

# God on Sexual Immorality

*The Ten Commandments*

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I feel greatly privileged this morning to ask you to turn to the book of Exodus 20 as we continue our study on the 10 Commandments which we have been engaged in over a period of months now, and we are coming to the seventh commandment found in Exodus 20:14.

Before I read the text and get into the exposition of it, I just wanted to mention a while back I had a time of ministry that took me to a group of people that I had not met before, and in interacting with them, I found that in my midst were a number of people who had been born out of illicit relationships and to talk to people that were the product of the sin of fornication and to realize that in their midst were many who had no idea who their human father was, to see the ongoing pain and uncertainty that that brings and the desire to have some shred of information about the man who sired them and gave them life and knowing that there was nothing to be found, was just very very impactful to me and it affects and influences the way that I am going to teach this passage here this morning because that sorrow and the wrecked lives that it represents and the pain that has no human balm for healing, is a long-term decades long fruit of disregarding God's law and sinning against it, and that human dimension of the tragedy is only a token of the greater guilt that it brings on those who are guilty of sexual sin. It is obvious why God hates sexual sin, it's obvious why he speaks so loudly against it in his word. It is a violation of his created order. It is a violation of love. It is a violation of his law and it brings untold incalculable heartache to those that are affected by it. Some of you, I'm sure, are in that position. Some of you are guilty of sexual sin, probably even this week, and so we need to come to the word of God with a spirit of humility, with a spirit that is willing to be instructed by his word for the glory of God and for the well-being of our neighbor, and to recognize that the cultural push and the social love and exaltation of moments of sensual intoxication is actually a great sin against God, it wreaks untold havoc on lives, and we as Christians need to come apart to God's word, receive what it has to say, and with the help of the Holy Spirit and the grace of God to set our lives in a pursuit that separates ourselves from such wickedness and such sad consequences that sexual sin brings.

So this morning the title of our message is "God on Sexual Immorality." I plan two messages, it may bleed over into three, we'll see. But our text for this morning is found in Exodus 20:14 and may God bless his word to the glory of his name and accomplish far

more than we could ask or expect or anticipate as a result of our study of his word here this morning. Exodus 20:14 says quite simply,

14 You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not commit adultery. And as we've found throughout the 10 Commandments, this one also, this is a command that is expressed in the second person singular. In English, "you" could mean you, one person, or it could mean you, the whole group of us or the whole group of you, but here in the command it is addressed to us individually. This is God speaking to your heart directly through his moral law. He's not asking you to judge and evaluate others, he's speaking to you in terms of what you do with his gift of sexuality to all of humanity.

So it's addressed to us personally and so that heightens the personal responsibility that we bear in response to this commandment. Furthermore, the prohibition, as with the other commandments, it is absolute. The commandment of God here and the idea of the grammar in Hebrew behind it, is you shall never do this. You shall never commit adultery. You shall never do this. From the beginning we are struck by the absolute nature of the commandment of God and so we come to this and realize that we are all under the authority of the moral law of God and that is true even if you are a Christian. And we need to repeat the things that we've been saying throughout this series and remember something very important: there is a sense in which, there are aspects in which a true Christian has been delivered from the law of God. The nature of that deliverance is, first of all, the fact that we are free from the law in the sense that we are not obeying the law in order to try to earn favor with God. We do not obey the law of God in order to try to earn our salvation or to balance out the sins in our lives with certain measures of what we consider to be obedience. We can't do that, that's not the way the law operates, and the hope in Christ is that Jesus Christ on behalf of his people has perfectly obeyed the law of God, Jesus Christ in his atoning death on the cross has paid the penalty for all of our violations of the law of God, and as a result of that everything that the law demands of us has been fulfilled for us in Christ. And we rejoice in that. We are free from that oppressive burden of trying to earn God's favor by the way that we behave and by the way that we think. Christ has freed us from that aspect of the law and we are free from the threat of the law's penalty. One of the blessed blessings of being a Christian is that we have no fear beyond the grave. We know that in Christ our sins are forgiven. Christ paid the full penalty of it and that's why he could say as he hung on the cross, "It is finished!" The work of redemption is done, in other words, and in that moment Christ had fulfilled what the law required from the hands of lawbreakers. He was paying the price of our sin at the cross.

