

Touchy Topics: Adultery

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[0 : 00] My son, keep your father's commandment and forsake not your mother's teaching.! Bind them on your heart always. Tie them around your neck. When you walk, they will lead you.

! When you lie down, they will watch over you. And when you awake, they will walk with you. For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light. And the reproof of disciplines are the way of life.

To preserve you from the evil woman. From the smooth tongue of the adulteress. Do not desire the beauty of her heart. And do not let her capture you with her eyelashes.

For the price of a prostitute is only a loaf of bread. But a married woman hunts down a precious life. Can a man carry fire next to his chest and his clothes not be burnt? Or can one walk on coals and his feet not be scorched?

So is he who goes into his neighbor's wife. None who touches her will go unpunished. People do not despise a thief if he steals to satisfy his appetite when he is hungry.

[1 : 22] But if he is caught, he will pay sevenfold. He will give all the goods of his house. He who commits adultery lacks sense. He who does it destroys himself. He who gets, he will get wounds and dishonor and disgrace.

He will not be wiped away. For jealousy makes a man furious. And he will not spare when he takes revenge.

He who, he will accept no compensation. He will refuse though we multiply, though the, though, though you multiply gifts.

The second reading from Matthew chapter five, verses 27 to 30. You have heard it said. You shall not commit adultery. But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with his, with her in his, in his heart.

If your right eye causes you to sin, tear, tear it out. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away.

[2 : 49] 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 to be thrown into hell. Here is the reading. Thank you very much, Michelle.

For this morning, we are continuing our three-part sermon series titled Touchy Topics. And we've come to the second part.

And it's a topic that the Bible takes very seriously. But it's a topic that our society takes very lightly. It's a topic of adultery. In the first scripture that we read this morning, committing adultery is described very graphically.

[4 : 07] It's likened to a man carrying fire next to his chest and a person walking on hot coals.

It talks about the pain, the grief, the suffering that comes from committing adultery. But on the other hand, society uses intentionally mild and even dishonest words to talk about adultery.

Society tries to make adultery seem less harmful and trivial.

And uses words to downplay it, to downplay the seriousness of it, to downplay the harm of it. And so we use words like affair and cheating and stepping out.

And the most popular one in Bahamian society, sweethearting. But brothers and sisters, none of those substitute words help us to appreciate the weightiness and the seriousness and the soberness of the sin of adultery.

[5 : 39] And I believe that part of the reason that adultery is so commonplace in our society is we've made light of it. We have trivialized what is most serious.

And I do believe that part of our taking adultery for the weight that it has in scripture and the seriousness that it has in scripture is some degree of protection and caution to us against it. The same can be said about sexual immorality between unmarried people, which is fornication. We've made light of that sin as well by calling it sleeping together. Or being intimate. Or having sex. But the sin of fornication is far more weighty than the substitutes that we use to refer to it.

But the sin of fornication is not the topic this morning. The sin of adultery is. And for a moment, as I reflected on both passages that we are reading this morning, you almost would want to think that we could dismiss the women because in Proverbs 6, it's clearly addressing men.

[7 : 08] And in Matthew 5, Jesus is also clearly addressing men. But even though the sermon is primarily directed to us as husbands and as men, it's only primarily addressed that way.

I think we can all benefit from hearing God's word this morning. Because the reality is that even though these passages address men, the only way that men commit adultery is with women. And unless there are a lot of women in our society who are doubling up in committing adultery and fornication with men, it would mean that there are just as many women as men who are engaged in the sins of adultery and the sin of fornication.

And we need God's help to hear his word this morning. And so I want to begin by praying for us. Heavenly Father, we bow our hearts before you.

Lord, we are reminded that we are addressing this topic because we are sinful people. We live in a sinful and a broken world.

[8 : 38] We're addressing this topic because we have rebelled against your design. Lord, you have ordained that a man should cleave to his wife, his one wife, and love her until death would separate them.

But Lord, we have gone contrary, and therefore, you and mercy have instructed us in your word. And we are now called to hear it and heed it.

So Lord, speak to our hearts. You know where each one of us is, Lord. You know what each one of us needs and what we need to hear, how we need to hear it. And so, as we sang this morning, speak, O Lord.

Speak to your people. Speak to us for our good, but ultimately, Lord, would you speak for your glory. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.

As we consider this topic of adultery this morning, I think it's instructive for us to notice that the book in the Bible that speaks about adultery more than any other book is the book of Proverbs.

