

February 18, 2018

The Seven Dead Sins

The Deadly Sin of Lust

2 Samuel 11:1-5/ Matthew 5:27-30

Opening words: Here is a statistic you should never forget! 100% of people have sinned. That statistic did not come from the Barna Research group, or the Gallop Research group. That statistic came from the word of God, the Bible. Romans 3:23 says, "*All have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God.*" It is not open for debate. Sin is real, and we are sinners. Sin is not just reserved for the law-breakers on the news. Sin didn't just happen in another time, or place. Sin is not just reserved for stories found in the Bible. Sin is real, and sin is as close as your next breath. Let me say it bluntly, so you don't miss the point. You are a sinner! Lent is not just a time to identify your sins, it is a time to take steps to eliminate your sins. That thought is at the very heart of my newest sermon series, *The Seven Deadly Sins*. The theme is not original.

The modern concept of the seven deadly sins originated with a monk by the name of Evagrius Ponticus in the fourth century. The theme was revised by Pope Gregory I in the year AD 590. Countless preachers, including Billy Graham, have examined the seven deadly sins through the years. In short, the seven deadly sins, pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, wrath, and sloth, are a classification of vices found within Christian teachings. I will look at each one and I will begin today. I have called today's message *The Deadly Sin of Lust*. Our scripture readings are 2 Samuel 11:1-5 and Matthew 5:27-30.

2 Samuel 11:1-5 In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem. ² One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, ³ and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite." ⁴ Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (Now she was purifying herself from her monthly uncleanness.) Then she went back home. ⁵ The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant."

Matthew 5:27-30 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.'²⁸ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹ If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

Lust has been defined as, *"A sudden, powerful, almost overwhelming desire for something you know is bad for you."* Today, I am looking at the word lust through a sexual filter. If you are ready to begin, say, **"Amen!"** Before I begin, let me make this proclamation:

Sex is one of the great gifts God has given to us! Just think about it for a moment. Just think about these random, yet connected, thoughts: The human body is beautiful. Intimacy is a treasure. Pleasure is a gift from our Creator. It is God who made us this way – male and female. It is God who gave us body parts, which produce life. It was God who placed this mysterious drive within us that we call "libido." We do not know exactly what libido is, but we know it when we feel it and we miss it when it is gone. Libido makes us feel alive. We should be thankful for our sexuality – for the thrill of a kiss, the tenderness of a touch, or the magic when two eyes meet across a crowded room. Sex enhances a relationship between a man and a woman. Sex is one of God's great gifts, yet from the beginning of time the gift of sex has been misused. Sex without love is a painful thing. Sex without love is called lust. There are only victims where lust is present. If you do not believe me, then look at this morning's Old Testament scripture lesson.

We are in the book of Second Samuel. The main character in the story is David, one of the greatest characters in the entire Old Testament. He gained fame when he was quite young, defeating the Philistine giant, Goliath. With that victory on his resume, David becomes one of King Saul's favorites. However, his story doesn't end there. When Saul is killed in battle, David is anointed king. Under his leadership, Jerusalem is conquered, and the Ark of the Covenant finds a new home. There is no other way to say it. David had a good life, but he couldn't handle the prosperity. That takes us to our scripture reading for today.

According to the text, it all began innocently enough. We are told it was spring. It is the time of year when young men think about love and kings think about war. David has sent his army into battle, but he remains behind in Jerusalem. That decision must have haunted him. According to verse two, David is having a hard time sleeping, so he goes for a walk. Like this building, the buildings in his time had flat roofs. The palace's roof must have been higher than all the surrounding buildings. He had quite a view. As he walks across the palace's high flat roof, he must have prayed for a cool breeze. He got more than a cool breeze, he got a show. What he sees, he likes. There in the distance was a beautiful woman bathing. That means she is there in her birthday suit. Even if David wanted to look away, he couldn't. You can call him a Peeping Tom, if you like, or you can call him a victim of his own libido. This is where the story turns truly ugly. David, the man who had everything, wants one more thing. He wants this beautiful nude woman. I am not talking about slavery; I mean he wanted to have her sexually. He doesn't even know her name, but he wants to have sex with her. Let me say it another way. They had no relationship, but he wanted to have sex with her. The woman with the body did have a name, and her name was Bathsheba. The woman with the body had a husband, Uriah. David and Bathsheba's relationship moves quickly, and our reading ends

with David being told she is pregnant with his unwanted child. Like an afternoon soap opera, the story only grows more complex. In the end, Uriah, who did nothing wrong, is killed. He illustrates for us the sad point. The deadly sin of lust always produces victims. It is as true today as it was in David's day. How many examples do you need?

The heart of the world's human trafficking industry revolves around lust. Sad, but true, we live in one of the hotbeds for human trafficking. I learned several years ago, the location of the annual Super Bowl becomes the capital of human trafficking for that one day. That means the capital of human trafficking this year was Minneapolis, Minnesota. Human trafficking is big business. According to the International Labor Organization, in 2014, the human trafficking industry was a \$150 billion business. According to the same group, in the world there are 21 million people entrapped in human trafficking. 4.5 million of that total are sexually exploited. It is not an industry built on love. It is an industry built on lust, with countless victims. Our world has a problem with lust. If you can agree with that statement, say, "**Amen!**" However, the problem is closer. Our country has a problem with lust.

