

“LUST”
Matthew 5:27-30
March 10, 2019
Holiday Island Presbyterian Church

INTRODUCTION:

Today we begin a new series of sermons: “The Seven Deadly Sins.”

**Since Lent is an appropriate time for us to examine ourselves,
it is also an appropriate time to examine this ancient list of sins.**

**You cannot go to any one chapter or verse in the Bible
and hope to find this list of sins . . .
. . . rather, these sins are scattered throughout the Bible.**

**The list of seven deadly sins have been around for a while.
The first list was compiled by John Cassian –
- one of the first monks -
- and later refined by Gregory the Great.**

**Because of our fallen nature,
we are most likely to commit one of these sins.
They are considered “deadly”
because of the devastating effect they have upon the sinner.**

**There is a popular theory that circulates from time to time
that the characters on “Gilligan’s Island”
each represent one of the seven deadly sins.**

LUST:

**This morning,
we’re going to take a close look at the first sin: lust.**

**Lust can be defined as the desire
to experience physical, sensual pleasures
causing us to ignore ethics and commandments
against acting on lustful thoughts.**

**And, if the “Gilligan’s Island” theory is correct,
the character who represents lust would, of course, be Ginger.**

**You will remember Ginger as the beautiful movie star
who was used to getting what she wanted
by flaunting her good looks and sex appeal.**

**There is a story told about a man and his wife
who were shopping in the mall
when a young, shapely woman in a very short skirt strolled by.**

As she passes, the husband’s eyes follow her.

**Without even looking up the wife asked:
“Was it worth the trouble you are now in?”**

**Most often, we excuse lust as the result of an overactive sex drive,
or try to excuse it as merely a biological phenomenon
or the by-product of overactive glands
or even a by-product of hormones.**

**If that were true,
then lust could be satisfied through sexual experience
in the same way a glass of water slakes a thirst
on a hot afternoon**

or a good meal satiates hunger.

**Instead, lust is something that grows like a mold or a cancer.
It feeds upon itself and can spread through our minds
quicker than an Oklahoma grass fire in August!**

**The more we attempt to appease it - the more it demands.
Until there is simply not enough erotica in the world
to satisfy lust's insatiable appetite.**

**Having said all of this,
you would think that lust would be considered
extremely dangerous and hazardous to society.
Unfortunately, just the reverse is true.**

SUPPORTED BY SOCIETY:

**We have produced - or allowed to be produced -
- a society which is sex-obsessed and sex-saturated.**

**Next time you are standing in a check-out line at any grocery store
take a look at the magazines!**

**You will find a reference to sex - in some form -
- on almost every cover displayed!**

**Watch television for as little as 30 minutes
and you will see subtle references to sex in commercials,
as well as in the program itself.**

**Let's agree with something
Madison Avenue has known for a long time:
Sex sells!!!**

**Sex permeates advertising –
advertising promotes spending and consuming
and consumptive spending fuels our economy.**

**It lures us into making certain purchases -
- clothes, toothpaste, soap, deodorant,
It stimulates us to drive certain cars
- and to patronize certain restaurants and resorts.**

Sex sells!

**For that reason, Lust has been said to be
the “Widest road - and the deepest pit”**

DESTRUCTIVE POWER:

**The destructive power of lust
is that it is not an isolated sin.**

**Lust isn't something that exists only in our minds
without somehow affecting our attitudes
and affecting our behavior.**

Samuel Smiles -poet:

**Sow a thought - reap an act
Sow an act - reap a habit
Sow a habit - reap a character
Sow a character - reap destiny**

**Lust sets off a chain reaction of events that is difficult to reverse.
We see someone we are attracted to
and we see no harm in that
so we go one step further.**

**We begin to spend time with that person -
- then time alone with that person -
- and we are on the slippery slope to sin.**

**Or we see someone we are attracted to
and that person refuses to return our favors -
- we build up resentment and anger.
Again, we are headed towards destructive sin.**

**You see, when lust takes up residence in our minds,
Nothing is off-limits**

Lust is to the gift of sex

what cancer is to a normal cell.