[10 : 07] The book of Proverbs repeatedly and extensively and graphically addresses this issue of adultery.

And Proverbs is one of the wisdom books. And that's where we find adultery addressed predominantly. And it reminds us that this is a wisdom issue.

It reminds us that to not commit adultery is an expression of wisdom. And to commit adultery is an expression of folly.

But it's not just ordinary wisdom. It's not just human wisdom. Instead, it is divine wisdom. It is wisdom that comes from on high.

It is wisdom that comes from the Lord. Proverbs 9.10 says, The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.

[11 : 18] So the wisdom that guards against adultery, enabling us to see it for what it truly is, is wisdom that is rooted in the fear of the Lord.

That's what Proverbs 9.10 says. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. And the fear of the Lord flows from knowing God.

We will not fear God if we do not know God. And if we truly know God, we will fear Him. And therefore, this wisdom that warns us against adultery doesn't come from living life for a certain length of time or just being a generally smart person.

No, it comes from fearing the Lord. It comes from knowing the Lord. And in the book of Proverbs in chapters 2, 5, 6, and 7, we have explicit reminders and warnings and commands against committing adultery.

Again, it is wisdom not to commit adultery. It is folly to commit adultery. But this wisdom is not from us. Not from our smarts.

[12 : 54] And therefore, we are utterly dependent on the Lord for this wisdom. The primary text this morning is in Proverbs 6, verses 20 to 35.

And I believe as I've looked at these passages on adultery, this is the most graphic, the most explicit, one of the passages that we can consider this morning as we consider this topic of adultery.

Proverbs 6, 20 to 35 speaks to us about adultery in two specific ways. And I want to consider them in our remaining time.

The first way that this passage speaks to us is that it reminds us of the commands against adultery. It reminds us of the commandments against adultery.

As is typical in the book of Proverbs, what we have in Proverbs 6, 20 to 35 are the words of a godly father who is speaking to his young son. The son is young, but he is not too young to be able to hear this topic that the father is addressing to him, this topic about adultery.

[14 : 23] And again, although this father is addressing his son, this is not a topic that is exclusively for men, although I would say fairly from the treatment in Scripture, it is predominantly one that comes to us his men.

The father begins his instructions to his son about adultery in a direct way in verse 24. But in verses 20 to 23, what he does is he generally reminds his son of the commandments and instructions that he had already received.

The father was not just commanding the son about specific things and reminding him about them, in this moment. When you read it, you'll see that he is reminding his son of what he had already been told.

And so although this word in verse 20, commandment, is singular and the word teaching is also singular, it is referring to a body of commandments and a body of teaching that the father is now reminding his son about.

God's And I hope that's clear to all of us. He's reminding him of what he has already told him. And what he's saying to his son, I want you to embrace them.

[15 : 51] And I want you to keep to them in an ongoing way. Now, the commandments that are in view here in Proverbs 6 and everywhere else in the book of Proverbs are God's commandments.

They're not just the father's commandments. But what this godly father has done is he has taken God's commandments as his own, and then he gives them to his son.

But there's an authority in a father's commandment that is detached from God's authority. And so the commandments that this father is laying on his son are God's commandment that he himself has embraced, and he's now giving to his son, and he's saying, my son, keep your father's commandments.

The father begins broadly, and then he goes specifically to the command concerning adultery. And there's much wisdom in this approach. A commitment to obey God's commandments as a whole keeps us to obey them individually.

[17 : 13] The idea to think that we can or that we will individually obey particular commands and not other ones, that is just, that is spiritual insanity.

It is this commitment to obey the Lord, it is this commitment to take all of God's words and seek to live by them, seek to obey them, that positions us to be able to obey the individual and specific commands.

It is posturing our hearts to say, God, I want to obey you. And then we can drill down and specifically obey those commands. And that is where this father begins with his son.

He calls him to embrace all of the commands that he has been taught. So in verse 21, the father tells his son that he is to bind upon his heart the commandments and teachings he has received. He tells him that he is to tie them around his neck, which points to keeping the commandments close, close to his heart. The idea is a person who has like a chain or necklace on them.

[18 : 29] It's around their neck, but it's near to their heart. And this is what the father is laying on his son. He's essentially saying, don't have it on a dress in a jewelry box.

Have it on your neck. Have it close to your heart. And he tells them that their blessings for doing this in verses 22 to 23. He points out to his son that when he takes seriously the commandments and the teachings that he has received, that they will function for him.

