

# ST. SIMEON ANGLICAN CHURCH, OFF FUTA ROAD, AKURE

## BIBLE STUDY, 20/08/2008

### STUDY 15

## FIDELITY AND PURITY IN MARRIAGE

Matthew 5:27 – 28

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery". Christ did not say, "Ye know that God said at Sinai," but instead, "ye have heard that it was said by them of old time." "Them of old time" referring to the ancient teachers. "Thou shalt not commit adultery"; those were indeed the actual words of the Holy Spirit, but the scribes and Pharisees understood and restricted the scope of these words to the bare act of unlawful intercourse with a married woman, "No man shall lie with another man's wife," and hence they thought that so long as men abstained from that particular sin or so long as the outside of the cup and of the platter be clean, they are indifferent to whatever filth may exist within (Matthew 23:25, 26). Different far is it with the Judge of all the earth: "The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (I Samuel 16:7). That which the world pays no attention to, God regards as of first importance, for "out of the heart are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23). It is only "the pure in heart" who shall ever see (commune with and eternally enjoy) God (Matthew 5:8). The essence of all vice is intention. Jesus condemns adultery in the heart. Those who indulge in unchaste imaginations, desires, and intentions are guilty before God.

Therefore, in the verses before use, the law-giver Himself restores the seventh commandment to its true sense and meaning, and therefore to its proper use, purging it from the false interpretation of the Jews. He insists that its true intent had a much wider scope, reaching also to the inward affections, prohibiting all impure thoughts and desires of the heart.

### 1. Fidelity and purity in marriage

Matthew 5:27; Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18; Matthew 15:4–6; John 8:4–5; Job 31:12; I Corinthians 6:9–10; Hebrews 13:4; Deuteronomy 22:22–24; Proverbs 6:32; Leviticus 18:20; Jeremiah 5:8; Ezekiel 22:11; Malachi 2:15

The external act of having sexual relationship outside of God's intended context of a husband and wife within marriage was strictly prohibited. God's intent is that His created human beings manifest His character of fidelity and purity within their sexual relationships. The action of abstaining from improper sexual activities externally does not necessarily forestall sinful attitudes of sensual desire within. Later in His ministry Jesus said that "from within, out of the heart of men proceed the evil thoughts and fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, deceit, sensuality, etc. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man" (Mark 7:21–23).

Adultery is the breach of wedlock. Even the Pharisees did condemn it, for though they made light of disobedience to parents, yet they clamoured for the death of the woman guilty of this sin. The grievousness of this offence appears in that it breaks the solemn covenant entered into between husband and wife and God, it robs another of the precious ornament of chastity, it defiles the body and ruins the soul, it

brings down the vengeance of God upon the posterity, which Job called "*a fire that consumeth to destruction*". "*Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers shall inherit the kingdom of God*". "*Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge*". In Christian ethics, the only legal and sacred relation between man and women is their union in wedlock. Every other sex relation and practice is against the principles of the gospel.

## **2. Adultery in the heart**

Matthew 5:28; Psalm 66:18; II Peter 2:14; II Kings 9:30; Ephesians 5:3–4; Genesis 3:6; 24:2; Exodus 20:17; I Samuel 11:2; Proverbs 6:25; James 1:14–15

*"But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."* Our Saviour Jesus Christ reveals the height, depth, and breadth of the spirituality of the Divine law. The commandment not only forbids all acts of uncleanness, but also the desire of them. It is not an involuntary glance which constitutes the sin, but when evil thoughts are thereby prompted by our depraved natures. The first step and degree, then, of this crime is when lust stirs within us. The second stage and degree is when we deliberately *approach unto*—a feeding of the eye with the sight of the forbidden fruit, where further satisfaction cannot be obtained. Where the lascivious desire is rolled under the tongue as a sweet morsel, it is the commission of the act so far as the heart is concerned, for there is then lacking nothing but a convenient opportunity for the crime itself. Then if this lust be not sternly mortified, the heart swiftly becomes enthralled and the soul is brought into complete bondage to Satan, so that it is fettered by chains which no human power can break. Such was the deplorable condition of those mentioned by the apostle, "*Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin*".

The use of any other of our senses and members to stir up lust is highly forbidden. Those who dress and expose themselves with desires to be looked at and lusted after (as Jezebel, who painted her face, tired her head, and looked out of the window) are not less, but even more guilty. How great, then, must be the guilt of the great majority of the modern misses who deliberately seek to arouse the sexual passions of our young men. And how much greater still is the guilt of most of their mothers for allowing them to become lascivious temptresses. The reading of books which make light of immodesty and indecency and the use of light and wanton talk and the jesting about loose morals are prohibited.

## **3. Our sincere urgent repentance and confession**

Matthew 5:27–28; Job 31:1; II Corinthians 7:1; Psalm 119:37; Psalm 101:3; Proverbs 7:25; 23:31; Ezekiel 23:16; Mark 9:47

How solemnly do today's study condemn us, for even though by preserving grace our bodies have not been defiled by the outward act of adultery, yet who can say "*My heart is clean*"? Who is free from a wanton eye, from evil desires, from impure imaginations? Who can truthfully affirm that he has never been guilty of questionable jesting and unchaste conversation? Surely we have ample cause to humble ourselves beneath His mighty hand and acknowledge our breach of the seventh commandment. The eye is both the inlet and the outlet of a great deal of wickedness of this kind; witness Joseph's mistress (Genesis 39:7), Samson (Judges 16:1), David (II Samuel

11:2). What need have we, therefore is, to '*make a covenant with our eyes*' to make this bargain with them: that they should have the pleasure of beholding the light of the sun and the works of God, provided that they would never fasten or dwell upon anything that might occasion impure imaginations or desires; and under this penalty, that if they did, they must smart for it in penitential tears. What have we the covering of our eyes for, but to restrain corrupt glances and to keep out defiling impressions? How much sorrow and humiliation would be avoided if such wholesome counsel was duly laid to heart and carried out in practice.

If we truly realise that the Holy One has taken up His abode within our hearts, must we not put forth every effort to keep the guest-chamber clean? As the best way to keep down weeds is to plant the garden with vegetables and flowers, so the most effective means of excluding from the mind those foul imaginations is for it to be filled with thoughts of spiritual things, to have our affections set upon things above. If we give God His proper place within, Satan will be defeated. Yea, shall we not with increased earnestness pray, "*Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken Thou me in Thy way*"? And if our repentance and confession be sincere, shall we not be doubly on our guard against a repetition of these sins, seeking to avoid temptations and taking heed of every occasion which may incite us?