

## Hard Sayings Of Jesus

### Lesson 17

Augustine confessed that he could not distinguish between the "clear shining of affection and the darkness of lust." Further, he admitted, "I could not keep myself within the kingdom of light where friendship binds soul to soul...And so I polluted the brook of friendship with the sewage of lust."

#### I. This Week's Hard Saying

*Matt 5:27-30 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: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.29 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.KJV*

#### II. Why This Is Hard

- a. This is hard because here again Jesus' statement is more stringent than the law by redirecting the focus away from an outward act to an **inward thought**.
- b. If taken **literally**, the remedy for overcoming the adulterous lusting would create huge numbers of maimed individuals in our society.

#### III. The Superficial Perspective

- a. In their expositions of this command, the Pharisees defined adultery, as a **physical act**. They suggested that if the iniquity was only regarded in the heart, and went no further, God would not hold the person accountable.
- b. Therefore they thought of themselves as righteously **obedient** to the seventh commandment and were proud to be able to say that they were not adulterers. Luke 18:11 *The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. KJV*

#### IV. Jesus' Perspective

- a. As He preaches this great sermon, the Lord Jesus is forcing men to examine their **hearts**, because holiness is always a matter of the heart and that's where the divine evaluation takes place. Proverbs 23:7 -- "*For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he....*". Matthew 15:16-19 -- "*And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding? Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the stomach, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart, and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.*" Jeremiah 17:9 -- "*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?*"
- b. In this passage, the Lord bares the **depravity** of the heart, ripping off the facade of the super-religious who would glorify themselves as if they stood absolved and He shows them that the primary thing He is concerned with is the heart.
- c. His message is the same as that found in the Old Testament: Man is a sinner and that sin is **deep** down in his heart. Psalm 66:18: "*If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.*" Ps 19:12 *Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. KJV*
- d. A new heart is what a man needs but he is powerless to change his own condition, man is **dependent** upon God to place a new heart within him. Ezekiel 11:19 "*And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh.*"
- e. The Lord asserts that the **intent** of this commandment was not limited to the external act merely, but extends to the secrets of the heart and the movements of the eye as well.
- f. When Jesus was finished with the sermon, his hearers were shocked because He spoke with such **authority** Mt. 7:28-29 *And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: 29 For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. KJV*

#### V. The Sin of Adultery

- a. The word adultery means "unlawful intercourse with the spouse of **someone else**."
- b. The context is broad enough to imply that **anybody** who lusts after any person has committed adultery in his/her heart.
- c. **Both** Old and New Testaments declare the sinfulness of adultery. Prov 6:23-29 *For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life: 24 To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman. 25 Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids.26 For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life. 27 Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? 28 Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned? 29 So he that goeth in to his neighbour's wife; whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent. KJV 1 Cor 6:9-10 9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. KJV*

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### VI. The Passage Examined

- a. "BUT I..." This is **emphatic** in the Greek with the use of the pronoun *ego*. Jesus is saying in context, "You have formerly had rabbinic tradition as your authority, but I am the new authority".
- b. "WHOSOEVER LOOKETH..." The present participle *blepon* conveys the idea of a **continuing** process of looking. It isn't the inadvertent, incidental glance, but the purposeful, prolonged, lustful looking that is in view here. 2 Peter 2:14 *having eyes full of adultery, that cannot cease from sin*
- c. "...HATH...ALREADY..." Jesus doesn't say that the one who lusts after a woman commits adultery at that point. Rather, He says that whoever looks on a woman to lust after her **has already** committed adultery in his heart.
- d. It is the polluted vileness of a heart that is bent on sin, **seeking an object** with which to fulfill its adulterous fantasy that results in the wanton look.
- e. The sin has already happened in the heart...the adultery is **conceived** and thus the look is prompted.
- f. "...TO LUST..." In the Greek, "to lust" indicates purpose or to **earnestly covet**. Whereas an involuntary glance means you just resist it and turn away, a lustful stare takes place when you cultivate and pursue the sinful desire.
- g. For example, one would be looking for someone to lust after if he were to go to see an X-rated movie or when one flips through television channels to find the thing that panders to one's lust, because one would be viewing with the **purpose** of filling the adulterous desire in the heart.
- h. This does **NOT** mean that sexual desire itself is wrong. God created sex and He created us with natural sexual desires. He also gave us the perfect context to indulge those desires—the marriage relationship
- i. This verse could be **paraphrased**: "Emphatically I say to you that whoever continues looking on a woman for the purpose of lusting gives evidence of already having committed adultery in his heart."
- j. So, Jesus identifies the heart as the problem because when one purposefully looks on another to lust after, s/he gives evidence of having a vile, lusting, and **adulterous attitude** and desires within the heart.

### VII. The Remedy

- a. Jesus provides some clues as to how to deal with this **depravity** within. Matt 5:29-30 *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.KJV*
- b. He is teaching that anything which causes a man to remain in his sin and to pander an adulterous and evil heart should be **eliminated**, even if it is something you wouldn't dream of giving up. Matthew 18:7-9: *"Woe unto the world because of offenses! For it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh! Wherefore, if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee; it is better for thee to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than, having two hands or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire. 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."*
- c. Therefore, we can conclude that our adulterous sin must be dealt with **radically** and mortally as one who lives in the presence of God. Matt 5:8 *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. KJV* 1 Cor. 9:27a, "...I keep under [beat] my body, and bring it into subjection..." James 4:8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. KJV Colossians 3:5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7 It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; 4 that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, 5 not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; 6 and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. 7 For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.

### VIII. Application

Alexander The Great refused so much as to see Darius's wife, a woman of incomparable beauty, fearing lest he that had conquered the husband should be overcome by the wife. Adultery starts with something very small and seemingly innocent—something that looks so harmless, it's easy for us to allow. It starts with contact which stimulates interest, which leads to attraction, and that leads to desire.

1. Desire is an alarm.
2. Walk in the Spirit. *Galatians 5:16 Live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the [flesh].*
3. Recognize you are vulnerable.
4. Watch what you put into in your mind and what you ponder once it is there.
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