Does anyone here know the name Harvey Weinstein? He is an American film producer, who co-founded the entertainment company Miramax. They produced several independent successful movies, including *Sex, Lies, and Videotape* (1989), *The Crying Game* (1992), *Pulp Fiction* (1994), *Heavenly Creatures* (1994), and *Shakespeare in Love* (1998). Weinstein won an Academy Award for producing *Shakespeare in Love*, and seven Tony Awards through the years. Harvey had a good life with our country's most beautiful people. On October of last year, we began to learn about his dark side. It started with a single sexual abuse allegation, then it ballooned in to eighty sexual abuse allegations. By the time it was over, he was dismissed by his own company and expelled from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. The allegations against Weinstein triggered the "#MeToo" social media campaign. He wasn't interested in a relationship with his victims. He was only interested in momentary sex. Countless women have been victimized by him. His is not a story of love. It is a lust story, with many victims.

Does anyone here know the name Larry Nassar? We talked about him several weeks ago. The one-time doctor for the Women's United States Gymnastics Team and Michigan State University will spend the rest of his life in prison. The 53-year-old was sentenced to somewhere between 40 and 175 years, for sexually abusing more than 150 women and girls over two decades. The fallout has touched many. He was not interested in a relationship, he was interested in sex. His is not a love story. It is a story of lust, filled with victims. Our country has a problem with lust. If you can agree with that statement, say, "**Amen!**" Did you know, according to the Washington Examiner, Americans spent \$11 billion on porn in 2014? But, it gets even closer. We have a lust problem right here in the Mahoning Valley.

Do you remember the name Stephen Sample? He was on the local news the other night. The forty-four-year-old Masury man was found guilty for possessing more than one million files of child pornography on his personal computer. He pleaded guilty on fifteen

counts of child pornography. He will get up to eight years for each count. He was not interested in a relationship, he was interested in sex. His is not a love story. It is a story of lust. There many victims in his story and he lived right here in the valley. I could go on, but I won't. The whole topic makes me sick. Sex-related crimes are a common occurrence right here in the Mahoning Valley. If you have heard enough about sexual predators, say, **"Amen!"** God gave us this gift of sex to enhance a relationship between a man and a woman, but it has been abused. Where there is no relationship, there is only lust and lust produces victims. If you have heard enough about the news and would like to hear about Jesus, say, **"Amen!"**

Today, we find Jesus in the fifth chapter of Matthew. The Master is in Galilee. That is important to us for one reason. Jesus was extremely popular in Galilee and the crowds followed him. Not so much to hear his lessons, but to see his miracles. In chapters five through seven, Jesus ascends to a high piece of land to address the crowd. We call that section of scripture The Sermon on the Mount. Those chapters are rich divine lessons. Jesus deals with many issues. One of the issues Jesus addresses is lust. In Matthew 5:27, Jesus tells the crowd, and us, that adultery is wrong. In Matthew 5:28, Jesus warns the crowd, and us, about lusting. So, what is Jesus saying? He says lusting should be avoided at all cost. Jesus is not talking about a passing glance at an attractive person of the opposite sex. (I have been doing that for years.) Jesus is talking about a willful, calculated stare at another person that arouses sexual desire. Jesus knew there is a world of difference between love and lust. Listen to what I am about to say. God gave us this great gift of sex to enhance our relationships. Many have abused this great gift of sex and turned it into lust, which produces only victims. That is why lust is one of the seven deadly sins. Do you know of anyone who is a victim of lust? Have you ever been a victim of lust? Have you ever been guilty of lusting? There is a surplus of lust in our world. If you agree with that statement, say, **"Amen!"** God's great gift of sex has been abused.

They tell me in Perth, Australia, an eight-year-old girl named Anita Broad received the perfect birthday gift. It wasn't a doll, it was a racing helmet. That was common in her family, because everyone in her family raced. You can call it a rite of passage. At eight-years-old in Perth, you are old enough to qualify for a Junior Competition License, which qualifies the holder to compete in the sport's Junior Dragster Eliminator. That gift of a helmet signaled to Anita that her time had come. The first time Anita wore the helmet in competition was the last time she wore it. Sad, but true. Anita was killed wearing her helmet in a race. There is no happy ending in this story. I feel bad for everyone, especially the one who have her the helmet, her father. I wonder if her father was sorry he gave her such a wonderful gift?

I wonder if God is sorry he gave us the great gift of sex? Mankind has abused it. Do you remember the definition of lust? It is, *"a sudden, powerful, almost overwhelming desire for something that is bad for you."* Never forget it. Lust is one of the seven deadly sins. This is Lent, a time to repent. And all of God's people said, **"Amen!"**