



Red Letter City

“Lust”

Sunday, May 15, 2016

Courage Church, Detroit, MI.

So I had this dilemma. Because last week was Mother’s Day. and we are, just sort of plowing through the sermon on the mount piece by piece, week by week, and naturally on Mother’s Day we came to “Lust.”

So I had a choice... I could either teach about lust on Mother’s Day... or we could take one week off from

the series and I could have my beautiful wife teach on Mother’s Day. and I went with that.

So now, today, you are going to get a message about “lust.” For those of you who missed last week and came today super excited to hear about divorce... that is next week. So get back here for that. I know a lot of people are like, “well, I am not divorced... that is not for me... I haven’t even been married yet... definitely not for me...”

yes it is.

It is for you. If it wasn’t important then Jesus would not have talked about it so much... but he did, because it is important.

So come out next week. Bring your married friends. Bring your divorced friends. Bring your single friends. Bring them all.

and I need to say this, before we dive in to all of this. Paul says in Romans 8:1 “that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ.” and some of the things that we are going to talk about today, some of you have found yourself at one point guilty of... and other things we are going to talk about, all of you have to a degree been guilty of... and its stuff that a lot of us may not want to hear but I would be remiss to pass over these topics that Jesus

so clearly spoke out about, just because I am afraid that someone may get a little bit upset.

Truthfully, every now and then we get to topics that are just, quite frankly, very difficult to talk about.

And the whole lump sum of what Jesus says that we are going to study today, AND the whole lump sum of what he says that we are going to study next week, are two of those topics.

but If you think they are difficult to hear... I assure you it is even harder for me to say them... because I take being up here, and speaking the word of God incredibly seriously, and I truly do understand both the *seriousness* and the *sensitivity* regarding certain, extremely complex issues.

A lot of the things in the bible, we tend to just give a “wide stroke” definition of and then expect everybody in every situation to fit into the box that we fit in.

And I believe that Jesus is clear, and a lot of the things he said are very cut and dry... and I believe the word is unchanging. But I think that the way we handle certain topics and approach certain topics has to be done with the sensitivity and understanding, that *everyone* has been through different things. They come from different places and have had, in many cases totally different circumstances that have shaped their worldview and even have lead them to where they may now find themselves in life.

But with respect to that, we also have to respect the fact that Jesus says “everyone who...” in these passages.

These are *everyone* issues, according to Jesus.

and the one today, everyone, in one way or another, has dealt with, or is dealing with it now... and I really believe that God wants to heal you of that.

So here we go.

Matthew 5:37-30

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’²⁸ But I say to you that **everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.** If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that 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 that your whole body go into hell.”

Lets Pray.

Last Friday, it was just a beautiful day outside and I went to pick up the girls from school, and we were driving home. and on the way home, there is this stop sign at Gratiot that we have to stop at and sometimes its really easy to turn onto Gratiot and other times its a total zoo... so much traffic just flying by and the only way to merge onto the street is to turn into the left turn lane and then make your way over... it was one of those days... and even after I had merged into the lane, it only took a little while before the side of traffic I was on came to almost a stop, just tons of cars, and on the other side cars were just FLYING by.

and I looked over, and standing in the middle lane, the left turn lane, was a man just standing there on his phone, laughing. Just standing there in the middle of traffic. He wasn't really even trying to cross the street, he looked like he was just enjoying a conversation in the middle of traffic, hanging out between the yellow lines. People were trying to get into the left lane from both directions and he was preventing them. It was almost like he didn't even notice what it was that he was surrounded by... like he didn't hear the horns or understand the frustration he was causing actual drivers whom that part of the road is supposed to belong to.

He was so engaged in the world of his seemingly happy conversation, that he paid no attention to the potentially deadly environment that he was literally standing in the center of himself, or the way it messed up other people just trying to get through their commute.

and I merged onto the highway and moved on, uncertain of what happened to that guy.