So we don't have to obey the law in order to earn salvation, we're not afraid of being judged by God because we are in Christ, Christ paid the penalty, Christ was buried, Christ is raised from the dead, and in our union with Christ, then, what is true of Christ is true of us as well and will be true of us. We enjoy the position of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. One day we will enjoy the reality of it and we will be raised with him and we will be alive forevermore and there will be no threat of sin, we will only be in

glory with Christ forevermore, and that is a glorious reality that our Lord Jesus Christ has purchased for us, on our behalf. Christ earned our salvation with his obedience and his shed blood and we, as Christians and only Christians, we're safe in him and we rejoice in that. Having said that, the law still has a different kind of purpose in our lives. The law instructs us in what the will of God is as we walk on earth. It tells us what God requires. It tells us what pleases God. It is a revelation of his will to us. And our friend, John MacArthur, has summarized it this way in his book "The Gospel According to the Apostles," and I just want to quote from him on this point. He said this, "Freedom from the law means freedom from sin's bondage and freedom from the law's penalty, not freedom from moral restraint. Grace does not mean we have permission to do as we please; grace means we have the power to do what pleases God. The mere suggestion that God's grace gives us license to sin is self-contradictory, for the very purpose of grace is to free us from sin. How can we who are the recipients of grace continue in sin?" So it's from that perspective that we understand that we are secure in Christ but understanding that the law reveals the will of God for how we are to live even as believers, not to earn merit, not to earn salvation but out of love to him, out of obedience to him, to please him, it's with that in mind that we come to the law of God.

Now let me ask you this and, you know, sometimes I speak rather directly and today is going to probably be one of those days, it looks like, and that's all right, but if you love the Lord Jesus Christ and he has truly saved you, you've truly been redeemed from the threat of eternal punishment for your guilt against God and you now have a clean slate before God and the righteousness of Christ is accounted to you and God accepts you as righteous in his sight for the sake of his Son. Isn't it obvious that anyone who truly knows Christ will love him? Isn't it obvious that the desire, the deepest heart desire of anyone who has truly been saved would be to please the one who had been so gracious and good to them? Isn't the thought of rebellion against love like that unthinkable? And shouldn't the heart of a true believer cry out, "God, what would You have me do? How would You have me live in a way that would please You? How can I please You with my life as a grateful response to Your saving mercy to me?" That's just undeniably true and it is the spirit of New Testament salvation.

The Scripture says in 1 John, "We'll know by this that we've come to know Him if we keep His commandments." The one who says, "I've come to know Him and does not keep His commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him." Scripture is not difficult on this point to understand. You know, it's difficult sometimes for people to get it in the 21<sup>st</sup> century because there are so many polluted voices trying to minimize and marginalize the word of God, the authority of Christ, and the importance of sanctification, virtue and obedience, but when you take Scripture at its word, it's not difficult to understand or see, and for the redeemed heart just cries out, "Lord, help me to obey. What do You want from me? Help me to do it." Well, we see God's law revealed on this matter of sexual morality.

So what I want to do today is I just want to talk about the biblical context of adultery and the biblical condemnation of adultery, and we'll see if we get any further than that here this morning. But let's consider, first of all, first point if you're taking notes here, write

this down: the biblical context on adultery. We need to go all the way back to the beginning and not simply lay out certain sins that are current today and condemn those, there's a place and a purpose for that, but to really understand the fullness of the wickedness of the sin of sexual sin, to fully understand that you have to go all the way back to the garden of Eden and you have to come to grips with what God's original plan was. We're not talking about mere external morality here, we're talking about the design of God from the very beginning.

So just by way of reminder here and to get us all going in the same direction here, I'll remind you right now that God created man and placed him in the garden of Eden. It was a perfect environment, perfect and yet something was missing. The Bible says that God saw that Adam was alone. He said in Genesis 2:18, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him." And so even in the perfect environment of the garden of Eden, Adam being placed in a sinless environment, in a state of innocence, and being on the receiving end of all of the goodness of God, God goes further and says, "This man needs someone so that he will not be alone. He needs companionship. He needs a helper." And so God created woman and established the institution of marriage.