They will be a blessing to him. He tells his son that the commandments will lead him when he walks. He tells him they will watch over you as you sleep.

There will be a protection for you. He tells him the commandments will be a companion for you, talking with you as you go through life.

And how many times have we been in a situation where we heard the word of God speak to us? Because it was in our hearts. We've taken it close to us.

[19 : 36] And in a moment, God's word speaks to us. He says to his son, if you will take the commandments close to you as you go through life, they will speak to you. He tells his son, the commandments will serve as a guiding light for you as you navigate your way through darkness.

And he also tells his son, and they will be a corrective means to you. They will discipline you. They will correct you when you go astray.

And then in verse 24, the father tells his son that keeping the commandments and not forsaking them will preserve him from the evil woman, from the smooth tongue of the adulteress.

Now, while it's generally true that all of God's commandments will do this, this is especially true of the seventh and the tenth commandments.

The seventh commandment says do not commit adultery. the tenth commandment says you not to covet anything that belongs to your neighbor and explicitly one of the things, and not things, but one of the aspects of this command that is laid out is do not covet or desire or desire your neighbor's wife.

[21 : 03] And again, brothers, this father is primarily addressing his son. He's addressing his son, so we especially should listen.

Taking God's commandments to heart generally. The first one is that we have no other gods before the Lord. That's the first one.

When we start there and that is our desire, that is our commitment, Lord, I don't want to have anyone or anything above you competing with you, we're better positioned than to fulfill and obey the other ones.

And so this father is saying to his son, he's saying these commandments, they will keep you from this evil woman.

In verse 24, he describes her, he says that she, the first description is she's evil. And one of this goes through our minds, brothers, when the temptation for sexual immorality, whether adultery or fornication, comes to mind and that temptation is in front of us.

[22 : 22] Do we see evil? So she has a smooth tongue and she is able to utter seductive and persuasive words.

She has the ability to entice. In verse 25, another protective command, he says, do not desire her beauty in your heart.

And beauty is not necessarily facial beauty. Beauty is whatever attracts you. Beauty is whatever you find attractive. The wisdom of the father to his son is do not desire that in your heart.

See, one of the games we can play is to think that we're okay if it's just in our heart. After all, nobody sees it.

And we're not doing anything. But brothers, when we get on that path, it is a path the enemy is leading us along. because if there's a desire that is forbidden, that we do not fight and resist, we'll find ourselves eventually acting upon that desire.

[23 : 45] In verse 25, we see the second command that he gives his son. He says to his son, don't let her capture you with her eyelashes. This would certainly be a very relevant warning today with false eyelashes that are around.

But, but, it's not just about eyelashes. What this father is saying to his son, he's really warning his son about any particular act or mannerism that, a woman might use to capture him.

Some, whether it's a wink or a blink or whether it is a smirk or whatever it might be, he says, don't you let her capture you with that. Now, I think it's important to point out that this father is not warning his son about women.

He's not warning his son about all women. This father is warning his son about a narrow, group of women. He's warning his son about the adulteress in practice or the adulteress in making.

He's warning his son about a particular kind of woman, a seductive woman, a woman who will entrap and ensnare. And I think part of the wisdom of the father reminding his son of his mother's teachings, it seems like his mother would be a part of instructing him as well.

[25 : 30] And wives and mothers, there's a vital role that you can play in instructing your sons and even your husbands about the ways of women that a husband, a father cannot do.

The warning is against a particular kind of woman, a woman who is open to or who is disposed to engaging in adultery, engaging in sexual immorality.

That's where the warning is, not to all women. Indeed, if the father is warning his son about all women, his son would not have much of a chance of even seeing a woman who he would hope to marry.

So it's not all women this way, but there are particular ones who are this way, and therefore the warning comes. Brothers, there is much protection for us in heeding these commands, in heeding these warnings that we're hearing this morning.

And again, this is more than just a son honoring his father's commandments. Ultimately, this is honoring the Lord's commandments. Ultimately, not committing adultery is about honoring the Lord. [27 : 09] not committing adultery is not first and foremost being faithful to my wife. Ultimately, committing adultery is honoring the Lord.

Before we can ever sin against our wives, we sin against the Lord. And I think this is so important for us to recognize, because you remember when we were in Genesis, Genesis 39, we looked at the account of Joseph and how Potiphar's wife was seducing him.

And Joseph said to her, he resisted and said, how can I do this great thing and sin against the Lord? At that particular point, there was no commandment against adultery.

