A.Epiphany6.Matt.5.21.28

Men, you’ve got 2 days. Don’t mess it up. What started as a day to honor an early Christian pastor martyred has been co-opted by our culture as a day to celebrate love. The day of the heart. The heart is what Jesus is getting at, **you shall not murder, commit adultery**, **but I say to you..**.

 When you hear ‘love’ in our world, it’s self-serving, self-fulfilling, self-defining. So you hear the foolish talk ‘love is love’ ‘love has no boundaries’ ‘love yourself first before you can love others’ ‘you be you’ ‘follow your dreams’ ‘all you need is love.’ Media works hard to normalize its view of love and marriage, you can’t watch an hour without seeing it, often subtle, but always shown in positive, warm, happy ways. It’s a lie.

 **Jesus says you shall not.** The world does not care. In such a short time, we’ve seen movements (movements that go against God’s natural laws have always failed in the history of the world) but these movements. We’re living in the throes of a sexual revolution that started a couple of generations ago but well-advanced. We've now lived through the birth control revolution, no-fault divorce revolution, the hookup culture, the homosexual revolution, now the gender revolution.

 Even Jesus Himself says, the Bible is very clear. The Lord establishes, directs, protects the institution of marriage (because He creates it, it reflects Him and bride the church) and the sacredness your body He creates (you are not your own). Vocations, identify, roles for men and women, boys and girls. He creates and creates anew at the baptismal font. He call us to live in purity in keeping our bodies and marriages sacred to Him.

 From Moses: **Obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you today**. **Walk in them, keep them.** From Jesus: **You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery**.

  But if you listen to these words a little more closely, you discover that they’re not first and foremost about what you have to do or not do -they’re actually about your heart. Moses is warning the people about their hearts turning away from God; Jesus is teaching that sin is, in truth, not just what you do or not do, but heart disease; anger, hatred, insults, grudges, lust -problems of the heart -what you hold here(motion).

 Shame on us all. We all have work to do, with ourself, unto others. The world we live in, I think if you asked most people if Jesus says **do not commit adultery**. marriage is a man and women, only intimacy between married people. Many really don’t know. And if they do, they dismiss it, ‘that’s your interpretation’, ‘your extreme unloving views’, ‘the Bible has issues’. And if it uses Jesus’ Name will say, ‘well God wants me to be happy’, ‘God loves everyone just the way they are.’ That’s how God made me.’ There is much gentle conversation to be done, engage people in His truth that God wants what’s best for them and that means, **go and sin no more**, it means, **repent**, it means **be holy.** It means **walk in His Ways,** not yours.

 And we all think, “Well, I’m okay. I’m good people. I haven’t killed anyone. I’m faithful in my marriage, murder, adultery doesn’t applies to me.” **But I say to you**. **everyone who is angry** (angry? Yes, angry!) **or insults will be liable to judgment** or belittles them **will be liable to the hell of fire.** For how I feel in my heart!If that’s not enough. **Everyone who looks with lustful intent has already committed adultery in their heart**. That’s right, a mere thought of the heart, live or online. Doesn’t matter. Your heart is completely filthy, corrupt, diseased. Repent.

 Consider, if your child comes crying to you, bloody scratches on their face, your first reaction, hold them, check for wounds, comfort them until they calm down enough to explain what happened. The child needs your acceptance, sympathy, love. And when they finally tell you, they were pulling the tail of the neighbor’s cat, the child needs something else. Needs you to remind them that actions have consequences. Cats have claws, aren’t afraid of using them. That doesn’t mean you send them away, tell them they should’ve known better. It simply means that I don’t allow my sympathy-giving to mute my truth-telling. They need love, AND they need the truth of God’s law. They’re not a victim; they’re a tail-puller.

 People come to the church, with bloody scratches on their face, have been pulling one tail or another. Their heart, desires, thoughts soiled with sin. It doesn’t matter. The Church is here to welcome, without exception. Whoever you are, whatever you’ve done, here is acceptance, sympathy, the only there is love. Love that defines all love. Also need to hear cats have claws. God has laws that we’ve broken, continue to break, and suffer the consequences. We are not victims of the Ten Commandments. We are not victims of our cheating, lying, lusting, coveting, and more foolish thoughts and actions than we can count.

 Why was Jesus crucified? Not for victims or people with pretty good hearts, but for your sins, to save sinners.

 Too often we think we’re the victim, it wasn’t my fault, I am good people, others mess things up, and whatever befalls me, even things I do, someone else or ‘nature’ is to blame and we transform the cross into a pacifier; and you can find plenty of church’s with victim therapy where God offers merely affirmation, support, and compassion. Instead of preaching Christ as the sacrifice for your evil, murderous, adulterous heart, your evil desires. And you can’t earn His love or good graces.

 Realizes the cat and its tail are not your problem. Your heart is, your hand. The Law always condemns you; while it also teaches you how to live, His ways for you.

 He knows your heart better than you and still pours out His gifts. From His cross flows the only love this world has ever known. The Law is fulfilled. There is no one to condemn you. For He answers the judge, restores, reconciles you to the Father now and for eternity. You will not perish but possess the land promised to your fathers. Those words of law are gifts of love, His perfect love in keeping them for you, perfect love forgiving you. This is not moral rehab for your heart, His perfect love creates, out of nothing, a new heart in you. You cannot mess up His love. The only true lasting love is Jesus. There is no other. Love is sacrifice, service. It flows from His cross, His very heart, into a chalice and into your lives. It flows to you as you are loved and love others. He defines love. It is yours.