



**Adultery, pt. 4 The Things Forbidden
Exodus 20:14 " You shall not commit adultery."**

Why is adultery such a foul sin? Not just because it defiles and is impure, but because it strikes at the very heart of all covenants. It is the very opposite of fidelity. It is a rending of sacred trust, both between man and woman and between Man and God. It is to repay faithfulness with faithlessness.

When you think about it, all of the primary relationships in the bible depend for their maintenance upon faithfulness to promises that have been made. The relationship between God as creator and man as creature were established by covenants, the relationship between man and wife is entered into by covenant, the relationship even between rulers and the governed is established by covenant, and you'll remember that when you became members of the church, you too established that relationship by covenanting. You voluntarily made vows before God and his people to which you solemnly pledged yourselves.

Even the act of Baptism involves covenanting, both on the part of the parents who promise **"in humble reliance upon divine grace, that you will endeavor to set before (him) a godly example, that you will pray with and for (him), that you will teach (him) the doctrines of our holy religion, and that you will strive, by all the means of God's appointment, to bring (him) up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?"** and to the child who is in effect entering having the sign and the seal of the covenant applied to him and being engaged to follow the Lord all the days of his life.

God in effect wed his people to himself by means of covenants saying "I will take you as My people, and I will be your God." (Exodus 6:7) and God kept all of his promises, he was faithful, even though his people were not, and he was longsuffering in the midst of their faithfulness, but he called their behavior what it was:

That is why idolatry is so often called spiritual adultery in the Old Testament, God frequently characterized his faithless people in the following terms: ***Ezek. 16:30 "How degenerate is your heart!" says the Lord GOD, "seeing you do all these things, the deeds of a brazen harlot.***

31 " You erected your shrine at the head of every road, and built your high place in every street. Yet you were not like a harlot, because you scorned payment.

32 "You are an adulterous wife, who takes strangers instead of her husband."

Eventually the spiritual adultery of his people became too much and he in effect wrote them a bill of divorce saying unto them in Hosea 1:9 "Call his name Lo-Ammi [which is Hebrew for not my people], For you are not My people, And I will not be your God."

As a result, God scattered his people amongst the nations, they had in essence squandered all the gifts that God had covenanted to give them as his people. And yet they were not totally cut off. God remembered his promises to his people, he remembered the promise of the seed and even in the midst

of scattering them God promised to restore his people, and give them a new heart, one that would be faithful and would cleave to Him and His Commands:

Ezek. 36:22 " Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went.

23 "And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the LORD," says the Lord GOD, "when I am hallowed in you before their eyes.

24 "For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land.

25 "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

26 "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

27 "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

28 "Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.

And those are the promises that are fulfilled in you through Jesus Christ. You have been given a new heart, and the desire to keep his commandments to do them. So therefore as his people you are called upon to be markedly different from those who are not God's people. We may live in the midst of a faithless and perverse generation, but that is not what should mark God's people who have been purchased at the cost of the blood of his Son. As Paul said to Titus:

Titus 2:11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,

12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,

13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

As we saw last week we are people who are called to honor and glorify God in our thoughts, in our deeds and in our bodies. We are called to faithfulness, purity, and goodness.

This means that all that undermines these things and is contrary to God's commandments is absolutely forbidden to us. Living this way will not be easy, although you are God's people, you live like the ancient Israelites and the early Christians did, in the midst of an adulterous culture. But for you it may actually be a little more difficult.

In ancient Canaan and ancient Greece, while things like temple Prostitution were considered a normal part of social life that all good pagans took part in. God's people still had to actually leave their homes in order to seek out temple prostitutes, unfortunately however, in our country the Television, the Telephone, and the Internet will bring Adultery into your living room. I mentioned this before, but while generic dating service websites tend to encourage fornication and homosexuality – ***do you think for instance that 100 years ago society would have been blasé about the fact that in the tick boxes for I AM A [BLANK] SEEKING A [BLANK] you can easily select the same sex for both answers???***

– the newest growth area in this industry are websites devoted to facilitating adultery. They will even provide convenient lies and cover stories and training in effectively "fooling your spouse". Not surprisingly they don't tell you that your spouse almost inevitably always finds out anyway, and that in any event there is one who always sees what you are up to.

So this will by no means be easy, especially for singles because you don't have an accountability group living with you. What forbidden things must we avoid then? I had originally intended to try to give you a complete list of the things forbidden organized in exactly the same order as they are in the Westminster Larger Catechism answer 38, but it occurred to me that not only is that a large list that will take quite a while to discuss. It's kind of like saying "What are all the different ways I shouldn't murder someone?" and then attempting to list them in detail.

