

Sober Words About Lust

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[0 : 00] Good morning, church. Scripture reading for this morning is taken from Psalms 119 verses 1-16.

! Matthew 5, 27-30.

! Psalm 119, beginning at verse 1. Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord.

Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart, who also do no wrong but walk in his ways. You have commanded your precepts to be kept diligently.

Oh, that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes. Then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all your commandments.

[1 : 10] I will praise you with an upright heart when I learn your righteous rules. I will keep your statutes. Do not utterly forsake me.

How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. With my whole heart, I seek you.

Let me not wander far from your commandments. I have stored up your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

Blessed are you, O Lord, teach me your statutes. With my lips I declare all the rules of your mouth.

In the way of your testimonies, I delight as much as in all riches. I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways.

[2 : 07] I will delight in your statutes. I will not forget your word. And then Matthew chapter 5, verses 27 to 30.

Matthew 5, verses 27 to 30. You have heard that it was said, you shall not commit adultery.

But I say to you that everyone who looks on a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than your whole body be thrown into hell.

And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than your whole body go into hell.

[3 : 23] Thank you very much, Faye. I'm sure that like me, you'd all agree that men and women are different.

While men and women are born and made in the image of God and they have equal dignity and equal worth, men and women are different.

And one of the ways that men and women are different is that, generally speaking, men struggle more with the sin of lust than women do.

And this morning, as we continue our sermon series in the Sermon on the Mount, we come face to face with this reality in these words of Jesus in Matthew 5, 27 to 30.

And these words of Jesus about lust are sobering. In truth, they're shocking. They're sobering and shocking because Jesus says to us that if lust is unaddressed in our lives, it will take us to hell.

[4 : 46] Jesus says, if lust remains unaddressed in our lives, it will result in our eternal damnation in hell.

Brothers and sisters, I don't know of more sobering and shocking words that we can hear from the lips of one who cannot lie.

from the lips of the Lord Jesus, who only speaks the truth. But in our over-sexualized culture, in which sexual sin is celebrated and sexual lust is minimized, it's so easy to ignore or minimize these words of Jesus in Matthew 5, 27 to 30.

But brothers and sisters, we ignore these words of Jesus to our peril. We ignore these words of Jesus to our eternal peril. And so this morning, with the Spirit's help in our remaining time, I hope to show why we all need to embrace these words of Jesus for our eternal good.

And so let's take a moment and bow before the Lord and ask for his help. Heavenly Father, we thank you that we are able to gather and now sit under the preaching of your word.

[6 : 23] Lord, we pray that you, through the power of your Holy Spirit, would cause these words to land on our hearts the way you intend them to. Oh, Lord, may we hear them.

And more than that, may we heed them. May we heed them for our good now and into eternity.

And Father, I pray once again that you would help me as I seek to be faithful to bring your word to your people this morning. We ask that you would draw near as only you can.

In Jesus' name, amen. When we consider these words of Jesus, one of the first things that stands out to us is that Jesus is magnifying the seventh commandment, which says, you shall not commit adultery.

adultery. And he is primarily addressing men. And I think we all know that adultery doesn't apply to men exclusively.

[7 : 38] It applies to women and men who are married. and I think because that is the case, because we know that adultery applies to women and men who are married, it's easy for some of us this morning to listen as if we are overhearing a conversation that's not directed at us.

And so I want to offer two cautions right at the beginning. First, I want to offer a caution to those who are single. We know that sexual immorality between married people is called adultery.

And sexual immorality between those who are not married is called fornication. But Jesus in this passage is addressing adultery.

And so you could begin to think, well, he's not really talking about single people. He's talking about married people. And so you could listen in an absent-minded kind of way.

I question you, don't do that. And I say the same thing to women this morning. When you read these words of Jesus, he says, if a man looks at a woman intentionally to lust after her, he has committed adultery.

[8 : 57] You could think, well, he's addressing men. He's not addressing women. But brothers and sisters, this is God's word to all of us. And God has preserved his word for all of us.

