

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Matthew 5:27,28.**
- B. The 7th commandment (Ex. 20:14).
"You shall not commit adultery."
- C. Two illustrations to begin our lesson this morning:
 1. Eccl. 10:8 speaks of having a wall (or fence) in our lives. The wall (fence) is a good thing keeping us from evil. Walls or fences are not just restrictive barriers. They can serve as protection from harmful things too. God has put a fence (or wall) around marriage so as to protect it.
He who digs a pit may fall into it, and a serpent may bite him who breaks through a wall.
 2. In *The Magician's Nephew* a story by C.S. Lewis, 2 children are exploring a strange, ancient world and come upon a bell, a small hammer, and the following warning:
*Make your choice, adventurous Stranger:
Strike the bell and bide the danger,
Or wonder, till it drives you mad,
What would have followed if you had.*

Polly refused to take a chance on ringing the bell, but Digory can't handle his curiosity, grabs the hammer and strikes the bell. It produces a clear sweet note, but instead of fading away the ringing begins to grow, and grow, and grow. It becomes deafening. Walls begin to vibrate and the sound is painful to their ears. They escape the room containing the bell just in time to see it destroyed by the sound.

Moral: Digory's impulsive decision brought on a tragedy far beyond anything he could have imagined.
- D. God has put a fence around your marriage so that if you stay inside it, you won't have a tragedy far beyond anything you could have imagined. That fence is the 7th commandment: "do not commit adultery."

I. DON'T PLAY "SATAN SAYS."

- A. Watch TV on any given night and you will encounter a constant parade of seduction, and suggestive sexual encounters. Virtually every program is riddled with immorality, seduction, and flirtation.
- B. Studies show that 90% or more of sex portrayed on TV is between people who are not married to each other. Someone said, "It's always sex o'clock in America."
- C. It's adultery, plain and simple. But Hollywood has made it all appear so romantic, exciting, fulfilling, and even funny. The image makes surround it with laughter, beautiful music, and sumptuous settings. At the same time, they carefully airbrush away the inevitable shame, deceit, betrayal, and ugliness.
- D. People who witness these make-believe encounters begin to think, "My life is so dull. So unromantic. Where is the music? Where is the laughter? Maybe this is what I need. Maybe this will fill that gaping empty place in my heart."
- E. Satan says "there is no fence."
 1. The entertainment industry glorifies "recreational sex."
 2. The news media reports on "casual sex."
 3. Superstars advocate "safe sex."
 4. God says, we need "sacred sex."
- F. Playing "Satan Says" is much like the answering the question, "What effect will my actions have if I go through a door called Desire?" If you go through that door (adultery):
 1. I will grieve the One who redeemed me.
 2. I will drag His sacred name through the mud.
 3. I will have to look Jesus in the eye one day and give account of my actions.

4. I will inflict untold hurt on my wife--my best friend and who has been faithful to me.
 5. I will lose my wife's respect, love, and trust.
 6. I will hurt my beloved children.
 7. I will destroy my example and my credibility.
 8. I might lose my wife and children forever.
 9. I will shame my family.
 10. I will lose my own self-respect. (Though God could forgive me, could I forgive myself?)
 11. I could form memories that plague future intimacy with my spouse.
 12. I could reap the consequences of diseases.
 13. I could cause a pregnancy that would be a lifelong reminder of my sin.
 14. I could invoke lifelong shame and embarrassment on myself.
- G. With all these possible problems playing "Satan Says" that fence doesn't look so bad after all. That which seemed so restrictive and confining is actually something very, very beautiful.
- H. God is not anti-sex. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Bible is not even prudish about human sexuality and the subject of physical love. The book of Song of Solomon is quite graphic in its celebration of the beauty of sexual love.
- I. Sex is not something that is necessarily secretive, but is something that is sacred.

II. ADULTERY.

- A. Adultery begins where every sin begins, in the heart. Jesus dealt with this internal in Mt. 5:27,28.
- B. The real battle between God and Satan is fought out in the minds of people. That's where the battle began with Eve and it has raged there ever since (Eph. 6:12; Rom. 7:22,23).
(Eph 6:12) For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.
(Rom 7:22,23) For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, [23] but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.
- C. What does it mean to break the marriage covenant by adultery?
1. Physical adultery.
 The most obvious way to break the covenant is through physical adultery—through participating in sexual intercourse with a person who is not your spouse (Heb. 13:4).
 2. Mental adultery.
 God wants us to understand that, as with every other aspect of our lives, the way we handle our sexuality is primarily a matter of inner purity (**Mt. 5:27,28**). Jesus says that lust is a covenant breaker.