Go to Genesis 2 with me. Genesis 2. I know you know the story but we need to connect it to the context in which we are speaking here today. Genesis 2, beginning in verse 21. Actually let's back up just to verse 20 for a little broader context. God had formed the beasts of the field, the birds of the sky, brought them to Adam to see what he would call them and in verse 20, "The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him." There were all of these creatures but they weren't capable, they did not share the image of God with him. There were all of these creatures but they were not capable of the rational thought and the human love that would be expressed by companionship with another human being, and so in verse 21 we read this, "So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. The man said, This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man." Then we read these famous words from verse 24, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed." And we see from this synopsis, you could say, that God created marriage for companionship, and as you read on in Scripture, you find that intimacy, sensual intimacy in marriage is not only permitted, it is commanded. You find that in 1 Corinthians 7; the Song of Solomon in the Old Testament celebrates the gift of sexual expression. And so God created marriage to be good, he created it to be between one man and one woman, one biological man and one biological woman, the times cause me to be more precise in what I say and that's all right. But God created this institution of marriage and he created it in a perfect environment with sacred purposes, with the sacred purpose of supplying companionship to the man, that the man and the woman in this exclusive relationship by which they would come apart from their prior families and join together to form a new family unit of

their own, God created this institution to be a blessing to man, to be a help to man, to be a companionship to him, and that there would be a mutual exchange of love and care in the context of marriage.

Now if you go further in Scripture, kind of shifting gears rather abruptly here for the sake of time, turn to the familiar passage of Ephesians 5 with me. Ephesians 5:28, the apostle writing inspired Scripture under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit says this that, "husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body." And he quotes from Genesis 2, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband." And so what we see in this passage is that marriage not only was designed for its original revealed purpose of companionship for man and for the woman, God had a longer term plan that would be revealed as revelation progressed, and the purpose of marriage we find in New Testament revelation is that it is to be a picture of the holy, sacred, eternal relationship between the Lord Jesus Christ and his redeemed, between the bridegroom, Christ, and the bride, his church. And this is to be a picture of the holy love of Christ for his people where he gives himself completely and fully for their redemption, that he provides for their every need, and he secures and protects them throughout all of eternity, delivering them, delivering them from sin, delivering them from Satan, delivering them from judgment, and this holy, great love of Christ for the redeemed, Scripture says, is pictured in the institution of marriage. The idea that Christ would ever betray his people, that Christ would ever violate his love to them is unspeakable blasphemy to suggest. Out on the thought. Out on the suggestion. Christ loves us, Christ keeps us. Christ loves us with an everlasting love. Romans 8 says nothing shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This is quite significant and so what I want you to understand in the context as we're talking about the matter of adultery in a few moments, is that when it comes to the institution of marriage, we are standing on holy ground, we are standing on some of the most sacred terrain found in all of Scripture when we talk about the institution of marriage. It evokes the holy, gracious purpose of our Creator. It pictures the sacrificial love of Christ for his people and their return of love and loyalty to him. And so there is this great sacred reality of marriage and everything that is intrinsic in sexual sin, everything about every aspect of sexual sin is a violation of that holy purpose.

Let me just hold it there, pause it there for a moment and to go on to say this. I want to say this, a little bit of a tangent but not really. The reality of marriage, the reality of God's sacred purpose in marriage, the revelation of his creative design, the reality of the exalted picture of Christ and the church that marriage represents, beloved, I just want to say to you that that reality should shape the way that Christians even approach how they conduct a wedding. If the wedding is the symbolic entrance into this marriage institution, and if marriage is given for the glory of God, then a Christian wedding should have as its