And so he is speaking to all of us. Even though men are being addressed in a primary way, God is addressing all of us.

And so for those of you this morning who are not being addressed in a primary way, you are being addressed in a secondary way. And I pray that you would listen and I pray that you would hear God's word to us this morning.

I want to share three responses, three responses that these words of Jesus call all of us to. The first way that these words of Jesus speak to us is they call us to honest evaluation.

They call us to honest evaluation. Notice again what Jesus says in verse 27. You have heard that it was said, you shall not commit adultery.

[10 : 17] Now here, what Jesus is doing is he is echoing the seventh commandment, the words given to Moses and really all the ten commandments. God who created men and women and the institution of marriage and the gift of sex to be enjoyed within the boundaries of marriage.

He says, do not commit adultery. In other words, he says, do not violate the marriage covenant between you and your spouse.

Now the way this commandment in the day of Jesus was practically understood was it meant you shouldn't touch another woman who's not your wife.

You should not get involved with her sexually. That's where they heard it. And today, that is the way we tend to hear it as well. That we should not engage in sexual relations with a person who's not our spouse.

But Jesus says it's more than that. Jesus says that the seventh commandment imposes upon us a greater obligation than keeping our hands off of someone who's not our spouse.

[11 : 44] Jesus tells us that if we will obey the seventh commandment, if we will fulfill the seventh commandment, it requires us not just to be concerned with the physical aspect of adultery, but also the hard aspect of adultery.

Look again what he says in verse 28. This is exactly what he says in verse 28. But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

What is Jesus really saying? Here's what Jesus is really saying to us. Jesus is saying that the marriage covenant is a whole giving of ourselves to another person.

We give ourselves not just physically, but we give all of our emotion. We give our entire being. We give our affections to that other person. And so even when our affections fall into unfaithfulness towards another person, Jesus says, you have committed adultery.

Because those affections, that love of your heart that is to be directed only to your spouse, you have violated that and you have attached it to someone else.

[13 : 08] He said, and if you do that, if you intentionally look at another woman and you lust after her in your heart, Jesus says, you have committed adultery.

You've committed adultery within your heart. And what becomes very clear to us is that Jesus is calling us to a deeper righteousness.

Jesus is calling us to something that is more than just external and superficial. He is calling us to both govern our eyes and guard our hearts as well.

From looking at another woman to lust after her. Because if we do, He says, you have committed adultery in your heart.

Now, while this is true, it's so easy for some to think that, well, Jesus really is exaggerating the point. But He's not, brothers and sisters.

[14 : 11] He's the one who cannot lie. He's the one who tells us the truth. And He says, if you're doing that, you're committing adultery. And we will go further and say, and if unaddressed, in time, what is going on in your heart will be manifested in your body.

You know, we consider that Jesus spoke these words some 2,000 years ago.

Jesus spoke these words at a time when women dressed in ways very different from the way that we dress, that women dress today.

And it helps you to see the sinfulness of the human heart. in Jesus' day, women dressed in what could be described as the typical fashion of all the women with one style was like two sheets with three holes, one for the head and two for the arms.

That's pretty much the way they dressed. And yet, men were able to lust. You're going to be pretty good to do that. Men were able to lust in that day.

[15 : 28] and Jesus addresses it. Brothers, how much more in our day? How much more in our day when the clothing of women is designed to reveal their bodies and not conceal their bodies?

It amazes me that when you watch sports, the men have more clothes than the women. women. They're shorter.

The women's clothes are shorter and tighter and the men are wearing more and they have more to, the women have far more to conceal than men do. And so, when we think about these words of Jesus in his day, they are much more relevant to us today.

And in our day, in Jesus' day, you literally have to look at a real woman to lust after her. Not so today. With the internet and with the pervasiveness of pornography, you don't have to look at a physical woman to lust after her.

Pornography now is available immediately and anonymously and, sadly, so many men are trapped in it.

[16 : 49] And so, we should take these words of Jesus very, very seriously. Because if they were relevant enough for him to include in the Sermon on the Mount in his day, how much more in our day?

