

Save Your Heart for your Covenant Partner

Matthew 5:27-30

I. There is a parallel between relationship with God and marriage.

- A. Paul speaks of a mutual submission (Ephesians 5:21-33).
 - 1. The wife is to submit to the husband as the Church to Christ
 - 2. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loved us
 - (a) He is to give himself, to die to self.
 - (b) Like Christ with the Church, he is to put her needs first.
 - 3. By doing this he is loving himself, for they are one
 - (a) A profound mystery.
 - (b) Is this about marriage or Christ and the Church? Yes!
 - 4. As husband and wife are one, we are spiritually one with Christ (I Corinthians 6:17).
 - (a) As Paul says, this is profound (deep) and mysterious.
- B. Consider the parallels of these two unions.
 - 1. Both are covenants, based on sacred oaths.
 - (a) The parties pledge to be loyal, faithful, true.
 - (b) The parties pledge to be exclusive.
 - (c) "forsaking all others, I promise myself for you only."
 - 2. We have seen that both establish a spiritual oneness.
 - 3. Both unions are holy because of sacred pledges to God.
 - (a) God promises blessing for faithfulness.
 - (b) He warns of consequences for unfaithfulness.
 - (c) He is calling us to guard and protect these relationships.

II. All covenants have signs that represent the promises.

- A. Last week we looked at signs of our covenant with God.
 - 1. Communion and the washing of feet.
 - 2. These signs are holy (sacred) because of what they represent.
 - (a) We see this easily with Communion.
 - (b) The foot washing: a shaming event that washed away sin.
- B. The sign of the marriage covenant is the physical union.
 - 1. The physical union is a picture of the spiritual oneness.
 - (a) Remember, covenant signs are holy.
 - (b) So, the sexual union of husband and wife is holy.
 - 2. That is why God says that sex is only for marriage.
 - (a) He has given us the gift of intimacy.
 - (b) The world doesn't get this. They think that sex is entertainment.
 - (c) But there are consequences to treating holy things as common.
 - (d) Since the "sexual revolution" family life has been devastated.
 - 3. The sexual relationship is what initiates marriage (I Corinthians 6:15-20).
 - (a) If you are with someone intimately, in God's eyes you are married. You are "one flesh."
 - (b) This is a problem in a culture where people have multiple partners.
 - (c) Sexual immorality brings harm to yourself.

(d) It also dishonors God.

- C. The one-flesh bond is also an emotional bond.
 - 1. God has designed the physical union to form a bond.
 - (a) Oxytocin, "the bonding hormone" is released.
 - (b) This brings feelings of intense bonding.
 - (c) God has designed that to be for marriage.
 - (d) Without lifelong commitment bonding leads to hurt.
- III. God has designed marriage to be a bond of lifelong love, loyalty and faithfulness.
 - A. He puts boundaries around sex and marriage for our good.
 - 1. To protect husband and wife.
 - 2. To protect the integrity of sacred oaths.
 - 3. To protect the sacred sign of sexual intimacy.
 - B. You have heard it said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery."
 - 1. You have vowed before God to be faithful and loyal.
 - (a) You are not to form a one-flesh bond with anyone else.
 - 2. Jesus: "If you lust in your heart...already committed adultery."
 - (a) Why is that?
 - (b) You have pledged loyalty, "forsaking all others."
 - (c) You are doing in your mind what you promised only for your spouse.
 - (d) That is disloyal, unfaithful, a violation of your covenant.
 - C. Engaging with pornography is also a covenant violation.
 - 1. By Jesus' definition, it is adultery.
 - 2. It is sexual immorality, whether you are married or not.
 - (a) Why? Because it is violating something God has made holy.
 - (b) It is treating something that is holy as if it is common.
 - 3. It is also very destructive.
 - (a) You are bonding with a false image (air-brushed).
 - (b) Neurological, chemical, and emotional effects lead to addiction.
 - (c) It undermines your marriage (or future marriage) bond.
 - (d) Your spouse feels like you're being unfaithful, because you are.
 - 4. If you are struggling with this, don't hide. You are not alone.
 - (a) You need prayer and accountability.
 - (b) Put a good blocker on all electronic devices.
 - D. Should I really gouge out my eye?
 - 1. No, not to be taken literally.
 - (a) If it was literal, why only your right eye?
 - 2. Origen apparently took it literally.
 - (a) He removed a body part that he thought was causing sin.
 - (b) He was trying to deal with Origen-al sin.
 - (c) The meaning: don't compromise with sin!