

## **"God's Standards for Purity"**

### **Matthew 5:27-30**

**Introduction:** Last week in our study of the Sermon on the Mount we looked at Jesus Words in Matthew 5:27-28 and if you remember the title was "God's Standards for Marriage". Tonight we are in the same text but the title is different and the reason is because in our study tonight we will see a broader application as we consider the meaning of the Words which Jesus spoke in this text.

Before we get into our study of the Words and their meanings tonight there is something else I believe we need to pay close attention to. Jesus teaching here starting in Matthew 5:21-48 is really pointed and very sharp. He never once dulls the edge of the Sword. He sharpens the Sword and He swings it with both hands in His teaching. In this entire section He is really giving to those around Him on that day as well as to us a clear definition of sin and He never once softens the meaning of sin.

Let me tell you what our Lord was doing here. He was exposing man's true condition so that His death on the cross could be better understood. Please don't miss the thought that Jesus loved all the people that surrounded Him that day and many of the multitudes were not saved. He spoke the Words of this sermon and He completely stripped them of their self righteousness leaving them standing before Him completely exposed in their sin. But it was all out of love for Jesus knew they could not understand their need of a Savior if they did not first see their true spiritual condition as well as the seriousness of sin. So by speaking the Words of these verses Jesus is reaching out in love to the lost.

**Application:**

There is a very important message in all of this for you and me. When we have an opportunity to share the gospel we must first speak of sin and its consequences. No one will see their need of Christ if they do not understand their true spiritual condition.

There is a modern day teaching today that is deceiving many people. Many pastors will stand in front of their people and simply ask if anyone would desire to go to live a happy life and then go to heaven when they die? When someone raises their hand they have them say a prayer or sign a card and then tell them they are saved. There is never a mention of sin and judgment. **No one can be saved if they do not see their true spiritual condition and come to know that God will judge their sin!** Think about something; if they do not believe they will one day be a judgment and that they are guilty of sinning against a Holy God then what is there to be saved from? Why do they need a Savior?

A while back I was confronted by someone who told me I was too "extreme" when I spoke of sin to the people of this church. I was also told that I needed to soften it up because I was scaring people. When I read the Words of our Lord in this text I realize He was beyond extreme and I am sure there were many that were frightened because of what they heard in His sermon. But that was good because that meant they heard the truth and were under the Spirit's conviction. Their hearts were being prepared to accept the free Gift of eternal life from God.

Let us learn from Jesus to speak the Truth even though it cuts deep into the heart. True love understands that pain caused by the Truth is

part of the very path that leads people to a life of freedom in Jesus Christ.

Now let us get back to our text in Matthew 5:27-30.

Last week we considered the teaching of the rabbis which Jesus referenced in verse 27.

### **Notice 5:27**

"Them of old time" were the rabbis. They did teach the act of adultery was sin. But in their teaching (as always) they did not go far enough. They themselves were not guilty of the "act" and for that reason they believed they were more righteous than all others.

But they failed to understand that it was not just the "act" that would condemn them but also that which was in the heart.

### **Notice 5:28**

Here Jesus exposed them in their sin because He told them if a man would look upon a woman and lust after her he was guilty of adultery in the heart. Notice what the writer of Proverbs says about man:

### **Proverbs 23:7a**

*<sup>7</sup> For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he:*

You see man's actions are just a manifestation of an inward problem.

### **Matthew 15:17-20**

*<sup>17</sup> Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?*

*18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.*

*19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:*

*20 These are the things which defile a man:*

This is the thought that Jesus was communicating in His sermon.

## **I. The Deed (5:27)**

### **Notice 5:27**

The focus in this section is on the sin of adultery. The sin was and is a very serious offence against God. Last week we looked how the death penalty was administered to those who were found guilty in the Old Testament.

Let us consider for a moment the meaning and the application of the word "adultery". It means to have sexual relations with the spouse of another. But the word is often used to describe the offense outside the bonds of marriage. In other words it is often used of sexual relations between unmarried people. The word can refer to any kind of sexual relations between a man and a woman outside of marriage or within the bonds of marriage. By the way just to refresh our memories any sexual relations outside of marriage is sin and forbidden by God.

### **Notice 5:28**

If we look closely at this verse we can see that our Lord has used the term in the broadest possible sense. He uses the word "whosoever" and that takes in everybody. He also uses the word "woman" and this is not limited only to the woman that is married.

