

The Hard Sayings of Jesus

Matthew 5:27-29

²⁷ “You have heard the commandment that says, ‘You must not commit adultery.’^u ²⁸ But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹ So if your eye—even your good eye^u—causes you to lust, 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.

Context – Sermon on the Mount

From a “40,000 ft.” perspective, what is Jesus doing in the Sermon on the Mount?

Adultery

What is adultery?

Voluntary sex between a married person and someone other than that person's current spouse or partner.

Deuteronomy 22:23-26

²³ “Suppose a man meets a young woman, a virgin who is engaged to be married, and he has sexual intercourse with her. If this happens within a town, ²⁴ you must take both of them to the gates of that town and stone them to death. The woman is guilty because she did not scream for help. The man must die because he violated another man’s wife. In this way, you will purge this evil from among you.

²⁵ “But if the man meets the engaged woman out in the country, and he rapes her, then only the man must die. ²⁶ Do nothing to the young woman; she has committed no crime worthy of death. She is as innocent as a murder victim.

What does this passage tell us about adultery?

Jeremiah 3:6-10

⁶ During the reign of King Josiah, the LORD said to me, “Have you seen what fickle Israel has done? Like a wife who commits adultery, Israel has worshiped other gods on every hill and under every green tree. ⁷ I thought, ‘After she has done all this, she will return to me.’ But she did not return, and her faithless sister Judah saw this. ⁸ She saw^[a] that I divorced faithless Israel because of her adultery. But that treacherous sister Judah had no fear, and now she, too, has left me and given herself to prostitution. ⁹ Israel treated it all so lightly—she thought nothing of committing adultery by worshiping idols made of wood and stone. So now the land has been polluted. ¹⁰ But despite all this, her faithless sister Judah has never sincerely returned to me. She has only pretended to be sorry. I, the LORD, have spoken!”

Matthew 12:38-39

³⁸ One day some teachers of religious law and Pharisees came to Jesus and said, “Teacher, we want you to show us a miraculous sign to prove your authority.”

³⁹ But Jesus replied, “Only an evil, adulterous generation would demand a miraculous sign; but the only sign I will give them is the sign of the prophet Jonah.

What do these passages teach us about adultery?

Lust

What is lust?

Usually intense or unbridled sexual desire; an intense longing, craving.

2 Peter 1:2-7

³ His divine power has given us everything needed for life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us by^[b] his own glory and excellence. ⁴ Thus he has given us, through these things, his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of lust and may become participants of the divine nature. ⁵ For this very reason, you must make every effort to support your faith with excellence, and excellence with knowledge, ⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with endurance, and endurance with godliness, ⁷ and godliness with mutual affection, and mutual affection with love.

Ephesians 4:20-24

²⁰ But that isn't what you learned about Christ. ²¹ Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, ²² throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. ²³ Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. ²⁴ Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.

Based on these verses, what else would you say about lust?

So, what is Jesus telling us in this hard saying about adultery and lust?

How are we (the church) doing with adultery? Should we gouge our eye out?

Galatians 5:16-25

¹⁶ So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. ¹⁷ The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions. ¹⁸ But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses.

¹⁹ When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

²² But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. ²⁵ Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives.

1 John 1:5-9

⁵ This is the message we heard from Jesus^[c] and now declare to you: God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all. ⁶ So we are lying if we say we have fellowship with God but go on living in spiritual darkness; we are not practicing the truth. ⁷ But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.

⁸ If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. ⁹ But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.

Remember how Jesus handled the woman caught in adultery . . . he will deal with us in the same way

John 8:1-11

Jesus returned to the Mount of Olives, ² but early the next morning he was back again at the Temple. A crowd soon gathered, and he sat down and taught them. ³ As he was speaking, the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in the act of adultery. They put her in front of the crowd.

⁴ "Teacher," they said to Jesus, "this woman was caught in the act of adultery. ⁵ The law of Moses says to stone her. What do you say?"

⁶ They were trying to trap him into saying something they could use against him, but Jesus stooped down and wrote in the dust with his finger. ⁷ They kept demanding an answer, so he stood up again and said, "All right, but let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone!" ⁸ Then he stooped down again and wrote in the dust.

⁹When the accusers heard this, they slipped away one by one, beginning with the oldest, until only Jesus was left in the middle of the crowd with the woman. ¹⁰Then Jesus stood up again and said to the woman, "Where are your accusers? Didn't even one of them condemn you?"

¹¹"No, Lord," she said.

And Jesus said, "Neither do I. Go and sin no more."