

It is a Matter of the Heart

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[0 : 0 0] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you'll be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. And we just got back from the couples retreat. Pastor Wilkerson did a great job, had a lot of fun.

I found a book that I'm trying to find cheaper. It's on eBay for \$45 and nothing should be \$45 like that. But I'm looking at the title of it. It's got me intrigued and it says, The Happy Home and the Heart That Makes Them.

And I just can't get over that, Brother Gibby. I'm just thinking about how it's such a great title for a book because it's a home that is made by your heart. That we work on our marriages, we work on our homes by working on our heart.

Because nothing else really matters. If you make a change that's external but you don't really change the heart, it's not going to last very long. It's going to go back to that wherever your heart is at. And Jesus is doing surgery here working on our hearts.

He's dealing with the self-righteous crowd and He's really working on the hearts of the people listening to Him preach. So Pastor last week preached on the hating heart. And He said the alternative title was Your Cheating Heart.

[1 : 0 2] And we looked at that, how people have this hateful heart. Well, today we look at your adulterous heart. And if we had an alternative message, an alternative title, it would be Shot to the Heart, You're the Blame, You Give Love a Bad Name.

Alright? And so He goes right to the heart. And these people are giving love a bad name. And they're doing things that don't model the love that God has, a promise-keeping God has towards His people.

And self-righteous is something that none of us are immune from. And so as you listen today, I hope you don't turn off and say, that's not for this crowd. You know, or this is not for me. Because self-righteous is something that all of us are prone to do.

Pastor showed us so clearly last week that Jesus is mocking the way that religious people have tried to change the meaning of the Bible to make their wicked, hating hearts comfortable.

That they try to change the meaning of the Bible to make their hateful hearts comfortable. That it's okay to do this or that. Or they add to the Bible. He had some humorous examples. His dad never would have liked me having a beard.

[2 : 0 6] He said, it's not in the Bible. And the pastor looked and didn't find it. And he gave several more examples. And then, as our moms would always say, you know, cleanliness is next to godliness. Or whatever was next to godliness is whatever she wanted it to be, you know.

Taking out the trash or whatever. But we make these Bible verses. And it sounds like Old English, so it must be Bible. We can't question it. And so they were doing this about things that really matter.

They were adding to the Bible here. And Jesus is mocking here the way religious people, they make a law, then they accomplish it. Then they feel accomplished. That they achieve the goal that they set for themselves.

And they win. Like playing a game with a kid. They win every time because they're making the rules as they go. And that's what these self-righteous people did. And so today we see the self-righteousness continues in this area of adultery.

That's what Matthew 5 deals with. It's dealing primarily with self-righteousness. But it's giving examples of where this self-righteousness is coming in.

[3 : 06] So first thing I'd like to say to you, starting here in verse number 27, it says, You have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Thou hast said. Thou hast said are these ready, available, easy to make bricks. And with these thou-house-says that we've had in our lives, we have a tendency to build a self-righteous facade around our heart.

So we make all these thou-house-says, we make all these rules for ourselves that aren't in the Bible, and we take them and we build this fake facade in front of our hearts.

So that people looking at us don't see our heart, but they see this beautiful facade that we have built by performing and doing these things. That's what the scribes and Pharisees did then, and it's what continues to happen today, if we're not careful, is that we build this facade around our heart that not only does it become so convincing that people that look on the outside, we begin to convince ourselves that there's not a matter of the heart that needs to be dealt with because we've done such a great job at faking it for so long.

Look what Jesus says in Luke chapter number 16 and verse number 15. He just really gets to it. I love when Jesus speaks to anybody in the Gospel records, no matter what they talk about, He sometimes just ignores what they're saying, and He really goes to the heart of the matter.

[4 : 26] When He's talking to Nicodemus, if you want to know what the people are thinking, you can always look at what Jesus says because He just really goes to the heart of it. Luke 16, 15, He said, And He said unto them, Ye are that which justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts, for that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

God sees the heart even though we may see the externals. So He looks right into your heart. And week after week, we'll come to church. Day after day, we'll spend time in the Bible.

And as we do, we look for another brick to build this facade of who we are. And God says, I want your heart. I don't want just the performance from you. I could have got this any way I want. I want your heart because I love you.

And that's the same message in the Old Testament we're going to look at. He's always wanted the heart of man. He's never just wanted us to be a follower of a list of rules. He's always wanted a relationship here.

Matthew 7, 15 warns us that there's going to be a group of false prophets. They go around in cheap clothing, but inwardly they're ravening wolves. And He warns us about these false prophets because they have this homemade version of righteousness.

[5 : 37] They're peddling it out their back door and saying, Yeah, we know there's righteousness by being forgiven of sin. Well, they would never acknowledge this. But there's righteousness when you recognize that you're a sinner and you come to Jesus and say, I've tried my very best.

