

## Matthew 5:27-30

### Adultery, Lust, and the Way of Jesus

**Introduction:** If you're joining us for the first time - welcome. We're currently teaching through Jesus' most famous teaching known as the Sermon on the Mount. Contrary to what some may think the Sermon on the Mount is not teaching us how to get into the kingdom of God- the Bible makes it clear that entrance to God's kingdom is only through grace - by the sacrificial work of Jesus. The sermon is also not teaching us how we stay in the kingdom. Rather the sermon is a description of the character and conduct of those who already belong to God's kingdom. The Sermon is not a call to repentance, though that may be involved at times, it is a description of the expression and evidences of true repentance.

The purpose of this sermon, I believe, is for God to work his kingdom characteristics, his virtues in us. So that we can achieve the human flourishing that God intends for us, and so that we properly represent him and his Kingdom.

Jesus Christ came from heaven on a rescue mission to invite all people into his Kingdom of righteousness and peace. Here at RCF we teach and seek to practice the way of Jesus, having responded to his offer of salvation; and this sermon has been used for centuries to shape and form God's people into the way of Jesus and we are believing that this is what God will do with us as well.

We started, weeks ago, with the beatitudes and worked our way through Jesus' vision for Human Flourishing and now we have moved into Jesus' teaching on what a fulfilled or greater righteousness looks like, Righteousness greater than even the the most religious people of Jesus' day.

It is so important to understand that Jesus IS presenting us with a task we cannot fulfill on our own ( it's otherworldly, upside down, so antithetical to the way the world is - it is the way it was meant to be, the way of God's kingdom)- he is in fact lifting the bar so high that no one can attain it. But simultaneously Jesus is inviting us into his kingdom and he offers us his righteousness - imputed and infused. Imputed meaning he gives us his righteousness - a status we could never attain - Justification and Adoption as children of God. But he also offers us an infused righteousness -

(regeneration - new hearts, new minds, and a new spirit according to Ezekiel 36; Jeremiah 24) so that we become a new kind of people - his people, who do God's kingdom righteousness because that is the kind of people we have become through his grace and spirit at work in us. This is what St. Paul is talking about when He says, **“For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. (Romans 8:3-4)**

**Jesus is going to show us what this greater righteousness looks like in regards to Adultery, Lust, and Sexual temptation or purity**

## **1. The Teaching**

1. Jesus again takes up the Law of Moses, specifically the 7th commandment, prohibiting Adultery. He says, this is good and right but it isn't enough to simply not commit adultery - You must put all Lust to death. The righteousness that Jesus requires and works in his people avoids all objectification or sexualizing of people. Jesus is doing is exactly what he said he came to do - to fill up the Law, to show what it really aimed at and pointed to; to show the true intent behind the teaching.
2. See, with many of the Laws of Moses you could totally keep them and remain unchanged in heart and character. You could never commit adultery, or murder, but your heart, your mind be filled with lust, perversion, hatred and prejudice - this isn't righteousness... this isn't anything like God himself. **Jesus says, later, “For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what defile a person.” - Matthew 15:19-20**
  1. Jesus comes at it a different way - Jesus makes new people, with new hearts, with new desires, and goals that are part of a whole new Kingdom.
3. **Getting God's view of Sex -**
  1. **What is sex for? - Most people would say it's about pleasure, self expression and exploration, novelty, and spontaneity.**

**And as far as I know the one rule of our culture's sexual morality is mutual consent.**

2. God's (the Bible's) view of sex could not be more opposite, but it isn't because God has a low view of sex but in fact a very high view of it.
3. Of course God invented sex. He made the first humans male and female; sexually complementary, he called them to be fruitful and multiply - modern translation - have lots of sex, make lots of humans, fill the earth with them.
4. The first man and woman become a biblical prototype for marriage and sexual relationships. So that when Jesus is questioned about marriage or divorce he always references Genesis 2 and the story of the first marriage - highlighting the fact that they are male and female and that they become one flesh. God's ideal is that sexual relations would be exclusively between one man and woman in a committed covenant relationship for life.

