

## Sermon 16: The Lust in our Hearts

Someone who believes Jesus is a prophet and yet doesn't know and practice what He taught is like a child who returns empty-handed from the bakery.

His mother says, "Didn't you go to the bakery?"

The child says, "Yes mother."

"Then where is the bread?"

The child says, "I went to the bakery and I had the money, but I couldn't remember what I went there to buy!"

We can't imagine a child so absent-minded as to forget why he went to the bakery, yet people believe Jesus is a prophet and don't know what He said or practice His teaching!

In Jesus' sermon on the mount we are learning what Jesus taught about the kingdom of God. Last time I spoke to you about the sermon on the mount we saw that the law is spiritual. The law says, "Do not kill." But if you hate people you are already a murderer. If you look down on others and consider yourself superior, you are breaking the law of love. You are guilty before God. You are unclean before God. Jesus did not give a new teaching. Listen to what was written in the law of Moses.

Leviticus 19:17-18 ' You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him. <sup>18</sup> 'You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I *am* the LORD.

You must be cleansed of this to enter the kingdom of God. Jesus will continue explaining the spiritual nature of the law with another important example.

Matthew 5:27-30 " You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' <sup>28</sup> "But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. <sup>29</sup> "If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. <sup>30</sup> "And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

Jesus connects the sin of adultery with the punishment of hell. No one wants to go to hell. Everyone wants to enter the kingdom of heaven. But in the kingdom of heaven, adultery is not permitted. What is adultery? You will say to me that it is sleeping with someone else's spouse. That is true but Jesus did not stop with that meaning. He explains the true nature of the law. It

has to do with the lust of the heart. If you lust after a woman in your heart it is the same as if you had committed the act in reality. As you think, so you are.

What is the solution to this problem? Most people in our culture say that the solution is to cover the woman. They say we must hide her beauty so that we will not lust after her. They say the problem is with the woman and not the man. What did Jesus say? The problem is with you, man! The lust in your heart shows that there is evil in you. The only thing lacking for the physical act of sin to occur is opportunity.

You have heard the story of two ethnic or religious groups living side by side in peace for decades, even centuries. But suddenly they begin to kill each other. Why suddenly? Did this hatred come into existence suddenly? No. It was always there. The hatred just found expression suddenly.

In America there was a hurricane in New Orleans. Suddenly there was no police force. People began to rape the women and plunder their neighbor's houses and even kill each other. This evil was not new. It was always in the heart. The evil just found opportunity.

When we lust, it shows that there is evil in the heart. We may not have opportunity to realize that lust, but we are guilty before God as if we did. That evil in your heart can never enter the kingdom of heaven. But you can't conquer your lust by yourself. If you eat only stale bread and water it will not take away your lust. If you do religious rituals it will not take away your lust. You must be born again. You must have a new power in you. This power comes from God through Jesus Christ alone.

I saw a video on the internet once. A huge crowd of men was gathered around a young woman dressed in only her underwear. She was laying on the ground. The crowd was shouting and there was great excitement. Finally a young man took a stone block and threw it to her head and blood poured out from her. What was her crime? Adultery. Where was the man she committed adultery with? Why did they not kill him too?

In our culture they say that if a man commits adultery, his hands are dirty. But if a woman commits adultery, her face is dirty. Does the Bible endorse this double-standard between men and women? Turn in your Bibles and we will see the law that God gave to ancient Israel.

Leviticus 20:10 The man who commits adultery with *another* man's wife, *he* who commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress, shall surely be put to death.

In Turkey over the last 10 years there have been more than 1000 "tradition" killings. One man was assigned the task of killing his sister because she did some misconduct. Before he killed her, he raped her. Why did he do that? Do people think that the brother is more righteous than his sister?

You might say to me, "David, I don't try to lust when I see a woman. It is natural." I know. That is the point. What could I say to you to convince you that humans are born with an inclination to sin? What could I do to convince you that you cannot make yourself clean before God with religious rituals? What could I do to convince you that your righteousness is not good enough to enter the kingdom of heaven? What could I do to convince you that you need a savior? I would probably point to this one fact that you lust naturally and ask you if you don't see that there is evil in your heart. The problem of lust is deeply spiritual. And the solution is spiritual. You must have a new heart. You must be born again.

