

 4236 Haverhill Road, West Palm Beach Florida, 33417  Sun: 9:30 am / 10:30 am & 6:30 pm  Wed: 7 pm

 Facebook

 Podcast


Give



Matthew Bible Study (The Gospel of the King and the Kingdom of Heaven) The Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 5:27-30, Lust

 Brent Kercheville  July 17, 2016

 Click to play audio

We are in a sermon series called Inside Out. In Matthew 5:21-48 Jesus is showing his disciples how their righteousness is to exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 5:20). The teachers had lowered the standards of the Law of Moses so that they believed they were attaining righteousness. Jesus is showing the true standard of God's law and how the people have fallen woefully short. Remember that Jesus preaching repentance (Matthew 4:17) and the gospel of the kingdom (Matthew 4:23).

Jesus is teaching that there is depth to the law. In the last lesson we noticed that a person could not say that all the feelings a person has against a person (hatred, malice, anger) are acceptable so long as you do not murder the person. Nor could a person say that it was acceptable to verbally insult the person so long as you did not murder the person. Jesus is preaching for the change to come from the inside, not mere conformity of our actions. In the same way, Jesus addresses the heart again. The command given in the Law of Moses was to not commit adultery. But that did not mean that you could do whatever you wanted to do sexually so long as you did not commit the actual act of sexual relations. Listen to what Jesus says.

But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matthew 5:28 ESV)

To understand the concept of lust here, I think the ESV does a great job with its translation "lustful intent" to express what is intended by the Greek word. It is not sin to look at a man or a woman. Nor is it sin to notice that a person is attractive. I feel confident to say that the reason any man began to date the person that they now have married was because they found the woman attractive. Further, God created these desires within us. To find another person attractive and desirable is not sin because these thoughts and feelings were created within us by God. Jesus describes what the sin is: it is lustful intent. It is the gathering of the mind to lust. The Greek here indicates a person who turns his mind to a thing. This same Greek word is translated "longing" in Luke 15:16 and Matthew 13:17. Lustful longing or sensual longing is the concept under consideration. The looking is in order to lust.

The Law of Moses was clear about this and condemned lusting. Jesus is not giving a new command that would have shocked his listeners. The tenth commandment at Mount Sinai gave the same command.

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 is your neighbor's. (Exodus 20:17 ESV)

Three commandments earlier God declared that you shall not commit adultery. But that was certainly not the end of the matter. You were not allowed to covet your neighbor's wife. That word means to lust, desire, or delight in (Kohlenberger/Mounce), desire (HALOT). Therefore it is not merely looking but what is going on in the mind while looking.

Jesus does not allow us to think that we can do in our hearts whatever we like or even act upon those thoughts and desires but just do not commit the actual sexual act. Jesus says that you have already committed adultery with this person in your heart. This is why what you allow in your mind is so important to you and to God. People will ask what is the big deal if you fantasize about another person or look at those kinds of images online or in magazines. Listen to what Jesus said:

For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person. (Matthew 15:19–20 ESV)

Sin begins in the heart. These sins do not happen by accident but begin by allowing the mind to indulge in this kind of thinking. You are allowing your mind to have lustful intent. Paul Earnhart said it well, "No

married person can do justice to his mate while given over to unrestrained desire for another." Think about this and try this with your spouse. Tell him or her that you enjoy lustfully thinking about another person rather than him or her, but there is nothing to worry about because you did not do anything physically. You just like to think about other people. This is why God called Israel's unfaithfulness to him and his covenant adultery. The people wanted to be with anything else and anyone else but God. Their hearts were far from him. In the same way, we cannot have our hearts far from our spouse, desiring someone else, and think that we are not destroying the marriage. Only a dishonest person would believe that you can desire another person yet still be faithful to your spouse. This is why Jesus calls this very thing, "committing adultery in the heart."