first goal the glory of God. Not the glory of the bride. That central theme of the glory of God will affect the way the minister preaches at the ceremony; that central purpose of the glory of God will affect the modesty with which the bride and her bridal party choose to attire themselves because they realize that the way they present themselves, it reflects on the glory of God either positively or negatively; that central concern for the glory of God will affect the type of music that is chosen and even the venue at which the wedding takes place. You see, we celebrate marriage when we celebrate a wedding and if we're going to do it from a biblical God-centered perspective, we cannot set aside the glory of God for the sake of a human entertainment event. Weddings matter and Christians, and I speak to the many single people that are in our midst here today, let me just encourage you to think through these things. How you conduct your wedding will either reflect well or reflect poorly on the glory of God. You show me how someone handles their wedding, I'll show you what their real convictions about the glory of God are. And lest you think that I'm overstating the point, Scripture says this in 1 Corinthians 10:31, "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." Well, how much more, then, when we are touching on the sacred institution of marriage should we be deeply concerned that we are doing it in a way that takes into account the glory of God and that that is factored into every detail of what is done. If the glory of God is central to how we eat and drink three times a day, how much more a wedding that reflects on his work in creation and redemption?

So for you single people whom we love and we embrace at Truth Community Church, as a pastor, as your pastor, I just encourage you to take this to heart now before the wedding approaches, take it to heart now so that you'll be spiritually prepared when your time comes. When God gives you that gift, you be prepared to return thanks in a wedding that glorifies him. Yes. Yes. Yes. Enjoy your day with your bride, enjoy your day with your groom. Absolutely, but Christians find their greatest joy when they are actively engaged in promoting the glory of God and you can do that together. And the way that you approach your wedding sets a trajectory whether you like it or not, it sets a trajectory for your marriage. If a plane can leave off two different runways at the same airport just slightly angled differently and they end up going in much different directions, and so for our single people, I plead with you to take these things to heart and honor the Lord with the way that you approach your wedding as a reflection of your reverence for him and your reverence for the gift of marriage that one day he will give to you. End of tangent and I'm grateful for the many in our church body who have done exactly what I'm describing.

Now with all of that said and we've set apart the institution of marriage in our thinking, now we have to come to what God is prohibiting more directly in Exodus 20, and you can go back there with me. As we've said at other times, the gift of sex is to be enjoyed in the context of marriage but not outside it. It is for marriage, it is blessed in marriage, but it has no place in anyone's life outside of marriage. Now with the picture of marriage in mind, what we can see is this, and I'm going to be quite discreet as possible knowing there are young children in our midst, I'm going to be very discreet as I talk about these things, but what I want you to see is that sexual sin, and we'll define it and go through Scripture here in a moment, sexual sin defiles and defaces that beautiful picture and that

beautiful institution of marriage that God has established, and therefore because of that all sexual sin by definition must be profoundly evil. Sexual sin is profoundly evil. It brings great guilt upon those who participate in it. It brings great guilt on those who simply engage it in their imaginations or in the privacy of their own room. We have to take this seriously and, beloved, I plead with you to take God at his word, and the fact that we live in such a perverse culture, such a libertine culture which I mean in the most derogatory way possible, the fact that sexual sin is prevalent in society does not in any way lessen its guilt before God. And so we need to take this seriously and as we study the word of God, we can only come to that conclusion.

We've seen, first of all, the context of adultery, taking a little side detour into the matter of Christian weddings, now secondly, we're going to look at the condemnation of adultery. The biblical context will help us understand the prohibition. Once again Exodus 20:14 simply saying, "You shall not commit adultery." Now what is adultery? What does that term mean? Well, let's define it first in a technical sense, in a technical sense of what the term means, and then be able to expand out and see what the Bible says about sexual sin in general. So defining it in a technical sense, adultery refers to voluntary sexual relations between a married person and someone other than his or her lawful spouse. Adultery, technically speaking, is referring to where one of the partners or one of the people engaged in relations is married to someone else.

Now what does God say about this? And one of the things that I hope that you've seen as we've continued our study in the 10 Commandments is that as you read the rest of the books of Moses, five books of Moses called the Pentateuch, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, as you read the rest of the law of Moses, the book of Moses, five books, one book of Moses, as you read this you get a commentary on what the expanded nature and the expanded definition of these terms, what is the broadness that is encompassed by the brief command, and what we find is this, is that the brief command, "You shall not commit adultery," stands as a category for all manner of sexual sin. Not simply those that involved a married person but any kind of sexual sin whatsoever. We find this as we continue our study through the word of God and let the word of God interpret the word of God.

