

**LIVE  
PURE**

## LIVE PURE

Sept. 6, 2015

**Sermon in a sentence:** As the 'bride of Christ', we have entered into a marriage covenant that motivates us to be faithful to Jesus spiritually, and to our spouse sexually.

**Congregational reading:** Exodus 20: 1-17

**Scriptures:** Exodus 20:1-17; 1 Cor. 6:15-20; Gen. 2:24; 2 Cor. 6:14.

Ex. 20:1-17 NKJV And God spoke all these words, saying:  
2 "I *am* the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.  
3 "You shall have no other gods before Me.  
4 "You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness *of anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth; <sup>5</sup> you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For **I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God**, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth *generations* of those who hate Me, <sup>6</sup> but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.  
7 "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold *him* guiltless who takes His name in vain.  
8 "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. <sup>9</sup> Six days you shall labor and do all your work, <sup>10</sup> but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. *In it* you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates. <sup>11</sup> For *in* six days the LORD made the

heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

12 “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

13 “You shall not murder.

14 “You shall not commit adultery.

15 “You shall not steal.

16 “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

17 “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that *is* your neighbor’s.”

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There are few days as exciting for a woman as her wedding day. It almost seems as if her whole life has been leading up to this one climactic moment. (Yes, we know there is a husband involved, but this is *really* about the bride!) No expense is spared, friends and family come together and there is a great celebration.

In Genesis 24, Abraham called his chief servant to him and commissioned him to find a wife for Isaac. He took precious gifts with him and presented them to the young lady God led him to and we can just imagine the joy and the celebration that took place. Nothing has changed from that time to this. A wedding is a very big deal!

One of the most amazing things God’s word has revealed to us is that He Himself was also looking for a wife. And he found one. Her name was Israel. He loved her, pursued her, gave her many precious gifts, drew her to Himself and married her. The writings of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah,

Ezekiel and Hosea,<sup>1</sup> speak eloquently about the marital covenant between God and His people – an incredible insight into the will and plan of God for Himself and for humanity.

Isaiah 54: 5 NKJV For your Maker *is* your husband, The LORD of hosts *is* His name; And your Redeemer *is* the Holy One of Israel; He is called the God of the whole earth.

Hosea 2:16,19 NKJV “And it shall be, in that day,” says the LORD, “*That* you will call Me ‘My Husband,’ and no longer call Me ‘My Master,’ 19 “I will betroth you to Me forever; yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice, in lovingkindness and mercy.

**God has chosen to have the most personal, precious and intimate relationship possible with the people He created in love.**

After delivering Israel from Egypt and taking them to safety across the Red Sea, **God called Moses to a meeting on Mt. Sinai to give him the details of the marriage covenant between Himself and His bride Israel. We call them the “Ten Commandments”. And as we go through them with ‘marriage covenant’ in mind, they make perfect sense.** Nothing in the Ten Commandments is the least bit onerous when looked at in that light.

**1<sup>st</sup> Commandment:** Since Israel was married to God, they certainly should not have any other gods before Him. Likewise, in human terms, is it not reasonable to expect that if your wife is married to you, she will have no other husband?

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<sup>1</sup> God is Israel’s husband: Jer. 31:31-32; Isa. 54:5-6,8; Hosea 2:2,7-8; Ezek. 16:8-14; Song of Solomon.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment:** God said, do not make an image of another god and bow down to it or worship it.

When I enter my bedroom at home, I see a picture my wife hung in a very prominent spot on the wall. It is one of our wedding pictures, and you see it as soon as you walk in. It shows us in a very happy, loving embrace. I hope you can understand that if I walked in one day and saw a picture of another man where my picture used to be, there would be a serious problem. Why? Because I am very jealous to maintain the love of my wife!

God is exactly the same. He makes no bones about it. He is a jealous God (v.4). He demands exclusivity. Just like you and I require of our spouse.

**When God speaks about His spouse and His dealings with her, His emotions are totally raw, open and unvarnished. He feels very strongly about His bride! How she lives and what she does has a great impact and effect on Him.**

Therefore, when Israel made a statue at the base of Mt. Sinai, replacing Him with a dead gold cow, He was furious! He said to Moses: "I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked people! Now therefore, let Me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them" (Ex. 32:9-10).

Most of us can understand His reaction. We may have the greatest feelings of love and happiness toward a spouse, a child or a parent. Yet, depending on something they do or say, those feelings can change in an instant to anger and resentment. And vice versa. God's relationship with His bride plumbs the depths of His emotional well!

**3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment:** “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain....” (Ex. 20:7). Many times in the book of Ecclesiastes, Solomon uses the words ‘vain’ and ‘vanity’ to identify things that are worthless or irrelevant. We understand that God’s name encompasses His personality, His character, His majesty and His power. So if we take God’s name in vain, throwing it around as a slang expression or swear word, we show that He is really irrelevant to us and unworthy of our respect. God resents this, especially if it comes from His wife!

