

Adultery in God's Eyes

Matthew 5:27-30

Halifax: 15 February 2004

Introduction:

For several months now, we have been studying the Sermon on the Mount.

- Currently, we are in the second part of this great sermon where Jesus presents to us the true meaning of God's commandments.
 - He makes it clear that He did not come to destroy the Law but to fulfil it.
 - He labours to make sure that His disciples understand what God's commandments really mean.
 - The religious people of His day, as in our day,
 - were not really being honest with God's commandments.
 - They had found ways to get around what God had said.

You see, if you truly and rightly understand God's commandments,

- You will understand how much you need Jesus as a Saviour.
 - You will see that measuring up to what God requires is impossible apart from Jesus Christ.
- You will understand why it was necessary to for Him to die on the cross!
 - and why you cannot be forgiven unless you come to Him...
- And you will understand how much you need to be changed...
 - That it is not just a few actions that need cleaning up...
 - But that you need to be radically changed from the very core of your being.
 - You will see that you must look to Jesus to save you from your sins.
- So you see that Jesus in His great love for His people wants us to understand God's commandments in the right way so we will come to Him for salvation!
 - Last week, I showed you how He explains the sixth commandment!
 - "You shall not murder!"
 - He shows us that when you look the commandment before God,
 - it refers not only to the act of killing itself,
 - but also to the anger that rises in your heart when your neighbour displeases you in some way that ought not to displease you!

- This week we come to Jesus' exposition of the seventh commandment:
 - You shall not commit adultery.
 - Once again, Jesus shows you that it is not just what you do with your body, but also what goes on in your heart that God sees.
 - His exposition is given to help you understand how far this commandment reaches when you remember that it is not a mere human commandment, but God's commandment.

So let us now turn to consider Adultery in God's eyes.

I want to begin by saying:

I. You have a very kind and wise God!

- A. One of the ways His kindness and wisdom is shown is in how He made us male and female.
 1. He constituted the man with a very strong desire to hold a woman very close to himself.
 - to take her and embrace her and caress her and to lay with her.
 - to care for her and cherish her and provide for her as his very own flesh.
 - Do you remember what Adam said about the woman God had made before he fell into sin?
 - He said,
 - "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman because she was taken out of man."
 - There was an intimacy there such as he could have with none of the other creatures God had made...
 - There was a closeness and a desire to embrace her and hold her near...
 2. And in the woman God created a corresponding desire to be held and cherished by the man.
 - He gave her a longing to be held very close by the man, to be embraced and caressed by him.
 - She was made to rejoice to be in his arms and in his love and care, cherished as his own flesh.
 - God made the man and the woman to be together in this sweet intimacy.
 - It is a beautiful thing!
 - You can see His kindness and His wisdom in making us with these desires.

B. God appointed from the beginning that the man was to enter into this sweet intimate fellowship with one woman.

1. After Adam said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh,"

- God said,
 - "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be jointed to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."
- In these words,
 - the Lord shows us that He has designed the man to have this intimacy with one woman, his covenanted wife;
 - and for the woman to have it with one man, her lawfully wedded husband.
 - There was to be a formal breaking of the tie with ones parents to enter into a covenant together as man and wife.
 - It was here that the man was to live out his strong desire to hold a woman close to himself
 - and that the woman was to live out her desire to be held by him.

2. God did not make the man and the woman capable of sustaining so intimate a relationship with more than one person.

a. This special intimacy was designed by God to set the relationship of husband and wife apart from all other relationships.

- An intimacy was to be enjoyed here that was enjoyed nowhere else.
- To try to enjoy that intimacy with more than his wife places a burden on a man that he is incapable of bearing...
 - He can spread himself around like a dog,
 - but if he does, he loses the dominion God gave him to exercise.
 - Even King David experienced that with the wives and children he had by polygamy.
 - As a king, he thought it manly to take many wives and show how powerful he was...
 - but instead of dominion, he ended up with confusion and strife.

b. You end up spreading yourself too thin if you to try to have more than one woman...

- You are like a piece of glass that was designed to cover one window trying to cover two windows...

