

MATTHEW 5:27 – 30

THE BLESSED SEVERANCE

INTRO

Today Jesus is driving down deep into the heart of the matter of sin and I think it is interesting that he begins with the area of adultery and lust. This sticks out to me because in that day, the culture was much more conservative as far as things go along these lines. The standard of dress was much more conservative. Even prostitutes dressed much more conservatively than many people just going to work or walking through the mall. This tells us that the matter of lust, particularly as it leads to adultery goes much deeper than what we see on the surface. Therefore Jesus, after He has stated His position on the Law, comes straight out of the gate with one of the most besetting sins of which we know.

27 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ 28 But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 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. 30 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.

- “You have heard it said... but...”
- “I say.” The authority of Jesus. (the emphatic sense)
- Six other times we will read of Jesus saying these same words. He comes out under His authority. We, as Christians have to see the authority of Jesus and the Bible.
- Mt. 7:28,29

- 28 And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, 29 for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.
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- Do we truly believe the Word of God is the final authority in our lives? The culture would say no. The culture would have us believe that the Bible and its commands are old fashioned. But culture changes. In fact it changes faster now than it ever has before. Much of this is due to technology and social media.
- The Barna poll: Teens and young adults believe that it is more immoral to not recycle than to view pornography.
- But what does Jesus say?
- II Peter 1:3,4
- *3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*
- Do we believe this? Do we truly believe that the keys to living pure in a culture saturated with sex, lust and all images in between are in the Word of God or do we cave in to cultural norms, give up and live “mediocre” Christian lives? Do we even believe it is possible to glorify God in our lives, both public and private? Well, according to Peter we have what we need in the Word of God. Jesus is to have supreme authority in our lives.

- **28 But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.**
- **Sin begins in the heart. It begins long before the actual act occurs.**

Adultery – any intimate (sexual relationship) taking place outside of marriage.

Lust – a selfish desire for something that is inappropriate. (Material lust vs. relational lust)

It begins in the heart:

James 1:13-15

13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

Barna poll: 50% of young adults (25 and younger) believe there is **nothing wrong with viewing pornography.**

60% young adults actively seek out pornography.

Relational lust leads to adultery of the heart. (But there is still a distinction between the thought and the act.)

- When does a look become lust? The progression: attraction, obsession, action

Gen. 39: 6B

Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance.

- The initial attraction

Gen. 39:7

7 And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me."

- The obsession

Gen. 39: 10-12

10 So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her.

11 But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house was inside, 12 that she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside.

- The action
- We know when we have looked too long. We know when the conversation turns to something more than a conversation. We know when the line has been crossed.
- King David
- But Jesus wouldn't leave us here. He tells us how to avoid this temptation.

29 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. 30 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.

Hyperbole: mortification, not mutilation.

"Causes you to sin..." scandalize

We are told here to identify the things that tempt us. Once they have been identified we must avoid them.

- We have to sever certain relationships.
- We may even have to leave a job.
- We may have to eliminate certain channels.
- We may have to eliminate social media.
- We have to move in Christian circles. Men, we don't need to isolate ourselves, but we do need to insulate ourselves.
- Does Jesus say to cover our eye? No! He says to pluck it out! We cannot play around with this! We have to get away from it!
- Does Jesus say we are to put a glove on our hand? NO! He says to cut it off?
- Are our marriages worth more than the relationships and situations that tempt us into infidelity?
- Sever ties with the things that put us in a place to be tempted.
- Mr. Miyagi theology.
- What is our purity worth to us?
- Picture the consequences with your spouse and children when it comes to the surface. What are they worth to you?
- When King Josiah became king of Israel, he crushed the high places, the pagan alters that had been built by the kings before him.
- *II Kings 23:15*
15 Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he broke down; and he burned the high place and crushed it to powder, and burned the wooden image.

We cannot allow idols to remain in our homes and lives. We have to be ruthless with the things that beset us.

Psalms 119:10

10 With my whole heart I have sought You;

Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!

David was able to conquer this sin through the grace of God!

We can too!

We are to flee, as Joseph did!

1 Cor. 6:18 – 20

18 Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

2 Timothy 2:22

22 Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Rom 8:12 - 14

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

We can never sever these things on our own, but we do have to want to sever them. At the point of repentance, true repentance, the Holy Spirit floods into that space that was occupied by lust and adultery and fills it! That is supernatural! It has to be! If the Word is only a self-help book then it is no better than Oprah or Dr. Phil. Positive thinking won't conquer these things. The flesh can't conquer the flesh. It is only by the grace of God and the filling of the Holy Spirit that sin can be conquered.

Will you ask Jesus to cleanse that part of your life today?

It is better to be lame and maimed than to live with a bad heart.