So in the Old Testament in the law of Moses, within a matter of weeks in Leviticus anyway, a matter of weeks after this moral law is given in Exodus 20, Moses speaks, God speaks in Leviticus 20 what does God think about this particular sin. Look at Leviticus 20 and it is, as in every other aspect of the law of God that we've seen in this study, it's frightening. It's a fearsome thing to contemplate the holiness of God as revealed through the penalty that he inflicts and what he requires at the hand of those who violate his moral law.

Leviticus 20:10, written just within a month after the book of Exodus or shortly thereafter. Leviticus 20,

10 If there is a man who commits adultery with another man's wife, one who commits adultery with his friend's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.

Adultery in the Old Testament code for the nation of Israel required the death penalty. You were to be executed if you committed this sin.

Look over at the book of Deuteronomy which came after the years of wandering in the wilderness, some 40 years later. The 10 Commandments are repeated in Deuteronomy 5 and then we find this in Deuteronomy 22 which is where I want you to go. Deuteronomy 22:22 says this,

22 If a man is found lying with a married woman, then both of them shall die, the man who lay with the woman, and the woman; thus you shall purge the evil from Israel.

You forfeited in the nation of Israel, by the act of adultery you forfeited your right to live. And it expands beyond marriage, verse 23,

23 If there is a girl who is a virgin engaged to a man, and another man finds her in the city and lies with her, 24 then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city and you shall stone them to death; the girl, because she did not cry out in the city, and the man, because he has violated his neighbor's wife. Thus you shall purge the evil from among you.

The death penalty.

Turn over to the book of Proverbs just after the book of Psalms, of course. Proverbs 6. And I'm only going to look at this one passage although there are many many in Proverbs that we could have looked at. We're just taking one for the sake of time. In Proverbs 6:20 it says,

20 My son, observe the commandment of your father And do not forsake the teaching of your mother; 21 Bind them continually on your heart; Tie them around your neck. 22 When you walk about, they will guide you; When you sleep, they will watch over you; And when you awake, they will talk to you. 23 For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light; And reproofs for discipline are the way of life

Now what's the point of all of this instruction from Solomon to his son? Verse 24,

24 To keep you from the evil woman, From the smooth tongue of the adulteress.

Do you see again we find this word "evil" attached to the sin of adultery and it's an adjective applying to the woman. She is an evil woman. It's not simply that God declares the sin to be evil, the person who engages it is engaged in evil. He or she is evil themselves. And so be on guard, take heed and avoid this great sin by being rooted deeply in the word of God, is the point of the passage. And he says in verse 25 in a way that foreshadows what Jesus would say in Matthew 5,

25 Do not desire her beauty in your heart, Nor let her capture you with her eyelids.

Don't even go there in your thoughts, in your affections, in your heart desire. Don't go there. Don't desire that. Even though it's outwardly attractive, it is a trap designed to kill you. Verse 26,

26 For on account of a harlot one is reduced to a loaf of bread, And an adulteress hunts for the precious life. 27 Can a man take fire in his bosom And his clothes not be burned? 28 Or can a man walk on hot coals And his feet not be scorched? 29 So is the one who goes in to his neighbor's wife; Whoever touches her will not go unpunished.

Proverbs 22:14 it says,

14 The mouth of an adulteress is a deep pit; He who is cursed of the LORD will fall into it.

Now when you go into the New Testament, you find that the condemnation is not narrowed down or mitigated or lessened, it's expanded. It's expanded into something even more. Look at Matthew 5 with me. We'll come back to this text next time, whatever next time means on my pulpit calendar, but in Matthew 5:27, Jesus tells his audience what the true meaning and the true intent of the law of God is. It's not simply prohibiting the physical act of engagement, it is prohibiting heart desires, it is touching the heart itself and requiring righteous desires and not evil desires. Matthew 5:27 Jesus says,

27 "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 lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

The lust is of the same kind of sin that the physical act is. It's not to the same degree, it's not to the same extent, but it has the same evil root as the physical act does. It starts with evil wicked desires in the heart and Jesus says that's what the law of God is talking about, not simply don't do the act, it's saying don't even desire the act, and expands it in a way that convicts and condemns us all to one degree or another.

And how serious is this? How evil is this sin? Well, you can judge it by what Jesus' counsel is to his disciples. He says, verse 29,

29 "If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. 30 If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell.