But I know this. What he was doing was causing grief and frustration to others... probably unbeknownst to him. and if someone who needed to turn got over and didn't see him...

he wouldn't be laughing on the phone anymore. It had the potential to fall apart very quickly.

It was a fine line he was walking on, one that he willingly gave up a certain level of control over his own safety for, to engage in this moment *privately* on the phone, yet surrounded by hundreds of cars who could take him out at any moment whether on purpose or on accident.

I think that sometimes we find ourselves in trouble, and we don't even realize it. We don't realize that we are hurting others. We don't realize the danger that we are in.

We are think things like, "Oh, it is only in my mind... it will never go beyond this... and its not hurting anyone." and we forget that devastating reality behind iniquity... that "whatever your eye hooks to, multiplies."

and you can think that you have your own little private life in your head and think that its not affecting anyone but I assure you, that as whatever your eye hooks to, begins to multiple your life will begin to change. And you may not notice it right away, but it will wear on those around you. It will cause grief to people and they may not even be able to figure out why.

But the truth is... that the reason that Jesus deals so dramatically with the Spirit of the law is because he knows that where your thoughts go... and what you dwell on, is a window into what you are becoming.

So Jesus says "lets cut this off at the source." He says just a few verses back, "unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of heaven."

The scribes and the Pharisees were the religious leaders. They were the ones always out in public showing people how great they are. And a lot of

people read this and they think... the Pharisees tithe faithfully, the fast every week, they pray all the time...

I am in big trouble!

But Jesus here is saying, NO! The Pharisees miss the point. Over and over. If nothing else, YOU SHOULD AT LEAST BE BETTER THAN THEM! He says, "On the outside everyone thinks they are great... but in reality they preach but they don't practice." (Matthew 23:3)

He says "they clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence." (Matthew 23:25)

and he says "they are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead man's bones and all uncleanness." (Matthew 23:27)

Jesus is saying that if you want to enter the Kingdom of heaven you have to check your heart, and you have to repent for the things that no-one sees. Do you realize that in Heaven, all of our darkest secrets will be made known? You guys know, that I am all about grace... and I believe that when you call on the name of Jesus, that you are saved and that you have a home in heaven but I think for some of you, you may get there, and at first, it may be a little bit awkward... having to stand next to your unrepented sins.

And the most likely things to go without repenting of are the things that nobody ever sees.

Repenting of the things that nobody ever knows about is important for your eternity. The bible says in Luke 8:17 - "For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light."

Luke 12:3 says something similar.

Romans 2:16 says that God judges the secrets of men.

What goes on in your head absolutely matters. It will be judged in eternity and it will guide your life today.

That is why I believe that a successful and God fearing life is about intent...

Overcoming enormous hurdles like lust requires *intent*.

You have to understand this... because intent **MUST BE** a guiding principle in your life or you will find yourself in some very hard to navigate circumstances.

What do I mean by that?

I mean you need to be intentional now, to not even find yourself in the types of circumstances that require a decision on if you will do something, or not do something. If you will commit transgression, or not commit transgression.

Think about lust. Think about sexual desires that are directed in the wrong place, which we will use as a working definition for right now... we will get more into it later..

Truthfully, how well do you think most people would do if given an IQ test while they were sexually aroused? Do you think you would pass? You would probably be a mess.

You see, when you are sexually aroused you lose blood from your head... blood from your brain goes somewhere else and it makes you more dumb.

And why am I telling you this?

because if you find yourself in situations like that... the situations where you have the opportunity to do things like commit adultery... the chances **ARE DEFINITELY HIGHER IN THAT MOMENT** that you are going to do it because in all reality you lack so much of your brain power in those moments... that you make really bad decisions.

and that is not to justify the action of adultery, because even with 75% percent of your brain... I hope that the reality of your future just crumbling right before your eyes is enough for you to hit the brakes if you ever find yourself in a position like that...

but people are literally giving in to a desire that lasts for a split second, and it costs them a lifetime of guilt, and brokenness... and hell... and it puts others through hell. And if by the grace of God it doesn't cost them their marriage, then it becomes a lifetime of trying to rebuild something that was never meant to be broken in the first place.

and NOBODY IN THEIR RIGHT MIND would give up their entire future for a feeling that lasts a few seconds. NOBODY.