And let me just say one side point that I'll come back to this. The Sermon on the Mount is like grammar school for the Christian.

it is Christianity 101. And Jesus, of all the things that he could have talked about in the Sermon on the Mount, what is in the Sermon on the Mount, he considered it important enough to give it to us and we need to be familiar with his content, and that is why we are giving our time over an extended period to understand the Sermon on the Mount.

and Jesus considered this issue of sexual purity important enough that he included it in the Sermon on the Mount and that should inform the importance to which we should give it.

It was relevant in Jesus' day and it is so much more relevant in our day. I realize that with our best efforts to avoid sexual lust, we can be bombarded with opportunities to lust every single day.

[18 : 26] Whether it's the way women dress or whether it is things that come onto your computer or your phone that you did not go after, websites that you may stumble upon that you had no intention going there, those are the realities of living in an over-sexualized culture that we live in.

But that's not what Jesus is addressing. Jesus is not addressing the accidental exposure to what our eyes should not behold.

What Jesus is addressing is the intentional exposure the intentional looking, the intentional lusting after another woman.

Look again at what he says in verse 28. But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent, with lustful intent, that is looking at a woman to draw something from her, indeed to steal something from her, some kind of gratification, some kind of sexual pleasure.

He says when you do that, you're committing adultery in your heart. Jesus is addressing intentional looking, intentional lusting.

[19 : 54] And so brothers, here is where honest evaluation comes in. Do you look at women intentionally for lust after their bodies?

Certainly viewing pornography is intentional lusting. That is intentional lusting.

And what do you do when you see a woman who is immodestly dressed? Do you engage in continuing to look or do you by God's grace turn away or look away?

These words of Jesus called for honest evaluation. if we linger and we indulge in sexual lust and desires and we don't turn away, brothers, we are violating what Jesus says in these verses and what he calls us away from.

Honest evaluation is required of all of us if we are going to grow in godliness. If we are going to take these words of Jesus seriously, we need to honestly acknowledge before the Lord where we are in this area.

[21 : 32] And the good news, brothers and sisters, is even in an overly sexualized culture, we can live lives that are honoring to the Lord in sexual purity.

Not just for the appearance of what others see, but before the Lord who knows all and who sees all. Before the Lord before whom no secret is hid and all hearts are open.

And listen to the promise that we have in scripture that the new birth in our lives enables us to do this. Not perfectly, truly, but truly.

This is what Paul writes to Titus in Titus chapter 2 verses 11 to 14. He says, for the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

The good news is that the grace of God trains us. The grace of God trains us to say no to ungodliness and to say yes to righteousness and to say no to worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright lives in this present age, in this present, overly sexualized age in which we live.

[23 : 30] God's grace trains us not to be passive about sin, not to be careless about our lives, it trains us to make effort to pursue holiness before the Lord.

And when we are careless, when we are indifferent to sin, that's not grace, brothers and sisters, that's license. License is a distorted understanding of the grace of God.

God's love. And so first, these words of Jesus call us to honest evaluation regarding sexual purity in our lives. Where do we stand?

God's love. And so my second point naturally flows from the first one, and it is this. These words of Jesus call us to radical mortification.

Radical mortification. What is mortification? Mortification is a word that comes from, it means to kill or to put to death.

[24 : 47] It's the same word we use when we talk about a mortician. A mortician is somebody who deals with dead people. And so mortification is the name for the Christian practice of recognizing and putting to death sin in our lives.

simply put, it is fighting sin. That's what mortification is. It is fighting sin. It is putting sin to death. Mortification is the informed view and understanding that we need to be putting sin to death in our lives.

The deceased Puritan pastor and theologian John Owen wrote the following. The choicest believers who are assuredly freed from the condemning power of sin ought yet to make it their business all their days to mortify the indwelling power of sin.

All of our days. And this is the reality. Yes, Christ has freed us from the penalty of sin and from sin's condemning power.

But we still battle with indwelling sin and we will battle with indwelling sin until the day that we die and we are called with the power of the Holy Spirit to be putting sin to death in an ongoing way.