The commandment against adultery doesn't come until Exodus 20. but what kept Joseph in that moment was his desire to honor the Lord. And brothers, not committing adultery is more than just looking at the seventh commandment, looking at the tenth commandment and saying, okay, I'm going to obey that, I'm not going to do that.

No, ultimately it is looking to the Lord, saying, God, I want to honor you. I want to honor you. And what did Jesus say? Jesus said, if you love me, you'll keep my commandments.

[28 : 38] And so it's not a matter of just legalistically obeying the commandments. No, it is a matter of walking with the Lord, being close to the Lord, and having a desire to honor the Lord.

And that desire to honor the Lord, is far greater than a desire to have momentary pleasure. So, brothers, how do these commandments against adultery land on your heart this morning?

Are you sobered by them? Do you see God's wisdom in them? have you taken them to heart?

And are you taking them to heart for us this morning? Brothers, if we're not sobered by them, we don't see the danger.

If we're not sobered by them, we have not taken to heart what this father is saying to his son when he talks about this kind of woman who you need to be on guard against, who you need to be protected against, and how God's commands will protect you against her.

[30 : 04] And if we're not sobered by it, it's not a great likelihood that you'll try to guard against it. We'll think, oh, I can manage it, I can handle it. And the Bible says, when you think you're strong, take heed, lest you fall.

We have these commandments against the Lord, but again, it's not a matter of just legalism. Well, not only does this passage remind us of the commandments against adultery, it also warns us of the consequences of adultery.

And this is my second and final, but I must say longest point. The consequences of adultery are laid out in verses 26 to 35.

But to get a clear sense of them, we need to start in verse 25 as the context for verse 26. Look again with the father says to his son.

Do not desire her beauty in your heart, and do not let her capture you with her eyelashes. For the price of a prostitute is only a loaf of bread, but a married woman hunts down a precious life.

[31 : 33] If you're reading the English Standard Version, you will see that there's a footnote, number six, after the word bread, in verse 26. And what the footnote points out to us is that there is an alternative rendering, an alternative translation to those words in the original language.

language. The ESV translators opted for the words, for the price of a prostitute is only a loaf of bread.

But the alternative translation that they point out in the footnote is, for a prostitute leaves a man with nothing but a loaf of bread. And while both of these translations help to point to the serious consequences of committing adultery, I believe that when we take verses 25 and 26 together as a complete thought, it appears that the English Standard Version translators got it right.

The point seems to be that while soliciting a prostitute who's not married, and committing adultery with a married woman are both serious sins, soliciting a prostitute versus committing adultery with a married woman has less consequences.

I think that's the point that is being made in verses 25 and 26. The consequence or the price of soliciting a prostitute, and the idea is that she is single because that's generally the circumstance of a prostitute.

[33 : 25] It's not as likely that a prostitute is going to be married. Most prostitutes are single, and this certainly is the idea that this father is conveying to his son. And he's saying to his son, soliciting this prostitute, the cost is a loaf of bread.

That apparently was the price at that particular time, and scripture is by no means in any way supporting or making light of prostitution.

Prostitution is heinous, prostitution is heartless, prostitution devalues and exploits and abuses women in particular who are made in the image of God.

And only a heartless man, you think of it in this case, she is being solicited for a loaf of bread, which would have been the price, and it shows that this was survival for her, this was just means of getting on, and there would be a heartless man who would only part with that loaf of bread if he is able to sexually abuse his victim.

And we can modernize that to today, where it may not be a loaf of bread, but it is something that is very insignificant. And heartless, characterless men would only part with those few dollars under the condition of being able to sexually abuse someone who is made in the image of God.

[34 : 53] And so scripture is by no means endorsing prostitution, but it's simply laying out this father's teaching. He's just making the point that the high cost and the serious consequences of adultery in comparison with having sex with an unmarried prostitute.

He's just saying that those two are just light years apart. They're light years apart.

The point that the father's making to his son is that a commercial transaction with an unmarried prostitute has a lower consequence than becoming entangled in adultery with a married woman.

That's the point that he's making. I think that's why the translators of the ESV seems to have gotten it correct in the context of verses 25 and 26.

Notice how he says it finally in verse 26. And this is why he's saying that committing adultery with a married woman is worse.

[36 : 07] The married woman, verse 26, the married woman hunts down a precious life. It's not just going to cost you a few dollars.

