

THE CHALLENGE OF LUST

Intro: We live in a society that is addicted to lust. The sexual revolution has resulted in the overthrow of virtually every norm of purity in our society. Pornography is a multi-billion dollar industry in America. Over 20 million abortions have been performed since Roe vs. Wade in 1973; most of them performed on unmarried teenagers. The divorce rate in this country have increased 800 percent since the Civil War. Almost 50% of all graduating high school seniors have been sexually active. We experience a daily media blitz of lust--commercial advertising seeks to sell its products with...lust; situation comedies build their plots around...lust. Watch the ratings weeks and note how quickly lust enters the picture!

How is a Christian to handle this barrage of titillation and degradation in our society? What is God's standard of proper sexual conduct? Those questions are answered by Jesus in the second block of material in the body of his famous sermon on the mount. Read Mt. 5:27-32.

LUST IN THE HEART PARTAKES OF THE VERY ESSENCE OF ADULTERY!

The common view of the Pharisees was, as they emphasized the letter of the law while missing its spirit, was that only the physical act of adultery was wrong. To sleep (euphemistically speaking) with the wife of another was a serious sin against God!

It was a serious sin! Gen. 39:

It was not all that God had forbidden even in the O.T. Cf. the tenth command--"you shall not covet your neighbor's wife!

But Jesus emphasizes that illegitimate lust in all its forms is prohibited by the 7th commandment!

Adultery is the product of unlawful lust in the heart! To look upon another with thoughts of this kind is to commit the act in the heart. It is to partake of the very spirit of adultery! And that itself is wrong!

Just as the 6th command condemns every expression of selfish vilifying anger, so the 7th commandment condemns every form of unlawful passion! I feel they must be spelled out.

Fornication--to prostitute one's body to the lusts of another (It includes premarital sexual relationships, extramarital relationships (adultery), homosexual relationships, and any other more deviant type of behavior one could imagine).

Activities short of fornication but that express and cultivate the same lust! Lasciviousness! That which expresses and causes improper passions to be aroused!

Our speech can be lascivious! (Eph. 5:1-5)

Our movements can be lascivious!

Our dress can be lascivious! (Clothes that call attention to the form of the body, that reveal too much of the body or that suggestive.)

Our actions can be lascivious! Petting and caressing.

LUST MUST BE DEALT WITH DECISIVELY AND EXTREMELY!

The language of this section is designed to challenge us to see the seriousness of learning to get control of ourselves! The thoughts goes something like this: The eye and the hand are the human instruments through which lust is expressed, first in the seeing and then in the touching of the opposite sex. If those things cause us to fall into temptation, it would be better to remove them than to go to hell!

Several important points need to be made:

Sexual misconduct will send its participants to hell! Jesus said that! Though adultery is often downplayed in our society and even encouraged among "mature consenting adults" Jesus says that it puts the participants in danger of hell fire! Cf. the young man who upon thinking about it said, if Jane is there it will be alright!

Jesus never intended for us to literally mutilate ourselves! This is strong hyperbole to emphasize a point! If I were to remove an eye for lusting, I would still have an eye with which to lust. If I were to remove a hand for touching, I would still have a hand with which to touch.

The point of this section is: Remove the source of temptation!

Avoid the stimulation of lustful activities! A Christian has no place in a parked car on a lonely road...dance floor...listening to lascivious music...wearing immodest dress...watching suggestive movies, t.v. shows or reading suggestive material.

If we are serious about going to heaven, we will get our heart right toward this sin, our national crime! In ancient times adulterers were excuted! In our society we make heroes out of them! Lust is not something to be pampered, flirted with, nibbled around the edges. It needs to be stamped out--immediately, decisively, radically.

UNLAWFUL DIVORCE & REMARRIAGE RESULT IN ADULTERY BEING COMMITTED.

There is yet one other way that adultery occurs. The Pharisees had taken the provisions of God's law and constructed a view of marriage so loose that anyone could divorce anyone for anything and marry another without wrong! (Sounds like 20th century America doesn't it?) Through this means sanction was given to adultery by serial marriage!

