

## A Word Concerning Morality #7

Matthew 5: 27-30

Tonight we have come to a portion of the Sermon on the Mount, and a distinct biblical doctrine, that is often overlooked and even ignored. In this portion of His message Jesus deals with the immorality of adultery and emphasizes the importance of morality among believers. Many assume that it is too “touchy” a subject to deal with from the pulpit or even publicly for that matter. Clearly Jesus did not hold that point of view as He preached against the sin of adultery and presented a challenge to abstain from engaging in such activity. I am convinced that much of the problem we face in society today is a direct result of silence in the pulpit. I will admit that this is not an easy topic to address, but it needs to be preached so that humanity will know what the Bible teaches and God expects.

This passage deals with an issue that brings great damage and destruction to countless relationships and homes each year. I have experienced the devastation adultery brings to the home. I was raised in a broken home, due in large part to an adulterous relationship that ruined the marriage of my parents. Surely we need to be educated and warned regarding the potential for such activity and challenged to refrain from it at all costs.

As we move through these verses this evening I pray that we will open our hearts and minds to the leadership of the Spirit so that we can receive the beneficial instruction that is preserved for us in the pages of God’s Word. He created man, performed the first marriage ceremony and set the bounds for such a union. May we determine to live according to the commands and desires of our Lord? I want to look at [details](#) of this passage as we consider: [A Word Concerning Morality](#).

**I. The Decree Expressed** (27) – **Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:** Don’t let the simplicity of this statement fool you; it reveals much that we need to consider. Notice:

**A. The Sovereignty Revealed** – Jesus speaks of an old saying that they had heard all of their lives. This was a command that had been handed down for generations. The pure conscience of man, if nothing else, reveals that adultery is wrong, but Jesus emphasizes an even greater presence in regard to this command. He is rehearsing the 7<sup>th</sup> command that God had given Moses. Thou shalt not commit adultery. These commands, known as the Ten Commandments are recorded in God’s Word. The Jews knew that God had commanded that they refrain from such activity. God has said that we shall not commit such an act!

- We live in a society that has pretty much abandoned the Word of God and its teaching. Most are encouraged to live as they please and in many aspects the laws of our land no longer reflect the law of God. Man may agree and even encourage such sinful activity, but God is very clear regarding what He expects and demands of us. A sovereign God has declared that we are to refrain from the act of adultery!

**B. The Severity Revealed** – This is not something God wished we would refrain from. It isn't something He had rather we didn't do. God is very clear and emphatic in His Word. **Thou shalt not commit adultery**. Jesus in no way reflects the idea that it is acceptable in some cases. According to God's Word it is never acceptable, under any circumstances.

- Just as it is in our society many of the Jews were guilty of such sin. They knew what God's Word said and yet they chose to ignore this fundamental teaching. We need to understand that the dictates and desires of society have never changed the relevance of God's Word. It doesn't matter who engages in adulterous behavior, God has commanded us to refrain from it. It may be glamorized in Hollywood, engaged in by a large percentage of the population, and ignored by society as a whole, but that will never change what God has said.

**C. The Standard Revealed** – Jesus said, **“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time.”** This was not some new doctrine that Jesus sought to teach. It wasn't something they had never heard or was foreign to them. They had been raised under this teaching. It was accepted and embraced as the standard for purity in marital relationships, by those who sought to live according to God's Word.

- As I preach this message tonight, I am not preaching anything new. We have all been taught of God's requirements regarding marital purity. However, I fear that many in the coming generations have never been told that adultery is wrong. But, you will have to agree that our conscience, if nothing else, would teach us that adultery is wrong. In our civilized western culture, marital purity is usually expected. That is definitely God's standard and it is the standard accepted by many even today. Many who are guilty of adultery or engaging in it now would admit that it is wrong. I pray that we never get to the place that we are callous and unconcerned regarding marital purity in our society.

**D. The Sentiment Revealed** – As we consider Jesus' teaching on adultery we realize that it must have been prevalent in that society for Him to have addressed it in this message. I am convinced that He was addressing a real problem the Jews faced in that day and culture. They knew what the Bible said and they understood the commandments of God, and yet they chose

to ignore God's teaching and live as they pleased. Is that not largely the sentiment that many have in our day as well? Most today that choose to engage in adultery are well aware that it is wrong. If they didn't why would they seek to be secretive about it? They know it is sinful and wrong, and yet they continue their sinful acts anyway. Humanity in large part has chosen to disregard the teaching of God's Word in order to fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

### **I. The Decree Expressed** (27)

**II. The Doctrine Expanded** (28) – **But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.** The Jews had their perception of that which constituted adultery, but Jesus expands upon that. He reveals that adultery is not confined to a physical act, but can also be committed within the heart. Consider:

**A. The Authority** – **But I say unto you...**The majority of the Jews held God's Word in high regard and had no problem with its authority, but many were skeptical of this man who claimed to be the Son of God. Jesus was well aware of their unbelief and skepticism and yet with authority He expands upon what God had said. Who better to know the written Word than the living Word?