It's going to cost you your very life is what the father is saying to his son. And this becomes very clear in the remaining verses starting in verse 27.

He says, can a man carry fire next to his chest? And his clothes not be burned. But the reality is not just his clothes will be burned, but he himself will be burned.

And the other question in verse 28, or can one walk on hot coals and his feet not be scorched? The answer is no. And again, the clear point is that committing adultery has harmful consequences that are inescapable.

that's the exact conclusion that the father places before his son in verse 29.

[37 : 18] He says, so is he who goes into his neighbor's wife, none who touches her will go unpunished.

that's the meaning of verses 27 and 28. So it is, this one who is taking fire close to his body and thinking he's going to be okay, walking on hot coals and thinking he's going to be okay, he says, no. So it is with the one who goes into his neighbor's wife. he is not like the man who goes and has this transaction with this single woman over here. No, he is a man who has put himself into a destructive situation.

The idea almost is like when Eve talks about when she relates to the serpent how the Lord says you're not even to touch this tree and that wasn't from what we could see in the original instruction but this father is saying to his son don't even touch her.

So it is with anyone who touches her he will not go unpunished. Verse 29 is a sobering verse.

[38 : 37] Verse 29 is a serious verse. And why is it serious? Why is it sobering? Not just because of this graphic although it is that.

This is sobering and this is serious because this is God's word. And for this not to be true, God is a liar. For us not to experience what this father soberly says to his son, so is he who goes into his

neighbor's wife.

No one who touches her will go unpunished without exception. People say, well, what about those people who never got discovered?

A lot of people who committed adultery and never got discovered. I know there are a lot of men, I'm sure, committed adultery, never found out. What about them? What about them?

Read verse 29 again. No one, no one will go unpunished. God's word. This father is writing, the author of these words is writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

[39 : 52] No one who commits adultery will go unpunished, whether known or unknown. And what this verse does is it speaks beyond human awareness.

It speaks to God's awareness. Only God can say this. None of us can say this. Only God can say this because God is the one who ultimately punishes all sin.

And many face the dire consequences of adultery in this life. But for those who don't, their sin is hidden to human eyes, but it is not hidden before the all-seeing and all-knowing God who was promised that they will be punished.

Brothers and sisters, this is an important reminder. It's a reminder to us that no one gets away with sin. In order to get away with sin, in order for sin to be unpunished, it would either mean that God is not all-knowing and because he doesn't know about every sin, he doesn't punish it.

But we know he is all-knowing. Or it would mean that yes, he is all-knowing, but he just overlooks some sins and let them slide.

[41 : 21] And if he did that, then he is not perfectly holy. God cannot overlook any sin, not even the smallest sin.

He can't do it. So then how do sinners like you and me, how do we stand before a holy God?

How do we stand before a holy God who cannot overlook even the slightest sin? And not just our sins of commission, our sins of thought, the sins in our hearts, the attitudes that we have.

He can't overlook any of that. He can't overlook even some sins we commit that we're not even mindful that we're committing.

How do sinners like us stand before such a God? I'll come back to that question. In verses 30 and 31, the father introduces a scenario about a poor man stealing to satisfy his appetite.

[42 : 41] Look again at what he says. People do not despise a thief if he steals to satisfy his appetite when he is hungry. But if he is caught, he will pay sevenfold, he will have, he will give all the goods of his house.

Now on the face of it, these two verses just seem out of place. They seem unrelated to this topic of adultery that this father is addressing to his son.

But I think on closer inspection, they actually are related to what the father is saying to his son. The thief in verses 30 to 31 can be likened to a single man committing fornication to fulfill sexual desire compared to a married man who is able to fulfill his sexual desire within the context of his marriage, but he still goes out and he steals someone else's food.

And the point is that the sin of fornication, as serious and as weighty as it is, is not as serious and not as weighty as the sin of adultery.

So the single person who commits fornication to fulfill sexual desire, which is sexual theft, does not face severe consequences as the man who commits adultery and commits a kind of unnecessary sexual theft.

[44 : 42] I mean, if you think about it, if we start just in the natural and you have somebody who has food in their cupboard and they leave the food in their cupboard and they go outside and they steal, you have knowledge of that, you're the judge, that's what the person did.

And then someone else who absolutely has no food in their house and they went in the food store and they stole something, you're the judge, you are fully aware of these circumstances, you're not going to judge them the same.

You're going to see them in two different ways. And I think the scenario that the father points out to his son has that implication behind it.