Jesus points to the man and says that the problem is there. Does Jesus mean to say that it is proper for women to dress in a sexually inviting manner? What does the Bible say? Fasten your seat belts ladies and make sure that the air bags of the car are working because this could be a bumpy ride!

1 Timothy 2:8-10 I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; <sup>9</sup> in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, <sup>10</sup> but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.

What did the apostle Paul mean when he said that women should dress in "modest apparel, with propriety and moderation"?

We have three words here.

The first is modest apparel: This is the Greek *kosmios* and means modest or sensible. The word modest in English denotes dressing in a way that does not attract sexual attention.

The second word is propriety: this is *aidos*. It was used in the Greek language for moral and social correctness and also for covering parts of the female body according to respectable Roman society.

The third word is moderation: This is *sofrosune*. This word was used to describe discretion but particularly used in the context of women for chastity, that is sexual purity. The highest virtue for a woman was being able to control herself sexually.

There was a television commercial a few years back and a handsome young man walks into a cafe and sits down. The waiter is a young woman and as soon as she sees the man she turns and loosens the strings of her blouse and her blouse opens. She is a healthy woman. Do you understand what I mean? Then she goes to wait on the man. Is there anyone here who does not understand why she opened her blouse?

On the streets of Izmir some girls' school skirts are longer and they fall just below the knee, but others are almost a miniskirt, exposing the thigh. I asked my Turkish wife who grew up and went

to school in this country if the school dress code allowed that. She said that after school the skirts are easily rolled up from the waistband to make them shorter. Is there anyone here who does not understand why a girl would roll up her skirt from the waist to expose her legs?

The Bible expressly tells women to dress modestly, that is, in a way that does not draw attention to themselves sexually. So while Jesus says that the man is responsible for the lust in his heart, He does not mean that this is a license for women to dress in a sexually enticing manner.

In America, many people have a weight problem. They go to these centers where they learn about dieting and losing weight. What would you think of an ice-cream seller who parks his cart right outside the door of these places? Shrewd? Wicked?

In America there are people who have alcohol problems. They go to these centers to get help to overcome alcoholism. What would you think of someone handing flyers and brochures for alcohol sales to people going in and out of the alcohol help center? Are they innocent in God's eyes?

Are you innocent if you dress sexually?

Does the Bible explain why women should dress modestly? No. You should understand that. Does the Bible explain why women should not wear braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothing? No. You should understand that.

There once was a woman who was coming to our church in the United States. She came modestly dressed without ornaments. But I saw her in the shopping mall one day. What a difference! She had on her ornaments and dressed openly.

On one hand, I am thankful that the woman has enough respect for the beliefs of the Bible to not wear those things to church. It means she valued the beliefs of others in the church. But I was sad because she didn't apply these scriptures to the whole of her life. She really didn't believe that what Paul wrote was applicable to her today.

The admonition is repeated in 1 Peter 3:

1 Peter 3:1-6 Wives, likewise, *be* submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, <sup>2</sup> when they observe your chaste conduct *accompanied* by fear. <sup>3</sup> Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward -- arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel -- <sup>4</sup> rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. <sup>5</sup> For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, <sup>6</sup> as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.

In all of the Bible there is only one passage of scripture that tells women how to win an unbelieving spouse to the truth. That passage is this one. It tells the woman to be submissive and not wear ornaments and have a gentle and quiet spirit. Ladies, this command is valid for us today.

Men, this admonition for women to dress modestly does not mean that the problem of lust is solved for you. What is in your heart? If there is lust there, you are unclean before God just as much as if you had opportunity to carry out your thoughts. You cannot control your thoughts and passions by yourself. You have tried and failed. There is one solution: the new birth experience. Jesus never sinned. When you receive the Spirit of God through faith in Christ, you will have the power of Jesus living in you to resist temptation. Your sins are covered. This is the good news. This is salvation in Christ. You are not a slave to sin anymore. You can be free. Won't you accept Christ in your life today? Ask God to give the Spirit of Christ to you right now.