The Remedy

Notice that the remedy is to deal drastically with sin. We should easily understand the logic that Jesus is making in verses 29-30. We will cut off limbs when it is a matter of life and death. There was a story a few years ago a hiker who fell in a ravine where his arm was trapped under a rock. Stuck there for days he ended up having to cut off his arm to be free and live. You can make that clear decision because you realize that it is a matter of life and death. This is the logic Jesus is giving to us. Lustful intent is a matter of spiritual life or spiritual death. There is the serious need for removing ourselves from these sensual opportunities for this sin. I think it is important to note that Jesus picks this sin for this kind of response. He did not say this about anger in the last section. He does not say to cut off your eye or hand with the sins later described in this chapter. This sin, lustful intent, needs an aggressive response. A person who does not make an extremely aggressive response against lust does not love the Lord. We must fight for purity if we are God's people. God's people do not get close the fire or think that they can play close to sin. God's people make extreme decisions to cut off access to potential sexual sin because it is a matter of life or death spiritually.

If our eyes cause us to sin, then we need to not look! Act as if you have no eyes and will no longer look at those sinful things. If our feet cause us to sin, then we need to not go to that place. Act as if your feet are cut off and you will choose to no longer go there. If our hands cause us to sin, then no longer do what your hands are doing. This is what the Lord is saying when we are told to put to death the sins of the flesh.

Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. (Colossians 3:5-6 ESV)

Listen to what the scriptures are saying. We are responsible to take extreme measures in our fight against sin. Fight against the computer. Fight against the movies. Fight against the TV shows. You are falling into sin through these things and you must fight against them. We must act decisively even if it is painful to us to make choice. Cut sin and temptation out of our lives.

So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. (2 Timothy 2:22 ESV)

The Reason To Fight For Purity

Jesus gives the reason why one must fight against lustful thoughts. Not only has Jesus declared that the person has committed adultery in the heart but also states that the person who does not fight for purity will be cast into hell. This is the second time Jesus has spoken about hell in this sermon. In the last paragraph Jesus said that the person who insults his brother will liable to hell of fire (Matthew 5:22). Now Jesus says that those who do not put to death the sinful members of the body will be cast into hell.

This means we must fight for our hearts. Jesus is teaching us that these things are stemming from our hearts. It is not enough to say that we have not committed the sexual act of adultery. The ultimate problem is the heart. We must protect our hearts by protecting our eyes and protecting our hands and feet. Jesus is awaking our hearts to the reality of our failure before it. Adultery must not only be avoided but lustful intent also.

As we end it is important to state that sexual sin is forgivable before God. God will forgive any and all sins. This is why Jesus is preaching this sermon. Jesus is preaching repentance and the gospel of the kingdom. The good news of the kingdom is that you can be forgiven when you turn from sin and come to Jesus. Your sinful acts and thoughts are forgiven by God when we are poor in spirit and mourn over the sin we have committed (Matthew 5:3-4). But this does not mean that there are not physical consequences for our decisions. Though forgiven by God, we will still experience the consequences for our sins, which we will even see in the next paragraph where Jesus allows divorce for adultery (Matthew 5:31-32).

Cut the temptations that bring you to sin out of your life. Protect your heart. Fight for purity. Flee lust. Turn to the Lord forgiveness. This is the call of Jesus.

Like 3 people like this. [Sign Up](#) to see what your friends like.

 [Share on Facebook](#)

View more studies in [Matthew Bible Study \(The Gospel of the King and the Kingdom of Heaven\), The Sermon on the Mount.](#)

Previous: [Matthew 5:21-26, Anger](#)

Next: [Matthew 5:31-32, Divorce](#)

Church of Christ - West Palm Beach

We are a nondenominational congregation of Christians located in West Palm Beach aiming to be faithful in every way to Jesus Christ.

 [Join us on Facebook](#)

Contact Us

worship with us

West Palm Beach church of Christ
4236 Haverhill Road
West Palm Beach, FL 33417

Map & Directions

assembly times

Sunday Services

9:30 am / 10:30 am & 6:30 pm

Wednesday Services

7 pm

Church Website Design