

# Jesus On...

October 2015

## Series Rationale:

He lived 20 centuries ago. He was born in humble circumstances to an impoverished couple in an obscure village. A few hundred people ever met Him personally, a few thousand people ever heard Him speak. He never traveled outside of His region. He didn't write a book, He didn't lead an army, He didn't govern a nation, He didn't even have a home. And yet no one has had a bigger influence on human history than Jesus. And to this day, across the generations, his teachings are almost eerily relevant to the circumstances of our day-to-day lives. He had a lot to say about the real life issues that you and I face. In this series we will turn to Matthew's gospel to see what Jesus had to say about forgiveness, and anxiety, and conflict and even sexuality. You won't want to miss it.

**Preacher:** John

**Date:** October 4

**Title:** Forgiveness

**Text:** Mt. 6:14-15

**Preacher:** Derek

**Date:** October 11

**Title:** Anxiety

**Text:** Mt. 6:26ff

**Preacher:** Brian

**Date:** October 18

**Title:** Conflict

**Text:** Mt. 5:23-25; 18:15-16

**Preacher:** Derek

**Date:** October 25

**Title:** Sexuality

**Text:** Mt. 5:27-30; 19:1-12

# Jesus On Forgiveness

**Date:** October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015

**Preacher:** John

**Text:** Matthew 6:14-15, Matthew 18:21-35

## Series Rationale:

He lived 20 centuries ago. He was born in humble circumstances to an impoverished couple in an obscure village. A few hundred people ever met Him personally, a few thousand people ever heard Him speak. He never traveled outside of His region. He didn't write a book, He didn't lead an army, He didn't govern a nation, He didn't even have a home. And yet no one has had a bigger influence on human history than Jesus. And to this day, across the generations, his teachings are almost eerily relevant to the circumstances of our day to day lives. He had a lot to say about the real life issues that you and I face. In this series we will turn to Matthew's gospel to see what Jesus had to say about forgiveness, and anxiety, and conflict and even sexuality. You won't want to miss it.

## CORE VALUE OR L.I.V.E. to mention

- **Live in Community** · Invest in Others · Volunteer your Time · Equip Yourself
- Accessible Biblical Truth · **Authentic Relationships** · **Spiritual Vitality** · All In · Outward Focus

## Scripture –

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant – Matthew 18:21-35

21 Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” 22 Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.

23 “Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. 24 When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. 25 And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. 26 So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ 27 And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. 28 But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay what you owe.’ 29 So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ 30 He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. 31 When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. 32 Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. 33 And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ 34 And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. 35 So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

Matthew 6:14-15

14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

**Creative Ideas:** Story about a broken relationship restored through forgiveness. (Something difficult to forgive – a child forgiving a parent for leaving)

**Big Idea** – Show the same limitless forgiveness you’ve received.

### **SERMON OUTLINE:**

Series Intro: [use material from series rationale]

**BUILD THE TENSION!** - [Help people empathize with the emotions of being wronged.]

- Examples of people being wronged and hurt deeply by others
  - How these hurts have led to broken relationships
- How do we break the cycle of hurt?
  - “Hurt people hurt people.”
  - What does responding to hurt with hurt accomplish?
- They need to be asking -- WHAT’S THE SOLUTION???? HELP ME LEARN TO FORGIVE!!

### **THE SOLUTION:**

- Peter felt this tension too.
  - He had people in his life that hurt him, disappointed him, lied to him
- Peter asks Jesus a question we’ve all asked in Matthew 18:21
- 21 Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?”
  - How many times should I forgive someone?
- 22 Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.”
  - Jesus tells a parable to illustrate his response
- 23 “Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. 24 When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. 25 And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made.
- A king wants to “settle accounts” with his servants
- The servant owes the king A LOT of money
  - Millions of dollars???
  - Everyone listening would have been like “Whoa!! Stinks to be that guy!”
- There was no way the servant could pay what he owed
  - However much he had, it wasn’t nearly enough
- So the king does what is fair and just – he orders for his servant and his family to be sold and payment to be made
  - What’s the cultural context here??
  - Becomes someone’s slave to earn the money he owes the king
  - It was pretty much a life sentence
- 26 So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’
- The servant begs the king to not sell him and his family, but to be patient and give him more time to pay him the money
  - Let him stay a servant so he can earn more money and pay him back
  - Anyone listening would have realized that he’s delusional – he would never be able to repay his gigantic debt