Now Jesus is using hyperbole here; he's not literally telling people to literally take a machete and cut their hand off. He's using a dramatic hyperbole to illustrate how severe this sin is, how bad it is, how wicked in the sight of God and how dangerous it is to entertain it in your heart. Just in your heart because if you coddle this sin in your heart, you coddle it in private, it's going to come out in your life later absent repentance. But what I want you to see particularly about what Jesus' words here, is that lust and adultery he sets aside as particularly hellish sins. These are particularly hellish sins that are associated with the pit itself. It is demonic. It is satanic.

Notice what he says there and he says it twice in verse 29, he says, "it's better for you," middle of verse 29, "it's better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell." Middle of verse 30, he repeats himself, "it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell." Beloved, this is in the context of Jesus' teaching on the law of God, "You shall not commit adultery." It's in the context of Jesus saying even lust has the guilt of adultery associated with it, and this is the sin that was the death penalty in the Old Testament. Jesus introduces us to the concept that it's not just a matter of losing your physical life, it's a matter of eternal consequence. Millions if not billions of people will be going to hell for this sin, that's how severe and God views it. This is how serious it is. Hell itself is at stake in what we're discussing here and so you'll forgive me, you'll forgive me for being a bit animated about it for the sake of your own good, to not downplay it as some do in their pulpits, to not downplay these things, to not joke about it, to not minimize it for the sake of cultural acceptance. You need to understand that there is a great big flashing red warning sign, "Beware! Stop! Stop!" There's great danger here of the eternal kind that's at stake. As I said, we'll come back to this text.

Turn to the book of Ephesians 5. As you're turning there, you know, it's just my prayer that the Lord would awaken us. You know, we're all sinners who fall short of the glory of God. We get that. I know that. But the fact that we're all guilty does not give us license to marginalize or minimize the word of God. We need to give full voice to what God says about it. And so between the physical act of adultery and the lusts of the heart that Jesus speaks about, understand and for the benefit of your young people, that overly sensual relationships even if they stop short of physical intimacy, overly sensual relationships are embraced by this commandment, "You shall not commit adultery." You are to treat each other with holy respect and holy deference and not be engaging in that which naturally leads to a culmination and just say, "Well, I'll just stop short." No, it doesn't work that way. If the sin is in the heart, it's already guilty enough to go to hell, and so to act on that even if it stops short of intimacy is likewise a sin of great consequence. This unfolding, this unloosing of your desires is designed for marriage not before, and it's not good to stoke the fires ahead of time.

So Ephesians 5:3 with me and we're just looking at the condemnation of adultery and taking God seriously. And beloved, I'm literally, you know, driving my foot into the floor repeatedly as I talk to you. I've said this so many times but when Jesus speaks like that, he's not bluffing. He is warning earnestly about the consequences of sin and you cannot dismiss it and say, "Well, the Lord is gracious and I'll be okay in the end." If you are unrepentantly pursuing a course of sexual sin, you're in the gravest of dangers. You are in grave danger of eternal judgment. What happens to you if you die on the way home today hardened in your sin? What happens to you then when Jesus says lust and adultery, you're going to be thrown into hell for it? What's going to happen to you? I shudder at the thought of someone hearing these words and just shrugging it off and cold-heartedly dismissing it and insulting the Lord of grace as if his word is not to be taken with the utmost seriousness and earnestness. What's going to happen?

Ephesians 5. God says this repeatedly. There is no whispering here. There is no whispering in God's word about sexual sin as some have suggested. He's shouting. He's shouting about this. Ephesians 5:3,

3 But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; 4 and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this you know with certainty, that no immoral [referring to one who commits sexual immorality] no immoral, no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Then he goes on to add a warning, you know, and the warnings that I'm giving here from this pulpit so inadequately here this morning, I am not being any more forceful than Scripture itself is as I warn you and plead with you to take heed to the word of God because look at what Paul says in verse 6, he says,

6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things [the things he was just talking about in the prior three verses] because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

Turn over to 1 Corinthians 6 which is, of course, back in your Bibles. I wrote it down in reverse order in my notes and that's okay. 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 10.

