace God's forgiveness and continue to pursue holiness. Our weakness doesn't define us. God's grace and forgiveness defines us.
- Even with specific situations that may qualify for divorce, one should always seek reconciliation.
 - If find oneself in a difficult situation, seek Biblical counsel.

Possible Discussion Questions:

- What point(s) in the sermon did the Lord most impress upon you?
- How does adultery start?
- What changes do you need to make in your reading or viewing cabinets to avoid temptations to lust?
- What can you do this week to strengthen your marriage or the marriage of a friend?
- James 1:22 admonishes us to be “doers of the Word.” What next steps will you take in response to the truths you have been exposed to?

Introduction

We live in a hedonistic universe where so much is catering to the flesh.

- Culture shift: Sexual liberation = self identity
- Biblical standards have been viewed as "antiquated".
 - When the church's standards become lower, all of society suffers.

- But the truth is that God's Word is eternal and never changes. Always true and always applicable.

Question: How can we stay pure in today's culture?

Passage:

Matthew 5:27-32

“You have heard that it was said, You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 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. 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.

“It was also said, Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

EXPOSITION

Jesus presents a new standard of holiness.

- Holiness is not based merely on the text of the Law.

The Law

Matthew 5:27

“You have heard that it was said, You shall not commit adultery.’

- "you have heard that it was said"
 - Pointing not to the Law but how the religious leaders had been teaching the Law.
- God is more interested not merely the external but also the internal.

Luke 11:39-41

And the Lord said to him, “Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. You fools! Did not he who made the outside make the inside also? But give as alms those things that are within, and behold, everything is clean for you.

True Meaning of the Law

Matthew 5:28

But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

- What this doesn't say: temptation itself. Natural attraction in a material world.

- What is prohibited: deep seated lust that occupies the person.
 - Once a thought enters our mind, it is dwelled upon.
- "We cannot stop birds from flying above our heads but we can prevent them from building a nest on their head." (Martin Luther)
- We cannot prevent certain thoughts from entering our minds, but once they enter, we may either entertain them or cast them aside and turn our minds elsewhere.
 - Do not feel guilty just having a thought.
 - The issue is dwelling upon them.
- Sometimes you might be shocked with a thought that enters your mind but don't linger on them.

2 Corinthians 10:5

We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,

Truth: we are all adulterers of the heart.

- This passage is not for another person but for each of us.
- We should be reminded that we are all spiritually bankrupt and broken before the cross.

Scope: any and every sexual practice is immoral not just in look but also in thought.

- Sexual sins are preceded by sexual fantasies.
- Ex: King David.

2 Samuel 11:1-4

In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel. And they ravaged the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem.

It happened, late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful. And David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, "Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" So David sent messengers and took her, and she came to him, and he lay with her. (Now she had been purifying herself from her uncleanness.) Then she returned to her house.

- David's sins occurred out of dwelling on the fantasy and then acted upon it.

Protect our Eyes and Hands

Matthew 5:29-30

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. 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.

- we must resist the temptation to water down what Jesus said.
- If you are choosing lust over purity, this will lead you to hell and destruction.

Galatians 6:7-8

Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he 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.

Key Points:

- The heart of the problem is the problem of our heart, our sinful heart.
- The key to spiritual victory over lust is not a mutilated eye or body, but a changed heart!

APPLICATION

I. Recognize yielding to sinful lusts will lead to hell.

- If you are cavalier to sinful lusts such as pornography, then question whether you are truly a Christian.
 - If you are in Christ, you hate sin.
 - In Christ, life is not about perfection but direction.
 - Do you fight sin?
 - Or do you view sin merely casually?

II. Deal with the real cause of your sin.

- Sin of discontent
 - Discontent with your state of life.
 - You feel you deserve "more" and seek "more"
 - But be thankful and satisfaction with where God has placed you.
 - Tend to your spouse.
 - Invest in good friends and ministries.
 - Put yourself into good things. Don't be idle.

III. Remind yourself of the truth.

- Your identity is based on what God says about you.
 - Not about your weakest moments.
- The righteous man gets up and moves on.
 - Don't do a pity party in your sin.
 - Follow Christ.

Matthew 5:31-32

“It was also said, Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

- Divorce often begins with a wandering mind due often to marital dissatisfaction and discontent.

Guidelines of divorce / re-marriage

- Very specific situations:
 - Deuteronomy 24:1-14
 - Abandonment (1 Corinthians 7)
- Even with specific situations, still recommend one always should seek reconciliation.
- If find oneself in a difficult situation, seek Biblical counsel.

Illustration:

Working on a vineyard, accidentally sever the vine. Can try to cover it but the result will be clear. Only thing can do is replant the vine again and nurture to growth.

- Adultery severs the vine.
 - Can it be redeemed? Yes. But it will take time just as replanting a vine from the beginning takes time.
- What if caught a spouse with a habit of pornography or having lust in the heart - grounds for divorce?
 - Lust/pornography does affect the vine but does not sever the vine.
 - Physical intimacy severs the vine.
 - This does not downplay the hurt and effort caused by pornography but it is not equal to physical adultery.

Situations:

Situation: You have been hurt from the sin of adultery.

- Remind yourself continually of God's grace.

Psalms 34:18

The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.

Situation: You were in sin of adultery, experienced the consequences, but have since repented and turned to God.

- Embrace God's forgiveness and continue to pursue holiness.
- Our weakness doesn't define us. God's grace and forgiveness defines us.

Psalms 51:10

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

1 Corinthians 15:10

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.

Situation: You are not in Christ.

- Repent of your sin and turn to Christ.

Acts 16:31

And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."