- We deceive ourselves when we think we can pay back our debt to God for all our offenses and sins
- 27 And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt.
- Notice that the king shows him mercy – but doesn't agree to his plan
  - It says he "forgave him the debt" (v.27)
  - the king wiped it away! His servant doesn't owe him a penny anymore!
  - \*What does it mean that he released him?? Let him off of imprisonment?
- Everyone listening is thinking "This is craziness!"
- Even though this disturbs our sense of justice (it's not "fair" to let someone off the hook), we can empathize with the servant so we can celebrate the king's decision to cancel his debt
  - This is what we would want the king to do for us if we were in the servant's position
  - It's easier to celebrate forgiveness when someone else is the one who needs to do it -- or when we're on the receiving end
- This would be a pretty good ending to this story – the servant goes free and lives happily ever after enjoying his freedom with his family.
  - What kind of effect do you expect this to have on his life?
  - How do you expect him to treat others?
    - With kindness and graciousness!
    - He was just given his life back! We expect that he would pay it forward because he knows how amazing it was to have his debt cancelled
- But the story continues... and the audience can't believe what happens next.
- 28 But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii...
- Apparently, the servant wasn't the only one with a debt in this story.
  - He seeks out one of his fellow servants who owes him money a hundred
  - One denarius = one day's wage
- Everyone listening would have been thinking the same thing... "A hundred denarii? That's nothing compared to 10,000 talents! I'm sure he's going to find him to let him slide after having his ENORMOUS debt cancelled by the king."
- 28 But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.'
- What?? This jerk is going to make his buddy pay him a few hundred bucks??
- It gets worse...
- 29 So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' 30 He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt.
- Not only does he not cancel his debt, he puts him in prison! He doesn't even give him a chance to work his normal job to pay him back.
- At this point in the story, we stop cheering for the servant.
- How could you be such a jerk when you were shown such kindness by the king?
- The other servants in the story felt the same way. Listen to how this story ends.
- 31 When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. 32 Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. 33 And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' 34 And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt.
- A story that started with astounding mercy ends with dreadful punishment.
- And everyone listening is happy about it!

- At first, we were happy that the servant didn't have to serve the life sentence in prison that he deserved. But we are so appalled by his lack of mercy that we are glad to see him in prison at the end.
- 
- As a listener to the story, it's interesting to see who you cheer for. Who you want to win, and who you want to lose.
  - Have you ever watched a movie where you realize the guy you thought was good is actually one of the bad guys? It's terrible! It makes you so angry! "I can't believe I was starting to cheer for him and want him to win!"
  - That's kind of how I feel in this story. If I would have known what kind of punk this servant was, I wouldn't have wanted his debt to be cancelled in the first place.
- The interesting part about this story is that you're in it!
- And I hate to break it you, but you're not the king.
- After Jesus finishes the story, he tells everyone listening who they are in the story.
- **35 So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."**
- You're the servant! You're the one who owes the king millions of dollars! You're the one who has been shown astounding mercy!
- And you're the one who has to decide how you're going to handle the debts of the people who owe you.
- Just like the servant, we have a much easier time receiving forgiveness than showing it.
- Here's the sick reality: **We want everyone we hurt to forgive, but we want everyone that hurts us to pay.** How screwed up is that?!

How are we supposed to handle all the debts that people owe us?

- Jesus gives us the solution:

**BIG IDEA: Show the same limitless forgiveness you've received.**

- This whole story was to illustrate Jesus' answer to Peter's question?
  - How many times should I forgive?
  - In other words, "What's the limit to my forgiveness?"
  - How many strikes before I can feel justified in holding a grudge, seeking revenge, not speaking to someone?
  - Irony – Jesus would forgive Peter for denying him
- Jesus says 77 times (or 70 times 7) to show that there should be no limit to our forgiveness.
  - When we think in terms of limits, we immediately show how little we understand/ appreciate the forgiveness we've been shown
  - This story is a picture of God forgiving the gigantic debt of all our sins and offenses against him – no matter how terrible or how many. Jesus is telling us that as his followers, we should follow God's example and forgive the debts of all the sins and offenses that people commit against us – no matter how terrible or how many.
- We don't want to do this. We don't want to let people off the hook. We want people to pay for what they've done.
- But Jesus teaches us that the solution to broken relationships is not punishment -- it's forgiveness.