[26 : 13] This is our lot until the Lord Jesus comes. John Owen also said, he warned, be killing sin or sin will be killing you.

There's no compromise with it. Be killing sin, be actively fighting against sin or sin will be fighting against us. Without any effort on our part, sin will be having its way with us.

Sin will be killing us, snapping out every single evidence that we belong to Christ. This is the point that Jesus is making in verses 29 and 30.

Having identified the sin of sexual lust, Jesus goes on to say how sin must be dealt with. And in short, what he says, deal with it radically. Put it to death.

Look again at how he says it in verses 29 and 30. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than your whole body be thrown into hell.

[27 : 26] And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than your whole body go into hell.

What is Jesus saying? Hopefully you recognize that Jesus is not speaking literally. Jesus is speaking figuratively. But some have taken him literally.

One such person is the well-known third-century scholar origin of Alexandria who castrated himself in his attempts to deal with sexual temptation.

And I know he was sorry when he realized that the issue was in his heart and not what he cut off. But how do we know that Jesus is speaking figuratively rather than literally?

well, if Jesus was speaking literally to tell us to deal with the problem of lust, he was going to tell us to just cut out one eye. Because when you take out one eye, you have the other eye.

[28 : 35] And if you're determined to lust, you just lust more with that eye than with the eye that was taken out. And we have two hands. If Jesus was speaking literally and he felt that it was our hands that really was the root of our problems, he wouldn't tell us cut one hand off.

Because if you're determined to embrace another woman, you're going to embrace it with one hand. And so Jesus is not at all speaking literally.

He's speaking figuratively. But he's trying to drive home the point by telling us to do these things that we think are unthinkable. And what he's saying to us, is you must be willing to be radical with sin.

And in particular, the sin of sexual lust. Why? Because of where it will lead. It will be more than just the lusting of the heart. You see, as bad as heart adultery is, heart adultery in and of itself, if it remains there, doesn't rip families apart.

It doesn't bring heartache and heartbreak. But, left unattended, it will certainly leave then. Jesus is saying, be radical with sin.

[29 : 59] We need to be willing to make whatever sacrifice is necessary to be effective in our fight against sin. That's what Jesus is saying. So, even before you consider what it entails, our heart's posture must be, Lord, I'm willing to do whatever it takes to mortify sin in my life because of the consequences.

The consequences is, sin unaddressed in our lives will land us in hell eternally. And so, I wonder this morning, do you see the words of Jesus about tearing out eyes and cutting off hands as being drastic, or do you soberly embrace them because of the seriousness of sin and of sexual lust in particular?

Listen to these words immorality. In 1 Corinthians chapter 6, verses 18 to 20, Paul was addressing sexual immorality in the Corinthian church and this is what he says to them.

Flee. He didn't say avoid. He says, flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own.

[31 : 38] You've been bought with a price. Therefore, honor God with your body. Brothers and sisters, adultery is the most serious of all of the sexual sins.

Because not only is it a sin against our bodies, but it is the breaking of a holy covenant. And so it is no light sin.

It is no sin that we just brush aside. In our hyper-sexually charged culture today, brothers, we have to be radical if we're going to mortify sin in our lives.

And it starts with lust in our hearts. We will never touch with our hands what we have never lusted for in our hearts.

That's the protection that we can have by the grace of God, that we will never touch with our hands what we have not lusted after in our hearts. The apostle Paul addressed Timothy, and he told Timothy how he should relate to women.

[33 : 04] And brothers, we should take these words to heart. In 1st Timothy 5, verses 1 and 2, here's what Paul says to Timothy. He says, treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.

Absolute purity. And here Paul is speaking in the context of the local church. If there's any place where this must be true in our lives, brothers, it must be in the household of God.

That we see the women among us as mothers. And we would not think about having sexual desires towards our mothers, and thinking about the young ladies as sisters.

And we would not think about having sexual desires towards our sisters. Paul tells Timothy, he says, Timothy, you are to relate to them, the women in the church, with absolute purity.