**5. Why?**

1. Because marriage is a sign first and foremost of God's covenantal love with his people. It's not really about us; therefore we have no right as humans, especially as followers of Jesus, to redefine that. This is about God and his never stopping, never giving up, un-breaking, always and forever love that is ultimately displayed in Jesus sacrificing himself for us on the cross. That's why marriage is life long commitment of faithfulness to one's spouse.
2. Sex in marriage is the way that we say to our spouse - I belong to you and you alone. It is away to know our spouse deeply. It is a way to serve your spouse; a way to give pleasure rather than to get pleasure. There is obviously an intimacy and vulnerability that comes with being sexually exclusive.
3. Jesus' followers abstain from extramarital sex, and lust in order to witness how God works in the gospel. God calls his people into an exclusive relationship with him, a marriage covenant, and to give him anything less in return is unfaithfulness. The Bible says you should not give yourself sexually to anyone until you have committed every part of yourself to that person; Just as God does not give his intimate love to people outside of a

covenant with Jesus. Our lives are to pattern God's life and love in every way.

4. Finally, sex outside of a marriage covenant undermines the character quality of faithfulness, which builds community. Chastity, we forget, is not a state but a form of the virtue of faithfulness that is necessary for a role in the community. Therefore, it is as crucial to married life as it is to the single life.
5. Jesus is calling his followers that are married not just to sexual fidelity but to total and complete fidelity to one's spouse - in thought, word and deed. Whole-hearted or whole person devotion. Anything outside of whole heart, whole life, commitment to our spouse is out of sync with the way of Jesus
  1. Notice that in all Jesus' teaching of greater righteousness there is a theme of wholeheartedness, and sincerity. Jesus is calling us to fidelity in all areas of our life. A Holistic righteousness.

#### 4. **Getting God's View of People**

1. It's not just lusting or a prolonged stare that Jesus is against. It is obviously the heart and will that longs to possess and use a person for self gratification that Jesus is against. *Jesus is against the fallen human tendency to exploit other humans and use them as objects for self fulfillment and self-gratification.* He wants to make us into people that see others the way that he does -Human beings made in the image of God, with dignity and honor, brothers and sisters to be cared for and respected, persons to be served and loved, rather than objects to be exploited and used.

#### 2. **The Exhortation**

1. **If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away.**
2. **If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away.**
  1. **Why?**
  2. It is better that you lose one of part of your body than that your whole body be thrown into hell. This is heavy stuff. Is Jesus saying that if you slip up one time, or if you struggle with lust you are going to hell?

3. I think Jesus is saying to us that these are not the character and qualities of his kingdom righteousness and those that do not deal severely with their sin, at a heart level, find themselves more in line with the World, not the Kingdom of God, the way of the serpent and not the way of Jesus. Unbridled and undisciplined lust is evidence of a heart that has not been changed (regenerated) and renewed by God. It will have no part in God's kingdom.
4. Jesus answer -Cut this stuff out, throw it away - it is radically affecting your view of and your interactions with the opposite sex. It's not just immature, prejudice or chauvinistic it is earthly, sensual and demonic - it is the way of the serpent, the way of the kingdom of darkness, and it will have no place in the kingdom of Christ
5. Deal radically with your lust because the cost of dealing with it, though often very costly, cannot compare with the consequences of not dealing with it.
3. Take radical measures with that habit, thing or person. Jesus doesn't advise band-aids but amputation... The right eye reference is seems to be something literally that we are taking in, the hand to be what we are physically involved in - certain literature or entertainment. (Facebook, instagram, internet, entertainment, certain places or people to avoid... it's not just porn, or just a person.. those are fairly obvious.. Jesus is talking about even avoiding those things that could slowly lead, or trigger to eventual sin... Deal with lust immediately, deal with the roots or channels that could potentially open the door to sin...
4. Practically - I think this means get rid of, cut out, any influence in your life that objectifies, degrades or sexualizes the opposite sex - talk radio, film, media, music, literature, politics etc. Do your friends encourage you to faithfully love your spouse? Are the movies you watch causing you're heart to wander? What narrative of beauty, sex, and love are you subscribing to?
5. Cut this stuff out - it is radically affecting your view of and your interactions with the opposite sex. It's not just immature, prejudice or chauvinistic it is earthly, sensual and demonic - it is the way of the serpent, the way of the kingdom of darkness, and it will have no place in the kingdom of Christ

