

Matthew 5:27-37

“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of my members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell. It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery. Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God’s throne: nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.”

The Most Powerful Sermon In The World, part 2

We are in Matthew chapter 5. Matthew is using, he’s taking parts of the Sermon on the Mount. He hasn’t taken all of it. But he’s taken certain parts and he’s laying something out before us, as he is throughout his Gospel account. Matthew is showing his audience that this man Jesus is nothing less than the Messiah, the Messiah of the people of Israel. (At the time Matthew wrote this Gospel, the only one written in Hebrew, his audience was a predominantly Jewish audience living in Jerusalem and Judea. Matthew was written at first for the Jews.) Remember, Jesus is on the side of the mountain there in the area of Galilee. There’s a multitude around him we were told early on. He’s looking, as he’s speaking especially to the

disciples. He wants to make contact with them, he's seeking to drive home truths with his disciples. Yet the multitudes are there, the message is certainly for everybody. As he's sharing the things that he is, there are clearly hard hearts around him. Jesus wanted them, and wants you and I to experience life abundantly. So he's sharing these things. Yet there are people that are deceived by their own ways and their hard-heartedness. There are those that are there that, because of their own spiritual merit, their own spiritual achievements, they think they certainly know what it's all about, they know God. They think they have this life of the Spirit, but they're deceived. There are even some, and it doesn't say this directly, but no doubt because of what he says, there are people that are around him who not only see themselves that way, but also they are expounding their own self-righteousness and religious methods, and they're even leading others away from God. So Jesus is seeking to get through to their hearts, saying some things that are very shocking. If you remember, in **verse 20**, this we noted last time, just bringing you back up to speed again, this is shocking as he said this to the crowd that was there, **"For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."** Eyes bulged out, jaws dropped at that statement. But yet he's stating truths, and he's also going right for the heart, trying to awaken them, and get their attention. Jesus is sharing about life, and man, there's hard hearts, and he's hammering away at some of that hardness, seeking to get through to them. And so, this is a heart-searching, heart-penetrating text that we're in.

*The Seventh Commandment, Brought To Its Full
Spiritual Intent*

Verses 27-30, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body be cast into hell." There are these religious leaders that are there, I mean, they're the spiritual leaders, and they're seen a

certain way. And yet they have had a misunderstanding of God and of his Word. And because of that, being in a place where they are, they've taught the Word inaccurately, they've shared things that aren't true, so the people under them have not had a right understanding of God, and there's just this cloudiness and confusion to their teaching. **"You've heard that it was said of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.'"** Now they have heard that a lot of times, that's one of the Big Ten, that's the Seventh Commandment in the Ten Commandments, recorded by Moses, Exodus chapter 20, verse 14, Deuteronomy chapter 5, verse 18, one of the Ten Commandments so often stated. Unfortunately, because of the religious leaders, and in their own hearts, many of them have had a misunderstanding about what the spirit of that meant, and what it was all about. For many, and especially the religious leaders, there was an understanding, a belief that you had to physically be married, and to have sexual relationships with somebody who wasn't their spouse in order to break this commandment. Or in their culture, if you were engaged, it was seen the same way. If you were engaged and had sexual relationships with somebody other than your fiancée, that would also be considered adultery. So you had to physically do this in order to break this commandment. So many, most in the crowd, religious leaders, would look at this commandment and say *'I've never broken this commandment.'* Yet, in their hearts, in their lives, in many instances there was poison and ugliness and lust. So Jesus is addressing the fact that they've had a misunderstanding. [Comment: There is one place in the Old Testament where one true believer in God had this understanding (not to say the Prophets and other born-again believers, few as there were, didn't understand this as well). But this individual actually said he made a covenant with his eyes to not look upon a young pretty maiden. And he was married. This is found in the Book of Job. Job understood the 7th Commandment. The Jewish leaders knew the Book of Job well, but totally missed or ignored this spiritual nugget of understanding about God's Law, that it went to the heart-level.] There in **verse 28** he says, ***'You know, you've heard this, but let me tell you, whoever looks at a woman lustfully, has already committed this sin of adultery.'*** Now, I'm sure, you know, in my mind, as I look on the side of the Mount there with this multitude, I can see folks starting to shift, I can hear rustling in the crowd. That's making people uncomfortable, ears are perked up. I mean, some people are thinking, *'Are you saying that I committed adultery?'* There are people thinking that at this moment. It's kind of stunning. That's a command where they've always said,