This married man has within the context of his marriage the opportunity to fulfill sexual desire and that's the only legitimate context in which it should be fulfilled.

And practically speaking, and hopefully I don't have to fill this out for us this morning, but practically speaking, one of the realities of this is that as married men, we shouldn't leave home hungry.

[46 : 09] Those of you who clearly need to listen to the recording again to get the point, of that. And wives, if you've missed it, you're in deep trouble.

And I'll spell it out for you. Don't let your husbands leave home hungry. All right? Doesn't legitimize stealing, not at all. Doesn't at all.

But it certainly may encourage stealing. Verse 32, the father says to his son, he who commits adultery, and by the way, I'm not dropping hands.

I'm not dropping hands. I don't need to do that. By the grace of God, by the grace of God, I've, in 38 years of marriage, marriage, I've, I've, I've eaten well.

I've eaten well. By the grace of God, I may that continue. Verse 32, he who commits adultery lacks sense.

[47 : 30] Let's hear this, brothers. He who commits adultery lacks sense. He who does it destroys himself.

He who commits adultery lacks sense. He who does it destroys himself. This is a self-inflicted destruction.

destruction. This is a destruction that comes from lacking the sense that we can get from God's word, a wisdom that is on high, that can keep us and help us, and to see adultery for what it is. Look at what this father says to his son. in verses 31 to 31, the man who commits fornication, he'll pay a severe price if he's caught.

He's going to pay seven times the value of what he stole. But the man who commits adultery destroys himself.

[48 : 50] The sin of adultery is a personally destructive sin.

It is self-destruction that demonstrates a lack of godly wisdom. And look at the harmful consequences of adultery in verses 33 to 35.

Wounds and dishonor he will get, wounds and dishonor will he get, and his disgrace will not be wiped away, for jealousy makes a man furious, and he will not spare when he takes revenge.

He will accept no compensation, he will refuse you though you multiply gifts. This is graphic language. He gets wounds and dishonor, his disgrace will not be wiped away.

And here we see the lies that so many accept. We see the blindness that is active in the commission of adultery. Who commits adultery and says, oh, I'm wounding myself.

[50 : 08] I'm dishonoring myself. I'm bringing disgrace on myself. Nobody thinks about that. they have happy thoughts, wonderful thoughts, of self-gratification.

But the wisdom of God's word says to us, no, that's not what you're really doing. What you're doing is you're wounding yourself. Intoxicated by your lust to cause you not to see and to feel what you're doing to yourself.

You're wounding yourself. You're dishonoring yourself. You're bringing disgrace upon yourself that will not be wiped away. Again, no one committing adultery thinks like that in the moment of it.

But in the aftermath of it, we're able to see this. And that's not enough. The man who commits adultery with another man's wife is at the mercy of a husband who's been sinned against, whose marriage has been violated at its core in the most injurious way.

So much so that it shakes him at its very core. This is such a serious violation. Do you know that the law actually makes accommodation if a man in such a situation finds his wife in a moment of unfaithfulness that if he acts in an irrational way, the law kind of makes accommodations for him believing that that's momentary insanity.

[51 : 57] This is the rage of jealousy. It makes a man furious and he shows no mercy when he takes revenge.

Let me be quick to say this is not advocating and I certainly am not advocating that if God forbid we find ourselves in this situation that we do something that is contrary to God's word by harming another person to any degree.

This is not at all endorsing that. it is simply expressing the reality of what happens in those particular situations.

His father says to his son, and by extension to us brothers, that no amount of money, no amount of gifts will quench the wrath of a man whose marriage has been violated.

some of the worst multiple murders that we've had in our country have been around this issue of adultery.

[53 : 16] As I was thinking about this sermon, I remember, I just reflected on just over a number of years how one of the most contradictory and hypocritical realities in our society is that I can't speak for our society because I don't know the world broadly, but I suspect it's pretty similar, but certainly in our society, Bohemian men, make very light of their own adultery.

They believe they can sit with their wives and tell their wives what they did and that she should be understanding and forgive them. But when the tables are turned and their wife were to say to them, this is what I did, night and day in terms of the response.

No understanding and this just talks about the man going after the man who violated his marriage, they will go after both the man and their own wives, and if they don't kill them, they will half kill them. And here's the reality when we really think about that. The one in a marriage who should be able to bear adultery better than the other one is the husband.

Because we're the ones who are called to love our wives the way Christ loved the church. And how does he love us?

