

**Jeremiah 23: 9-24; “God Sees our Sexuality”, Sermon # 24 in the series –
“Heart Lessons Learned for a Prophet and the People of God”,
Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on March 5th, 2017,
in the Morning Worship Service.**

I wonder if you can think back in your mind to the time when you were young, and remember the feeling you got, when you played hide-and-go-seek; when you found a place to hide that was so secret, it was so good, that no one could find you? It was great excitement. There was that intense feeling of thinking that no one knows where I am, and perhaps a feeling, whether true or false, that you were safe; that you had it made. And yet the feeling was gone, all too soon gone. It was hard to preserve. For sooner or later you had to come out of your hiding place and interact with other people again. The amazing thing about fallen human nature is this: that people in every generation think that they can play hide and seek with God. They believe that they can hide themselves in places where the Lord cannot see them. They do not recognize the truth of verse 24 of our text – “Can anyone hide himself in secret places so that I shall not see him?”

So this morning we want to look at the subject of sexual purity and impurity. And we want to think about God’s Omniscience, His Omnipresence, and His Immensity, in relation to this subject. Sometimes we think that we can hide our innermost desires from God. But, at this hour, I am hoping to show you that remembering these attributes of God that I have mentioned, will be a good motivation, by the hand of the Holy Spirit, to bring us to repentance, if we have sinned, and also to a renewed faith and obedience to our great, and awesome, and loving God. Can we really hide from God? The answer is no, but if we are walking with Him closely, we can rejoice in the fact that He sees us. He sees us in these following 3 ways.

1st of all – He sees us clearly in relation to our sexual purity or impurity.

(verses 9-15)

“My heart within me is broken because of the prophets.” “All my bones shake.” “I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine has overcome, because of the Lord, and because of His holy words.” “For the land is full of adulterers; for because of a curse the land mourns.” The pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up.” “Their course is evil, and their might is not right.” Jeremiah here states that his heart is broken within him. He reels like a drunken man because of the Lord and because of His Holy words. And why? Because the land is full of adulterers.” And also verse 14 – “I have seen a horrible thing in the prophets of Jerusalem: they commit adultery and walk in lies; and also strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns back from his wickedness.” “All of them are like Sodom to Me, and her inhabitants like Gomorrah.”

It is important for you to understand that God sees each one of us perfectly clearly in everything we think, or say, or do. In the context of the verses that we are studying this morning, He sees us in relation to our sexuality. And further, it is important for us to see, that how we think about our sexuality does affect our whole life, the welfare of our nation, and our relationship with God Himself. That is what God is showing us in this text. It must be understood at the outset that God created our sexuality. I want you to turn over with me to Genesis 2: 18-25. “And the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.’” “Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them.” “And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name.” “So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field.” “But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.” “And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he

slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place.” “Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.” “And Adam said “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” “And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.” This is marriage; God bringing a man a woman together in the bonds of an exclusive relationship of commitment, companionship, and love. And within the context of that God-defined relationship of man and wife, the expression of sexual love takes place. They were naked and were not ashamed.

We must understand, if we going to understand this subject rightly, that God created our sexuality. In the beginning He made them male and female. And the reason that the first woman Eve was made, was because Adam did not have a helper comparable or suitable to him. God caused Adam to sleep and took a rib from his side, out of which He literally built a woman. And He brought her to Adam. And He then and there, immediately defined for all men what the appropriate relationship was to be. One man and one woman in the bonds of holy matrimony; God joining them together, and the two becoming one flesh. God saw all that He had created and it was very good. Our sexuality is not only good, but it is very good when it is defined as God defined it; one man and one woman for life in marriage. God blesses the marriage bed and the legitimate pleasures of it. But all or any of our pursuits, of having sexual experience outside of marriage, as it is defined in this Biblical way, are all sinfully wrong. They are termed fornication and adultery.

Fornication is having a sexual relationship before marriage. It is a man and a woman, outside of marriage, becoming sexually involved with each other. They have come to the conclusion, usually because of having strong feelings for each other, that abstaining from sex before marriage is not really as important as God has made it out to be. And thus, the Biblical command to abstain is ignored, or forgotten in the midst of attraction and temptation. Adultery is having a sexual relationship with someone other than your husband or wife, and the command of God to be faithful to your spouse is ignored. But in regard to both of these sins, listen to what it says in Proverbs chapter 6, verses 27-29. “Can a man take fire to his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?” “Can one walk on hot coals, and his feet not be seared?” So is he who goes in to his neighbor’s wife; whoever touches her shall not be innocent.”