- You end up with a lot of holes and a lot of leaks because there is not enough of you to do the job.
- You become like a dog who struts about,
 - but has no dominion anywhere but the kind that comes from barking and snarling.
- The dominion God appointed for the man was a dominion in which his wife was comfortable in his arms as he cherished her and protected her.
 - It is a dominion where she wants to be one with him because she respects him and knows that he loves her.

TRANS> And in His wisdom and kindness...

3. God designed it so that children should be brought forth as the man holds his wife close to himself and as she is held by him.
 - a. It was not just the production of children with which God was concerned!
 - Dogs can produce offspring very well, but we are not dogs!
 - God designed it that children were to be nurtured up in a home where a husband clings to his wife and cares for her and nourishes her.
 - b. These children were to grow up in that environment of love and intimacy.
 - They were not to belong to the village or the community, but to a man holding a woman.
 - They were meant to have a place where they belonged and where they could have their identity...
 - Not with other children in herd like buffalo—
 - but with a man loving a woman and a woman rejoicing in that love.
 - This was to be the children's environment until they leave father and mother and joined to a wife or a husband.

TRANS> God was so kind and wise to make us this way...

- And there is yet more...

C. God gave man a strong desire to embrace the woman and the woman a desire to be embraced in order to teach us about Himself!

1. From the beginning,

- God established marriage to be a showcase of His own love for us.

- God the Son whom we now know as Jesus Christ was the one who created us and who sustains us...
 - He is the One who cherishes us and provides for us and cares for us, and rules us with tender sacrificial love!
2. The man was to understand how to love to his wife by looking at how the Son of God loves His people!
- a. He was to look and see how the Son of God cared for His people...
 - The love that has now been demonstrated so fully by His death on the cross to atone for our sins!
 - This love was there from the beginning and has manifested—
 - When the need was there, the Son gave everything to meet that need.
 - That is what a husband is model in his relationship to his wife!
 - b. And as the man endeavours to love his wife like the Son of God loves us,
 - He learns all the more to delight in the Son of God and to rest in his love.
 - He is able to behold the glory of God.
3. And as he imitates the Son of God, he not only beholds the glory of God himself, but also displays it to others...
- a. His love and commitment to his wife shows others about the love of God the Son.
 - He demonstrates this love to His wife, to His children, and to all who are round about!
 - b. This is true art!
 - An artist takes what is there is represents it on oil and canvass or in stone or whatever medium...
 - The beauty of God's love for His people is demonstrated in the medium of marriage.
 - c. Man was made in the image of God for the glory of God...
 - And God ordained that His love should be demonstrated in marriage where a man holds a woman...
 - and cherishes her as his own flesh.

TRANS> What a wise and kind creator you have to give you so high a privilege!

- **He** is kind and wise....

II. But you, oh man, how foolish you have become!

A. The trouble began the day Adam rejected God's counsel.

1. You know what happened...

- a. The woman was deceived by the serpent and ate the fruit that God had forbidden.
 - It was the fruit by which man would declare that he would not have God to rule over him.
 - It was by eating this fruit that rebellion would be declared.
- b. And Adam did not stop his wife, though he knew full well what was being declared at that tree.
 - Instead of stopping her, he also ate...
 - The rebellion began on that day and it has been with the human race ever since.
 - We rejected God's counsel and went our own way.

2. And you can see right from the start how the fall affected marriage...

- a. See the man shifting the blame for his folly on the woman!
 - "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate."
 - What an effeminate wimp!
 - Where is your dominion Adam?
- b. The man still has the desire to hold the woman near to himself and the woman has a desire to be held...
 - But now there is much discontent...
 - 1) The embrace has become a selfish embrace...
 - It is not a reflection of the commitment of the Son of God to love and cherish and care for His own...
 - but it is a desire to be self-satisfied.
 - 2) No longer does the man treat her as his own flesh,
 - and so there is frustration and fear and uneasiness...
 - and there is selfishness and abuse...
 - and there is such discontent that the man does not satisfy himself with embracing one woman,
 - but moves about from one to another like a dog.

