

Matthew 5:27-30

Fix Your Eyes Upon the Majesty of God

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said:

*“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory!”*

And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!”

Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.” (Isaiah 6:1-7, ESV)

What will it be like when we see the Lord? Can you imagine? What we just read was from Isaiah. Isaiah was a prophet who spoke to a people on the edge of the judgment of God. He sees the Lord. Can you imagine what it must have been like to see Jesus? What must it have been like for the light of the world to step down into darkness, to open eyes of the blind so that they could see him in his glory? Today in some mysterious way we get to hear from God as he speaks to us through his Word.

READ TEXT

There is a serious epidemic, an epidemic that has plagued man since the beginning. The problem - looking with lust at what is forbidden. The reason looking is serious is because of what Jesus says in Matthew 6:22-23, *“The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!”*

Instead of looking with lust at what we cannot have, God has called us to be captivated, to be controlled, and to have our eyes fixed on his majesty. Jesus has come to show us true beauty. You must understand how revolutionary this is. Because of our sin we could not look upon God and live. There was a vast chasm between him and us, a chasm of sin. We were removed from his presence. In the Temple, the place people went to meet with God there was a curtain separating us from his presence, but since Jesus has come, he has said, if you have seen me you have seen the Father. Since Jesus has come the Bible tells us that we have seen his glory, glory as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. The curtain that separated us from his presence has been torn from top to bottom, the chasm has been crossed. This is why Jesus says don't waste your time looking with lust at a man or woman. We have something better to be captivated by, someone better to desire. Looking with lust will cost you your life, desiring God will give you life.

Don't miss this. Why is Jesus saying all of this? The Lord is calling us to fix our eyes on him today. Let's learn how from this passage.

1. Our Eyes Are Prone to Wander

Do you feel it? Do you feel that you are prone to leave the God you love? The problem that we face as fallen humanity is our desiring. What we do is a big deal, but the problem begins not with our doing, but with our desiring. If the problem were only doing then we could do what the Pharisees did and reduce the instruction of God down to what we do on the outside. But the demands of God are much higher than that. God says we are to love him in a certain way - with all of our soul, heart, and strength, in other words, everything that we are.

Think about the message of the Apostles, the message that we just read: And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14) The depths of our depravity are far reaching. But the good news is that Jesus has come not only to show us how far we have fallen, Jesus has come to bring us up to the heights of his perfection. How? By coming and becoming flesh so that he could show us his glory not from a distance but in the most intimate and personal way. This eternal Son of the Father who has taken on flesh has come both as the message and declaring a message. His message: Repent, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand! Repent - turn your wandering eyes upon true beauty. Turn your eyes upon Jesus.

Listen closely. The Pharisees had set up a system of being satisfied with doing and not desiring. Let me say this. If you are satisfied with simply doing then you don't know Jesus. If you are not troubled by desiring evil then I question rather or not you truly know the majesty and perfection of God. If you think that God is satisfied with your doing or not doing then you have reduced the standards of God to something that you can keep and have thereby erected a God suitable for your own desires. In other words, you are an idolater at heart and have erected a God in your own image instead of worshipping the God who has made you in his image.

Jesus says, "If you look with lust, you are guilty!" Don't miss this. Jesus says this for two reasons: 1) to show us how far off track we are and 2) to redirect our focus. Don't forget, Jesus is saying this. The one who brings conviction of our sin is the only remedy for our sinfulness. Do you see the beauty? Jesus has not come to condemn the world, the world is condemned already. Jesus has come so that you and I who are prone to wander from the God that loves us could redirect our focus. Jesus has come to leave us with the attitude of Romans 7. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! (Romans 7:24-25)

Let's be honest with one another. I say this with shame. When we read this passage, is there one among us that is not guilty of adultery? In the words of Lloyd-Jones, *"I thank God that I have a gospel which tells me that Another who is spotless and pure and utterly holy has taken my sin and my guilt upon himself. I am washed in his precious blood, and he has given me his own nature. When I realized that I needed a new heart, I found, thank God, that he had come to give it to me, and he has given it."* (Sermon on the Mount, 241)

We are prone to wander. Jesus has come to put our wandering to rest. Number 2 this AM:

2. We Must Fix Our Eyes on His Majesty

Jesus has come and says come unto me. Do you see this? The one who has come now bids us come. In a world full of darkness there is only one light, Jesus is that light. In a world full of wandering, he declares that he is the way, the truth, and the life. You must fly to him, you must run to him, you must fix your gaze upon him; you must be captivated by him; you must desire him above all others. He is pure beauty, no one nor nothing can compare with his beauty. How could anything else captivate us?

Let's be clear. There is nothing wrong with looking at a woman or a man and thinking them attractive. We all know the difference between looking and lusting. Ladies and gentlemen, you ought to do your best to look attractive, nothing wrong with looking attractive, but when a man or a woman wears things or does things that intentionally make themselves seductive, everyone knows the difference, but more importantly God know the difference. Your whole purpose is to know God and the second purpose is like it, direct others to God. Far be it from us to distract people from him who is truly beautiful with our pitiful attempt at seduction.

Also, there is nothing wrong with sex. Sex is a beautiful thing when a man loves a woman and they commit themselves before God in Holy Matrimony till death alone parts them. God places boundaries around looking and sexual relations for our protection. This is not intended to hurt us, though at some points it may feel like cutting your hand off is easier than turning away, God's ways are here to show us what life is all about.