'Oh, not done that one, got that one down alright, man.' And now they're *'Huh!? I've committed adultery!?'* It's shocking, it's an attention-getter, no doubt about it. But Jesus knows, *'I've seen the video you play in your head, man, I've seen the images, I've watched your eyes go where they go.'* So Jesus is stating here, the reality of sexual sin is this, the reality of sexual sin is more than the physical act. It begins with the desire of the heart, it begins with the lust of the heart, and the thoughts in the mind, that's where it starts. [Comment: psychologists have matter of factly stated that the biggest sexual organ is the mind of a person, their brain.] Now by the way, we can state this, and this is a no-brainer for just about all of us, maybe not all of us, but I'll state this. This is clearly a statement that the Bible says, that pornography is clearly sin. Right? Jesus says to look at a woman lustfully is adultery, is sin. So pornography clearly is sin. I only state that to you because there are maybe some present, there are certainly those in our culture, there are teachings and understandings in our society that in some instances where they state that it's healthy, maybe even beneficial for a young person, maybe it's just normal. And it's true, we're designed, man has been designed to be visually oriented to be attracted to the image of a woman, but in a certain context, the context of marriage. So if you question that, if you happen to be a young person wondering *'Is it ok?'* No, Jesus says it's sin. It is absolutely, without any doubt, it is sin. Can't debate it otherwise. If you're a Christian and you believe that the Bible is the Word of God, there you are. It is sin, it is wrong, and there's a danger if allowed to remain in our hearts, because it can lead to the physical act. It can cause us to do that. Now, we should also make the point, it is also possible for a man or a woman to look at somebody of the opposite sex and say *'Oh, they are very attractive, very beautiful,'* and yet not to lust, that's possible too. He's referring to a lust, and there's a difference between just admiring innocently and lusting.

We Live In A Sex-Crazed Culture

You know, today we live in a culture that is sex-crazed, pretty much like the Roman Empire was at this time, right up to the end of its existence in 486AD, that is for sure. And it's easy for a Christian, a Christian family, to start to be affected by that, to let our guard down, because we're so sex-crazed as a culture, and the TV's on, and whatever, and we start watching or listening to the music, we start to change and allow things to

slide. But Jesus comes right out here in his Word and says **'Lust is sin, it's sin.'** I grew up in a church setting, background, but I can't think of anybody really sitting me down and going *'This is sin.'* I wish I had heard that. It would have been good for me to hear that, when I was hearing so many other things. I had people even close to me, they had been encouraging me as a young man. On my first cruise across the Atlantic on my submarine, the crew made sure when we hit the first port of call that I, as a virgin, was "wined, dined, and bred." Their intentions were good, but their understanding of God's Word, which I was beginning to understand even then, was nil. But Jesus comes out and says, **'Lust is sin.'** Lust is sin, it's that simple. We're in a sex-crazed culture, there's no doubt about it, and God does not want us to be influenced by that, to be deceived by that. I'm just amazed by what comes on the TV, but also what really hits me is the time of day it comes on, there's really no getting away from it anymore. I mean, we had the Discovery Channel on once, and CNN, and these sexually explicit ads were coming up, *'What is **that** doing on in the middle of the day?-- In the middle of this show?'* Animal Planet, why did we have to see that commercial in the middle of Animal Planet? What's up with that? Our culture is sex-crazed, and I guess it's that people don't see it that way, because more and more we're being inundated with it, and inundated with it, and inundated with it. Every time there was a commercial, you know, watching a lot of bowl games with my father-in-law, he's got the clicker, but every time a commercial came up that was questionable, I'd immediately look at my son, and my son would look at me, and I'd just hold his eyes, right there, we would just look right at each other. And I'd wait till the commercial was gone, and then look back, *'Alright, you can look now.'* I wouldn't have to say anything, we'd be across the room from each other, but we'd look at each other, this was just part of trying to teach my son, *'You don't want that poison in your life.'* You know, I didn't have a father that was that way, or even hearing messages like that in church. I wish I could go back and re-live my life. I wish I could erase my young years, and live a pure life, I wish I had had people saying *'Purity, man, purity.'* Jesus says lust is sin. And sin only hurts and destroys you. Don't buy into it, don't listen to it. Now, at the same time, God is a God of grace, God is a God that forgives, God is a God that heals...This isn't a message to beat you up either, but the truth is, lust is sin. And Jesus wants his audience to understand that, to also be able to see in your heart and go *'Ooh, I got that stuff in there, that's ugly stuff, I wish it wasn't there.'* And what