I've done everything that I know to do. Now, what would you have me do, Jesus? And He says, you're doing exactly what I would have you to do. You've come to me to have a relationship. Well, they're peddling this homemade brew out their back door, and they're making this self-made righteousness that we often buy into because it's quicker and it's easier than maintaining their relationship.

We love to-do lists. In the couples retreat that we had, He talked a lot about living with your wife with understanding and getting to know them and working on that relationship and the matters of the heart.

But you know what the easiest thing is? It's when He gives you a list of things to do. If He says, okay, at this time of day, buy flowers. At this time of day, say, I love you. And if there was just a list, it would be easy.

But it doesn't work like that because every list is different. What flowers mean to your wife means something different to somebody else. So you have to have this relationship. And the list, even though it looks hard, it's a much easier way to go about doing it.

[6 : 49] You see, Pharisees and scribes had such a superficial view of sin that they were able to accommodate it with a superficial view of salvation. It really lowered what sin was there.

And can I just remind you what sin is? Just real quickly, Leviticus foretold that that's rebellion towards God. It is waving your fist in the face of an almighty God and saying, my way is better than your way.

So I will act upon my desires and not your desires for me. 1 John 3, 4 tells us that it's the breaking of law. It's the transgression. That we are cosmic lawbreakers.

That we weren't just speaking. We were not just getting a fine by those in the county because of what we were doing. That the God of heaven, our Creator, said, this is right and this is wrong. And we wrote that law.

It can also be attitudes and acts that express our ingratitude. In Acts 17, 28, we're told that it's just an expression. That how could we ever dare to go against the God of heaven who knows everything.

[7 : 51] Who knows the hairs upon our head. He knows what's best for us. He doesn't keep sin away from us because He doesn't want us to have fun. But because He knows that it hurts us. And this expresses ingratitude to Him.

Sin does. It's humanly incurable. Jeremiah 13, 23 says, A leopard can't remove its spots. An Ethiopian can't change the color of skin. There is nothing you can do.

And no matter what religion tells you, no matter who you talk to, there's nothing you can do to cure your own sin. There's not enough. There is not a, I sinned when I was younger, but I think I'm going to make up for it in the rest of my life.

You don't have an economy for it. You don't have a magic eraser for sin. You can't do anything about it. You actually, when you go to the stains of sin in your life and try to fix it yourself, you make it worse.

That's what my wife tells me. If I'm trying to clean up a mess, she says, No, you'll just make it worse. It's true. Okay? And she's shaking her head because she says, I don't know if you've ever offered to clean up a stain or anything like that.

[8 : 49] All right, I'm making it worse. Here's a great example of what I'm talking about there. And it's hard work. Sin is hard work. It really is. The way of the transgressor is hard. It's not the life that I want to live.

You know, it's hard to say, no, the sin, but it's a lot harder to live in sin. Power of God. And then we find ourselves so many steps away and He loves us. And we say, How do I get back to where I'm at?

I've made all these steps and I've sinned. And His answer is, come to me. You know, it's not just a road map. You've done all these things. I've followed this road map back. He says, No, it's not a road map. It's a person that you need to run to.

How serious is sin? It brings death. The wrath of God abided on you because of your sin in your life by birth and by choice. That's how big a deal sin is. Also, sin is such a big deal.

Well, think about the drastic measure that it took for sin to be paid for. It took the God of heaven coming, taking on a robe of flesh, and going to a cross to pay for sin.

[9 : 46] You ever go to a store and you look around and you say, Oh, this stuff looks nice. I don't. And then you look at a price tag and you're going, Whoa, I had no idea that something could be that expensive. So, could you take a moment and say, Whoa, when I look at the price tag of the cross, I remember that that sin that I've just been letting see there in my heart, it is a big deal.

It's not a big deal when I look at my neighbor. It's not a big deal when I think about the consequences. It's not a big deal when I compare myself with other people. But then I look at the price tag and I say, Wow, sin is a big, big deal.

Then drastic measures should be taken to avoid it. Did you catch it in our reading earlier? It says, If your hand is offending you, cut it off. If your eye is offending you, plunk it out. Drastic measure.

Look at those verses more. If you can see nothing else out of those verses, that sin is such a big deal that it ought to be dealt with. And so, it may be more than inconvenient.

It may be changing of a lifestyle. It may be accountability. It may be a million different things. But whatever your answer to sin is, it ought to be drastic. It ought to be acted upon.

[10 : 48] And even today, you know, I don't know your heart and I really wouldn't want to. Okay? But I don't know your heart. But I know the Holy Spirit does. And He may put that finger upon your heart and say, You know, this is what He's talking about.

But you know, this is something you've been dealing with for a long time. This is sin. It's going to hurt you. I love you. You need to avoid this. Cut that out. You know, you get rid of that in your life because you have that power.