Something has happened to our desires. Since the Fall, our natures have been corrupted. Think, with me, how did the fall happen? It started with a look. When the woman saw the fruit and the tree, she ate and then gave to her husband and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they saw their own nakedness. It's fascinating to me that we have a culture that is so inundated with sex that we delight in nakedness. It is everywhere, you cannot go read a news article without being tempted to see something you shouldn't or wish you hadn't. All the while, no one is asking why we are delighting in nakedness and no one is asking what this delight will cost us. Jesus tells us both. We delight because something is not right and the cost of our delight is our own souls.

We have lost our heading of true north and are prone to wander. We who were created for seeing the beauty of glory are determined to live in blindness. The song of our society is if it feels good do it, as long as no one gets hurt and your motives are pure, do it. Against this world is the Bible and the Christians who live according to Thus Saith the Lord, who say, No. The behavior that the world delights in is behavior that will cost them their souls. Even though this command is totally counter everything that our culture holds dear, we must stand with our Lord and say that we choose to obey God rather than men. This won't be the first time, and it surely won't be the last.

But the question is, who is man enough to take this stand? Who is woman enough? Who is man enough to make the covenant that Job made and not take a second look?

Job said, *"I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman."* (Job 31:1 NIV) How many women are going to be woman enough to say against the grain of this culture that women are more than something for men to feast their eyes upon?

We must fix our gaze on beauty, fix our eyes on Jesus. The Word of Jesus is meant to cut just like a knife, and they do. Do you feel the sharpness of the blade of his Word this morning? Sensuality is the biggest obstacle to godliness amongst Christians today. This issue is wrecking havoc in our churches and I am guessing it is wreaking havoc in this church. The problem, many are so unaware of the behavior they are engaging in, many are unaware that the behavior that they delight in may be the very thing that costs their bodies in hell. God calls us to be holy as he is holy. By the way, that quote from Leviticus 19:2 is in the context of God dealing with unlawful sexual practices. Godliness and purity go hand in hand.

To avoid the gaze of lust, you must have your eyes fixed on Jesus. Dietrich Bonhoeffer observed something that is fascinating, and I think he is right. He said, when lust takes control, *"God ... loses all reality.... Satan does not fill us with hatred of God, but with forgetfulness of God."* This entire message is meant to help you remember how beautiful God is. Jesus says what he says in Matthew 5 to remind us of his beauty.

There are three practical steps that I want to give you to help you fix your eyes upon Jesus. Three ways to turn from Lust:

1. Recognize When Lust Comes

What are your triggers for lust? Now that you know what our Lord is saying, now that you believe in him, now that he has given you new life, it is time for action, it is time for you to pursue holiness, and it is time for you to guard the approaches of sin. Every Kingdom posted century towers or watchtowers throughout the borders of their kingdom far from the castle. Why? They would rather fight the enemy far away from the castle because once the castle had fallen all was lost. Where are you fighting temptation? Don't wait until you are consumed with lust, if you go that far it's too late. Most men or women don't set out to be immoral, but inch by inch, choice after choice, decision after decision, and the enemy lurks closer and closer until the enemy is at the gates and it is too late! Set the centuries out far from the castle, guard yourself against the approaches of sin.

2. When Lust Comes, Remove Yourself from the Temptation

Get out, don't try to stand and fight, flee. Take Joseph as an example. When Potiphar's wife got her hands on him, he left. Men and Women, choose to not put yourself in situations of temptation. Do what Billy Graham has done. Never be alone with a woman who is not your wife. Women likewise. When you are tempted to lust, turn your lust into prayer for the other person - remember you are meant to know God and be an instrument in others knowing God. There is one relationship that matters most in your life. Make drawing closer to Jesus the top priority of your life. Fix your eyes on Jesus.

Number 3, and this is most important:

3. When Lust Comes Realize the Seriousness of Sin

Don't be dismissive. Look at what Jesus says in verses 29-30. Jesus is not being literal here. You can still lust when you are blind and limbless. What Jesus is telling us is to have the right perspective - there is a way that seems right, the whole world says it is right, but the end is destruction - hell. This is serious and will have disastrous consequences. You need to come to the realization that is better to live life as a cripple than to forfeit your own soul in hell.

There may be some things in your life right now that you know you need to cut off. Maybe you need to cut off some of your TV shows that you delight in, what's the cost of your delight? Maybe you need to cancel that subscription to that questionable magazine. Maybe you need to quit going to the internet hoping that you will stumble upon something. Proverbs 6:27 asks this question, *Can a man carry fire next to his chest and his clothes not be burned?* Quit playing with fire - put it out by cutting it off.

This is costly. We are told to put to death what is earthly in us (Colossians 3:5). But who is calling us to put to death what is earthly in us? Jesus. And who is Jesus? The most amazing, the most beautiful, the purest and most holy, our Savior who has come to give his pure life for sinners like us. We can't even help ourselves so Jesus has come as our help.

So when you're tempted to look on anything or anyone else, remember you already know what beauty is, who beauty is, and nothing compares to him. Turn your eyes upon him, be captivated by him. Find yourself by being lost in him. Fix your eyes upon Jesus.