it then does, realizing this, is cause us to look to him, look to Jesus, and draw near to him, and to ask for his forgiveness and his healing and his touch, and his power in our life. It is interesting too, this is the Seventh Commandment, and it's like part of the first nine, in the sense of the religious elite at this time, they could look at the first nine commandments (of the Big Ten), and they could look at it on the basis of outward performance, you know, the nine commands, if you have that bent too, you can do that. And people do that, they can go *'Oh, I've not broken those, I've honoured the Sabbath, I've never bowed to an idol, I've never therefore broken that commandment, I've never taken God's name in vain, I've never committed physical adultery, I am blameless when it comes to the Law.'* Of course, those nine commandments had a heart intent to them that they were missing. But then you get to the Tenth Commandment, it was as if God knew that that was the case, he comes out with the Tenth Commandment and says, ***"Thou shalt not covet."*** I can't physically show you that I'm coveting, you know what I mean? But it can be right there, you know, *'I want that car of my neighbor's, I want my neighbour's house, his wife,'* it even mentions that. You know, it's just in the heart. And Paul says in Romans 7, you know, Romans 7 he says ***'The law was there to demonstrate to me that I have an ugly heart.'*** And then he quotes the Tenth Commandment, ***'The Law says you shall not covet.'*** And ugh. You know, maybe your slide by the first nine, but ugh...thou shalt not covet! I have this heart problem. And so he goes on into Romans 8, and he ends Romans 7 by saying ***'What can I do? I cry out to Jesus.'*** And then he goes on telling us about the life of the Spirit in Romans chapter 8, about how the righteousness of Jesus is brought right inside of us. God is saying, ***'You need me desperately, you need me every hour, you need my power in you all the time, and you need to view sin for what it really is, and see the heart for what it really is.'***

Jesus Gives Practical Counsel

Verses 29-30, "If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell." Well he goes on from there in verses 29 to 30, to then give practical counsel. In these

words he is saying again, you need to hate your sin, don't brush it off. Sexual sin, if there's lust, it's sin, but you don't just leave it there, it needs to be dealt with, that's what he is saying in verses 29 and 30, deal with it violently, deal with it brutally if you need to deal with that issue. Now, there are folks and there's young believers that have looked at this verse and taken it the wrong way, and you can easily do that. He's making a heart point here, there's a principle here that's very valuable. Pastor Joe Focht, listening to one of his sermons he gave on this, and in the sermon he mentions early on in the Jesus Movement days, he had a friend, a young believer, and he actually, and this is not to be gross, but he actually took a fork and he removed his eye, because he read this, **and we, everybody needs to understand that it's not what he's saying, that's not what he's saying.** Ray Charles, there was a special on TV recently, and he was blind, and they were mentioning to me after the first service, Ray Charles had all these kids by all these women. Sounds like maybe he had a lust problem, you know what I mean? And Jon Courson, if you read his Commentary, I was reading it, I have it from a long time ago, he makes the point that he has a really close friend whose blind, and his number one struggle is lust. So taking your eye out ain't going to cure your lust problem. It's not. Joe Focht in his study makes mention of an older guy that's blind in his church, that leaders actually had to sit down with this older guy, because he was hitting on the gals. But he's blind. So, don't miss the point, he's kind of exaggerating in a sense, he's making a dramatic point to say, **'Be passionate about dealing with the sin in your life! Hate the sin! Hate it! Don't allow it to stay there! It's ugly, it's awful, it hurts you, it'll hurt others, deal with the sin!'** That's what he's doing by saying this in verses 29-30. And there are practical things you can do, to deal with sin in your life, too. But it's true, if you hate your sin, there's practical things that you can do, that's what he's noting here. The Holy Spirit is saying here too, **'Don't pluck out your eye, or cut off your hand, but God wants to deal with the very issue, and it's the issue in your heart.'** And it's a spiritual surgery that needs to take place, and that's the intent here, no doubt about it. You know, if there's fire burning in your heart, the principle is, don't let the oil near it. You can have a little flicker that comes on, and you know it's there. You bring oil near it though, *Wooosh!* It is amazing what happens when you remove the oil. It really is what happens, it gives real strength to you, and it just removes the weapon out of the hand of the devil, that that route of, path of temptation is removed. Maybe what you need to do is end the relationship.