And so this requires, this calls for radical mortification. And radical mortification will be the result for all of us who understand the seriousness of sin in general, and sexual sin in particular.

[34 : 34] Notice how in verses 29 and 30, Jesus points to the importance of how we must be determined to mortify sin.

He doesn't just say, if your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and lay it aside. He says, no, you tear it out and throw it away. No. we'll try to pick it up again and try to push it back in place.

But it is offending, it is causing us to sin. He says, you don't just cut off your right arm and lay it aside. He says, no, you cut it off and you throw it away.

That which causes us to offend, we must be willing to make a radical break with it, brothers and sisters. And we can only do this by the grace of God. We can only desire to do it by the grace of God and we can only do it by the grace of God.

But as we've heard, the grace of God has appeared, training us, teaching us that we can renounce ungodliness and worldly passions. But how committed are we to radical mortification of sin?

[35 : 52] For example, if you have a problem with viewing pornography, whether on your computer or on your phone, what are you willing to do to radically address that which is causing you to sin?

Willing to give up your phone if it comes to that? Willing to commit to say, I will only view my computer in an open space?

And if it is such that you need to hand your phone to your wife or to whomever, are you willing to do that?

To radically deal with that which causes sin? Brothers, if this is a habitual thing, if this is something that we're falling into again and again, an unwillingness to radically deal with it, an unwillingness to cut it away is showing that we're not being serious with sin the way Jesus is addressing it here.

He says, he tells us precious, precious parts of our bodies, be willing to get rid of it if it is offending you. And so, is there a willingness to be accountable?

[37 : 17] Is there a willingness to, there are today software that can be used to bring accountability that if you attempt to go on an inappropriate website, it sends an email to those who you're accountable to.

Are you willing? This is just one example. There are other areas that could be addressed, but we need to think about it and ask ourselves, am I seeking to mortify this area of my life where I'm falling into sin?

And so, how can we grow in sexual purity? The first way we begin to grow in sexual purity is we must take these words of Jesus seriously.

We must take Matthew 5, 27 to 30 seriously. And we must not be content just with, oh, I have never touched another woman.

We must be content to live before the all-knowing and all-seeing God who knows our hearts and we're seeking to honor Him in all that we do.

[38 : 35] We must desire sexual purity of heart as well. And we would all do well to hear the words of the psalmist in the first passage that was read this morning from Psalm 119, 9 to 11.

How can a young man keep his way pure? How? By guarding it according to your word. Brothers, if we are going to embark on this battle to mortify sexual sin in our lives, and we're trying to do it without the word of God, we're like a person who's put on a construction site without any tools and their bare hands.

There's no chance of success in such an endeavor. We need God's word. And that's what the psalmist says. He says, the way that a young man keeps his way pure is by guarding it according to God's word.

And then he cries out, he says, with my whole heart I seek you. Let me not wander from your commandments. I've stored up your word in my heart that I may not sin against you.

That is what we're seeking to do as we memorize scripture together. We want to store up God's word in our hearts that we don't sin against the Lord. And this is how we feed our spirit and we starve our flesh.

[40 : 02] It is through God's word stored up in us and through the power of the Holy Spirit that we learn what God requires of us. And it is through his word and the power of the Holy Spirit that we are able to be convicted of sin and enabled to repent.

Ladies, in these verses before us, Jesus calls men to be radical with sin because the stakes are so high.

Because sin unaddressed will lead us to hell. And if you're rightly hearing these words of Jesus to men, if you're rightly hearing them, I think within your heart should be the desire to say, Lord, I don't want to do anything that will add to the temptations that men face to engage in sexual lust.

That should at a minimum evoke from you a desire to dress modestly that you don't add to that temptation. And think about that.

Jesus calls men to be radical in addressing sin, sexual sin in particular. Is it a big thing for you as a woman to enlighten this, to make a commitment that I'm going to dress modestly?

[41 : 37] sacrifice? When we think of sacrifice, it should not be such a great desire that I must wear this particular thing because it's in fashion when it's immodest.