6. *“Perhaps it is no wonder that the women were first at the Cradle and last at the Cross. They had never known a man like this Man - there never has been such another. A prophet and teacher who never nagged at them, never flattered or coaxed or patronized; who never made arch jokes about them, never treated them either as "The women, God help us!" or "The ladies, God bless them!"; who rebuked without querulousness and praised without condescension; who took their questions and arguments seriously; who never mapped out their sphere for them, never urged them to be feminine or jeered at them for being female; who had no axe to grind and no uneasy male dignity to defend; who took them as he found them and was completely unself-conscious. There is no act, no sermon, no parable in the whole Gospel that borrows its pungency from female perversity; nobody could possibly guess from the words and deeds of Jesus that there was anything "funny" about woman's nature.”*  
- Dorothy L. Sayers, *Are Women Human?*

1. We don't just need more men like Jesus in the culture, we need more men like Jesus in the Church!
  7. Let us be a church community that celebrates our sexual difference with respect, honor and purity -A sacredness. “So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”
  8. Let us be a community that doesn't bend to the culture's photoshopped, airbrushed, surgery altered, picture perfect standards of “sexy and beautiful” but instead celebrates the virtues of kindness, faithfulness, goodness, and self control as the true beauties of the world. And each human as a unique, beautiful individual, with dignity and worth, worthy of respect and honor because they are image bearers of God. Let us be like Yahweh, our Father, who does not judge by the outward appearance but looks at the heart.
  9. Though it may sound and feel as though Jesus' command is condemning us he is in fact offering us liberation. Freedom from the bondage that our lust leads us to. Desire that cannot possibly be satiated or fulfilled. Jesus never commands without giving the power to fulfill.
3. **The Power to Perform**
1. **You're not as stuck as you think you are**

2. Some of us Just feel totally and completely powerless to control our sexual desire.... But much of this is due to a over-sexualized culture around us that says that there is no reason to control these urges or desires.. if they are there they need to be satisfied.... This however is a false premise.
3. Tim Keller gives a great example of this, *“Imagine, He says, an Anglo-Saxon warrior in Britain in AD 800. He has two very strong inner impulses and feelings. One is aggression. He loves to smash and kill people when they show him disrespect. Living in a shame-and-honor culture with its warrior ethic, he will identify with that feeling. He will say to himself, That's me! That's who I am! I will express that. The other feeling he senses is same-sex attraction. To that he will say, That's not me. I will control and suppress that impulse. Now imagine a young man walking around Manhattan today. He has the same two inward impulses, both equally strong, both difficult to control. What will he say? He will look at the aggression and think, This is not who I want to be, and will seek deliverance in therapy and anger-management programs. He will look at his sexual desire, however, and conclude, That is who I am..... Where do our Anglo-Saxon warrior and our modern Manhattan man get their grids? From their cultures, their communities, their heroic stories. They are actually not simply “choosing to be themselves” - they are filtering their feelings, jettisoning some and embracing others. They are choosing to be the selves their cultures tell them they may be.” - Tim Keller, Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism*
4. I bring up this story to make the point that so much of our seeming powerlessness to our sexual desires is actually due to our over-sexualized culture’s influence. You control urges all the time, you use self-control all the time - Example: You choose not to ram your car into people on the freeway even though they cut you off, drive slow, or have a political bumper sticker that offends you. Why? Probably because of the financial and judicial ramifications. Cannot we not see the ramifications of our lust? It’s ruining our minds, it’s ruining our relationships. It’s our culture that tells us we don’t have to use sexual restraint so we think we can’t. This is a total lie.
5. **You Can Change**