Maybe there's a hobby or activity that you really enjoy, but as you go down that road, if you're honest about it, you find often it will lead you to a trap in the end. Maybe it's a job, I can think of people who have had jobs, that needed to change their jobs. That's not easy. [Comment: coming from a Sabbatarian Church of God background, I have had to quit a job over the Sabbath, and have lost jobs over Sabbath observance, and I learned quickly that God always lined up another job for me, because I had to quit, or was fired by following him or in order to follow his laws. God respects it when you have to quit a job in order to better obey him, whether it be over the Sabbath for Sabbatarians, or for reasons of obedience in other areas. God is totally faithful in these matters.] We need to be salt and light, and be around and have relationships with the people in the world so we can share the love of Christ and be the example of Christ to the world. But yet at the same time, there are times where it's a real stumbling-block for some people because they're in a certain set of circumstances, and man, the flesh just goes off. And you think, *'Man, if I leave that career, I'm really going to take a pay cut.'* But maybe that's what you need to do. It's a sacrifice. But look what he says, **"If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It's more profitable for you to that one of your members perish than for your whole body to be cast into hell."** It's better for you to go without that, whatever that symbolic right hand might be, than the destruction that will come if it remains. So at times, yeah, I leave the job, sometimes I cut the cable or whatever it is. Ezra, Ezra and Nehemiah, look at these two men and the way they looked at sin, really beautiful. But yet in a brutal way too. I mean, Ezra, the Jews had come back to the city of Jerusalem after their Babylonian captivity, God is so gracious to restore them, and there's the temple. But Ezra then realizes that as he's there, some of the Jewish men, and some of the men in prominent places have actually taken on pagan wives, and at this point have children by those wives. Ezra falls on his face and he weeps and he mourns and he cries out to God for a whole day. You can read about what he had to do in Ezra chapters 9 through 10, these pagan wives would have brought the Jews back into the pagan idol worship that had caused God to take them into the Babylonian captivity, lead them into active sinning against the LORD. Nehemiah is even more radical, because what he does, when it happens, the same thing, he plucks out hair, he slaps them around as he does it too. I mean, Ezra weeps, Nehemiah, you know, roughs them up a little, he is so ticked off by it, so angry. There are folk outside the gates of Jerusalem wanting to bring in goods to sell on the

Sabbath, and he warns them from the wall ***'I'm going to deal with you if you don't get out of here.'*** He's just brutal about it. But there's a holiness in his life. There was a holiness in the life of Ezra and Nehemiah, and there was a holiness in the nation of Judah back then, as a result. And that's the attitude that Jesus is sharing here in our life, and I pray it's true in your life too. And it's not a bad thing to be that way. You want to be gracious and kind too, I mean, don't pluck other people's hair out and slap them around or anything like that, this is meant to be applied by you to yourself, this is personal. Charles Spurgeon says this, *"If abstaining from alcohol causes weakness of the body" (if you thought, 'Well I gotta drink because I'll get weak if I don't.')* *"it would be better to be weak than to be strong and fall into drunkenness. Since vain speculations and reasonings land men in unbelief, we will have none of them. Holiness is to be our first object, everything else must take a very secondary place. Right eyes and right hands are no longer right if they lead us to wrong."* I think that says it pretty well.

What Jesus Says About Divorce

Verses 31-32, "Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' But I say to you, whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery, and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery." So, third time he says ***'It's been said, it's been said,'*** now referring back to Deuteronomy chapter 24, Moses said ***'If a man finds uncleanness in his wife, he can write her a certificate of divorce and divorce her. If she goes out and marries another man, and then divorces that man, it is an abomination for her now to come back to him.'*** And that's what it says in those first few verses of Deuteronomy 24. [Comment: the apostle Paul passed on legislation for the Church based on this and other Biblical principles in 1st Corinthians 7. See <http://www.unityinchrist.com/corinthians/cor7.htm> for a balanced Biblical teaching on this subject by this same Calvary Chapel pastor. But for the short of it, if a believer is married to a non-believer, and the non-believer decides to leave the marriage, divorce, the believer is free to remarry again, he or she is not bound in such cases. But two believers must not divorce and remarry, they are bound. That's the bottom line on what the Bible has to say about Divorce & Remarriage.] It's interesting to me what follows. He's speaking about lust and