There should be a willingness to forego that fashion for the sake of modesty, for the sake of honoring the Lord, for the sake of my brothers that I don't add to stumbling blocks in front of them.

Is that a big price to pay for what is at stake? Would you really look your brother in his eye and say, I don't care about what your issues might be and how you may be affected by what I wear, knowing that Jesus says sin unaddressed will lead you to hell?

this ought to be a small price to pay because first and foremost the way you dress should be to please the Lord, to honor the Lord, to be modest in your power.

Scripture commands this. It's not an optional thing. And we shouldn't hesitate, women, women, not we, but you shouldn't hesitate to get the opinion of your husband, get the opinion of your brothers.

[43 : 07] How does this look? Is this too revealing? I've heard women talk about, well, that's just a little bit of cleavage. No, that's your breasts. Ladies, I encourage you to honor the Lord.

Choose clothing that will conceal your body, not reveal your body. You can dress in a way that is tasteful without being seductive.

Well, these words of Jesus not only call us honest evaluation and radical mortification, third, finally, and briefly, these words of Jesus call us a sober contemplation.

these words of Jesus demand that we slow down, that we hear what he is saying. Two times Jesus says the same thing.

He warns us in verses 29 and 30, and he says, for it is better that you lose one of your members than your whole body be thrown into hell.

[44 : 26] Two times in four verses, the one who cannot lie says, it is better that you lose one of your members than your whole body be thrown into hell.

hell. This warning about being thrown into hell is especially sobering when we bear in mind that God is the great judge who is not just the judge of our actions, but the judge of our hearts as well.

And this warning is sobering because it helps us to see the seriousness of sin based on the punishment that's meted out to it. sin deserves death.

And the reason it deserves death is because of the one against whom it is committed. We ultimately commit sin against the Lord, and he is just in all of his ways, and sin against him deserves not just punishment, but eternal punishment in hell.

So how should we hear these words of Jesus? Those of us, we believe in the eternal security of the believer, those who have put their trust in Jesus. We believe the words of Jesus that all who come to him, he will lose none of them, but raise them up on the last day.

[46 : 04] we believe the words of Jesus that no one can pluck his children out of his hands. And so how should we hear this repeated warning of Jesus that sin unaddressed will lead us to hell?

God, here's how we should hear it, here's how it's relevant for us. If you or I are unwilling to mortify sin in our lives, if you or I are careless about sin in our lives and there's a disregard for holiness in our lives, we are giving evidence that we don't belong to Christ.

And see, this is why it is so important to take the words of Jesus seriously. Because when we don't, we are on such an edge that we, one, lose our assurance of salvation, and it could be the fact that we don't have salvation.

Because although we're not saved by not doing this or not doing that, living lives of holiness is evidence that we belong to Christ.

And this is why these words of Jesus are very serious. If we want to brush these aside, and we want to live carelessly, and it doesn't matter to us, you may very well be giving evidence that you do not belong to Christ.

[47 : 47] Because, brothers and sisters, that is not the response of someone who's been converted, who's been translated from death to life, from darkness into light.

Listen to how the apostle John pastorally puts it, carefully puts it, for people who live a life that contradicts the profession that they belong to Jesus Christ.

This is what he says in 1 John 3, 4-10. everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practice lawlessness, sin is lawlessness.

You know that he appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him keeps on sinning.

No one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. little children, let no one deceive you. Whenever we see these words, let no one deceive you, take note.

[48 : 56] They are there because people are deceived. let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning.

The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. No one born of God makes a practice of sinning. For God's seed abides in him, and notice, he cannot keep on sinning.

Can't do it. Cannot do it. He cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. By this it is evident, who are the children of God and who are the children of the devil, whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

Do we as believers sin? Yes, we do. sin. But, if we belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, we do not practice sin.

We do not practice sin in an ongoing way, brothers and sisters. Sin ought to grieve us. We ought to be convicted when we sin. And the only way to continue in sin as a pattern and as a way of life is to be convicted by sin and to feel comfortable in that way.