**What does Jesus teach us about forgiveness?**

- 1) **Everyone owes significant debts.**

- Listen closely... I didn't say "Everyone ELSE owes debts."
- The assumption in this story
- When Jesus taught his disciples to pray (what we call the Lord's Prayer), he prayed these words "...and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." – Matthew 6:12
- Everyone needs forgiveness!
  - From God and from the people they've hurt
- In Romans 3:23, Paul tells that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"
  
- We focus so much on other people's debts, we forget how great our debts are.
  - Living as though you don't need forgiveness
  - Similar to judgment – speck/plank
- Think of the debts that God has canceled for you
- What are some of your deepest regrets, your worst mistakes, your hurtful actions?
- **Remembering our own debts helps us put other people's into perspective.**

## 2) Forgiveness is a choice to cancel the debt owed to you.

- Forgive – to release, send away
- Forgiveness is choosing not to define someone by their hurtful actions (mistakes, wrongs).
  - Forgiving their debts – the ways they have hurt you
  - Not making someone pay what (you feel) they owe you!
  - Forgiveness is choosing not to demand what is rightfully yours.
- Psalm 103:12 -- "as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us."
- Have you really cancelled the debt? Or have you just put it on hold?
- Do you say "I forgive you" when really you're just waiting for another opportunity to make them pay up?

## 3) Reconciliation comes through forgiveness, not punishment.

- The goal of forgiveness is reconciliation.
  - Broken relationships restored
  - Damaged relationships healed
- Matthew 5:24 – "First be reconciled to your brother..."
  - Jesus places a high priority on reconciling relationships
  - Brian will talk more about this passage and Jesus' teaching on conflict in 2 weeks
- Forgiveness is the hill you must climb to reconcile a relationship.
  - It's not easy. It's not quick.
  - It's often a long, difficult journey. But the outcome makes it worth it.
- ANALOGY – two people standing at the top of steep hill
- Forgiveness is the only remedy to broken relationships
  - Otherwise the relationship is based on the person paying back their debt – and they never will
- How do you make people pay for their debts?
- We don't send our spouse to their room, or tell our friend they're grounded
- We use relational punishment
  - Withholding love and affection

- Anger
- Hurtful words
- Criticism
- Sarcasm
- Silence
- Not doing things they want you to
- Revenge - Eye for an eye
  1. You hurt me – I’m going to hurt you
  2. You didn’t call me – I’m not going to call you
  3. You lied to me – I’m going to lie to you
  4. You insulted me – I’m going to insult you
- How is this helping???
- Are you responsible for a broken relationship in your life? Either because of your hurtful actions or your unforgiveness.
  - Jesus tells us to follow his example and do whatever we can on our end to reconcile and restore that relationship

**4) Forgive in the same way you’ve been forgiven – without limits.**

- Jesus’s prayer -- “forgive us the debts we owe you as (in the same manner) we forgive the debts people owe us”
- Ephesians 4:31 -- “...forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”
- How does God forgive?
  - He forgives often.
  - He forgives completely.
  - He forgives my small offenses.
  - And he forgives my worst offenses.
- Are you showing that same limitless forgiveness?
- Are you choosing to cancel their debt completely – no matter how severe? Over and over again if necessary?
- Are you choosing to see them with eyes of love instead of eyes of hate?
- Are you telling the story in your head about the good that they add to your life instead of repeating all the ways they have hurt you in the past?
- You hope the other person is sorry. You hope the other person forgives your debts, too. But none of those are guaranteed. And they should not be required in order for you to forgive them.
- You are not responsible for their response to your forgiveness. You *are* responsible for forgiving their debt.

**THE OBJECTIONS TO/ MISCONCEPTIONS OF FORGIVENESS:**

- There’s a difference between forgiveness and trust.
  - You can forgive someone and still not trust them.
  - You should want to rebuild that trust and give them opportunities to do that.
- Forgiveness does not mean you give up on improving a relationship.
- Forgiveness does not mean not having boundaries.
  - “I forgive you, but I am not going to allow myself to be hurt by you in this way anymore.”