But people find themselves in those types of situations all the time.

But you have to understand that the action about to be committed began somewhere else... it began in an environment when you had more control.

And when Jesus says that the person who "even has lustful thoughts is guilty" I do take that literally... I do believe that as far as Jesus is concerned, iniquity is just as sinful as transgression. Lust is just as sinful.

But the result in this Kingdom is devastatingly greater if it is acted on.

Which is why we need to live our lives so intentionally when we have all of our brain... that we do not EVER even come close to finding ourselves in circumstances like that, with a quarter of our brain missing.

Jesus goes to dramatic lengths to show us the importance of this. The importance of cutting it off at the source.

Verse 29 and 30:

If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into **hell**. ³⁰ 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 that your whole body go into **hell**.

Cut off your hand if you have to. Pluck out your eye if you have to... you would be better off walking around this earth maimed and dismembered than for your whole body to go into hell.

You are better off blind... better off with no hands at all... then to throw your life away with lusting over something that you can not have.

Now... Jesus did not actually expect anyone to pluck out their eyes, in fact he would not have wanted them to do *that*... the point is the source. Get it at the source.

Get it before it starts.

Your hand... don't put yourself there. Don't give yourself the option. Don't even let it be possible.

The eye is where the problem starts. Lust typically begins visually.

You have to change what you see.

And there is so much more to that than just not looking at someone else and desiring them. You have to change the way that you view life... you have to approach it with intention. You have to understand that you are living for something so much bigger...

Think about Joseph in Genesis 39. Potiphar's wife wanted to sleep with him. Day after day she tried to seduce him and every time, he refused and the reason that he gave every time was *not* "I don't like you. I don't desire you. I don't want to do this. This doesn't sound fun."

No. He gives her a bigger picture.

He tells her "My master has given me everything. He has held back NOTHING from me, except for you because you are his wife... He has given me charge of everything..."

Joseph saw that God was positioning him for something really incredible. He saw a much bigger picture than just a moment with a woman and so he took the high road until it eventually got him arrested because she lied about him.

But that didn't change the bigger picture of what God wanted to do with Joseph, because Joseph was faithful.

that is one thing people don't realize.

People read this scripture and all they see is *hell*... and it freaks them out. I have talked to countless people who struggle in this area and it all comes back to them, wanting to be sure that their eternity is okay, after they make these mistakes.

and I can't help but wonder as I look at the messes people are creating in their own families and lives... "That is what you are worried about?" That you are going to lose your get out of hell free card? If that is the case, You may as well turn it in now.

"God is not fire insurance!" - its ridiculous... there is a much bigger picture that you are a part of than just where you end up after you die. We are citizens in a Kingdom and we are on a mission that is a whole lot bigger than you...

and what you do and do not do.

But the only way that you are going to be a part of that Kingdom, and of that mission is if you view your life from *that* scope... you have to see it with intention. You have to see a bigger picture which means you have to be able to see past a moment, or past a thought, and be able to ask, "where is this entire thing going?"

"Where is this relationship going?"

"Where is my life going?"

Because Jesus says, if you aren't intentional, you are right... it may be going to *hell*.

“Better for you to lose one of your members, than for your whole body to go into hell.”

Hell

Hell is a very difficult topic to discuss, but Jesus talked about it a whole lot. And it is important to say from the front of this, that we believe in the eternal here in this church. We believe in an eternal heaven, and we believe in an eternal hell. We believe in a *literal* heaven, and a *literal* hell.