6. Jesus promises his people, not just “a fresh start”, but daily presence and power to do what he has called us to do. As I was saying at the beginning - Jesus doesn’t just give the people of his kingdom salvation - Justification or imputed righteousness. He also gives to us an infused righteousness - Regeneration a new heart and a new mind, with new desires and instincts (Ezekiel 36:26; Jeremiah 24:7)
  1. No doubt -Counter formation, or Kingdom Formation is the hardest thing a human being will ever set out to do and that's why it takes God's spirit working inside out and a community of people supporting us through. It's a lifetime project.
7. Our task is to implement God’s infused righteousness by putting off old habits and putting on new habits patterned after the way of Jesus (Found all over the NT). St. Paul tells us that this starts by getting a renewed mind by reading, studying, discussing and meditating on the Gospel and the word of God (Romans 12:1-2). Through God’s truth our mind is transformed to see people the way God sees them, to treat people the way God treats them. Not objects to be possessed, to satisfy our pleasure; but as image bearers of God to be honored and loved...
8. Lastly, we need to build a strong Jesus community that practices a strong Sexual ethic....
  1. It is typical for Christians to think of sexual ethics in purely individualistic terms, but that is not the right way to read Scripture.
  2. Richard Hays, in his First Corinthians commentary, responds: “First Corinthians 6:9–11 has provided the launching pad for countless moralistic sermons that decry the types of sinners listed here: fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, greedy, slanderers. While in fact . . . the concern of the passage as a whole is . . . to call the Corinthian church to act as a community . . . and to assert the transformed identity of the baptized. . . . The Corinthians are to stop seeing themselves as participants in the “normal” social and economic structures of their city and to imagine themselves instead as members of the eschatological people of God, acting corporately in a way that will prefigure and proclaim the kingdom of God. . . . Paul is seeking to re-socialize them into a new way of doing business, a new community consciousness.”

3. Hays notices that Paul is calling the church not just to individual moral behavior but to be a kingdom community in which the world's values do not hold.
  4. Church we will fall prey to the world's views of sex unless we create a community, an alternative city. In this alternative city, singles enjoy their kingdom mission and practice sexual abstinence joyfully. They live in community with Christian families, who do not make an idol out of family or make singles feel abnormal. Married couples live in transparency and faithfulness to their spouses. While at the same time making the community a safe place for confession, true accountability and help to change.
4. **Conclusion:** Can I give you some super good news? Husband, your problem isn't that your wife isn't fit enough, sexually experimental enough...etc. Wife your problem isn't that your husband isn't buff enough, handsome enough, or chivalrous enough .. etc. Single friends, your problem isn't that you don't measure up or that you lack sexual intimacy in your life... what every single one of us are looking for is found in God alone - Lust is an insatiable desire. It can never be filled... it wants, and wants and wants but never satisfies. G.K Chesterton once said, every one who knocks on the door of a brothel is looking for God. Our deepest desires cannot be filled by anyone or anything. Only God. "You have made us for yourself and our hearts are restless until the rest in thee O Lord" - Augustine. God offers himself to you through the person of Jesus
  5. David and Bathsheba - David had everything, and it wasn't enough. God's response.
  6. My people have forsaken me - the fountain of living water, and have dug broken cisterns that cannot hold water.
  7. It is only through God, his love, that you cannot earn, cannot lose but receive as grace; it is only through his love that you can both see people the way he does, and treat people the way he does.. it is only through him we can be healed from our abusive exploitative human perversity and sexual objectification and achieve the human flourishing of mutual respect, honor, and love that he created us for.