The Pharisees built their doctrine on Deut. 24. A case of casuistic law! All more modern translations correctly render the set of "if" statements that serve as the conditions of this contingency legislation. (chart)

What is this passage teaching?

It is not teaching that all divorce was acceptable to God!

It does assume that divorce will take place in spite of the teaching of God concerning the permanence of marriage.

It does teach that a divorced woman is "defiled" by marrying another man.

It does prohibit the return of a divorced woman to her original husband after marrying another!

Deut. 24 was given by Moses to curb divorce not command it! The Pharisees emphasized a part of the letter of this law but missed the spirit! They used a verse designed to discourage divorce to justify the practice of divorcing for every cause! "Men, you had better think twice before divorcing your mate, she can never return to you!"

Did Moses then "command" men to give bills of divorcement to their wives and put them away? The Pharisees said "yes" and used this to justify taking one woman after another! But Jesus said, God suffered it or permitted it!

Furthermore, the Pharisaical interpretation missed the real emphasis of all God's marriage laws.

Gen. 2:24

Ex. 20:10 Thou shall not covet!

Mal. 2:18

And so they found a way to justify adultery by serial marriage! Here is the procedure. You want to sleep with another man's wife!?? That would be terrible if you were not married to her. But, if you divorce your wife regardless of the reason and marry her then you are o.k.!

But Jesus says, "Not so!"

Whosoever puts way...except for fornication...causes her to commit adultery!

Whosoever (all married men) puts away (divorces) except for fornication (sexual immorality by adultery, lesbian, incestuous) causes her (the divorced wife) to commit adultery (by marrying another)

This clearly also shows the responsibility of person in unlawfully divorcing! The Pharisees, as Jews, could legally put away their wives by giving them a bill and sending them away. But Jesus says, that such action results in causing others to commit adultery, the very thing they taught against!

Whosoever marries a put away woman commits adultery!

This part emphasizes the one who marries a put away woman. Just as she commits adultery by remarrying, so the one who marries her commits adultery.

So then the Pharisees who sought to justify himself by the letter of law was in fact causing two other people to commit adultery by his actions.

In addition, the one who does the putting away and marries another also commits adultery!

Cf. Lk. 18:14-18 on this point! Note who Jesus is talking to and what he is saying to them.

The Pharisees were scoffing at Jesus' teaching about dangers of a love for money. The Pharisees were scoffing.

Jesus remarks were addressed to their hearts.

You who justify yourself in the eyes of men. You have neat and clever ways of circumventing the true purpose of God's law! But God knows what you are like inside. He knows your love of money and your lust! You may be esteemed for your outward righteousness but God knows your hearts!

The time for entrance into the kingdom has come. But you and others like you think you can enter by force! Not so! Not one principle of the law of God can be set aside without sin.

But now note the punch line! This is what this discussion is all about! Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery! Whoever marries her that is put away commits adultery! Do you see the connection!???? You may justify what you do to men, but your misuse of the law of God reveals you to be adulterers in heart! This is the same message Jesus was teaching in Mt. 5 to the same people!

There is but one exception to this rule. Mt. 19:9 Whoever divorces, except for fornication and marries another commits adultery!

In only one case can one put away and not be implicated in the resulting adultery--fornication!

In only one case can one put away and be married again without commit adultery oneself! That is in the case of which the divorce is for the cause of fornication!

Conclusion: When we study these words we may feel very guilty. If you have committed these sins, I feel for you if you do not! When we realize the high standards of God we realize that we are not good enough to go to heaven on our own! If we have been guilty of lust, we will go into the hell of fire! Jesus said so! And his words will judge us in the judgment!

There is hope! We can be forgiven. If we will believe in Jesus, repent of those sins (quit doing them), confess Jesus as Lord and live by his will, upon being baptized in His name he promises to forgive us of every sin!