**Lust causes the natural biological response of attraction
to spin out of control.**

Is every instance of lust bad?

No!

Not if it is contained within the covenant of marriage.

**A husband should be sexually attracted to a wife;
and a wife should be sexually attracted to a husband.**

**It is customary to give gifts to someone we care about
- flowers, candy, cards; tokens of our affection.**

**The most personal thing we have is the gift of yourself
there is nothing more precious to give than that.**

**It should be reserved for the one person
to whom we pledge our whole self
“Until death do you part!”**

**We must guard against allowing lust
to lead us into a shallow relationship
for the sole purpose of satisfying our lust
at the expense of someone else.**

THE CURE:

Jesus taught us how to deal with lust.

In Matthew 5:27-30 He said:

**“You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’²⁸
But I tell you that anyone who looks at another person lustfully
has already committed adultery with that person in his/her heart.**

Jesus said, “I tell you...”

**It was a solemn proclamation of truth - an important truth
something which He expected us to pay close attention to.**

“Anyone...” said Jesus.

**That indicates it applies to all people, at all times,
with no exceptions!**

**Anyone who continues to lust in his/her mind
is just as guilty as someone who acts upon that lust!**

Lust is always a sin!

And it is serious enough

that Jesus says we should take drastic action to avoid it!

**²⁹ If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and
throw it away. . . And if your right hand causes you to
stumble, cut it off and throw it away.**

**Jesus uses the violent language of gouging out an eye
or cutting off a hand to demonstrate
how important it is for us to avoid lust!**

Violent language - indicating a violent sin!

Spurgeon, the great preacher, told this parable:

**There was once a tyrant king who summoned one of subjects
and commanded the poor blacksmith to forge a chain.**

Finished the task and presents the chain to the king.

**The king ordered the blacksmith
to take it away and forge it twice as long.**

Once again finished the chain and presented it to the king.

**Once again, the king ordered the blacksmith
to take it away and forge it twice as long.**

The blacksmith comes back again for the third time.

**The tyrant king looks at the chain
then orders the servants to bind the blacksmith hand and foot
with the chain he had made
and to cast the blacksmith into prison.**

Spurgeon surmised that the devil does the exact same thing to us.

**The devil causes us to forge our own chain
then binds us hand and foot with the chain of our own making
and casts us into outer darkness.**

That is the soul-destroying power of lust!

God - and only God - has the power to break those chains!

No other power in the universe can release us from those chains!

**We are held prisoner by our own sin -
- unless we appeal to God to release us!**

**If there were no cure,
if there was no way to escape the snare of lust
we would be condemned to a bleak existence.**

CONCLUSION:

The good news is:

We have been given several tools to use against lust.

**First of all,
we have the promise of God
that we will never - never - be tempted
beyond what we can bear.**

It says in 1 Corinthians 10:13

**No temptation has seized you except what is common to man.
And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what
you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a
way out so that you can stand up under it.**

**If you are suffering under the power of lust
ask God to help you overcome that temptation!**

**A second tool in the Christian's arsenal
is a good, close, Christian friend.**

**Find a friend, one who is a person of great faith
a person who prays often
a person who has a good relationship with God.**

Ask that person to help you overcome your lust.

Put yourself into an accountable relationship with that person.

**The world doesn't care one iota about whether or not lust exists...
...the world doesn't care if your family falls apart
and the world doesn't care if you destroy your own soul!**

**This Church cares!
I care!!!**

**If there is ever anything I can do to help you overcome lust
give me a call!
I'll do everything in my power
to help you find release!**

Now you see why Lust is considered one of the 7 Deadly Sins!

It is deadly!

But it doesn't have to have complete control over you!

PRAYER:

Merciful God, we are faced all sorts of temptations. Were it not for You, we would indeed be doomed.

Grant us the strength, the faith and the courage to withstand the temptations that come our way. Remind us often that we are Your children and that You have given us rule by which to live.

Bless us as we strive to be worthy of being called Christians; and forgive us when we fall short.

AMEN