You're better than a person with an arm cut off. You're better than a person with an eye out because you're a person with a new heart. You know, that's the organ transplant that you need to fix. It's the heart. And as a believer, you have a new heart.

So your heart tells your hand what to do. Your heart can tell your eye what to do. And you've already received that. I'm getting ahead of myself and I'm excited about that. I'm excited that I have that power. I'm excited that I don't really need to cut my arm off because it really wouldn't fix anything, would it?

If I cut my arm off, I'm just going to do double time with my other hand at sinning if I don't change my heart. So they were hiding and ignoring their adultery here. This is where the self-righteousness comes in.

[11 : 48] They're hiding in verse number 28. But I've said to you that whoso looketh that a woman of lust after her committed adultery with her already in her heart. So their facade is a lack of action.

My heart doesn't have this in it. There's not adultery in it because he's hiding it behind the eyes and in the heart. And so he thinks nobody sees it. Nobody knows about it. But God says, I not only see your day planner, but I see what's going on in your heart.

The heart is filled with adultery in the person here wanting to find an object on which you can attach the fantasy. It doesn't say that when you look upon it you will sin.

It says that you've already sinned. Because that's where that look comes from. It's the vile, adulterous heart that results in this wanton look. And do you see here? That it's already there in your heart.

It's hard to quantify it, but men know the difference between looking at something and seeing beauty and lusting after it. But can I tell you men in here and ladies that that sin that happened is a symptom of something already going on in your life.

[12 : 50] It's not circumstantial. It's not just your environment. It's that the heart that is looking for that will always find something to put their fantasy on. That when that's in their heart, when that discontent, that ingratitude, that lack of love for where they should have it, that lack of love for their wife, for their youth, when it's there, they're going to find it no matter where they go.

Ladies, you can help as well because you're not guilty of it, but you could be found as an accomplice to this. In Job 31 it says it's a horrible crime, this thing of adultery.

It's a horrible crime that you would do that. And so if you dress in a way that you would want to bring that on, then you're an accomplice to that. But can I tell you men in here, there's not enough that women could do to keep us from that if we have a lustful heart.

Because once that is in our heart, we are going to find it wherever we look. And because when you look and you look to lust and you look to covet and that fantasy comes, it's saying that sin was already taking place.

Let me read it for you verse again. But I send you that whosoever looked to the woman who was after I had committed adultery with her, already in his heart. He's already committed adultery in his heart and then now he looks and it's lustful and now he has an object to it that it goes to but the sin is already there.

[14 : 08] That's why it doesn't, that we should have a defense against ourselves and be careful where we put our eyes but if your heart is already looking for it, you're going to find it wherever you go.

There's not going to be enough accountability because the wicked heart always finds what it craves and it's looking for and you can't stop it so you just change the heart. I don't think this is standard operating procedure in middle school and so I doubt this happened to you.

I've never heard of anybody else saying this but I was in middle school and I thought it was a good idea one day to bring over the high schoolers for a sexual education talk with the seventh grade middle schoolers and one of the things that the high schoolers did is they had these posters and in the poster they set up these different things.

They said holding hands and it went the whole gauntlet of spectrum of things that they could do and they said I want you to go stand underneath the poster in which you think is wrong. You choose what is wrong and from the looks of you none of you dealt with this and I'm pretty sure it was the first and last time that ever happened.

Now that I mention that I don't remember ever seeing that teacher again the next year but as we were there and in seventh grade I was already a believer I didn't know what I knew now but I was just thinking how do these people get to decide what's right and wrong?

[15 : 22] Like how did they decide that poster or that poster? I mean who tells them this? And I was thinking I wanted to go to the chalkboard and teenagers chalkboard it's like the marker board see some people even think I'm old okay this section these people even think I'm old okay and so I wanted to go to the chalkboard and write my own definition I wanted to say who thinks all of this is wrong and stand under it because I knew that sin didn't start by an action that my sin towards the opposite sake could be started now and it was in my heart I didn't know how to say it but I knew that it was there and that's so much what was going on and to you those who have been in the church for a long time most of your sin has taken place in your heart and you can take pride in the fact that it never lived itself out but a part of it is you're just a coward you know it's that you just never acted upon it it isn't honorable that you didn't act upon it it was just you like the prestige of looking good and you also like the hidden sin so you're trying to get the best of both worlds so don't break your arm patting yourself on the back because your sins have been internal where other brothers and sisters have been external and we have seen that could I have an amen there please thank you