[55 : 10] Unconditionally? He loves us when we go astray and he receives us. And we're called to mirror that to our wives. So if there's one in the marriage who is to be postured to understand and to forgive, that duty, brothers, is laid on us primarily as husbands.

Our wives should be the ones who hit the ceiling more than we do. Our wives, if there's anyone to withhold forgiveness or be slow to forgive, it should be our wives, not us.

And yet the reality is very different. We are called as husbands to mirror the holiness and the forgiveness that Christ exhibits to us.

We're to reflect that. And who should be the most faithful ones in our marriages? We should be the most faithful ones in our marriages. But in society, we expect that men will be men, and so we understand they'll be men.

No. When we take very seriously this role that God has given to us as men, we should be the most faithful in our marriages. we should all be faithful.

[56 : 41] But if we want to place the accent on that faithfulness, the accent on that faithfulness is on us as men. We don't get a pass.

We don't get an easier path. No, the hardest path is given to us because we are called to reflect the holiness of Christ. We are called to reflect the forgiveness of Christ in our marriages.

As we think of this topic, as far reaching as the sin of adultery is, as serious as it is, how did we come to make it so light?

How did we come to a place where we can use seductive and attractive words to downplay the seriousness of adultery?

My prayer for us is that these reminders and warnings that we're hearing this morning will keep us from making light of the sin of adultery.

[58 : 06] Because again, if we don't make light of it, if we hold it as serious, as we hold it as sober, it will offer us some degree of caution.

It will help us to see that when that lollipop of a moment's pleasure is being offered to us. That lollipop is on a dagger.

And when we get through the pleasure of it, we have a dagger in our souls. And here's our reality this morning, brothers.

this is not just keep your hands off a woman who's not your wife. That's not what the Lord calls us to.

That's a given. He calls us to something much higher than that. He calls us not only to keep our hands off them, but he calls us to keep our eyes off them, he calls us to keep our hearts off them, and that is what Jesus addresses in the second passage, in Matthew 5, 27 to 30, when he says, you have heard that it was said, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not put your hand on another man's wife.

[59 : 32] But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Brothers, looking at a woman with the intent to lust is committing adultery in the heart.

This clearly includes pornography. Looking at women in pornographic images or videos or whatever form they may come in, that's adultery.

adultery. Now, I'm not saying that it equates physical adultery, but nonetheless, it is adultery.

It is adultery of the heart for a married man, and it is fornication of the heart for a single man. adultery.

[60 : 36] The physical consequences of adultery are certainly far greater, but we should not for a moment think that we are getting by with anything if we are engaging in viewing pornography.

Brothers, it is sin, it is adultery, as Jesus said, because it is impossible to view such content without lustful intent.

And if not repented upon, it will soon be acted upon. And the graphic and weighty and long-lasting consequences that we're reading about this morning will be a lot.

in verses 29 and 30 of Matthew 5, Jesus therefore tells us that we must be radical in dealing with whatever causes us to sin.

He says we must be willing to part with it. We must be willing to cut it off, no matter what degree of inconvenience it causes us. Whatever it is that's causing us to sin or tempting us to sin, by God's grace, we are to cut it off.

[62 : 06] And we can cut it off by God's grace. If that means severing a particular interaction with a person, it's worth doing it.

If that means getting rid of a phone, if our phone is such that it always yields us to yield to temptation, to view that which we shouldn't be doing, get rid of it.

If it's your computer that you aren't able to be on without going to places where you shouldn't go, then maybe you need to be going to your computer with someone else to help you with that.

Jesus says that if we do not radically deal with what causes us to sin, sin, when we don't radically deal with what causes us to sin, it points to a deeper issue.

And what that deeper issue is, is that deeper issue is a lack of conversion and that will lead us to hell. That's the point that Jesus is making here because by the grace of God, if we belong to Christ, we will not persistently stay in sin.

[63 : 23] If we persistently stay in sin, if we think it took a greater price to mortify sin and to cut off that which causes us to sin, what we're essentially then doing is denying our own conversion.

And Jesus says that will lead you to hell. That insistence, that persistence in sin will take us to hell. Now, I know that the title for this topic is touchy topic, but it's also a weighty topic.

And for some of us this morning, the weight might be because we have committed adultery.

perhaps you've confessed your sin to God, to your wife, you've received God's forgiveness, you've received your wife's forgiveness, your husband's forgiveness, and yet the shame of it, the stain of it, the weight of it still remains.

And that's part of the reality of sin. But that can function in a good way for us.

