



## Walk the Talk: Love Your Neighbor, but not like that!

April 26, 2015

### A Biblical Worldview

Sexual intercourse outside of marriage was strictly prohibited by the Mosaic Law. "Thou shalt not murder" is the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment; "Thou shalt not commit adultery" is the 7<sup>th</sup>. Jesus doesn't suggest that adultery is acceptable or that if you're already engaged in adultery in your heart that you might as well go ahead and commit the act. Sinful acts don't further the Kingdom of God.

The Bible states that the purpose of marriage = for "a male/female, to become one." This is a monogamous relationship. **Today's culture** violently disagrees with the Bible on a number of different levels. There are some new terms circulating now. "*Monogamish*" – which leaves open options within monogamy. Another new term is "*Polyamory*" which makes no pretense of being monogomish. It's an "open" marriage. A third term is "*throuples*." (Like "couples" only there are 3. The first 3 gay men got married in Thailand on Valentine's Day).

How do Christians determine what is right/wrong? What is the moral compass/guide for a Christian?

(I'm not trying to tell people who aren't Christians how to live.) 4 things:

#1.) **Scripture.** 1<sup>st</sup> and foremost. We always begin here. We believe this is the revelation of God. Thus, our first question should always be: "What's the Bible say?" And that's why we want to emphasize scripture. The founder of the Methodist movement, John Wesley (whom we are dedicating a statue to today) said he was a man of one book – the Bible. He knew about other books, but there was one book that he turned to as the authority of his life.

The Bible doesn't answer every question. Thus, we need to look at other sources, too.

#2.) **Tradition.** What have others in the church passed on to us? Like the Bible, this is an external authority. It is not just a subjective opinion or feeling.

#3.) **Reason.** Does this make sense?

#4.) **Experience.** Faith should be mine and have an impact upon me.

Scripture and Tradition appeal to authorities outside of me. Today's culture generally dislikes this. Our culture wants to be able to make up the rules as we go along. There IS a place for our input; but there is also a place for another

authority over and above me, too. It's incredible hubris to think that I know all of the answers.

One can have a "Biblical Worldview" and use it to be as mean as a snake (exactly what Jesus called the Pharisees: "snakes" and "a brood of vipers").

Jesus wanted people to know the scriptures and to live in accordance with them. He didn't come to abolish them. However, he looked beyond following the rules and having good behavior to having good relationships with the right attitude. Rules give us importance guidance and provide boundaries, but relationships offer love and grace. Good behavior keeps us from harm, but a good attitude keeps us from pride, anger and lust. Give the Pharisees an "A" for Behavior, but they flunked "Relationships." They used the scripture for the purpose of hatred.

Matt 5:27-32

*"You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' <sup>28</sup> But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. <sup>29</sup> If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. <sup>30</sup> And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.*

*<sup>31</sup> "It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.' <sup>32</sup> But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery.*

We spoke about Anger last week. The Pharisees were self-righteous because they weren't killing people, but Jesus got at the heart of the matter by discussing Anger. Righteous anger corrects injustice and is good when lived out in a righteous way. Sex can be a wonderful gift, too. Without it, none of us would be here. God gave us this gift. But if misused, it becomes incredibly destructive. Anger and sex are like fire; it can cook a meal or burn down your home.

1.) The Biblical view of marriage is exclusive. A man and a woman are to leave their families and become "one flesh." They form a "marital **bond**" (ironically, last Sunday we recognized 215 Asbury couples who've been married 50+ years. The last names of our longest term marriage, 72 years, is "BOND.") This pair bonding is quite challenging, but can be the most wonderful relationship in life. "For better

*for worse, for richer for poor, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until death us do part.*" Marriage is meant to create intimacy and trust for a lifetime.

2.) To "**adulterate**" means to dilute the bond. Adultery is double-bonding. The old song says it well: "Torn between two lovers, feeling like a fool, loving both of you is breaking all the rules." Those who commit adultery break trust. Adultery destroys intimacy.

3.) Adultery doesn't just happen or jump out of the bushes and grab you, it is usually the result of **drift**. Every marriage has "dull and boring" stages. Every marriage faces challenges. When the primary bond is not properly nurtured, the mind can begin to drift. Drift is silent. It may take a long time. Like a boat drifting, it's silent. Thus, adultery is usually premeditated. In its weakened state the mind begins to think of "what if" opportunities. Adultery is often the outcome of habitual patterns of thinking.

4.) **Lust** knocks on a lot of doors, whether single/married. Jesus point was adultery begins with lust. It is incredibly destructive. Many marriages have been destroyed thru adultery; many more have been impacted by lust. The rampant use of pornography in our culture is having devastating results.

Jesus spoke with some hyperbole. Don't literally go gouge out your eye. But destroying a marriage by committing adultery has terrible consequences. What starts out as enticing ends up entrapping us. Arthur Miller's play, "The Death of a Salesman," powerfully illustrated what happened within a family when adultery impacted them. We don't want anyone to go through this. Lust has devastating consequences upon individuals and it rips families apart.

5.) Don't just "not drift" but learn to **be holy**. Stay active and engaged. Alert. Be on guard. Be vigilant. Holiness of heart is something which is very important in contending with all of these issues. It's not just wiping the slate clean or emptying the house, it's creating something good. Fill the void in your heart with good and holy habits.

Jesus spoke about anger, contempt and lust. Now he turns to **divorce**. Can you imagine how few divorces if anger, contempt and lust were eliminated?

Divorce. Simply brutal for a woman in those days. A man could get rid of his wife quite simply if she didn't please him in any way (burned the meal, made it too salty, or if he saw a better looking woman). Once divorced, she had basically 3 options: Live with family; Remarry, Prostitution.

If he gave her a "certificate of divorce" it could prove that she was single and she couldn't be executed for adultery (she could be a prostitute and not be killed, but if adulterous she could be killed – go figure).

The question was whether or not the man could divorce his wife for any reason of if it had to be strictly on the grounds of adultery.

Jesus made it clear that he didn't completely forbid adultery; but he also noted that it was heart-breaking due to the hardness of heart (contempt). A marriage wasn't supposed to end in divorce, but a divorce was far better than beating or killing her.

Divorce is so destructive. God said he hates divorce – I think the people who hate it as much are those who've gone through it. They still carry the wounds.

### Application

Ours is an angry, violent and over-sexualized world. There is a component of "knowing" God's will (intellectually) and of "Doing" it (proper behavior). The PAGANS operated out of ignorance and did what they wanted to do. Jesus said: "*Don't be like them!*" (Mt 6:8). Avoid pagan situations and practices. (Why would you as a Christian think it's a good idea to go out on a date with a married person?)

Yet the Pharisees had both the right knowledge (knew all of the rules and even made some new ones) + right behavior (practices) but something was missing. Their HEARTS weren't right. Jesus said: "*Don't be like them!*" Avoid anger, hatred and contempt.

Jesus calls His disciples to live in a different way. There is a 3<sup>rd</sup> way of living = not "ALL RULES" (legalism and hypocrisy) or "NO RULES" (antinomianism) but the way of grace. It's not just "knowing" and "doing" but it's also about "being" transformed.

We ALL NEED **GRACE!** Who among us could possibly say that we have not been inflated with pride, filled with anger, spoken God's Name in vain, struggled with lust or been captured by envy and jealousy? We all stand in the need of grace. *All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.* We all need forgiveness & Reconciliation. That was last week's message. That's our message every week. This grace is available through Jesus Christ, who forgives us and brings us back to God.

Forgiveness as Empowerment, too.