It's much easier to truncate that list greatly by simply starting out saying that all forms of sexual relations that take place outside of marriage as it was given by God, a lifelong covenant between one man and one woman are forbidden:

But there are also several other things we should mention –

1) that certain kinds of marriage are forbidden, in fact when we do these things it actually ceases to be marriage and is instead an abomination:

The first of these is incest, if you want to see a complete list of the forbidden relationships you will find them listed in Lev. 18:6-18. This is essentially a no-brainer, you should not be marrying fathers, mothers, daughters, sons, aunts and uncles. Cousins should probably be avoided, even though the word does not specifically prohibit this.

The second is Homosexuality: There is no such thing as marriage between man and man, woman and woman. As I said elsewhere, not only are all the aims for which marriage was ordained impossible between persons of the same sex:

We read in scripture that Marriage was ordained for:

- 1) the mutual help of husband and wife (Gen. 2:18; Eph. 5:28; I Peter 3:7)
- 2) For the increase of mankind with legitimate issue (Gen. 1:28; 9:1)
- 3) To provide God and his church with holy offspring (Mal. 2:15)
- 4) And for preventing of uncleanness. (1 Cor. 7:2,9)

In both the Old Testament and the New, homosexuality is spoken of as:

- 1) An Abomination punishable by death (Lev. 18:22, 20:13)
- 2) A Vile Passion (Romans 1:26)
- 3) Shameful, unnatural, and an error (Romans 1:27)
- 4) A sexual sin common amongst those who will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9)
- 5) Unholy, Profane, ungodly, lawless, insubordinate, sinful, and contrary to sound doctrine (1 Tim 1:9-10)
- 6) Sexual immorality (Jude 1:7)

The third is Polygamy: The entire text of commands regarding marriage in the Old and New Testaments is totally adverse to polygamy. The bible always speaks in its teachings on marriage of wife not wives, and Jesus points out that the basis of marriage is that Matthew 19:4 "***a man shall leave***

*his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?" **Two**, not three, not four.*

But what about all those patriarchs with multiple wives? R.L. Dabney decimated the argument that their bad example is in anyway normative for believers in the following fashion:

"Polygamy is recorded of Abraham, Jacob, Gideon, Elkanah, David, Solomon; but so are other sins of several of these; and, as every intelligent reader knows, the truthful narrative of holy writ as often discloses the sins of good men for our warning, as their virtues for our imitation. And he who notes how, in every Bible instance, polygamy appears as the cause of domestic feuds, sin, and disaster, will have little doubt that the Holy Spirit tacitly holds all these cases up for our caution, and not our approval."

2) We should also point out that the things that *lead to or promote fornication and adultery either in deed or thought are also forbidden*

This includes:

- A) Drunkenness (Eph. 5:18)
- B) Immodest Apparel (Prov. 7:10, 1 Tim. 2:9)
- C) Prohibiting Marriage and Enforcing Vows of Celibacy (1 Cor. 7:9)
- D) What the LC calls Corrupt and Filthy Communications (Eph. 5:3-4)
- E) Pornography (Gal. 5:19, Eph. 5:3)

3) Finally, that which destroys marriage without Adultery such as desertion is also forbidden. (1 Cor. 7:12-13)

Finally, there may be fear amongst you that because you have not been faithful in these things, that there is no salvation. You may fear, by my breaking of this commandment, I too have become *LO AMMI*.

Friends, there is not one person in this room who has kept this or any other commandment perfectly. Our hope of salvation cannot be in our keeping of his commandments, either in part or in whole. Rather our hope of salvation lies in the person and work of Jesus Christ, who kept the Covenant perfectly on your behalf.

By God's grace all of the promises having to do with our redemption are kept by God, who is ever faithful, and who keeps all of his promises and is yet faithful even when we are faithless, so that Paul can remind the Corinthian Church in 2 Cor. 1:18-20 ***"But as God is faithful, our word to you was not Yes and No.***

19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us -- by me, Silvanus, and Timothy -- was not Yes and No, but in Him was Yes. 20 For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us." All of God's promises to his people are fulfilled in Jesus.

So for those of you who have fallen into sexual sins of whatever kind in the past, but yet who are now trusting in Jesus Christ alone for salvation. What would he say to you? ***"Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."***