

28/10/2007

Rev Robert Denham

The stripper walked out among the gawking eyes and lusty hands. "Take it all off!" came the yell from up the back. With a delicate twist, all that was left was a G-string. The crowd hooted and hollered for more. Never had the ladies seen a man like this! Never had the senior citizens had so much fun! But was it fun? Was it OK? No one DID anything... it was just a lot of fun! Or was it?

Was it any different to the coated man staring at the cubicle in the adult shop?

Was it any different to the giggling boys around the Penthouse magazine?

Was it any different to the buck's party?

Or to the zippered section of Cleo?

Our law says it is OK. Society says "Everyone does it!" You can spend your money without fear of police. You may even be cheered on by the crowd. Is it harmless? Is it a nice pleasurable past-time, as long as it does not get any further than what happens in your head?

What is wrong with it? Lots; for it affects our relationship with each other, and it affects our relationship with God.

Most people accept that physical adultery damages relationships. Adultery changes the relationship, even before the partner finds out. There is secrecy and lying. Trust is destroyed. Yet trust is the basis of all our relationships. As we trust others and share with them, we grow in our love and feeling of security, which is vital for a long-lasting friendship and companionship. Adultery destroys that, as does the guilt it brings.

But also, physical adultery affects our relationship with God.

The 7<sup>th</sup> commandment said *Do not commit adultery*. God desires purity:

Purity of relationships, and purity of marriage. His people are to be holy.

His desire for purity of relationships was so strong that he declared that death was the punishment for adultery. Leviticus 20:10 says *If a man commits adultery with another man's wife – with the wife of his neighbour – both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death.*

At the time of Jesus, the Pharisees prided themselves on being able to keep the 7<sup>th</sup> command. They had very strict rules, and in the heat of the moment, would even break the Roman law of no unauthorised Jewish capital punishment, in order to

kill someone found in the act... although they often only stoned the woman.

They would recoil from physical adultery, but like all people, what went on in their heads and hearts was not as pure. They could easily have asked "What's wrong with thinking it, so long as nothing ever happens?"

Jesus said in Matthew 5:27-28 *You have heard it said 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*

He combined the 7<sup>th</sup> commandment and the 10<sup>th</sup> commandment. Do not commit adultery, so do not covet your neighbour's wife. The Old Testament law did cover the thinking, desiring and mental aspect of adultery, for that is part of coveting.

Jesus made it very clear. Do not do it! Do not even daydream about it. In God's eyes, your lustful thoughts are just as evil as adultery. God still wants our relationships to be pure. He doesn't want us daydreaming about others.

He does not want us to imagine we are with someone else while lying with our partner. He does not want us to cheapen our relationships or damage them by mentally cheating on our partner, whether or not it leads us into physical adultery. He does not want us to sin against him, or against our partner, or against our brother or sister.

But society has eased the disgrace of adultery, and has promoted the voyeuristic market. How many movies are made without nudity or some form of sex? How many porn movies are made, sold and watched? How many sex shops and adult bookshops have flourished in Sydney and her suburbs? How much of the internet involves this type of activity?

And the only reason that they have flourished is that there is a market for them.

So what should we do?

The 1<sup>st</sup> thing is to admit that in God's view, lustful thoughts are just as bad as doing the act. We need forgiveness, and Jesus died so we might be forgiven even for those sins. So confess them to God and repent.

But how serious should we take repentance? Should we just feel bad and promise not to do it again?

Jesus said in Matthew 5:29-30 *If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your*

28/10/2007

Rev Robert Denham

*right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell.*

How seriously should we deal with sin? Would you miss an eye? Would you miss a hand?

Jesus is saying that sin is so devastating, that it needs to be thoroughly chopped out.

It is just as precious to us as our eye and right hand, yet it needs to be deliberately got rid of. It will be as drastic as poking your eye out, or chopping off your hand. It will hurt and your life will be different because of it. But the results are the reason why it needs to be done.

It is not as easy as medication, or a week in hospital, or 6 months church attendance, or saying 17 Hail Mary's. It is a radical choice of actively removing it.

We cannot do it by ourselves. We need God's help. Pray for His Spirit to strengthen you to get rid of sin. Then make your decisions. Stop buying the magazines. Refuse to go to that club. Turn the TV off. Don't visit those web pages. Stop day dreaming. Look at his or her eyes, not her breasts, legs, bottom, or his abs and butt. Wipe those videos. Stop that subscription. Make a deliberate choice to refuse adultery.

And pray for each other, that we can all resist temptation. Pray for your partner. Pray for our young people whose culture is so sex oriented. Pray that they too will cast out sin.

And if you cannot do it yourself, get help from a trusted friend. Be accountable to each other.

For sin is abhorrent. It's abhorrent to God, and also affects each other. Are you different to the non-Christians? Are you different to the hypocritical Christians? Are you wanting to be like Jesus? Then just do it.