- c. What a fool you have become O man!
 - How much you have given up!
 - How much you have ruined!
 - How far you have fallen!
3. Oh yes, by His grace, God does not allow us to totally forget from whence we have fallen...
- a. Through Jesus Christ,
 - He redeems us and restores this blessed relationship in part...
 - and through common grace,
 - He maintains it in the world to a degree even among those that do not know Him...
 - Almost every culture has some idea about marriage.
 - It all comes from God's original institution, though it is always perverted in many ways.
 - b. In Western civilisation, God was pleased to restore marriage in a very remarkable way.
 - There was a cultural maturity so that everyone in our culture considered marriage between one man and one woman to be proper...
 - and all sex outside of such marriage to be perverse...
 - Certainly, there was hypocrisy...
 - but it is far better to have hypocrisy within a society that has a pure standard...
 - than it is to have **no** standard at all from which to deviate!
 - It is one thing to sin in the dark and be ashamed—
 - It is quite another to sin openly and, as Jeremiah said, to forget how to blush!
 - God had blessed us with a sexual maturity...
- B. But now, our society is slipping—we are becoming very immature once again about sexuality!
- 1. We do not know how to use God's gift with wisdom.
 - a. The immature take what is precious and use it without wisdom.

- We are like a one-year-old with a pan of gold that has just been panned...
 - He is attracted to the gold!
 - He grabs it in his little fat hands and slings it around into the river—puts some in his mouth—has a great time with it!
 - He likes the gold, but he uses it in an immature way.
 - b. That is the way an immature man is with a woman—
 - She is beautiful and desirable to him...
 - He wants to embrace her and hold her very close to himself...
 - but he doesn't really have a clue what it's all about!
 - c. Sexual immaturity does not understand the value of God's gift...
 - Sexual immaturity is like the couple that buys a throw rug they inherited and uses it at their side door to wipe their feet when they come in from the barn...
 - They like the rug and are glad enough to have it,
 - but they do not realise that it is a Persian rug that is worth \$50,000.
 - They take what is very precious and use it in a perverted way.
2. When you are immature, you don't see how immature you are.
- a. If a young man, growing up in the church, turns to sexual immorality,
 - he does so with the foolish arrogant attitude that this is something his parents don't really understand!
 - He doesn't understand that his parents have learned to express their sexual desires in accordance with God's will...
 - When this lack of understanding is there,
 - It is usually the fault of the parents and especially the fathers for not teaching his son wisdom in this area...
 - If you haven't instructed your children along the lines of the instruction given in Proverbs,
 - how are they supposed to know that you have any wisdom in this area?
 - They think you just haven't discovered what they are now experiencing.
 - They are playing with gold like the one-year-old I mentioned earlier...

- Even though they are teenagers and ought to know better by now,
 - they don't know because no one ever explained to them what the gold was for in a mature way.
 - They have found it and they love it, but they do not know how to use it.
- b. Our whole society is falling into this immaturity today!
- And because it is real immaturity,
 - They follow their perversions as if they are fresh new discoveries that no one understands!
 - They do this because no one has shown them how God's gift is supposed to be used!
 - They only saw marriages that presented a truncated, distorted picture of the love of a man for a woman.
- c. People of God,
- Its time for you to repent!
 - Those who follow God's will in this matter are the ones with sexual maturity and sexual wisdom!
 - They are the experts that have wisdom to pass on to our age!
 - When the church does this properly,
 - the world becomes ashamed of their perverted sex and take it to the closet again.
- C. Jesus Christ makes it very clear where sexual wisdom and sexual maturity lie!
1. Wisdom is found in being a one-woman-man.
 - a. A man is not to run about from one woman to another...
 - He is supposed to pour his energy into establishing one relationship with one woman.
 - He is supposed to work out one relationship to the glory of God!
 - b. He is not even to think about having another woman!
 - Jesus says that to do so is to commit adultery!
 2. It doesn't matter how the satisfaction comes—
 - a. Any longings to embrace a woman outside of covenant marriage is adultery.

- Your focus is wrong whether you are a man who:
 - justifies the use of porn,
 - uses it and feels guilty,
 - or doesn't use it but wishes you could...

- Likewise, your focus is wrong if you are a man who:
 - lusts after women around you and excuses yourself,
 - or who lusts and feels guilty,
 - or who just wants to lust.

- Your focus has shifted from your wife and from the glory of God to your own selfish desires...
 - You need to repent.