I understand what pastor says when he feels all alone up here it is a lot lonelier than it looks alright so here we go they created a rule here it's all about the heart and it's always been about the heart and it was never about a list of rules in the Old Testament and it's never been from day one of creation it's been about a relationship with the God of heaven and they created and so first of all they hid it so they're making this facade and they're looking like they're not adulterous because they're not acting on it because they're just keeping it in this hidden closet in their heart and nobody knows that's where they go to to live out these fantasies but secondly they did it they created a rule that they followed so they made a rule and by following yet they felt self-righteous and that's what verse 32 says but I say unto you that whosoever shall put away his wife saving for the cause of fornication causes her to commit adultery and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced commit adultery what was happening here was musical chairs they were taking a passage in Deuteronomy chapter number 24 verses 1 and 2 and that passage

I'll summarize it for you it says if a man finds fault with his wife and here they were making it if you read in the commentaries they were just making anything that they found she was obnoxious if she burnt the breakfast if she didn't make breakfast they just said if you found fault in your wife here and then he gives her a letter of divorcement she remarries and the second husband finds something against her he gives her a letter of divorcement she cannot return to the first husband because she has become an adulteress which was caused by the first husband and so what they say they read that and they say you know what so we can get a divorce if we put it on paper see that is the logic that is produced by the mind of a person with a self-righteous heart they hear God's heart on an issue and they say oh you're saying that as long as I don't just do it verbally which in some cultures would say I divorce you I divorce you I divorce you it would be done you're telling us that if we do it by putting it on paper that's what you want for us to do because they weren't looking for a relationship they were looking for a rule they could live by and so they were doing that and so this was a time where people were taking a wife and putting her away and they felt self-righteous because they were doing it in a way by writing a letter that is there can I tell you

I grew up in a home where my mom and dad were divorced early and because of that those of you that have dealt with this in life I would never want to say a single word in here that would hurt my mom and I think about that today but because I did grow up in a home like that and because I do talk about my mom to who my mom about this she would say that if you're in a room full of teenagers and young married people please do not take away the teeth of the bible when you talk about the pain of divorce and it hurts people here and so they were looking to just take away the pain of it because they're like well we're following this but we know that it hurts people we know from experience we know through that and we know from the word of the lord that that is not his heart on the issue and what he was doing here was he was trying to teach on how to prevent adultery how in sin a divorce had come and it hurt people and he was teaching them how not to add up to that and they had taken it to make a rule out of it and that is the logic that is produced by the mind of a person with a self-righteous heart you imagine reading that scripture and saying oh you're saying all we have to do is write a letter and he says that's not the heart of the matter at all

God was teaching them not to add the sin of adultery to the pain that is already there they did not want musical chairs in marriage 1979 in Newsweek a lady writes an incredibly great article about divorce and she's not a believer and she says my friends after 18 years of marriage are getting a civilized divorce I object I think people should be upset about so serious a thing as divorce and her article wasn't talking about right and wrong about divorce but what she was saying was I just can't believe that it's civilized I can't believe there's not a shedding of tears I can't believe there's not a breaking of hearts that everybody is just okay with it they couldn't stand that it was civilized so we hide behind that we hide adultery in our heart nobody ever sees it but it's hidden in our heart we also hide it by creating a role and say it's okay because I do it in a certain way or a certain manner and then another way that we do it we don't find it in this passage but we find it in 1 Corinthians chapter number 6 we also find that today in our society it's a biological thing that a relationship a man with a woman is just a biological thing it doesn't mean anything we were painfully uncreative in our excuses before

[21 : 18] God when people go around today and talk about friends with benefits they say that sex outside of marriage doesn't mean anything because it's not emotional it's not an attachment it's just things that humans do it's biological we're not very creative they've been saying that from the beginning of time in 1 Corinthians 6 13 it says meat's for the belly and the belly for meat but God shall destroy both it and them now the body is not for fornication but for the Lord and the Lord for the body so they say meat's for the belly and belly is for meat so let's all go on and let's have a party and God says that's not the case the meat may be for the belly but your belly is for meat your belly belongs unto the Lord and so our lives and our bodies belong to him I know it's really cheesy but it's always stuck with me even from summer camp as a teenager when a guy said I would like some friends invited him to do something and they said I would really like to but I don't have any hands what do you mean you don't have any hands I see your hands he says no you don't understand these hands they don't belong to me these belong to

God and God would not want to do that with his hands what a wonderful thing huh as well as our children we have a dedication service here and we dedicate them to the Lord and the parents say this belongs to God I hope you remind them from every stepping stone in their life that you don't belong to us you don't belong to yourself you belong to the Lord so we see this facade that happens around the heart but Jesus comes in and he destroys the wall and he reveals their heart they were unconcerned about God's heart on the matter they were just concerned about their image and what they were legally allowed to do Jesus never condones the divorce but he states that it will happen as a result of adultery in a marriage and he tells that about the wife that will go on or the husband and go on to get married after they have been forsaken there God not only does it only not mandate divorce for adultery but he gives a very vivid example in Hosea of a promise keeper that he is remember that story in Hosea where God says I'm going to call my prophet and I'm going to have him marry a prostitute because I want them to know how I keep a promise and I'm going to show Israel how much I love them and all these things go on with