In both of these cases God is displeased with, and He is dishonored by, such sins. Both fornication and adultery are a violation of the 7th commandment: “You shall not commit adultery.” If we would know the truth, we have some duties commanded and some sins forbidden by the 7th commandment. The law was added because of transgressions, til the Promised Seed, our Lord Jesus Christ, would come. The law was given to show us what sin is, so that we will be convinced of how dishonoring it is to God, and how ruinous it is to us, in both soul and body. This particular law was given to show you that God is indeed watching you in all of your ways in these things, and He has your good in mind. Proverbs chapter 5 and verse 21 says: For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the Lord, and He watches all his paths.” (NASB) The duty which God requires of us before we are married, or when we are married, is as the Shorter Catechism says: “To preserve our own and our neighbor’s chastity (that is, their sexual purity) in heart, speech and behavior.” Chastity is that purity of heart and behavior, that evidences itself in a submission to God’s will concerning the use of your sexuality; the who, the when, the what, and the how.

Turn with me over to 1st Thessalonians 4: 1-7. “For this is will of God, your sanctification; that is that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is the

avenger in all these things, just as we told you before and solemnly warned you.” “For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification.” “So he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.” (NASB) As we think about these words, we need to understand that to be chaste is something which is pleasing to the Lord. It is learning to do His will to learn to be sexually pure in heart. It requires the grace of Jesus Christ to keep any of God’s commandments from the right motives. The law cannot give you life. And so, the right motive for sexual purity is the desire and aim to want to glorify God in the way that you live; to submit to His will, to submit all the good sexual desires to Him for safekeeping; and then in faith, you come to believe that doing things His way is the best for everyone. It is God’s will that you abstain from sexual immorality and know how to possess your vessel; that is, your own body, in this holy way. You are not to be lustfully passionate, as many people are, in our day, outside of marriage; people who do not know God. To be sexually pure is to see sex as God’s gift; that most wonderful intimate act and expression of love which is to be exclusively given to that one special person whom the Lord has given to you in marriage.

2nd – God sees us in relation to whether we will be faithful to stand in His counsel.

Verse 18 says – “For who has stood in the counsel of the Lord, and has perceived and heard His word?” “Who has marked His word and heard it?” The greatest reason that there was so much adultery in the land of Judah in Jeremiah’s day was because God’s holy words were not being heeded. The prophets and priests were profane. To be profane is to treat God and His word with irreverence or contempt. In this case, they committed adultery and walked in lies, and strengthened the hands of evildoers, so that no one turned back from his wickedness. There was no one preaching that people should repent of their sins. God looked, and He saw folly in the prophets of Samaria it says in verse 13. It was the false prophesying of the prophets which was making the people worthless. They were speaking a vision of their own hearts, not from the mouth of the Lord. In our day, people are doing the same thing. Religious people, claiming to be Christian, are saying “peace” to the sin of adultery. They are saying “peace” to the sin of homosexuality, and they are even promoting gender change and gender confusion in relation to people who are unsure of what they are in their inmost being. Are they a boy or a girl?

But what people are doing, who engage in these things, is to ignore and trample upon God’s holy words. And the question that I have for them, is found in verse 18: “Who has stood in the counsel of the Lord and has perceived and heard his word?” That is, who has looked into the Bible to see whether what they are doing, and the way that they are thinking, is right? The Bible says in Genesis 1: 27 that “God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” From this we must conclude that what God created you, you are. If God created you a male, you are a male whether you feel like a male or not. If God created you a female, you are a female whether you may feel like that or not. The gender that you are, is the one that God created you with, at the beginning of your life. Your gender was determined from the moment that you were conceived. It is not something which you are entitled to change by the way that you feel. And to think that way is to sin against God and your own highest welfare. You need to understand that you are fighting against God, if you are trying to change your gender.

A young person, or older person for that matter, may have many feelings which might lead them to believe that they should identify with the opposite sex from what God made them. But that those feelings should be pursued and acted upon, in order to try to change your gender is something that must be absolutely denied. God does not make mistakes in what He does in the creation of any person. Even the deaf, the dumb, the seeing, and the blind, he has created for His own purpose that they might glorify Him. (Exodus 4: 11) He has not created any of us so that we might argue with him over the matter. But anyone who wants to become transgender is arguing with God and the purpose for their life. They are saying that they do not believe that

God created them the right gender, and that now they must do something about it. They get the doctors to give them hormones, and they begin to dress and act like a person of the opposite sex. And sometimes they will even go so far as to attempt to change what God had made them by nature physically. What madness this is! What a God-dishonoring way to think! What a self-ruinous and sinfully selfish thing it is to do. God's counsel and the Bible's counsel to you is to repent, and believe that God created your body exactly as He wanted it to be. Psalm 139: 13 – "For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb." "I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." To reverence God is to respect and admire His handiwork in creating you. Do you do that? When you do that you are glorifying Him.