Therefore the actual act of adultery or the act of any sexual relations outside of the marriage is a very serious offence against God. It is a sin that is detestable to God. It is so serious that there are many passages that warn of the consequences. You see God has made it very clear that this sin brings with it that which is painful.

It is spoken of in Proverbs 5, 6, and 7.

It is spoken of in the life of David in 2 Samuel.

It is warned against in Hebrews.

### **Hebrews 13:4**

*<sup>4</sup> Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.*

Now we must understand that the religious leaders of Jesus' day viewed this sin in the proper way.

### **John 8:2-5**

*<sup>2</sup> And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.*

*<sup>3</sup> And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,*

*<sup>4</sup> They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.*

*<sup>5</sup> Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?*

You see from this they had the proper view but because they never carried out the act they thought they were above those who had and they were wrong. They were also guilty.

Now before I move on there is something I need to point out. I desire to show you what the Bible says about this sin because we live in a society that actually accepts and promotes adultery and fornication. Please remember it does not matter what society says about fornication and adultery it is a sin against the Almighty God and it will be judged!

## II. The Desire (5:28)

### Notice 5:28

Here in this verse Jesus is going to now address the "desire" and the desire comes from the heart. Please know that the religious leaders that were there that day would have agreed with the previous verse because that is what they taught. But God was concerned with the heart as much as the act. Let us notice some of the words here.

1. **"Looketh"** - This word speaks of a continuous action. Last week I told you when a person catches your eye at first glance it is not sin but it becomes sin when we continue to look and then lust. But the meaning in this verse goes beyond just looking and lusting.
2. **"Already"** - This places a very interesting meaning on this statement. Our Lord is saying that when someone looks with a continuous look and lust after that person they have "ALREADY" committed adultery with them in their heart.  
Here is the idea, in the heart a person formulates the act of fornication or adultery and it is then that the person is guilty but

then they search for a person with whom they can bring into their fantasy and when they are found they continue to look with lust. But the adultery has already been committed in the heart before the continuous look takes place. The person on whom they look is just used to fulfill the fantasy in their heart and mind. The point the Lord is making in these words is that the problem is in the heart.

3. **"Lust"** - The word here is very interesting and supports what we just looked at. The word "lust" here speaks of "a purpose". In other words the "looking" that Jesus speaks of in this verse does not refer to an "involuntary glance" but it refers to looking at someone for a purpose and that purpose is to satisfy a fantasy that the sinful heart has formulated.

So let's put these thoughts together. Jesus is telling all who read this that the person who looks upon a woman to lust after her is providing evidence they have an adulterous heart. The "continuous looking" is proof that the act has already been carried out in the mind.

### **III. The Deliverance (5:29-30)**

#### **Notice 5:29-30**

In order to understand these verses we need to know some history of the Jewish people. To the Jew the right hand, arm, and leg were considered to be the best of the body. The right side of the body was held in high regard.

In these verses before us Jesus is not telling anyone to literally pluck out their eye or cut off their hand. He was using this graphic illustration to say if there is something in a person's life that leads

them to this sin, even if it is something that is highly prized and esteemed, it needs to be cut off or cast out of your life.

### **Matthew 18:7-9**

*<sup>7</sup> Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!*

*<sup>8</sup> Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.*

*<sup>9</sup> And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.*

### **Conclusion:**

There are many ways that we could go with this text. But because of time limits let us consider two closing thoughts.

1. Sexual sins are very powerful and they keep many from coming to Jesus for forgiveness. The lure and the temptation are so great people refuse walk away from the sin in order to be saved. Jesus in this text uses the graphic illustrations to show how bad hell is. He told the people it is better to lose the best you have here than it is to die and go to hell.
2. Jesus also uses the graphic illustrations to show all of us to what extremes we are to be willing to go to escape the lure and the temptation of sexual sins.

Let me show you something from the Old Testament.

## **Deuteronomy 20:10-15**

*<sup>10</sup> When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it.*

*<sup>11</sup> And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee.*

*<sup>12</sup> And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it:*

*<sup>13</sup> And when the LORD thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword:*

*<sup>14</sup> But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the LORD thy God hath given thee.*

*<sup>15</sup> Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations.*

This is a section of Israel's military manual. They were to use the people of the land of Canaan that surrendered to them. But those who fought against them were to be destroyed.

### **Application:**

As we go through this life there are a lot of things that can be useful (internet, computers, cell phones, etc...) but if we are not able to keep them under control then they must be quickly destroyed. That is exactly what Jesus is saying in Matthew 5:29-30.