Hosea and he provides for her and he pursues her because he is illustrating the promise keeping that God has done and that's the way we should keep our promises as well that despite that he doesn't mandate that because of adultery divorce may happen he says it will happen but the example given here is that we pursue that we love and that we never give up on somebody and then they will have to forsake us but we will not forsake them Hosea and Mary is a prostitute provides for her it's a powerful testimony to God as the promise keeper to the children of Israel he is our example of our faithful covenant keeping God see Jesus reveals that man is unable to accomplish this with the rich man so it's a matter of the heart so he's saying guys you don't even care about what my heart is on the issue you just want to make a rule that you can follow in Matthew chapter number 19 you know it is a story of the rich young ruler we start in verse number 21 and you're going to see this example of a person that had built a facade by following the rules and by making these rules that they would follow it says

Jesus said unto him if thou wilt be perfect go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven and come and follow me but when the young man heard that saying he went away sorrowful for he had great possessions then said Jesus unto his disciples verily I say unto you that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven and again I say unto you it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God and when the disciples heard this they asked a very logical question it's the one that I would ask if I was there and they heard this they were exceedingly amazed and said who then can be saved but Jesus beheld them and said with men this is impossible but with God all things are possible it's in this passage that Jesus reveals that this man is unable to accomplish what needs to be accomplished because even though he's able to keep the externals he's not able to deal with the heart there's something that has to be impossibly done in his heart external behavior is but nothing from what's happening on the inside he says I'm not really impressed with all that you've done because I am God and I see your heart and he says let me give you an example of how your heart is hey go sell your stuff and give it to your neighbor and to the poor and he says I don't want to do that and

Jesus says well there the guy knows he's convicted he says I know why I don't want to do that because even though I can follow all the rules that I like my heart is not towards my neighbor my heart is not given to charity there's no love for the neighbor found in the heart of this rich man it's easier for a camel to enter through the eye of the needle and so the disciples say well then if that's the case it's impossible but Jesus tells them that he's not asking for man to do something that could be accomplished apart from him the disciples throw their hands up and they're saying well there's no way we can do it if you're saying that the test isn't this external it's the inward heart of loving your neighbor and loving God there's no way we can do it that's like a camel going through the eye of the needle there's no way we can do it and Jesus says exactly right there's no way you can do it apart from me that he has never provided a way that you could do it apart from him because he wants a relationship he wants to do it with you he doesn't want to give you a manual and say go do it and come back to me he says I want to be a father to you I want to have a relationship here with you so Jesus here is teaching that there's no physical remedy for a heart problem so you could cut off your arm and pluck out your eye but there'd be what's saying here there's nothing more precious to you the right arm but for most people is a stronger arm and the right eye and if it's going to cause you to pander after sin in your heart with your desires you should eliminate it which means there's nothing there there's nothing in your life that should be so strong that you don't get rid of it throw it away I won't mention the name but somebody was very close to being life that's no longer serving in the ministry but he got to a point and he just got involved in pornography and he couldn't stop it and so he goes out one day and he throws it underneath his car and he runs over it and he tells the secretary that he accidentally broke his computer and because he was fighting something there and in that moment in his office he realized that no 800 900 dollar computer or whatever it was was more valuable so he's beginning to get the understanding that drastic measure ought to be taken but it wasn't much longer that he comes into the office and he's the lust in his heart was first in pornography and now the lust in his heart had come upon he's having an affair he's about to leave his wife and his child and he doesn't know what to do and he knows that he's going down the road that leads to destruction that's going to hurt people and he walks over to a filing cabinet made out of metal and he takes a magnet and he holds it and out and he drops it and the magnet goes to it and he says that's how I feel about where I'm going in life but I cannot stop the desires in my heart from acting upon them you see you can run over your computer but if your heart stays the same you're going to replace the computer with a person or you're going to replace the computer with another person or you're going to replace whatever it is with something else and obviously we're talking about adultery here it's easy to see but it needs to be dealt with that day in the office on a heart level and not on a hardware level of a computer and it led down a path of destruction and it hurt many people and I'm one of those people that it hurt deeply as life had great influence the fall had a great influence as well I'm happy to say that he's faithfully serving in the church and trying to honor God in the marriage that he is in forsaking that and recognizing it as sin and receiving the grace that he needed in that moment and can I tell you how much that he need grace and forgiveness for that sin he needed it just as much as people like me in verse number 27 who would ever look upon a woman the lust needed forgiveness you see you can't take this passage and beat people over the head in verse number 2 32 because the handle to this passage in verse number 27 says all of us in here are guilty and need of forgiveness but we say he is Lord and we say what he says about a subject is right and what we and that's what we believe about it so we're told to mortify our members here cut them off you know could you imagine Santiago we're going to have a service here and it's going to be