But we also believe that the sermon on the mount is about far far far more than just eternity. It is about a Kingdom now... it is about citizenship in the Kingdom of heaven... NOW. It is about how life on this earth will be *for you* according to the way you follow the words that Jesus lays out here.

Salvation, eternity in heaven can only be found in Jesus Christ, and that work is already done for you if you call on his name and accept him. We don't serve Jesus to avoid hell. He is not fire insurance.

If you have Jesus living in your heart then you need to stop thinking that you have to get saved every week because you had a bad thought, because you lusted or you got angry and took it out on someone, or because you swore when you stubbed your toe.

Jesus is bigger than that. He is bigger than your moments of weakness. And he came to do so much more than just swoop you away into eternity.

We believe that heaven exists in the afterlife and we believe that heaven exists now... here on earth. and there are things that we can do that bring heaven to earth, now. And that *is* our mission.

We also believe that hell exists in the afterlife, and we most certainly believe that hell exists now.

And there are a few different words that Jesus uses that have been translated as hell... and most people believe that each of these words, in different ways represent what hell will ultimately be like... which I agree with... but what we know FOR SURE... without any question, is that the hell Jesus is describing in the sermon on the mount, was *more* than just a metaphor of what was to come... it was also an explanation of a current reality. it was actually something, in that day, that existed in a physical place.

The word that Jesus uses here, when he says “If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell.” Matt 5:29

is the word *Gehenna*. This is different from the “hades.” He uses the word “hades” in Matthew 11 when Jesus says to Capernaum that “they will be brought down to hell...” He tells them “For it the mighty works that were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day...” Jesus says “they will be brought down to HADES.” is “a lower region” and “a realm of the dead.” It is something below us. It is also the word that Jesus uses when he tells Peter in Matthew 16, “You are Peter... and on this rock I will build my church and the gates of HELL (*hades*) will not prevail against it.”

That is *hades*. We don't have much of an earthly visual as to what *hades* looks like.

But the hell that Jesus uses here, is *Gehenna*. and we have a pretty clear visual of *Gehenna*.

I remember growing up, constantly hearing Pastor Kevin calling hell the “garbage dump of the universe” and this is where that comes from. The word *Gehenna* refers to a place. A symbolic place...

But an *actually* place.

It was, in Jesus' day, the city dump.

And there was so much trash there all the time that there was a fire there that never ever was put out, it was just constantly going... constantly burning all of the trash to ashes... because Burning all the trash limited the smell of trash from filling the entire city, and it prevented an overflow of trash to go beyond Gehenna's capacity.

Everything there was rotting, while it waiting to be burned.

and this is very sad and disturbing... but it also was a place where people who could not afford a proper burial for their loved ones, would go and bury their dead. So there were constantly people there weeping over their lost loved ones because their final resting place essentially was the city dump.

But Gehenna was not always a garbage dump. There was not always a never ending fire that would burn there. The word "*gehenna*" means:

The Valley of Hinnom

It is a valley on the Southern side of Jerusalem that is mentioned several times in the old testament, and it later was turned into the city dump that Jesus would refer to as "Gehenna" or "hell."

The book of Chronicles talks about how people would sacrifice their children there... and do all sorts of incredibly evil things in this place. 2 Kings 23:10 talks about how the place is just an abomination because of the way people sacrifice their children there.

Even then, it was hell.

But you have to see this. Look at what Jeremiah 7:30-31 says:

³⁰ "For the sons of Judah have done evil in my sight, declares the Lord. They have set their detestable things in the house that is called by my name, to defile it. ³¹ And they have built the high places of **Topheth**, which is in **the Valley of the Son of Hinnom**, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which *I did not command, nor did it come into my mind.*

First observation... the word "Topheth" means PLACE OF FIRE. and this place of fire, was in the Valley of Hinnom.

So this was a place that people just went off. They created their own way and they did these awful things... things that God said not only did he NOT COMMAND... but these are things that he never would have even thought of.