- b. This is easier to understand if you compare it to something like killing.
 - God allows us to kill animals for food... you can do that lawfully...
 - But it's easy to see you are out of line if you simply **want** to kill another person without cause...
 - Even if you only fantasise about killing him but would never do it...
 - And even if you only want to fantasise about killing them....
 - It is clear that your heart is not in step with God's will.

III. You need to see what a serious matter a lustful look is.

- There is a tendency to make excuses and to justify yourself—
 - to say, “Well, I am just looking, it can't be that bad...”

A. Jesus says that if this sin is not dealt with, it will land you in Hell!

- Matthew 5:29-30:
 - "If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

- 1. When you lust you show contempt for God.
 - He has given men the desire to hold a woman and women the desire to be held by a man for His own glory as I showed before...
 - but what an affront it is to take this precious calling to demonstrate what God is like and use it in ways that are contrary to God's will!

- This is like taking the money you have been entrusted with by a company and using it for your own purposes!
 - Jesus shows us that God is not frail deity we often think He is!
 - He knows how to deal with those who show contempt for His name!
2. Jesus terrifies you with the fires of Hell in order that you might repent!
- a. You might say,
 - “Why not just talk about the positives and how marriage is the better way?”
 - “Why is it necessary to threaten us with Hell?”
 - b. Don’t you know the answer to that question?
 - Jesus knows what we are like!
 - We simply do not take sin seriously—
 - especially the sins of the heart—
 - unless we are brought to see the consequences of sin!
 - c. Jesus will not have one of His sheep for whom he died go on thinking lightly of the sins he commits before God’s face!
 - It was sins like this that put Him on the cross.
 - It is fatal for you to ease your conscience by pretending that it’s not a big deal...
 - It is a big deal in God’s eyes!
 - Jesus makes that very clear!
 - Jesus wants it to be a big deal in your eyes so you will repent.

TRANS> By saying that we ought to pluck out our eye and cut off our hand...

B. Jesus shows you that adulterous lust is not a sin to dilly-dally around with!

1. Radical action must be taken!
 - a. Jesus reasons that even if your right eye causes you to sin, it would be better to pluck it out and cast it away with contempt than to perish in Hell.
 - The same with your right hand!
 - Just think of the comparison—
 - losing an eye or hand now verses spending eternity in suffering in Hell!
 - You need to be that serious about warring against sin!

- b. He is calling you to get your priorities straight!
 - He wants you to understand that nothing is worse than sinning against God.
 - It is much better to show contempt for your own body than for show contempt for God!
 - You were not created to serve your body but to serve God...
 - And you get everything all distorted and backward when you make your body the priority.
2. But of course, Jesus is not counseling you to literally pluck out your eye and amputate your hand...
- a. This is obvious because that would not really solve the problem.
 - The left eye would carry on and so would the left hand...
 - The parts of your body are not really what cause you to stumble...
 - The problem is in your heart.
 - It is the heart that must be circumcised, not the eye or the hand.
 - The point is that you ought to be willing to take just as radical and serious measures to deal with sin as amputation!
 - b. Secondly, it is obvious that He does not mean to be taken literally because it would be wrong to commit one sin to prevent another.
 - Whatever measures you take to deal with sin must not be sinful themselves!
 - And mutilating your body is sinful!
3. How then, are Jesus' instructions to be carried out practically?
- Let me explain...
 - a. The word translated "causes you to sin" or "offends you" was used of the bait stick that was used to spring a trap.
 - The animal would go for the bait and be caught in the trap...
 - And Jesus is showing you how foolish it is to take the bait when you know that you will get caught in the trap of sinful lust if you do.
 - b. The point here is that if you really are serious about repentance,
 - you will not make provision for your flesh...