[29 : 52] the mortifying service you come up here we got hacksaws we get chainsaws tell me what your problem is the day all right you're having a problem with your wallet okay let me cut that out of you you can't have a wallet anymore you have a problem whatever it is let me take care of it that's so but there is a way in which Colossians 3 5 says that we mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth fornication uncleanness inordinate affection evil concupiscence and covetousness which is idolatry we're mortifying the members in Job 31 verse 8 Job says if I break this covenant keep food away from me he says I want to keep this covenant so bad that if I don't I don't even want to eat that I want to take drastic measures in it so how do we go and take these drastic measures that are needed and it tells us there in Colossians 3 2 says you kill your members that sin by setting your affections on things above set your affections on things above not on the things of this earth so those body members the eye the arm and whatever it is that is being controlled by your heart that's acting and doing these wrong things you know how you mortify it you look into the face of Jesus and you look at the cross and you stare at it and your arm begins to scream because it begins to realize that there's somebody else now in charge and then your eye says I don't like what's happening here my vision is being changed because when you stare at

Jesus the heart changes and the outward flow of it through your eye gate and through your hand will change as well and you mortify it so now that was a weapon of destruction is now something that can be used for good because you've looked and set your affections on the things of the heart there and that's how you go about cutting these members off you see the problem is not the arm but it is the heart problem is not the computer it's the heart the problem is not where circumstantial it is the heart and you need to address the appetite or your system your systems will never help you the heart not the eye it must be replaced so if you're a not a believer in here and you've never had that heart transplant and I tell you that the Bible tells you that you are a servant the sin that you may have some what appears to be victory at times but you really are powerless over it you're as a puppet on a string and you need to cut the strings off today and you do that by the new heart given to you as a new creature in Jesus Christ Joseph did not avoid adultery just by running you know how he did it his heart was prepared as soon as he heard what was going on he's like I'm out of here you know here's an opportunity I already know what I do when opportunity comes I run a grown man runs out of a room think about how much he must have wanted that when you give a man everything go back to Genesis and you'll see this you give a man everything and you say one thing is off limit what does the man want he wants the one thing off limit what was the one thing off limits to Joseph it was that woman so if

God he could have very easily begin to fantasize about having everything if I have that woman I have everything but what his heart was prepared for it was ready to run Ezra will not will help you in Ezra 7 10 it says that we prepare our heart something the high school has went through recently that we prepare our heart to study when you came in today you came with a heart prepared for one thing or another and those that came with a heart prepared I pray will leave with something if you did not come with your heart prepared you're not going to get as much as others Daniel 1 8 so before all these things happen I purposed in my heart I would not defile myself so what is your heart prepared for today what is it set on gold to do you have a heart right now and it is set towards something and maybe it's you're in here and your heart is set towards adultery maybe your heart is set towards hate maybe your heart is set towards something else but only you and God know what your heart is set to and none of your systems are going to work if you do not reset that heart by setting your imperfections on the things of God we should pray as the psalmist in 139 he says search my heart oh God and know my heart and try me and know my thoughts and see if there be any wicked way in me don't just wait for the opportunity and ask God to give you strength right now have that premeditated sin it's that

Abraham with his wife and he says hey when we get into that city tell everybody you're my sister what a chump huh he says when you go in that city I want you to tell everybody I'm saying that's a premeditated sin he said I already know what my heart's going to do I have the heart of a coward so if we get in a situation and might me saying you're my sister helps me that's what my heart says to do because he had the heart of a coward well some of you are going to leave here today and you have premeditated sin and can I tell you teenager in here you're going to have opportunity I don't know what's in your heart today but the next five to ten years we're going to get the fine because all those things that you dream of doing they're going to happen some earlier than others but off eventually lust and desire is going to be met with opportunity and there's going to be sin but I pray that there's some dreams and desires in your heart to do something great for God and an opportunity be met with it and we will get the look someday and say so that's what he was daydreaming about when he wasn't listening to me in Sunday school or that's what he was thinking about on that time so here lastly in closing how do we zone our hearts and areas where around our heart to prevent this type of construction so you got a heart the self-righteous heart wants to build a facade around it so we don't deal with issues of the heart we don't deal with that relationship so we just want to build a wall around it then Jesus comes in and knocks down that wall and he deals with the heart and so now you're in here and there's just a heart you and

God and you say I don't want to build the wall I've built there's been times in my life where I built the wall and it's just a tiring exercise and it never works so I want to zone the land around my heart so that we cannot build the self-righteous facade around it let me give you some biblical advice here how we go about doing it we must fill our hearts with the I have saids of scripture first of all it says they have said of old time that's how you build a self-righteous wall but how do you build and make sure that you're not building around your heart you fill it with the I have saids of scripture you say what does God say on it what is not only does what does God say about it but what is God's heart on the issue how does he address this in the scripture here I didn't come to set Moses aside she said I didn't come to change one single thing I just came to put it back to where it belongs that's Matthew 5 17 where he says I've not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it he says this isn't a third option you know Moses said something and now you have said something and I want to say something different he says I am a fulfillment of what Moses said and they're like what are you talking about Moses was all about following the rules we're all about following the rules and he says no he wasn't he said I know Moses you know I'm God here all right he said