- Abuse? Adultery?

What's your limit of forgiveness?

- A coworker talks about you behind your back?
- A classmate disrespects you?
- A friend insults your spouse?
- Your mom lies to you?
- Your brother stops talking to you?
- Your spouse betrays you?
- Your child steals from you?

**APPLICATION:**

- 1) Whose debt do you need to cancel?
- 2) What hurt have you caused that you need to seek forgiveness for?

**ALTAR CALL?**

# Jesus on Anxiety

**Date:** October 11, 2015

**Preacher:** Derek

**Text:** Matthew 6:26ff

## L.I.V.E. or CORE VALUE to mention

- Live · Invest · Volunteer · Equip · Family · Generosity
- Accessible Biblical Truth · Authentic Relationships · **Spiritual Vitality** · All In · Outward Focus

## Text:

Matthew 6:25-34

<sup>25</sup> "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? <sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? <sup>27</sup> And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? <sup>28</sup> And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, <sup>29</sup> yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. <sup>30</sup> But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? <sup>31</sup> Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' <sup>32</sup> For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. <sup>33</sup> But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. <sup>34</sup> "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

## Approximate Outline

### Intro:

- Signs of anxiety in our society / rise of anti-anxiety drugs/ we are the most anxious people in history
- Two kinds of anxiety:
  - a. Run of the mill situational anxiety /worry – life is busy and stressful
  - b. Anxiety disorder that's actually within a family of mental illness – the church hasn't been good about dealing with mental illness in the past – so I want to talk a bit about this form of anxiety a little later on.
- A working definition of anxiety: the painful awareness of being powerless over a personal matter or impending danger.
- Ways people tend to deal with anxiety:
  - a. People who stop, recognize they're anxious, respond to it, try to figure out what's wrong and deal with it if they can. Anxiety goes down.
  - b. People who deny it. Maybe they were raised not to feel. Maybe they were taught when they were young not to think and that their hurts and pains didn't mean anything. They weren't important. Maybe they had so much pain as children that they learned to lower the volume

control on pain and to ignore that blinking light of anxiety. These people go around anxious but ignoring it. It shows up physically, relationally, emotionally and spiritually.

- c. These people don't deal with it or deny it. They dwell on it. These are the people who have gotten used to anxiety. It's almost like they've lowered themselves into the hot tub of anxiety. It's with them all the time. When they go to bed at night, they might lie in bed blinking and trying to go to sleep. Thoughts, worries, anxieties and tensions flicker by or things that happened that day that were left unresolved. When they finally do get to sleep, they sleep, wake in the morning and for about five to ten seconds after waking feel at ease. Then it hits them. The anxiety sweeps over them like a wave. They start the next day anxious again.

1. Pay attention to why anxiety is alerting you

- anxiety in its early stages is a very natural thing. It's something that starts in our minds and our bodies that says something is wrong. Something is not going right -- danger. Watch out. Check this out.
- On its own in the early stages, there is nothing wrong with it. It's the same as if we listen to our pain cells telling us, "Hey! Get your hand out of the fire. On an emotional level, anxiety does that. It warns us and is an important part of our warning system that God gave us when he created us.

#### Context

- The disciples have literally been out of work for a while. In those days, there was no severance pay, no workman's compensation and no Social Security. When he said, "Follow me," they left their jobs. By now, they're thinking, "What's going to happen to us if we follow this guy around? What about food and clothes?" All the people gather around in front of him to listen.
- Recognizing anxiety is a natural thing, he says, "I understand that you're anxious but don't stay that way." Then he gives some reasons why we should trust him.

#### 4 Reasons to Not Worry

1. Stuff is not that important

- *Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?*
- The more tightly you hold to certain things, the more that fear and anxiety will reign around those things.
- I.e. spend a bunch of money on a new living room set and all the sudden you are anxious anytime the kids play in there. Or invest heavily on landscaping and you suddenly get worked up when people walk on your lawn.
- Helicopter parents – when you exalt your kids too much – the fear of what could happen to them will consume your life.

2. You are of utmost value to God

- *Look at the birds... Are you not of more value than they?*
- Birds don't just sit back and do nothing – they are very hard workers. They work hard but they don't have 401k's – if God cares for them – how much more will he care for you.