III. A CALL TO COMMITMENT AND FIDELITY.

- A. Why is commitment such a rare commodity in our world today? If we enter into marriage looking for someone to serve us, rather than someone to serve--we are selfish!
1. Some say that love is based in passion... Not true.
 2. Some say that love is based on need... Not true.
 3. Biblical love (agape) is based on commitment... True.
- B. One of the chief falsehoods in Satan's Great Encyclopedia of Lies is that love is only a feeling. No! Love is much more than a feeling. *Phileo* is a feeling, but Xians are to practice *agape* love. Agape love is when you can no longer find the feelings but do the right thing anyway. Agape love is when you wake up some morning and don't feel anything at all, and keep your commitments.
- C. There is no man or woman in the world who can fill all the empty places in your heart. Solomon had 1,000 wives and some 700 concubines and ended up as empty as a man can be! Only the Lord God can fill the vacuum in a human heart.

- D. Commitment in a marriage needs to be summed up as “not finding someone that will serve you, but finding someone that you can serve.” Finding someone that can serve you is selfishness--finding someone you can serve is commitment.
- E. Three important truths for living faithfully within the fence:
1. **Honor the sacredness of marriage.**
 - a. God has ordained the rite of marriage (Gen. 2:24; 1Tim. 4:3; Heb. 13:4a).
(Gen 2:24) For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.
(1Tim 4:3) men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods, which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.
(Heb 13:4) Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.
 - b. God wants sex kept sacred in marriage because marriage is sacred to God, and He has a very specific purpose for sex in marriage. That purpose is for the pro-creation of children and for the mutual enjoyment of husband and wife.
 - c. God forbids adultery in the 7th commandment. What He is concerned about is marriage.
 2. **Honor the permanence of the marriage covenant.**
 - a. God did not make woman just so that man could reproduce or release tension.
 - b. God made woman to be man’s helpmeet. Man reaches his full potential (and so does woman) when the experience the togetherness of marriage.
 - c. Marriage is not just getting lucky to find the right man or right woman. It is a covenant relationship that is based on a lifetime commitment to another person.
 3. **Honor the celebration of intimacy.**
 - a. See Prov. 5:18.
Let your fountain be blessed, And rejoice in the wife of your youth.
 - b. When two people marry the two become one flesh in God’s sight. Man consummates this union by their sexual relationship.
 - c. The intimacy of husband and wife in this way is a intimacy unlike any other. The sexual aspect of marriage is a God given vehicle for giving, sharing and relating with one another that strengthens the covenant relationship.
 - d. It is no accident that when God speaks through Paul in Eph., chapter 5 about the intimacy between Christ and the church He chooses the covenant of marriage.

IV. A STRATEGY FOR INTIMACY.

- A. Three simple suggestions for couples to put a good fence around their marriage.
- B. First, **don’t flirt with impurity.**
 1. For a married person, the term “innocent flirtation” is a contradiction. People of character must be very conscious of what they listen to, watch, say, do, and with whom they associate so that no one would question their commitment (see Mt. 5:29,30).
“And if your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. [30] “And if your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to go into hell.”
- C. Second, **enrich your marriage.**
 1. You may not cheat on your mate, but do you cherish you mate.
 2. God never calls us to do the minimum when it comes to His teachings. He wants us to grow and develop our relationship with Him. The same is true in marriage.
 3. Those of you who are grandparents can really help in this area. If your son and daughter-in-law (or vice-versa) haven’t had a weekend to themselves lately offer to keep the kids for a weekend so they can get away and renew their marriage commitments to each other.

- D. Third, **choose purity in the church.**
1. Choose to be different from the worldly marriages that end up in divorce but choosing to remain loyal, true, and pure to your spouse.
 2. Choose to make your relationship with X and His church a high priority in your life and your marriage.
 3. People of character admit their need for strength and cleansing.

CONCLUSION & INVITATION.

- A. Fences can be very good things!
- B. It is not so much what you want to keep in as it is what you want to keep out.
- C. Put a fence around your marriage so that you will remain faithful to your spouse and not be guilty of breaking the 7th commandment.
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.