[36 : 46] Moses was about a heart relationship and I'm about a heart relationship as well the self-righteous would love to replace a relationship with God for a rule book that they can go carry around with them because if we carry around a rule book with us then we could have the authority and we could reinterpret the law we could say yeah God I know what you said and I reinterpret it to say something else and he says I don't want the rule book I want a relationship here with you Tinsley drew me a picture we were gone for a couple days thank you'll put that up there but she drew this picture and when I got home she said daddy you've got mail and so she gave me this little card and I think it's me and it looks like me and she gave me it looks like me Jeff says I see it all right and so she gave me this card so could you imagine I go set this card on my desk and I say I really love that card Tinsley loves me and she made that card and Robert walks by and he says you know what I think Trent likes it when you draw note cards I think that I ought to make some note cards for Trent and then a week later

Robert comes to me and says hey Trent you've got mail and I get a picture like this and he sets it on my desk and he says so what do you think about that and I would say that's really creepy Robert never do anything like this again we got to get offices I got to have a door between me and you and it's got to have a lock that would be silly wouldn't it he's like I'm just going to mimic what I saw and I will develop a relationship here with you this is not a perfect illustration it's not from the Bible and I'm not saying God has a different list not a different desire for you as he does others but this idea that we just look and we mimic the externals what everybody else is doing is a silly way to go about having a relationship no Robert would say hey we're friends and because we're friends I know you like chicken wings and I can afford chicken wings so I will buy you chicken wings thank you Rod Murphy all right and so he would do what he is able to do about it you understand that it's a silly illustration but we do this all the time we say God I'm making you these drawings I see you like these drawings I'm copying somebody else and he would say I want you I want time with you stop running around mimicking what everybody else is doing I want to sit down and I want to talk to you tomorrow morning I've already wrote the book all you have to do is sit down and do that and when you pray I'll listen to you what a wonderful thing that we have there so here the self-righteous want to replace a relationship with a list of rules that they get to make up and reinterpret parenting and the Christian life we say that rules without a relationship yield rebellion you know that with your children can I tell you in your Christian life the same way if you try to follow this as a list of rules and you don't have a relationship with the author of this book it's going to breed rebellion because you're going to get frustrated and you're not eventually you're going to try to do better eventually it's going to give up and say forget that I tried that I need another option you see the scribes that Jesus was teaching they didn't know as a continuation of those tests that God is unchangeable and the

Old Testament is not building a relationship on law it's building a relationship on love and Deuteronomy which is the second recording of the law you're going to see time and time again when you read it in your Bible if you look for it it says I want to love I want you to love me I want you to love me I want you to love me I want a heart commitment I want a heart devotion I want a wholehearted kind of genuine affection for me you see the law was not the cause of the relationship but it was a result of it we're going through Exodus God loved his people he brought us out he took us out of Egypt he brought us into the promised land and he says I love you I love you I love you and then we say we love you we love you we love you and he says okay well let me help you regulate that love let me teach you how to love let me give you these ten commandments and I'm going to say to you in the ten commandments you shouldn't have any other gods before me because love is loyal love is loyal and you take that to your marriage you should have no graven images because love is faithful you should not take the Lord's name in vain because love is reverent you should remember the Sabbath because love is separated and holy and set aside you should honor your father and mother love is respectful you shouldn't kill because love values people and it's humane you shouldn't commit adultery because love is pure you shouldn't steal because love is not selfish and you should not bear false witness because you are loving people and loving people are honest it's a book about love it's not a book about rules all about love and what does God require of his children we find in here on 10 and 12 now Israel what does the Lord thou require of thee but to fear the Lord thy God and the walk in all his ways and to love him and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul to keep the commandments of the Lord and his statutes which I command thee this day for thy good and then in verse 19 he says love you therefore the stranger for you were strangers in the land of