[64 : 52] It can remind us of the price of sin. It can remind us that sin is often more costly than we think it is in the moment.

But if you find yourself there this morning, I pray if you have trusted the Lord and received forgiveness from the Lord, I pray that what is stronger and louder in your mind is the mercy and grace of God that he has given to you because you have confessed your sin.

The Bible says, whom the Son sets free is free indeed. And so that's my prayer for any of us who find ourselves in this place this morning that above those discouraging thoughts that we might have, above those regrets that we might have, we will hear the voice of the Savior saying, you've been set free, you've been forgiven, and that is your reality.

I pray brothers and sisters that we are freshly reminded this morning of God's commands against adultery. I pray that we are freshly warned against adultery.

But that's not enough. It's not enough for us to be reminded, it's not enough for us to be warned.

Even being reminded and even being warned ultimately does not in and of itself prevent us from committing adultery, especially when we remember the standard that Jesus laid, that it's more than just keeping your hands off of who is not your wife.

[66 : 53] It's keeping your eyes off and keeping your heart off as well. And what we need more than these reminders, we need them, and the warnings, we need Christ.

Christ. We need Christ. We need to cling to Christ. We need to stay close to Christ and live by the grace that he provides daily so that we would say no to ungodliness and yes to righteousness and we would live self-control and upright lives in the present age by the grace of God.

We can only do that not by our own strength, not by our own wisdom, not by a thousand reminders and warnings. We can only do that through the grace that Christ provides.

And brothers and sisters, through that grace that Christ provides, we are able to live lives that honor the Lord, sexually pure lives that glorify the Lord in a world that is sinking in sexual sin. love to us. But this is our reality. Let's not be deceived in thinking that it's enough just to keep our hands off of another woman. You realize that if in this moment we were to lose our sight and we were to lose our sense of hearing, all of us have lived long enough to have enough content in our hearts that we have seen or heard that can cause us to be able to lust until the day that Christ returns.

[68 : 44] We don't need to see another forbidden sexual image. We don't need to have an extra forbidden sexual thought.

it's already in our hearts as a vault. And if to the slightest degree we were to give way to forbidden passions and forbidden lusts, we fall short of what Jesus has said.

Our best efforts the best among us, the best in the world, cannot achieve the perfect standard of what Jesus lays down for us in Matthew 5, 27 to 30.

But the good news is that we will not stand before God on our own merit. We will not stand before God on our own sexual purity. We will stand before God on the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. who walked this earth and perfectly obeyed God, perfectly honored God in every single degree including sexual situations.

[70 : 08] And Jesus did that for all who would put their trust in him. trust in God. And so when we stand before God, the only reason that we will be perfectly righteous and we would not be found wanting because of sexual impurity is not because of our record because we would all be found wanting, but it's because of the record of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ, he perfectly lived for all those who put their trust in him. But not only that, Jesus also died for every single sin, sexual sin, whatever the sin, Jesus died, he went to the cross for our sins.

The Father says to the Son in verse 32, he who commits adultery lacks sense, he who does it destroys himself.

Verse 33, he says, he will get wounds and dishonor and his disgrace will not be wiped away. Our Savior, who is righteous, who committed no sin, he took wounds.

He was dishonored. He suffered disgrace and he did that in the place of all those who would put their trust in him.

[71 : 58] And that is the way that sinners like you and me can stand before God. We can stand before God because those sins of ours, the Father poured out his wrath on his son for those sins.

Every sin, every sexual deficiency, every sexual failure that we've had, our will have, Christ has gone to the cross and Christ has borne it.

God doesn't overlook our sins. sins. He didn't overlook our sins. He punished them in the Savior.

And that's good news for us. That's good news for all those who put their trust in him. And so though this topic is weighty this morning, I pray that we will leave remembering that the Lord Jesus Christ has paid the penalty and the Lord Jesus Christ has lived the life that enables all of us, with all of our deficiencies, with all of our failures, whatever they might be, to stand before a holy God and not be condemned because he sees us with the righteousness of his son.

Let's pray. Father, we pray that you would give us wisdom from on high.

[73 : 39] We pray that you would help us to hear your word and apply it to our lives. But most of all, would you help us to look to Jesus Christ, the only one who is perfectly sexually pure in every way, and the one who paid the penalty for every feeling for those who put their trust in him.

Help us, Lord, to fix our eyes on him this morning. We pray in Jesus' name. amen. Amen. Amen.