They are the ones creating hell in their world. They are doing it to themselves. They are doing it to their children! To their communities. These things were not even in God's mind. He couldn't even think of them.

Hell, as we think of hell, eternal punishment, Jesus describes in Matthew 25 as being a place that was prepared for the Devil and his angels. But Jesus tells the people who are not merciful toward others, and who ignore the least of these, and who basically create hell on this earth for all sorts of people, that they will have be sent to this place.

Because they won't align their lives up with Kingdom principles now, God will give them over to that. Jesus says "fine... if you are content creating hell now, I will give it to you."

but IT WAS NOT CREATED FOR YOU.

But everyone always argues, that a loving God would never do that... he would never send someone to hell. As if hell was God's big idea for mankind... it wasn't.

God literally says in Jeremiah "I would never even think to do something like that."

Hell was created for Satan, not you.

and yet we are creating it here, for each other, and for ourselves.

If you think hell is just a *later* thing... take a look around!

talk to a holocaust survivor. Who watched their parents be murdered and their sisters tortured.

If you think hell is just a *later* thing, read a little bit about what happens when a human being is sold into sex slavery. and the way that one person's uncontrollable lust becomes another's hell.

If you think hell is just a *later* thing... you ought to talk to the mother of two children... who has a husband, but he is not a husband... the kids have a dad but *he is not a dad*. She is raising the kids by herself... working three jobs to pay for her husbands gambling problem... only to come home and be verbally *and* physically abused by her drunk, jobless husband day after day after day, knowing that he is addicted to pornography, and always talking about other women's bodies right to her...

but as far as she knows, he never actually committed adultery... and so desperately she reads the bible, and she tries to understand it, but from everything that anyone has ever told her... she is stuck unless he does *that*. Unless that lust is actually acted on. Because someone put a heavy burden on her, and won't lift a finger to ease that burden.

so she feels like there is no option other than to endure it. Over and over and over.

Every. Single. Day.

His lust has landed *her* in hell.

Lust has caused people to tear apart our world. Lust for people. Lust for power. Lust for money. and we create hell to fulfill it.

For so many of us, the concept of hell is nothing more than something that we are supposed to avoid but when I read the scriptures it appears to me like hell is something that we are supposed to engage.

When Jesus has that epic moment with Peter, and he uses the word "hades" but he says that "you are the rock on which I am going to build my church... and The gates of hell can not stand against the power of the

church of Jesus Christ... and yet we spend our lives sitting on our blessed assurance that we won't ever have to go there and we ignore the fact that people are *there* right now.

Behind those gates. Waiting for the church to break through and do what we are supposed to do best...

redeem people.

Jesus does not want you there.

He does not want you to spend eternity there,
and he doesn't want your life to be hell here, and now either.

But the sons of Judah are here burning kids in a fire thinking that it is right, when really everything about it is hell.

What hell are we causing people thinking that it is right? What selfish ambitions are we dragging our loved ones through thinking that it is right? What heavy burdens are we placing on people that we don't lift a finger to ease?

that is why sacrifice can be such a complicated thing. Because what happens is, it is possible in sacrifice, to think that you are doing the right thing... when in reality you are obviously doing the wrong thing. And that was something they were obviously doing then... obviously it was wrong to sacrifice people... especially children... it would take an insane amount of callousness to numb yourself to the level of believing something so dark is ok. But in their eyes they were doing what was right.

But we still do it now. We give too much credit to ourselves when we give stuff up.

We think that we are right with God because of what ever it is that we give up...

and don't get me wrong... there are things in our lives that we need to give up.

If lust is an issue for you, the things that it will lead to can have a detrimental impact on your life and you must give it up... but your life is not defined by your sacrifice. We talked about this on Thursday. What does Jesus say? "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." To Jesus it is always about the person you are becoming... not the things you are trying to avoid.

And if your mission to save yourself from your lust rises and falls on the idea that you will just give it up... then ultimately you will fall again... because it is not about what you give up it is about what you become.