3. Worry adds nothing positive to your life

- *which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?*

- when you commit yourself to the ministry of ferocious anxiety and worry, does it work?... does it produce good things?... can you manipulate events... can you change stuff if you really worry hard?"
- If you're short, and if you'd like to be taller... does worrying about it produce greater height? if you're worrying about dying prematurely, will worry add a few bonus years to your life?" Has worry every been able to smooth out turbulence in an airplane... or get the pilot to do a smooth landing?

#### 4. You can trust that God is good

- *your heavenly Father knows that you need them all...*
- It almost makes sense for people outside the family of God to worry. But not us.
- The role of faith in our worries.
- Most everyday fear and anxiety originates from the lack of trust that God is good.

How to know the difference between anxiety and an anxiety disorder/ mental illness. – ***need to do more research on this...***

Some thoughts on anxiety disorder and mental illness:

Mental health needs are as real as physical health needs and must be treated as such.

- the Church has failed people who suffer from mental illness, either through misinformation, ignorance, silence, or turning a blind eye to suffering.
- We must enter a new era of taking mental health seriously.
- A 2008 Baylor University Study found the following among church attendees with professionally diagnosed mental illness(es):
  - 41% were told by someone at their church that they did not really have mental illness.
  - 28% were told by someone at their church to stop taking psychiatric medication.
  - 37% were told by someone at their church that their mental illness was the result of personal sin.
  - 34% were told by someone at their church that their mental illness was the result of demonic involvement.
- Steps to help with mental disorders/illness are: psychotherapy, medication, and supportive care. The church can help with this third area (supportive care) – but just like we wouldn't encourage someone to come to a prayer group instead of receiving their cancer treatments and medication -so also we must encourage people to receive the proper medical care for mental disorders.

#### **Objections:**

##### **Additional material**

##### 1) Anxiety

- You will probably include common worries but these were some that I thought of
  - o Well-being of your children, their salvation
  - o Life not meeting our expectations/ the expectations of others
- The spectrum of apathy to anxiety –
  - o caring deeply about something and being concerned with an outcome is good, but obsessing over/ not trusting God it is bad – when the problem overshadows God
- Anxiety in light of eternal hope/ security

# Jesus on Conflict

**Date:** October 18th, 2015

**Preacher:** Brian

**Text:** Matthew 5:23-25; Matthew 18:15-20; Mark 10:35-45

## L.I.V.E. or CORE VALUE to mention

- Live · Invest · Volunteer · Equip · Family · Generosity
- Accessible Biblical Truth · Authentic Relationships · Spiritual Vitality · All In · Outward Focus

**Text: Matthew 5:23-25**

**23**“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, **24**leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.

**Matthew 18:15-20**

<sup>15</sup>“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. <sup>16</sup>But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. <sup>17</sup>If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. <sup>18</sup>Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. <sup>19</sup>Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. <sup>20</sup>For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

**Mark 10:35-45**

<sup>35</sup>And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him and said to him, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” <sup>36</sup>And he said to them, “What do you want me to do for you?” <sup>37</sup>And they said to him, “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.” <sup>38</sup>Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?” <sup>39</sup>And they said to him, “We are able.” And Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized, <sup>40</sup>but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.” <sup>41</sup>And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John. <sup>42</sup>And Jesus called them to him and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. <sup>43</sup>But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, <sup>44</sup>and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. <sup>45</sup>For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

**Big Idea –**

**Approximate Outline**

Intro:

- “Settle this like adults” T-shirt?

#### Priority—Matthew 5:23-25

- Jesus wants us to feel tension, to up the priority of this in our lives.
- Notice that it doesn’t say when you have something against your brother in this passage—it says if your brother has something against you. In this passage, Jesus is putting the burden of reconciliation on the person who has wronged another.
- We want to avoid conflict, but Jesus’ advice is to be direct—this is hard depending on your personality and family background, but talking around an issue, or trying not to talk about it all, leads to sin.
- Taking a break from conflict is ok, gathering your thoughts and calming down, etc. But often we never want to come back to it. Jesus says, don’t go to worship God while you realize that someone still has something against you.
- When you are in relational conflict with someone, seeking and giving forgiveness *is* your worship.
- Often times it’s easier to vilify, to dehumanize the other person to protect our own sense of who we are. But:
- 1 John 4—how can we come to worship God and yet not love those for whom he shed his blood?
- Even if we sometimes fail at this –the important thing is to take a next step—make conflict resolution a priority in your life—resolve to take a step sooner rather than later.