The 7th commandment, "You shall not commit adultery" encompasses all sexual immorality, not just the sin of adultery. Listen to the Westminster Confession's Larger Catechism, (written in the 1640s); how the sexual sins related to the 7th commandment were delineated in that day. Question 139. What are the sins forbidden in the seventh commandment? Answer: The sins forbidden in the seventh commandment, besides the neglect of the duties required, are, adultery, fornication, rape, incest, sodomy, and all unnatural lusts; all unclean imaginations, thoughts, purposes, and affections; all corrupt or filthy communications, or listening thereunto; wanton looks, impudent or light behavior, immodest apparel; prohibiting of lawful, and dispensing with unlawful marriages; allowing, tolerating, keeping of houses of ill-repute, and resorting to them; entangling vows of single life, undue delay of marriage; having more wives or husbands than one at the same time; unjust divorce, or desertion; idleness, gluttony, drunkenness, unchaste company; lascivious songs, books, pictures, dancing, stage plays; and all other provocations to, or acts of uncleanness, either in ourselves or others.

Yes, we must understand that the temptations to adultery and fornication have existed since Adam's fall in the beginning. And in our day, the temptations are coming faster and thicker than they ever have before. We could add to the Larger Catechism couldn't we? We could add that it will be for our good, our everlasting good, if we will avoid looking at pornography; that is, sexually explicit images and movies which are so easily and readily available on television, computer, phone, and all devices which can bring us into sin with one click of the mouse or one touch of the finger. There are websites and programs and movies which you should never watch lest you be led into sin; even led into addiction to sexual sin, and thus deceive yourself about repentance and how essential it is to salvation. Repentance is necessary to salvation but not in the same way that faith is. It is by grace through faith in Christ that you are saved, and it is not of yourself; not of works lest any man should boast.

But the outworking of the grace of repentance, is seen in a Christian's repenting whenever they need to, in relation to sins which they commit. It is essential to prove to ourselves and other people where necessary, that we have the reality of that saving grace, which will lead us on to holiness in our life. If we have not holiness, we shall not see the Lord, it says in Hebrews 12: 14. If you have saving grace you will repent whenever you find yourself sinning against God; breaking the 7th commandment. I am speaking about when you sin in your mind and heart and commit this sin of lusting for someone in your heart. No one else may see it, but God sees it. He knows when you have committed adultery in your heart. And your repenting of these sins will show God, and us, that we have not fooled ourselves about the reality of what sin does, or the reality of what righteous living brings. Sin brings misery and death. Righteousness brings life and peace. It is righteousness which exalts a nation. It is sin which brings a reproach to any people.

Listen to how the book of Proverbs talks about the consequences of the sexual sins of adultery and fornication. "With her enticing speech she caused him to yield." "With her flattering lips she seduced him." "Immediately he went after her, as an ox goes to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks, till an arrow struck his liver, as a bird hastens to the

snare, he did not know it would cost his life.” “Now, therefore, listen to me, my children; pay attention to the words of my mouth: Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways.” “Do not stray into her paths; for she has cast down many wounded, and all who were slain by her were strong men.” “Her house is the way to hell, descending to the chambers of death.” Let us take heed to our souls. There are many immoral people out there attempting to bombard you with compromise, even when you are attempting to use your computer and other devices wisely. Oh, how careful we must be, to guard our hearts!

How carefully we must look to God’s word, his counsel, to guide us! Studying to see how you might better obey the 7th commandment is a wise and holy thing to do. Filling your heart and your mind with good things to meditate upon, and look at, is the wisdom that comes from God. Thinking about how you might preserve your own and other people’s chastity and purity glorifies God, and it is a safeguard for you. Listen to Psalm 119, verse 9 – “How can a young man cleanse his way?” “By taking heed according to Your word.” “With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!” “Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.” Now, notice, here is where you find the answer, not only to how a young man may cleanse his way, but how all people young and old, may cleanse their way. It is by taking heed to God’s word; these good precepts and principles of truth that will keep you on the path of righteousness so that you will not wander away into sin in your mind, or heart, or in your actions. But truly you must really want purity of mind and heart, and take steps to pray for it and to promote it in your heart and life, by the grace of Christ.

And then 3rd – We should take comfort in the fact that Gods sees when we are truly delighting ourselves in what He has given to us.