You have to have a bigger picture in your life than just sacrifice.

So here in the sermon on the mount, we have Jesus saying, if you can't get a hold of this lust issue... if you can't see a bigger picture and put yourself in a better story... a story of redemption. A story of redeeming others from the broken places of our world... and you can't see the way you are blocking yourself from your future over something so selfish and temporary...

if you can't get this thing down... your life is going to be in all kinds of trouble. It will decay... it will rot. you will be miserable... Your life with just rot while it waits for its turn to be burned. Everything will be fire. Everything around you will be fire. The people that you don't even realize you are hurting will be dying around you.

but none of it was God's idea.

You are creating a whole slew of problems for yourself and for the world around you. If you let your eye hook to this you are literally throwing yourself onto the garbage dump of life.

You are taking your life... your beautiful life that God created for you to walk in (Ephesians 2:10) as a rescue agent for him to redeem the world... and you are throwing it into the garbage heap. Into a place of destruction, and weeping. and brokenness.

In to a place that NEVER EVEN CAME INTO GOD'S MIND for you and your future!

His plans FOR YOU are good!

The reality of the ways your life will spiral downwardly if you chose this path are detrimental.

and even if that opportunity never comes for you to act, if you live it out in your mind enough times then you are going to find yourself in hell. Never happy. Never content. You will create hell in your marriage if you have one... you will create hell in your relationships.

and even if you can mask most of it... you will constantly be in hell, in your mind.

but lust is the word "*epithumia*" (*epi-thume-ay-o*) and it is a combination of two words, epi, which means "in" and "thumos" essentially means "the mind."

In.

The.

Mind.

So if you separate the words, you get "in the mind" and if you combine them you get the word "*epithumia*" (*epi-thume-ay-o*) which means "to set your heart upon."

It is a neutral word. The true problem with lust is, it is all about a good thing directed in the wrong place.

It is a word that shows up a lot in the New Testament... Jesus uses it a lot, but rarely is it used in a sexual way, Matthew 5 is one of the only times.

Jesus uses the word *epithumia* (*epi-thume-ay-o*) when he is about to take communion with his disciples, he says “I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer...” (Luke 22:15)

I have *epithumia* (*epi-thume-ay-o*) to eat this passover with you.

You may say... its the same word? It can't be the same word...

It. is. the. same. word.

We make good things bad, all the time. So often, when we should be bringing heaven to earth, we are bringing destruction instead.

Jesus said:

“I have set my heart upon eating this passover with you.”

What have you set your heart upon?

In all actuality, it all comes back to iniquity. It all comes back to what your eye hooks to, it all comes back to what you set your heart upon... it all comes back to what is in your... mind...

The mind...

In all of the bible... there is not a prayer that was answered in a more radical way, than Solomon's prayer for wisdom. God was so impressed by what Solomon asked, that he said “not only will I grant you this... but I'll give you everything you didn't ask for, as well.” Solomon saw a bigger picture and so God gave him an even bigger one.

What did he ask for?

“Give your servant a *mind* to discern good and evil.”

He said “God... help me with my mind!” Because there are so many different ideas spinning around in it... and I am trying to lead these people

and half the time I can't figure out right from wrong myself. I want to be a wise leader! Help me with my mind!

His Father, King David, prayed this prayer...

Create in me a clean heart, oh God. (Psalm 51:10)

King David screwed up. Really really badly. His eye hooked. It multiplied. He acted. And he created hell to cover it... but just like Jesus promises, everything done in the darkness will eventually come to the light. and it did for David.

but what a prayer.

Create in me clean heart. So that I can enter into the kingdom that Jesus died to invite me into. It is a Kingdom of life.

But it is also a Kingdom of light.