#### Community—Matthew 18:15-20

- Matthew 18 is Jesus telling Christians how to have a fight.
- This time, Jesus puts the onus on the person who has been wronged to start the conversation—to come forward and let the person know how they have hurt or wronged them.
- His recommendation? Conflict resolution happens best within the context of community.
- In any group of people, the extent to which true community exists determines their ability to work through conflict and avoid dysfunction. This applies to marriages, work, and church.
- Community:
  - Transparency
  - Honesty
  - Accountability
  - Trust
- First you go to the person—you don’t go to someone else first, you don’t talk about the person behind someone’s back—you go to the person.
- If that doesn’t work, you bring others in to the process.

- In the context of the church, that may eventually mean bringing the elders in to help correct and lead when the wrong done is particularly damaging to people in the church or the church as a whole.
- Application: Get in a life group—leaders get coaching.

### Humility—Mark 10:35-45

1. Who is the greatest?
  - When the disciples are arguing about who is the greatest, Jesus flips the argument on it's head.
  - So many conflicts can be diffused if we would follow Jesus' example and look to serve others—to see their needs as the priority.
2. Avoid being easily offended
  - In church (or maybe in life!), we have the tendency to let small slights really get us off course.
  - Social Media mentality—indignant anger is cathartic and easy. One misplaced tweet can ruin someone's life and career.
  - Nick Kansas research with International Space Station astronauts—how do they live in such confined spaces and resolve conflict—"the mission is too important".
  - Our mission is too important to let petty issues and hang-ups derail what God wants to do through us. Resolve to be someone who isn't easily offended.
3. The cross and conflict
  - Jesus demonstrates what he says to the disciples by resolving the ultimate conflict—between us and God.
  - He stands in the gap, wiping away our shame and guilt, and brings us back into community, back into relational wholeness with God.

### **Application**

1. Life groups
2. Seek help—CCA, Prepare/Enrich
3. What conflict do you need to take a next step in today? To reach out and seek or offer forgiveness?

### **Objections:**

### **Additional material**

- *Matthew 18:1-3 At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" 2 And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them 3 and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*
- *1 John 4:19-21: 19 We love because he first loved us. 20 If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. 21 And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.*

# Jesus on Sexuality

**Date:** October 25, 2015

**Preacher:** Derek

**Text:** Matthew 5:27-30; Matthew 19:3-12

## L.I.V.E. or CORE VALUE to mention

- Live · Invest · Volunteer · Equip · Family · Generosity
- Accessible Biblical Truth · Authentic Relationships · **Spiritual Vitality** · All In · Outward Focus

## Text:

Matthew 5:27-30

<sup>27</sup> "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.'<sup>28</sup> But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. <sup>29</sup> If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. <sup>30</sup> And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

Matthew 19:3-12

<sup>3</sup> And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" <sup>4</sup> He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, <sup>5</sup> and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? <sup>6</sup> So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." <sup>7</sup> They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?" <sup>8</sup> He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. <sup>9</sup> And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery." <sup>10</sup> The disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry." <sup>11</sup> But he said to them, "Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given. <sup>12</sup> For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it."

**Big Idea** – Jesus is the primary authority on sex, it was his idea.

## Approximate Outline

Introduction:

- Examples of our sex-crazed culture
- Admission that the Jesus way will seem strange to the world. It always has.
- Sex can be such a gift when it's handled rightly, if it can express intimacy and love like nothing else in the world -- which it can -- and on the other hand, if sexuality can be so devastating when it's mishandled, if it can destroy marriages and cripple consciences and traumatize young lives and consume those who have become addicted to it, then where are you going to go for authoritative guidance on it? How about the one who invented it?