9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived;

You see repeatedly Scripture says on this very point, beloved, don't be deceived. Your tendency is to dismiss it. Your tendency is to say it doesn't matter. Everyone else is doing it and so how bad can it be? Your heart is prone to deception on this very point. Scripture warns you again and again.

Do not be deceived; neither fornicators [sex outside of marriage], nor idolaters, nor adulterers [sex where one partner is married], nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.

Paul gives that balm of comfort in verse 11 speaking to true Christians that,

11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Christ forgives sexual sinners, yes, but the warning implores you not to presume on that grace if you are unrepentant and you love the sin. If you are unrepentant about your sexual sin, if you love your sexual sin, if you hard-heartedly pursue it, verse 11 has no application to you because it's evident that you have not been washed, you have not been sanctified or you would not continue to pursue the lust of the former life.

Now verse 15 there in 1 Corinthians 6. Paul says,

15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be! 16 Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body with her? For He says, "THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH." 17 But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him. 18 Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

And his point is that for a Christian to commit the unthinkable sin of adultery, to join with a harlot, to join with a prostitute, because of the indwelling Spirit there is a sense in which you are dragging the Lord into the wickedness of your life, dragging the Lord himself into that sin. Paul says that's unthinkable for one who is in union with Christ.

So we see that sexual sin will exclude men from heaven. Christ warns deeply against it. It's a violation of the Holy Spirit. You see, don't you, you see, don't you, the development, the progression of Scripture in the course of the progress of revelation, you see how this is unfolding? It doesn't get better from Genesis and Exodus as you go toward Revelation. It gets even more frightening about the consequences of it. Wrath and hell await those who are guilty of this kind of sexual sin.

Look at 1 Thessalonians 4. Oh, the repeated repeated stark warnings of God's word. None of us have any excuse after seeing Scripture today, do we, to think that this is somehow okay, to think that it's not so bad. None of us have that excuse anymore. The Lord has

stripped all of that away from us and we're just left bare before a holy God. 1  
Thessalonians 4:3. In verse 2 he says,

2 ... you know what commandments we gave you by the authority of the  
Lord Jesus. 3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that  
you abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each of you know how to  
possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, 5 not in lustful passion,  
like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6 and that no man transgress and  
defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is the avenger in all  
these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you.

Paul warned them. This is the spirit of what we're talking about today. I'm not out of  
bounds with the earnestness with which I address your heart this morning. Scripture itself  
is earnest in its warnings about this. Verse 7,

7 For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in  
sanctification. 8 So, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God  
who gives His Holy Spirit to you.

You're rejecting God himself, you are rejecting Christ if you reject this. And if you reject  
Christ and stay in that condition, there is only one eternal outcome for you and it ain't  
good.

One final text on this, Hebrews 13, a text which for some reason in these discussions is  
sometimes often overlooked and it brings us full circle back to Genesis 2. Verse 4,  
Hebrews 13:4, I'll give you a moment, an extra moment here. Verse 4,

4 Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be  
undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

You see, beloved, this matter of sexual immorality, it's a multi-faceted sin ranging from  
the desires of the heart to the physical act and all points in between. It assaults the  
institution of marriage from creation. It assaults the redemptive work and the redemptive  
picture of Christ and the church. It runs past all kinds of warning signs in Scripture. And  
all of those biblical details show why it is a high crime against God. And I want you to  
think through this with me as I give a little bit of application here, I guess. Sexual sin is a  
direct sin against God. It is a vertical sin against God. It makes Christ the member of a  
harlot. But even thinking on a horizontal level, those of you that engage in illicit  
relationships, think about what you're doing. You profess to be a Christian and you  
engage in these kind of illicit things. Imagine what you're doing. In a way that is almost  
unique to other sins in the moral law, you are directly involving another person in your  
sin. You are dragging them to hell also. What kind of love is that? You call yourself a  
Christian, "By this you'll know that you love Me if you keep My commandments." You  
say you love Christ, you say you love people, but you would draw someone into this kind  
of wickedness and draw them and push them closer to the rim of hell to satisfy your  
momentary desires? What's wrong with you?