- The world assumes they are accountable to no one and as long as it isn't a criminal offense, many have no problem engaging in sinful acts. (Let me just say, there is a lot that the law of our land defines as permissible that God says is sin.) Many refuse to submit to the Word of God and its teaching, but all men, saved and sinner alike will stand before Him in judgment! Christ has spoken specifically in this text regarding adultery and His word will stand.

**B. The Appetite** – **That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.** Many of the Jews felt as if they were alright as long as they hadn't committed a physical act of adultery. Jesus expands the sin of adultery to include looking on another with a lustful passion and desire.

- The idea of looking here does not refer to a casual glance. We have all had instances that we've seen things we had rather not seen. God will not hold us accountable for merely looking at someone else. That is not sin. The idea here is "*looking for an extended period of time with the intent of satisfying lustful pleasures.*" It begins with the eyes and moves to the heart. A glance turns into a continued look, and that turns into lustful thoughts and desires.

**C. The Adultery** – **That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.** That is difficult to embrace, but it is truth. Jesus declares that those who have looked with lust, seeking to fulfill their passions, have already committed adultery within their hearts. They are not guilty of the physical act, but in the eyes of God it is adultery nonetheless. He is teaching that there is much more to purity than keeping ourselves physically pure. Certainly that is expected and required of the Lord, but our purity before the Lord involves much more than our physical actions. It also involves our thoughts and our desires. When a man, or woman, looks on another and has lustful thoughts, the Lord declares that they have committed adultery within the heart and that is an adulterous act.

### **I. The Decree Expressed** (27)

### **II. The Doctrine Expanded** (28)

**III. The Deliverance Exposed** (29-30) – Our Lord never points out sin and rebellion in our lives without offering a means of dealing with that sin. That is what He reveals in these verses, a means of deliverance from the lusts of the flesh and adultery in particular. Notice:

**A. The Principle** (29, 30) – **And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. [30] And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.** Clearly Jesus is speaking of the seriousness of what He has discussed. These are severe actions that would result in severe implications for the remainder of life. We cannot read these verses and miss the severity and seriousness with which Jesus spoke.

- Some commentators believe that Jesus is speaking figuratively in these verses. I am not here tonight to argue one way or another about that. I do believe that [1 Jn.1:9](#) means what it says and that God will forgive any sin that we confess and forsake. I do not believe that Jesus is teaching that we must blind or maim ourselves in order to be forgiven. He is simply illustrating the seriousness of adultery. However, if this were the only way that we could overcome the temptation and sin of adultery, it would certainly be worth it.

**B. The Prominence** – **And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee.** Jesus is emphasizing the importance of dealing with the issue and escaping the snare of adultery. This is quite significant. The Jews

believed the right eye and the right arm were superior to the left. In their estimation they were more valuable than the other. Jesus reveals that one must be willing to make a great sacrifice if that is what was required to overcome this sin and live according to the demands of God; it was that important.

- Now we can't imagine plucking out our eye or cutting off our hand and I am not encouraging anyone to do that, but we too need to recognize the significance of this eternal lesson. If we are saved, our bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost. We have been bought with a price and belong to the Lord. We are expected to live lives that honor Him. It is impossible to do that when our lives are consumed and dictated by the lusts of the flesh. We need to be willing to make whatever sacrifices necessary to achieve a life that is pleasing unto the Lord. It may require some extreme efforts by the estimation of this world, but that is what the Lord expects. (Change jobs, cut off the cable or internet, avoid certain places, etc...)

**C. The Profit** – Twice in these verses Jesus states the same thing: **for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell**. It would be more beneficial for a man to live his life blind or maimed than to enjoy the pleasures of the flesh unhindered and be cast into hell, condemned of God. Once again I am reminded of the seriousness of this issue. Jesus sought to instill that profound truth in the hearts and minds of those who heard Him speak. It always pays to live for the Lord, no matter the cost. We could have all this world has to offer and enjoy every pleasure it affords, and yet if we died lost apart from God, what would it profit?

- As we come to a close this evening it is apparent that this is an issue that has touched many lives, resulting in great devastation and ruin. We are incapable in ourselves to avoid all the pitfalls and snares of the flesh. We cannot live lives that honor the Lord within our own will. We must have His help and guidance. You cannot overcome the urges of adultery or any other sin apart from the Lord.

If there is a need of any kind in your life, I urge you to seek the Lord. (I know that you are thinking that everyone will assume that you are engaged in adultery or some other form of immorality, but I truly believe that we are more mature than that.) If that is the case, you certainly need to bring that before the Lord. Whatever the need is, won't you come and find the peace and deliverance you need.