## Sex According to Jesus

1. We are all sexually broken (Mt. 5:27-30)
  - This was Jesus' whole point to the Pharisees in Mt. 5
  - They thought they could divide the human race into two categories: adulterers (those who have problems sexually) and non-adulterers (people like them, with no problems).
  - Imagine how offended the religious leaders were when Jesus told them that they too had problems with sexual righteousness!
  - What are some forms of this brokenness. An unhealthy attachment to your own need to look sexually desirable, fantasizing for someone other than your spouse, pornography, affair, homosexuality, etc.
  - In verses 29 and 30, Jesus makes these very strong statements. "If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away...And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away." Jesus is not recommending self-mutilation as a form of sin management. He is showing the absurdity of the way the scribes and Pharisees understood righteousness.
  - Their idea was, as long as you haven't sinned, you're righteous. Therefore, if looking at a woman might cause you to sin, just don't look at a woman. Jesus is saying, with some humor, "Well, if the way to be righteous is not to look at a woman, why not go all the way? If your eyes are the problem, just gouge them out." But, of course, your eyes are not the problem. The problem lies in your heart, your innermost being--your thoughts, desires and intentions. An external solution is not going to do.
  - We must address our spiritual brokenness in this area and bring it humbly before God.
  - Righteousness, as Jesus defines it, is not simply the avoidance of sin. The ultimate goal is to have your heart so transformed that you become the kind of person who, when you look at someone of the opposite sex, see what Jesus sees.
2. Sexuality was God's good plan (Mt. 19:3-4)
  - Just because sin has warped our understanding of sexuality – doesn't mean that it's bad. In fact it's indescribably good – we need to dig back through the layers of junk to get back to the original good plan
  - God made human beings as male and female--God made sex." God brought Eve to Adam, and Adam's response was not, "I'll bet she has a nice personality." This was good!
3. Sex was designed for the covenant of marriage between one man and one woman for life. (Mt. 19:5-9)
  - God intended sex to be for a husband and wife who have committed themselves to each other permanently, because only in the context of a permanent commitment can permanent intimacy be safely expressed. When there's physical intimacy without a permanent commitment, somebody's going to get hurt.
  - Any violation of this intended design is sin. (will share some insights about each of these expressions)
    - o Pre-marital sex (cohabitation)
    - o Divorce
    - o Adultery
    - o Multiple partners
    - o Pornography
    - o Homosexual relationships
  - 1 Thess. 4:3

- Make this commitment before you get into situations where you're going to be tempted to break it, because if you wait until then, you've waited too long. You're not going to make it. The pressure to go the other way on God's standards is so intense in our society that if you have not decided ahead of time, it's not going to happen.
- 4. Singleness can be a gift from God and a gift back to God (Mt. 19:10-12)
  - There are those who remain celibate for the kingdom of God. Jesus is not promoting castration, not by any means; but he was speaking of the renunciation of marriage for a higher purpose--the kingdom of God.
  - In other words, sexual fulfillment in marriage is not the only option for life. Jesus and Paul later (1 Cor. 7:7-9) commended celibacy for the sake of the kingdom--not as a means to achieve the kingdom, but because of the claims and interests of the kingdom.
  - This may be the answer for some who struggle with sexual identity issues.

There is beauty in sexual purity. In our day – like everything else – sex has become completely “me” centered. It was never intended to be that. I will paint a picture of the beauty of waiting, the beauty of abstaining, the beauty of committing.

#### **Objections:**

- How much time do you have? ... LOL
- If two people love each other and aren't hurting anyone what is the harm?
- The bible is an outdated book – why should we listen to it? We don't stone people anymore, etc.
- Jesus is all about love
- It's judgmental to impose your sexual ethic on anyone else
- What about the Supreme Court decision? How should Christians respond?
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#### **Additional material**

- There is the common idea that since Jesus never explicitly mentioned homosexuality, he must not have been very concerned about it. First, there are many ethical issues about which Jesus made no explicit statement. That observation hardly means that his moral vision has no relevance to those issues. Jesus never said anything explicit about abortion, slavery, human trafficking, or child molestation. But it would be an incredible claim to conclude from that fact that Jesus's teaching is irrelevant to our ethical assessment of those issues. Second, Jesus did speak explicitly about sexual immorality in general and the nature of marriage. He denounced the former (e.g., Matt. 5:28; 15:19) and defined the latter according to Genesis 2:24: “For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh” (Matt. 19:5 AT; par. Mark 10:7–8). Jesus affirmed the covenanted union of one man and one woman as the only normative expression of human sexuality. It is incredible to suggest that these words from Jesus have no bearing on the question of homosexuality. They surely do. – Matt Tully
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