The Commandments continue with other aspects of the covenant that express how our oneness with God affects the ways in which we relate to others: don’t kill anyone, don’t steal from anyone, don’t lie to anyone, don’t covet what someone else has, and make sure to honour your parents. As we would not do these things to our spouse, we should not do them to others.

Now let us take a look at Commandment #7, which is particularly germane to our discussion today: “You shall not commit adultery” (Ex. 20:14). In other words, we need to live in a state of moral purity.

**Adultery is a sexual act committed by a married person with someone other than his or her spouse. This differs from fornication, which describes sexual acts committed by an unmarried person. Thus, Commandment #7 specifies adultery rather than fornication since it is referring to those who are, in fact, already married to God: Israel in the OT and the Church in the NT. “You shall not commit adultery!”**

**Here is the reality for every child of God - we have entered into a covenant relationship with Christ that binds us together in oneness of spirit (1 Cor. 6:17), just as a marriage between a man and woman binds them together**

**in oneness of flesh. Moses says: “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (Gen. 2:24).**

**You may wonder why our discussion on moral purity has begun with a discourse on marriage. The reason is simple. For the most part, those of us in attendance today are Christians. Therefore, by definition, most of us are already married. Married to Jesus Christ.**

**With this in mind, let us now consider the situation of a Christian who desires spiritual, emotional and sexual intimacy in a human relationship.**

**First, let me repeat. We are already married! Married to Jesus Christ. Therefore, we should only enter into a human relationship that fits within the confines of our existing marriage to Him.**

**As we reflect upon our monogamous, exclusive, totally committed spiritual marriage to Jesus, we see what to look for in a human spousal relationship.**

**As we would expect, the word of God helps us in this endeavour: “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?” (2 Cor. 6:14).**

**If a Christian chooses to go against this instruction and marries an unbeliever, one of two things typically happens:**

- **They eventually separate from Jesus and adopt the lifestyle and world view of their human spouse, or**

- They endure a life of continual conflict and stress as they try to live for God with a spouse who constantly resists them.

In either case, disobedience to God's word has disastrous outcomes.

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When we marry a Christian spouse and establish a 'one-flesh' relationship with them, we know we should be faithful to the relationship and not commit adultery. This expectation is well established in the minds of all married people (not just Christian couples). We need to Live Pure! People have killed an adulterous spouse and escaped prosecution because sinner and saint alike have the expectation of marital fidelity. "You shall not commit adultery."

**We retain our moral purity and give our love exclusively to our spouse as a reflection of our relationship with God.**

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Now let us take a look at fornication. This sin is committed by people who are neither married to Christ in the spirit, nor to another human being in the flesh.

A fornicator has not committed him or herself to anyone, so is basically available to everyone. There is no covenant, no oneness, no dedication, no responsibility, no exclusivity. Therefore, there is no real love, for God or for their current partner.

There are spiritual fornicators that will temporarily link up with any god they feel can help them in a particular situation. This kind of god-relationship is all about "what's in it for me?" I will worship and pray to the sun god, the

**rain god or the fertility god to make my crops grow so I can feed myself, and maybe even make some money from selling some of my harvest. I will worship and pray to the money god, the health god, the wisdom god or the power god, as long as they make me rich, strong, smart and powerful. It's all about me.**

**Essentially, fornication is a very selfish act. People engage in spiritual fornication only to get what they want. Even if they are performing sacrificial acts for their god, it is only to avoid a perceived penalty that is worse than the sacrifice they are making. Fornication is strictly self-serving.**

**Fornication with another human being follows the same pattern. Whereas God desires us to enjoy a lifelong, committed spousal relationship with Him and possibly another Christ-follower, fornication is only meant for the gratification of lust. It promises a good time, and usually delivers on that promise for the moment. However, it comes at a cost. You leave a part of yourself with every partner you have, and you take a part of them with you wherever you go. And the more partners a person has, the less able they are to make a long-term commitment to a spouse and enjoy their sexual relationship. There are too many other people in the room – all in the fornicator's head.**

**The biblical teaching on this topic is very simple:**

**1 Cor. 6:18 NKJV “Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body”.**

**This is why the devil promotes non-marital sex the way he does. He has studied the Bible, and he knows that fornication hurts the fornicator.**

**At the end of the day, we all want love. The kind of love that says: “I am yours and you are mine – through thick and thin, for better or for worse.” We offer this to our spouse because that is the way God treats us.**

**Adultery and fornication destroys God’s kind of love, so we must discard them. They promise adventure, satisfaction and thrills, but at an exceedingly high price, with ever diminishing returns of fulfillment.**

**You may not have a human spouse, but every child of God has a heavenly spouse who has done everything *for* us and given everything *to* us. Let us love Him supremely, be faithful to Him completely and follow the example He has set for us.**

**Live pure!**