There is nothing hidden. Everything brought to the light now, and dealt with now, will not have to be dealt with later. But one way or another, the stuff that is done in the darkness will be exposed... and in this kingdom, this kingdom that we believe Jesus shows us will be brought to earth through a community...

we face things together. Not necessarily corporately... somethings we do face corporately, this is not one of them in most instances... but together.

because we understand that we are all going through a lot of the same things, and things always end up better when you work out your issues instead of burying them in your heart...

and I would encourage you that if you are dealing with sin in your mind, stuff that you really just can't sort through... first of all, "there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ," but those who are in Christ understand that it all has to come to light. So I would encourage you to find places of safety, people who are safe, and get some accountability in your life.

If you are struggling in these areas, our church is here. Our staff is here... and there are people who are better equipped to handle these types of things that we can connect you with if that feels appropriate.

But it may be as simple as pulling a friend aside and telling them what you are going through.

and if you are on the other end of that, and someone pulls you aside... remember, Jesus died for them just like he died for you. Courage Church is a place of safety. We are a place of grace. We are place that wants to bring heaven to earth, and a place that is on a mission to reconcile Detroit back to Jesus and that means NOT HOLDING THEIR TRESPASSES AGAINST THEM.

I want to read the passage one more time, and then I want to give you one more takeaway as we begin to close. and truthfully, I cut more from this message than I am giving you... I could do three more messages just on this one topic, but what I am about to show you, you have to understand if you are going to save yourself from a life of hell.

Matthew 5:27-30

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ ²⁸ But I say to you that **everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.** ²⁹ If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. ³⁰ 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 that your whole body go into hell.

Jesus does something very interesting here.

What he does is, he takes the 7th commandment... a commandment everyone knew and understood exactly how to follow it, and he marries it with the 10th. A command with a little bit more fuzziness around it.

The first nine commandments that were written on those tablets were rules. They were laws with immediate, tangible, obvious results. But the 10th was something different.

In fact, I could make the case that if you have the first, and you have the tenth, the rest will take care of themselves. I think we made that case last fall.

If you have the 10th down... you will never, ever struggle with the 7th.

You won't.

The seventh commandment is "thou shall not commit adultery."

The 10th commandment is "thou shall not covet that which belongs to someone else." What it literally says is "thou shall not *delight in...*" other peoples stuff.... Because God gave YOU exactly what YOU need.

and the problem with lust is it doesn't come with your life...

If you are married, you already gave someone else your life. And its a beautiful reflection of Christ and what he has given to the church... the bible talks about Christ as the bridegroom.

and He gave up everything for his bride.

so when you lust, what you are saying is, He gave up everything... and you cant even respect the boarders of your own marriage?

or You cant respect someone else's marriage?

Or take marriage out the equation entirely... Just take you.

Is Jesus not enough for you? Is the cross, and the compassion that came with it, and the love, and the unbelievably high price.. is that not enough for you?

Because until you can be completely satisfied in Jesus and completely content in his love, you won't ever find what you are looking for in this world.

but because we are always searching... WE ARE always grasping for things that we think will fill us...

BUT WHEN THEY DON'T FILL US, they leave us more empty than when we started, and so the next time it takes a little more, and a little more.

they actually rob of us of our futures... and they rob other people of their futures, so that we can feel good about our life for a moment.

It is selfishness.

Selfishness is a really big deal to God.

Lust always says, "I want what I can't have so I will do what I must to get it..."

and after you get it, you will always want something else. Ultimately it is greed and selfishness.

To the man in Luke 12 who said "I am going to build barns and bigger barns" so that he could just keep increasing and increasing, God looked at him and said "this night your soul is required of you!"

when you are always trying to get more, you are telling God, GOD YOU ARE NOT ENOUGH FOR ME...

Guys... everything in your life is a gift.

You say to me, NO. I worked for it! I deserve those barns! I worked for them.

no... its a gift. (James 1:17) "Every good and perfect gift is from above."

God owes you nothing and yet he gave you everything.

So lets be intentional about giving it back to him.