[50 : 32] One of the blessings of God to us who belong to him is conviction when we sin.

sin. See, think about it. There was a time when we sinned and we were not convicted. There was a time when we sinned, we enjoyed our sin, we wanted to go back to our sin.

But when we sinned and we are convicted, that is evidence that God has brought us to himself, that we belong to him, he has given us new birth, and we have a desire to seek the policeman and want to repent.

So, brothers and sisters, these verses of Jesus in Matthew 5, 27 to 30, they call us to soberly contemplate what he is saying to us.

My sins and your sins deserve help. That is the just punishment that our sins deserve.

[51 : 48] And we must not pass over this just because it's not a happy thought. We must soberly contemplate it because Jesus is telling us that if we refuse to mortify sin in our lives, it could cost us our very lives when we receive the punishment that our sins deserve.

Jesus does not repeat this warning about being thrown into hell to scare us. He repeats it to warn us to be honest with us.

And if you're offended by these words of Jesus about being thrown into hell, I would say that it's because you don't understand the seriousness of sin. Again, when we sin, we don't sin in a vacuum.

We sin against the holy and righteous God. sin in God. What Jesus is calling for in these verses in Matthew 5, 27 to 30, like the rest of the Sermon on the Mount, he's calling for what we cannot do on our own.

He's calling us to what we don't have the inner desire to do left to ourselves or the ability to do left to ourselves.

[53 : 18] And the truth is that any of us this morning who can consider these words of Jesus and who do not come up short to one degree or another, it's like a person who's saying that they are going on the scale to be weighed but they put one foot on instead of both feet on, or someone who says they're going to be measured and they tiptoe to be taller than they really are.

Brothers and sisters, when we come honestly before these words of Jesus, we all fall short to one degree or another.

And the truth is that even if we tear out both eyes and cut off both hands, like origin, we still have sinful hearts.

And I think for a lot of us men, we have enough memories in our hearts that could cause us to lust throughout all eternity.

God's And so these words of Jesus should drive us to Jesus. They should drive us to them.

[54 : 39] They should drive us to the one who died on the cross to make possible the righteousness that God requires from all of us. And the righteousness that God graciously credits into the account of all those who put their trust in him.

Because to whatever degree they can come so close to fulfilling what Jesus requires, it will not be to God's perfect standard. Jesus is the only one who has perfectly fulfilled all the commandments in letter and in spirit.

He's the only one. And that's the righteousness that you need, that's the righteousness that I need, and God in mercy and grace takes the righteousness that Jesus accomplished and he gives it to us.

He credits it to us. And so the biggest mistake we can make this morning is to run off with these words of Jesus and believe that we can fulfill them on our own in our own strength.

We can't. We can't. And I imagine the other response to these words of Jesus is to despair and to feel hopeless about attaining this purity of heart that Christ calls us to.

[56 : 06] And if you're feeling like that this morning, that's not a bad thing because that should cause you to run to Jesus. that should cause you to run to Jesus because the Sermon on the Mount is designed to drive us to the feet of Jesus.

The only one who keeps all the demands of God's commandments. I agree with theologian D.A.

Carson who said about the Sermon on the Mount, he said, we are both drawn to them and we're shamed by them.

We're drawn to the words of the Sermon on the Mount and at the same time, we are shamed by them. I pray this morning that we would all draw near to Jesus Christ.

I pray that hearing these words this morning will cause us all to respond with honest evaluation, with radical mortification of sin and sober contemplation of what is at stake if we do not mortify sin by the grace of God.

[57 : 23] And may that be the response of all of our hearts this morning. Let's pray. Father, thank you for your word this morning.

And I pray that you'd work in all of our hearts. I pray that you'd work in our hearts to cause us to respond as we should. But grant repentance where it is needed.

Grant conviction of sin where it is needed. Would you help us by the grace of God to not only be concerned about fulfilling the seventh commandment and indeed all the commandments in an external way.

But Lord, may we seek to fulfill them and obey them from the heart with the grace that you provide. We ask that you would do this in Jesus' name.

Amen. Let's stand for our closing song.