And some of you have experienced this on the other side. You've been faithful in your marriage and you've been sinned against in this way. I know that and I grieve with you but let it just be said that the adulterer crushes the soul of his or her spouse, crushes the souls of children. It's a violation of the marriage vow of faithfulness that I'll belong to you and you'll belong to me as long as we both shall live. Did that vow not mean anything? Was that promise in the presence of God and many witnesses just something a matter of convenience that you casually set aside when the urge hits you? What's wrong with you? Adultery necessarily involves other sins, lies and treachery. It pollutes the lives of legitimate and illegitimate children. It provokes other sins in those that are affected by it, sins of jealousy, revenge, alienation. It divides families. It can divide churches. It creates a reproach that follows you to the grave where it leads to eternal destruction. God's word is weighty on this and we would be fools to try to minimize, mitigate against it or somehow try to lighten the mood. We need to take this to heart. We need all to take this deeply to heart.

Just thirdly real quickly, finally, let's talk about the category of adultery and then see if we can end on a note of hope. The category of adultery. I've already made this point so I'll just mention it briefly here. This commandment, as I've said before, it does not narrowly apply only to the married, this category of adultery, this category of sexual sin prohibits every manner of sexual intimacy outside the bonds of marriage. Leviticus 18 and 20 make this clear. It prohibits intimacy between unmarried people. It prohibits homosexuality. It prohibits transgenderism. It prohibits incest. It prohibits bestiality, polygamy and pornography, all of which are perversions of God's design for intimacy. And it prohibits even the desire for such sins. A man, a woman, can violate this command without touching another person whatsoever.

And what can we say about all of this, then? Just like the other six commandments that we've already looked at, this commandment by itself is sufficient to convict us all of being lawbreakers. To one extent or another we've all broken the spirit of this command, if not the very letter of the command, and apart from Christ we are all guilty before God as a result of it. Now what can we say? Well, remember that the law, one of the functions of the law is to be a tutor, a teacher, a tour guide that leads us directly to Christ. We find in the condemnation that this commandment brings upon our souls, we find that which would point us to Christ, which would say, "Over there, not in your righteousness, not in your efforts to erase your past sin, go over there, go to the cross, go to the Lord Jesus Christ," because we find in the gospel of Jesus Christ a promise of mercy from God if we will turn to his Son, repentantly turn to his Son.

I want to end on this text from the book of Titus 3. Here we find Paul describing the spiritual reality for Christians who have truly been born again, for those who have repentantly turned from their sin and received Christ as Lord, as Master, as Savior. We see the reality that gives us comfort as Christians as we walk out and also we see an invitation that gives hope and a way forward for those of you who are not in Christ and you feel the crushing weight of the law of God on your conscience. Don't run from that, rather turn to Christ. Titus 3:3,

3 For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.

We were lost, without God and without hope in the world, from Ephesians 2. But what's the reality for those that God has shown mercy to in Christ? What's the reality of those that the Spirit has given new life to? What is the reality of those who have been born again? Verse 4, "But," blessed contrast. After all of this condemnation from the word of God, we get a blessed relief in the contrasting word there, "But." You used to be like this, now as a Christian it's different for you, and those of you who are sitting here as tenderhearted believers and this message has reminded you of your past guilt, here is the blessed balm that Scripture invites you to take and to apply to your wounds and to be restored to intimacy. Verse 4,

4 But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, 5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

If you're a genuine Christian here and have felt the weight of this command, just remember grace, remember Christ, remember that he fulfilled everything that God requires on your behalf and rest in him. At the same time, taking heart to other words of Scripture. As you go to Christ, as you remember Christ, embrace that for all the fullness of who he is and all the promises that God gives to his children in his word, do all of that, then go and sin no more.

*Heavenly Father, how searching Your word is, how convicting to know that we all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We are completely shut up to Your mercy and grace in Christ Jesus our Lord. Father, for the unconverted in our audience, do not let the conviction of this hour escape them until they bend the knee to Christ. For those of us that are in Christ, Father, we see in a new perspective how much You have forgiven us, how much evil and wickedness You have forgiven us of in Christ. We thank You for the Lord who purchased our redemption. We renew our love and commitment to Him just now. In the name of Christ our Lord. Amen.*

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