adultery, he's speaking to hard hearts here in his Sermon on the Mount. In the religious camps at these times, there were two main camps. There was a guy named Shimeai, a rabbi, he was very conservative. And he interpreted Deuteronomy 24 in a manner that when it says uncleanness, if a man finds uncleanness in his wife, that uncleanness was sexual sin. He especially took it in the sense that in the time of Christ, when you were engaged, that betrothal was essentially marriage, and so then on your marriage night, a man and a woman now come together to consummate their marriage, if the man discovers that his wife had been unfaithful to him before, had lost her virginity, she was considered "unclean." And so Shimeai took it in that context, that when that happened, then you could write that certificate of divorce. On the other side, there was a guy, Hillel, who was very liberal. He took that statement of uncleanness in Deuteronomy 24 and he interpreted it in all kinds of different ways, from you know, you put too much salt and pepper on his eggs, you know, she does that, he gets angry, he's now committed sin, she's caused him to sin, so she's unclean, he can divorce her. He went on and on, you can read some of them, speaking of *'she burned the meal, she could be considered unclean, he could divorce her,'* he'd write that certificate of divorce. If she snored, or nagged, he could say *'unclean, you snore, you're done, gone.'* If he met another woman that was more righteous than his wife, she was now in comparison unclean, so he could write the certificate of divorce. Very wide liberal interpretation, so you have people around Jesus, religious leaders who think they're holy, who have had a second wife, they had a wife that snored, got rid of her, third wife, and so forth. And they've misinterpreted and made this a game out of God's Law. And Jesus comes, he's speaking about sexual sin and adultery, he says, ***'If you have divorced your wife for these other reasons, and you have remarried, you've committed adultery.'*** So he nails them there. And now these religious leaders, Hillel, they've been teaching this stuff and doing this stuff. I mean, if they're in the crowd, you can just imagine, they're a little miffed at this. ***'You've committed adultery if you've done that.'*** And that is the way marriage needs to be viewed, as forever, and to not do that, and to just take a spouse and say, *'We don't get along anymore, we're not in love,'* and divorce, to be a Christian and divorce them and go marry somebody else, Jesus says you're committing adultery. [This happened to me, except it was the wife that did it to me. But afterward it become positively apparent she wasn't a believer at all, so 1st Corinthians 7

applied when all was said and done.] Now we should note, it doesn't state in the tense that you'll remain in adultery, but that you've committed [past tense] adultery. There's sin, a sin that has to be acknowledged and repented of. He's not saying divorce again. Now I've heard that twisted teaching, even once from a Calvary pastor, he said, '*You know, if you've divorced and remarried for the wrong reasons, then you need to divorce that spouse, because that's wrong, man.*' and that would be going back to verse 29 and 30, doing something radical, that isn't what Jesus is saying. Jesus is dealing with the heart. But if you have divorced and remarried for reasons other than sexual sin because your spouse was unfaithful, and that's the reason, something other than that, Jesus says you've committed adultery, and that is the truth of the Word of God. [Now having a mate, a husband that is physically abusive, a wife-beater, divorce and remarriage is justified Biblically, even in some cases with extreme verbal and psychological abusive mates.] And today maybe there are people here today, and you've never seen it that way, now this isn't to condemn you, this is the Word of God, and what you should do then, is if you've never seen it that way, is to repent of the fact that you saw it the wrong way. You've not viewed marriage the way God has intended for you to do it, and you need to repent of it and see it for what it really is. But then receive the grace of God where you're at, **and honour the marriage that you have now, and honour it in a way that is intended, that this is forever, this is forever.** Well, of course, God allowed divorce, God never intended it, and the Bible says God hates divorce (cf. Malachi 3). God allowed it because of the hardness of people's hearts, and he allowed it for this one exception. Now this particular verse, you know, just as Hillel and Shime'i interpreted it differently, people do that same thing today. The intent is he's showing the heart of people, and the hearts of the people around him, and stirring things up.