Egypt you miss that in Deuteronomy when you're just making a list of things to do for yourself you're going to miss that and that's no different than the gospel that's no different than what Paul would say is exactly the message the gospel and the New Testament you love the Lord with all your heart soul and mind and strength and you love your neighbor as yourself Deuteronomy 10 16 if you don't believe yet it's about the heart he says circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart and be not more stiff neck he says I'm going for your heart and then we finish out Deuteronomy the next so many verses next 10 verses he shows how it's lived out chapter 26 he has a big dedication and in a big dedication they say love the Lord and keep his statutes but love him with all your heart chapter 27 he says I'm going to send Joshua in I don't get to go to that land but as soon as you get in I want you to remind everybody that we're supposed to love the Lord with all of our hearts chapter 28 you got blessings got cursing got blessing and cursings he says if you want blessings in life love the Lord with all your heart and if you want cursings then follow after sin because sin has consequences in verse number 29 it's a heart commitment that he is asking for chapter 29 and 30 and that's why when we get to Matthew chapter number 22 it makes sense and when he says in verse 36 master which is the greatest commandment in the law Jesus said on the him thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind this is the great and this is the first and great commandment and the second is like unto it that thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself and on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets so these scribes and Pharisees were people that were obeying laws but they had nothing to hang it on and they were making a mess and he says hang it on these two love the Lord with all your heart and love your neighbor and everything else will hang upon those two things and I don't know so God's divine eternal standard no one can keep and so we see with the rich man he says nobody can keep that the rich man walks away and says I can't do that but he should have said I can't do that that's what you tell Jesus what you've asked for me to do I can't do and Jesus says you're right with the heart you have right now you can't take this heart now try it now go out and live these things and the sacrificial system didn't make men right with God it simply pointed out that only God can make them right with him he pointed out they needed a sacrifice he pointed out their inabilities why do we have a sacrificial system in the Old Testament when we have a list of all these rules because he knew that they could not keep them he knew they couldn't keep them externally and he definitely knew they couldn't keep them internally he says so I have a way for you to repent and ask for forgiveness and receive the grace of

God and that sacrifice that is there so I want to encourage you in here today what should you do with this teaching maybe you've seen the day that the facade does not change the fact that you have a heart of adultery maybe I don't know that about your heart and nobody sees that about you maybe men and ladies in here you know that inside of your heart there's a heart that is set towards adultery and you're just one opportunity away from hurting many people maybe you've recognized or remembered how actions of the past concerning the former selves did not reflect the heart of God and if you recognize that in your life and you say what God says about the matter is what I believe about the matter receive the forgiveness move on with your life and thank him for what he has done there and use your life and challenging other people in this way you should stop a couple things here you should stop trying to manufacture your own righteousness don't hide it deeper expecting that God won't see it don't try to justify your own actions by the manipulation or your perception of the rule if in your heart today there's this adulterous heart you have two options you either take it and bring it out before God and repent and confess it or you have to take it deeper because the Holy Spirit has woken you up to the fact that you know that it's there and it can't be left where it's at you now have to dig a basement in that closet and bury it deeper or you have to bring it out and hand it over to him but eventually it will be known take in here you shouldn't be taking your sin lightly you should take drastic actions you should change the affections of your heart and the directions of your eyes today those are the things we should stop but what should we do be we should be excited about the fact that God has established his state his relationship with you based on love and not rules and

[45 : 55] I hope you're encouraged by that today I hope you're encouraged by the fact that it's not a rule book but it's a relationship that he wants you should address the issue of your heart that will cause or have caused you and this to break the laws of God you should recognize the need of sacrifice of the Christ on the cross because you did not meet the divine internal standard you go to him and say I tried on my own and I wasn't doing very good now what should I do Jesus and go to him and you repent and you remember the cross how he had already paid for your shortcomings love the Lord your God with all your heart soul and mind and love mankind as you have loved yourself knowing that all the prophet and the laws hang on this and this is true in your relationship with God and your spouse your kids and all other relationships he'll said this week that a man who will fall in love with God and that will focus on his walk with God will accidentally be a better husband than a man who just decides to try to be a better husband you know if you'll just fall in love with God and love him and his word and get to know him you will be a have a much better walk with the Lord than if you just go about trying to do it in your own power love precedes right actions or right actions will try to replace your relationship with the one you love if you're busy today with right actions that aren't motivated by love for God those right actions will eventually replace your relationship with him so we go to God and we say we see it in

Deuteronomy we see it in the New Testament I want you in my life and if in here today you're trying to fight adultery in your heart with only a system would you come and put your heart before God and say God I want you to do work on my heart if you're in here being self-righteous thinking you're doing a great job at spinning the plates would you set the plates down and say God it's you that I want to know I want my right actions to be motivated by a love for you and I don't want my right actions to replace this relationship that I have miss Kristen comes to the piano I'm going to ask you to respond today actually I believe that the word of God will ask that you will respond today there should be drastic action taken in your life when sin is recognized when the Holy Spirit puts that on your life maybe it's a sin the adulterous heart maybe it's a sin of self-righteousness or maybe you didn't even deal with the heart last week when we talked about the hating heart but allow the God of heaven to do something in your heart and go to him and say I internally don't meet the divine standard I need the sacrifice I need to set my my heart upon the affections of you I need to look to you today but I pray with everything in me that you will do business with the Lord either here at the altar or at your seat this this message was recorded at Vision

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