Verses 23 and 24 of our text say – “Am I a God near at hand, says the Lord, and not a God afar off?” “Can anyone hide himself in secret places, so I shall not see him says the Lord; Do I not fill heaven and earth? says the Lord.” We have seen earlier in this study, that the right time for lovemaking is found in marriage, and in that context it is to be the great delight of husband and wife. The evidence that this is so is found in the Bible in a number of places. Proverbs 5: 15-20 is one of those places. “Drink water from your own cistern, and running water from your own well.” “Should your fountains be dispersed abroad, streams of water in the streets?” “Let them be only you own, and not for strangers with you.” “Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice with the wife of your youth.” “As a loving deer and a graceful doe.” Let her breasts satisfy you at all times; and always be enraptured with her love.” “For why should you, my son, be enraptured by an immoral woman, and be embraced in the arms of a seductress?”

The “water” that is mentioned here refers to obtaining your sexual satisfaction from your own wife, and a wife from her own husband. Running water is the going forth of those desires. It should not be done promiscuously, like streams of water in the streets, but the sending forth of these desires in marriage is called “rejoicing” with the wife of your youth. She is here pictured as a loving deer and a graceful doe. And her breasts should be the satisfaction of her husband at all times. But when a person abuses this good gift selfishly, when they go about to get all the personal satisfaction and pleasure they can from some other person or some other source, it is destructive in every way to the strength of marriage, and the true understanding of love. The goal of the Christian who would be faithful to their God and to their spouse is to come to a better understand of what love is. And God’s design for you is that you grow in the true understanding of the meaning of sexual love within the bonds of marriage.

There is a beauty and a glory to marital love that is not to be intruded upon by sinful lustful passion before marriage. And even when you are married, you should understand that God would have you to grow in your understanding of how to faithfully, freely, and fully give yourself to your spouse, so that they are satisfied by, and with, your love for them; mentally, emotionally, physically; in all ways. To be sexually immoral is to do damage to God’s good gift of love’s

fulfillment. There is a deep and meaningful fulfillment of love in the sexual act within marriage that is not to be found in fornication, and certainly not, in adultery. That fulfillment comes from God Himself blessing all that takes place in the marriage bed if there is a thoughtful consideration of your spouse. The marriage bed is undefiled. It is the giving of each to the other, everything of themselves to each other, which is a covenantal act in marriage. And this covenantal act and the renewing of the covenant in marriage, is a picture of Christ and His Church; the ultimate spiritual delight and satisfaction. It is pictured by the giving of husband and wife to each other; living to please each other, and to see this relation as exclusive, in order to their ultimate earthly happiness. The husband is saying to the wife – You are mine and I am yours. And the wife is saying to her husband – I am yours and you are mine.

Listen to Ephesians 5: 25-32 – “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.” “So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.” “For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.” “For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.” “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” “This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”

The covenant of grace was made and established through Christ’s giving Himself for His Bride, the Church, on the cross. He did this that He might sanctify her to Himself; set her apart to His most holy purposes, to change all believer’s hearts; to wash and cleanse them by His precious blood. This giving of Himself, by our Lord Jesus Christ, His denying himself, and His suffering unto death for His Bride, was meant to exemplify to all husbands everywhere, the love which a husband is to show to his wife. He is to give himself to his wife in every holy and legitimate way that he can think of. Christ died for His bride the Church, but He now greatly delights in the intimate and holy spiritual fellowship which is pictured as the love of a Bridegroom for His Bride in the book of Song of Solomon.

Listen to Song of Solomon 7: 6 and following: “How fair and how pleasant you are, O love, with your delights!” This stature of yours is like a palm tree, and your breasts like its clusters.” “I said, ‘I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of its branches.’” “Let now your breasts be like clusters of the vine, the fragrance of your breath like apples, and the roof of your mouth like the best wine.” You can see that the Lord Jesus is the spiritual lover of His Bride, the Church; nothing carnal or sinful at all is found in His love. And each of His people, and all of us together shall know the glory, and the beauty, and the power of His love more and more; tasting of it, now, in this life, and then glorying in it for all eternity. It will be to His glory if we are able to come to terms with the fact that God sees how we view our sexuality. He sees whether we long to be pure in heart. He sees whether we desire to be faithful to our spouse, and to Him our Lord. And He knows how to reward faithfulness. He knows how to give us the wisdom that we need, of how we can best demonstrate and convey our love to our spouse, so that He will be pleased, and we will be satisfied with each other’s love. May all sin and immorality be put away, and let all the delights of marital love be enjoyed by every married couple. And may the mystery be better understood, of Christ and the Church.