*Jesus Expounds On The Spirit Of The Ninth
Commandment*

Verses 33-37, "Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne: nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one

hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." (or "**cometh from the evil one.**") It's interesting to me that this follows the previous verses, because you know, divorce, people are not being faithful to their word. They've stood before God, and they've stood there with a person and before a community of people and said, '*We are going to be married until we die,*' and yet they have not been faithful to their word. It's almost logical, he's covering different bases as he goes on, but they're interconnected like this. There are times in the Old Testament that vows and oaths were actually even commanded as part of the Law. You can read in the Mishna now, long essays where they would try to discern what is proper, and what is improper. And they really got silly about it, and that's what he's addressing here. But what he's really going for, he's putting aside their silliness and their reasoning, and he's coming back to the main point, and the main point, the focus and heart of the command is '**Be true to what you say.**' These verses also, probably more so, tie directly into the 9th Commandment, which is basically "**Thou shalt not bear false witness**", i.e. '**Don't lie to each other.**' '**May your yes be yes, and your no, no.**' And he's not saying there aren't, that you should never, you know, the Quakers (and the Sabbatarian Churches of God) take verse 33 and say, '*Well, you can't take an oath, we can't ever state an oath,*' when they're in court they won't state the oath. But that's not what he's doing. [Comment: The U.S. Constitution and court system has made allowance for that biblical interpretation, which by the way, is quite an old and literal interpretation of verse 33. You can state in the courtroom, instead of swearing on the Bible, you can state "I do so affirm" without placing your hand on a Bible. And today, in the courtrooms, you don't even have Bibles available to swear on.] If you follow the rest of the New Testament, in fact by the end of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus himself, the high priest puts him under oath, and he doesn't say anything about that. There are a number of times Paul in Galatians, 1st Corinthians, he'll say '**I call on God as my witness,**' essentially making an oath. So Jesus isn't saying, when he says '**Do not swear at all,**' he's not saying you're not to have an oath or a vow, that there isn't a time to do that (what do you think Wedding Vows are all about?). His point is the heart, the heart is to be true to your word. If you say you are going to do something, go and do it. But he's speaking to the heart, to the heart of what's going on in the people's lives. And so they're not being true to their word. Literally verse 37 is '**Let your yes be yes, your no, no, and just what you say may be true, and**

may you stick to it.' So, man, there are people that are there, that have played games, and that's what he goes on to. I mean, the religious leaders, you can read this in the other Gospels, but these guys were saying, *'Don't take the name of the Lord in vain, so you can't swear by the name of God, but you can swear by heaven. Don't swear by the Temple, but you can swear by the altar in the Temple.'* They had different teachings, you know, it was just silliness. It was weird, you could do this and not do that. But Jesus says, **'No, be true to your word.'** The point is to be truthful, and let your yes be yes and your no be no. Maybe you're here and you have made certain promises to certain people, maybe you're here and your marriage is really struggling, and there's real temptation, *'Man, things are struggling, and I don't want to be with this person anymore.'* But haven't you made a vow, haven't you said, *'For better or for worse?'* May your yes be yes, and your no be no. Maybe you've made promises to other people in a different context, and God's just saying **'It's holiness and it's my heart, living the life of Christ and being true to what your word is.'**

We'll Pick Up Next Week

It is so vital that I see sin for what it is, that I acknowledge that this is sin and I repent of it, and I let God heal my heart in these areas. Jesus has shared, this is the reality of sexual sin, it's the lust. It's not the act only, it is the poison and the lust itself. When it comes to that sin and any other sin, we need to look at it a certain way, we need to put it away. We need to be brutal about it. We need to deal with it. But it's his surgery we need, we need spiritual surgery from God ultimately, to go in and remove the cancer in our hearts. He also states that divorce and remarriage can lead to sexual sin, it can be sexual sin, meaning it can be adultery [i.e. a one-time act of adultery], but I should at least in my heart realize that I have sinned (if I have done that), and now in the position that I am in, receive his grace and mercy (and make that marriage work). And then we need to be true to our word, let our yes be yes, and our no, no...[condensed down from an expository sermon on Matthew 5:27-37, given somewhere in New England.]

related links:

How to improve your marriage, keys to a happy marriage:

<http://www.HOWMARRIAGEWORKS.com>

Divorce & Remarriage, Paul's teachings on it for the Church:
<http://www.unityinchrist.com/corinthians/cor7.htm>