sermon notes

date October 31 & Nov. 1
speaker Mike Bellanti



Love Beyond Desire
Matthew 5:27-32

Objectification of personhood

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

Point extension rhetoric:

You have heard it said (Torah)…_____BUT…. I say……. _____

What happens to the human heart when we begin seeing people not as an individual to be loved, but as something to consume?

Jesus moves the conversation from outward behavior to the inner disposition of the heart.

The solution: Cut it out of your life

Matthew 5:29-30 - *"If your right eye causes you to stumble, 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. And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell."*

"I have made a covenant with my eyes..." - Job 31:1

- Ask the Holy Spirit to reshape your desires
- Guard what you see
- Change how you see

Cherish the marriage covenant

Matthew 5:31-32 - "It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce. But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her the victim of adultery, and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery."

Jesus makes some provisions for brokenness:

- Infidelity
- Abuse

The next right step towards "good"

- Start with your own heart, not your spouse's shortcomings
- Honest grace-filled conversations
- Invite wisdom into the struggle

Deep Dive Questions:

1. From Objectification to Seeing People as God Sees Them -

Jesus moves the conversation about lust beyond outward behavior to the condition of the human heart. In a culture that often reduces people to objects of desire or consumption, how might our relationships, attitudes, and everyday interactions change if we genuinely saw every person as someone created in the image of God? What makes this difficult in our culture?

2. From Behavior Modification to Heart Transformation -

Jesus uses radical language about removing whatever causes us to stumble. Yet his ultimate concern is not simply controlling our behavior but transforming our desires. What is the difference between managing sinful behavior and experiencing genuine transformation of the heart? What might it practically look like to invite the Holy Spirit to reshape not just what we do, but what we desire?

3. From Convenience to Covenant Faithfulness -

Jesus' teaching on divorce challenges a culture that often evaluates relationships through the lens of personal happiness and fulfillment. How does understanding marriage as a covenant that reflects God's faithful love challenge our modern understanding of commitment? Whether married, single, or divorced, what does it look like to practice covenant shaped love – love that honors the dignity of others, remains faithful through difficulty, and makes room for both truth and grace?