- A person who is serious about losing weight will not go out and buy a bunch of potato chips and pies just in case company comes!
 - Likewise, if you know that certain things are bait for adulterous lust—
 - and that they will lead you into this sin...
 - then cut the bait out of your life!
- c. You need to be brutally honest with yourself here!
- 1) You know good and well when you turn on the television because you want to see something to lust after...
 - Or when you open the paper or read a book in order that you may lust...
 - or when you gaze at the girl sitting across from you in the waiting room because you want to lust...
 - or when you go on the internet in order that you may lust—or hoping at least that you might find something along the way to make you lust!
 - 2) Jesus is telling you to quit dilly-dallying around with this sin!
 - Of course there are many times when temptation comes into your life when you weren't looking for it...
 - But be honest—
 - For what purpose did you take a second and a third look but to lust after what God has forbidden!
 - David saw Bathsheeba bathing on the rooftop...
 - If he had been honest with his heart at that point, he would not have looked again...
 - You may see something,
 - and you can't always help that...
 - But you can help looking a second time to lust!
 - That is what Jesus forbids here!
 - 3) Cut out those things that you know cause you to lust—
 - even if they are as dear to you as your right eye and your right hand!
 - a) What could more foolish than to lay up provision for your enemies—
 - when an army is invading your country, you don't supply them with ammunition and planes and tanks unless you are fool!
 - It calls into question whether you really consider your enemy!

- b) If you really care about dealing with this sin,
 - you will do whatever you can to make it as difficult as possible for lust to arise.

- 4) And I need to say a word to you women here as well...
 - a) Just as men have a desire to embrace you, you have a desire to be embraced by a man.
 - That is a God-given desire and there is nothing wrong with it until it becomes a desire to gain the attention of the man outside the bonds of marriage.

 - b) Like the man, you know when you are trying to gain the wrong kind of attention...
 - when you are wearing the low cut blouse or the short skirt or the tight jeans to make him look to lust.
 - Just as it is wrong for him to make provision for his lusts—
 - so it is wrong for you to make provision for his lusts as well.
 - You are inviting him to show contempt for God because you want to get his attention.
 - You may succeed in gaining his attention,
 - but remember that you will also get God's attention.

- 4. But let me add to all this that you must not forget the reason that lust is forbidden.
 - a. It is because God has designed the man's desire to embrace a woman and the woman's desire to be embraced for marriage, not for fornication.
 - He has designed it to be a part of a very special relationship, a one-flesh relationship, between a man and a woman.
 - To go against that is to spoil His design for marriage, for the family, even for society in general...
 - You are made in His image and you desecrate His image when you give yourself to fornication...
 - Is that really something you should be yearning to do?
 - Or should you be yearning to show forth His glory in a beautiful one-flesh relationship with your husband or wife?

 - b. One of the best ways to stop making provision for lust is to start making provision for your marriage.
 - Your desires and your energies need to be properly directed...
 - If you are feasting at home,
 - you are not so interested in feasting elsewhere!

- c. But what if you are yet too young to marry, then what should you do?
- You need to be preparing for the feast of marriage...
 - Young men,
 - you need to be preparing yourself to care for a woman, to provide for her, to cherish her...
 - Learning to submit to God and to know what you believe so that you will be able to lead your wife in accordance with His will...
 - You need to learn self-control and self-sacrifice now so that you will know how to treat a wife some day.
 - And young women,
 - You need to be preparing yourself to serve a husband...
 - not concentrating on gaining a man's attention,
 - but concentrating on making yourself beautiful with a meek and quiet spirit that is precious in God's eyes.
 - Learning to serve others and to care for their needs.
 - Learning to submit to the authority of your father so that when he gives you away to a man, you will know how to submit to him.
- d. And what if you are single and have no prospects?
- Once again, God gives you instruction about what to do...
 - In 1 Cor. 7, He calls you to give yourself to Him as though you were married to Him.
 - You are not to use your time for selfish purposes, but for serving others for Christ's sake.
 - There is no calling to selfish indulgence and isolation...
 - Either you serve your spouse in marriage...
 - Or you serve wherever there are needs.
 - It is not for you to give yourself to lust, but for the Lord.

Conclusion:

So you see that whether you are male or female, you must take this sin of adulterous lust seriously!

- It is not something to play around with!
- Jesus does not think it's a game at all.

He is much easier to hear when you consider how seriously He took sin!

- He is the head of the body, the church,
 - and He allowed Himself to be cut off so that the whole body might be saved!
 - He allowed Himself to be cursed of God and cast away in order that He might pay the penalty for our sins!
- He took serious measures for a serious problem!
 - And because He did, we can live through faith in Him!
 - But you will never inherit His kingdom as long as you pretend that lust or any other sin is no big deal.
 - You deserve to go to Hell for it, and Jesus did go to Hell for this sin (and all other sins).