

No.7: Be Committed

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Date: 05 March 2023

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[0 : 00] Well, if we could, with the Lord's help this morning, if we could turn to the book of Exodus. Exodus chapter 20.

Exodus chapter 20. If you're using the Pew Bible, it's on page 73. Exodus chapter 20.

And we've reached verse 14. Where the Lord says, You shall not commit adultery. You shall not commit adultery.

Now, as you know, over the past number of weeks, we've been going through the Ten Commandments. And in our study, we've referred to them, we've referred to the Ten Commandments as house rules. And they're house rules not because they teach us and tell us how to be a good person with good values and good morals for life.

Because the Bible assures us that we're all sinners in need of a Savior. We're all sinners in need of a Savior. But our Heavenly Father, He speaks to us in the Bible, not just as sinners in need of a Savior, but also as a family.

[1 : 24] And as a church family, because that's what we are. We are a church family. And our Heavenly Father, He addresses us as children. And as His children, we need family rules.

We need house rules. Because as you know, as we've said before, without rules, there's recklessness. Without laws, there's lawlessness. Without commandments, there's chaos. And our Heavenly Father, He has given to us these ten house rules.

And they've been given to us not to spoil our fun, but in order to protect us, in order to protect us from hurt or from harm. These house rules are given to us out of love.

They are there to look after us. Because like any good parent, they want to look after their children. And also like any good parent, they often say no to their children.

And I often say no to ours. We won't get into that just now. But eight out of ten of these house rules from our Heavenly Father, as you can see, they are no's.

[2 : 26] They are thou shalt not's. And as we said last week, these concluding house rules, where it just says thou shalt not, thou shalt not, or you shall not, we said that these concluding house rules, the last five, they are 3D.

They're three-dimensional. And they're three-dimensional because they address our head, our heart, and our hands. They address our head, our heart, and our hands.

That's what we see with this commandment, the seventh commandment, or the seventh house rule. We see that it addresses our head, our heart, and our hands. So first of all, our head.

House rule number seven addresses our head. You shall not commit adultery. Now, I don't know about you, but as we study these house rules together, I not only find that these house rules are so realistic, and they're so relevant, so relevant to our lives today, but when you go through them, you also see that there's an ordained order to them.

They're not random. There's an ordained order to them because, as we said, number one is number one because God needs to be number one in our life.

[3 : 45] Number two is number two because God is not number two. Number three is number three because we're to watch our words. We're to watch how we speak about God and also how we speak about those created in the image of God.

Number four, remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy because it's God's day. Number five, as we say to the children, as we say to them, but number five actually shows us as parents or as teachers or as aunties and uncles.

It shows us that children are precious. They are the heritage of the Lord. They're the fruit of the womb. Therefore, we need to teach and train our children to love and follow the Lord because if we don't, the world out there will.

And then as we saw last week, house rule number six, it shows us that it's not only our children who are precious, but we're all precious because life is precious. Life is a gift from God. Therefore, we're to seek and strive to preserve life and protect life because God is pro-life. But God is not only pro-life.

[4 : 58] House rule number seven shows us that God is pro-marriage. God is pro-marriage. And God is pro-marriage because it's God who originated and it's God who ordained marriage.

As you know, and as we read in Genesis 1, or Genesis 2, marriage has been around since the beginning of the world because in the beginning when God created mankind, as we read, He created us in His image and in His likeness.

He created us male and female. And God ordered and ordained that marriage was to be between one man and one woman. That's why we refer to marriage as a creation ordinance.

In fact, there are three creation ordinances, three things that God ordered and ordained in the beginning at creation. We saw one of those things a number of weeks ago when we considered house rule number four.

Because the Sabbath is a creation ordinance. It's something that's been in existence since the beginning. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. God ordered and ordained the Sabbath at creation.

[6 : 15] Work is also a creation ordinance. You might hate going to your work. You might not enjoy your job, but work is something God created. God didn't create us to waste our day being lazy.

No, God ordered and ordained at the creation that we are to work. We are to work. And so there are three creation ordinances, three things that God ordered and ordained at creation.

The Sabbath, work, and marriage. And God ordered and ordained at creation that marriage is to be between one man and one woman. Therefore, marriage cannot be redefined or reinvented by governments, institutions, societies, or even the church.

Marriage cannot be redefined or reinvented by governments, institutions, societies, or even the church.

One commentator said, marriage was God's idea. And if he designed it, then he gets to define it. And any deviation from his design is not marriage.

[7 : 32] I'll read it again. Marriage was God's idea. And if he designed it, then he gets to define it. And any deviation from his design is not marriage.

But as you know, this biblical order and ordained view of marriage, it has been discussed and debated on every media platform, not just in recent years, but also in recent weeks.

Because whether you've been watching TV or listening to the radio or scrolling through social media, you'll know something about the comments and the criticisms that have been directed towards one particular person.

Kate Forbes. Now, Kate Forbes, as you know, she's a Christian. She's a communicant member in our denomination, the Free Church of Scotland. She's also an MSP.

She's the Scottish Finance Secretary. She's currently running to seek to replace Nicola Sturgeon as the First Minister of Scotland. But over the past couple of weeks, Kate Forbes has been, as you know, victimized and vilified in the media, not for her politics, not for her policies, but for her personal faith in Jesus Christ.

[8 : 42] In fact, her Christianity has been described as outdated and outmoded in a modern and progressive Scotland. And sadly, many of the comments and criticisms, they've not only come from her colleagues and the LGBT plus community, which you'd actually expect it to come from, but they've also come from other Christians who don't hold her biblical views about abortion and assisted suicide, as well as homosexual and heterosexual marriage.

Furthermore, she's been condemned, as I'm sure you've read or heard or seen, she has said that she wouldn't have voted in favor of gay marriage and that she's been condemned for saying that sex before marriage or cohabiting or having children outside of wedlock is unbiblical.

And of course, some have labeled Kate Forbes as homophobic and a bigot and loads of other things for all her comments. But when you listen to her and when you listen to other Christians who are speaking like Christ, and this is an important point, Christians are called to love their neighbor and look out for their neighbor.

Christians are called to love their neighbor and look out for their neighbor. And I want to say that that means that we are called to love our neighbor regardless of their age, their addictions, their

gender, their color, their religion, their sexuality, their past, or their present circumstances. We are to love unconditionally. We are to love one another. How? As Jesus loves us. We are to love one another as Jesus loves us.

[10:33] And as you know, Jesus loves the whosoever. That is what is emphasized in our gospel. Jesus loves the whosoever. You know, we might disagree with someone's position.

We might disagree with their practices. We might even disagree with someone's politics or someone's policies. We might, but that doesn't mean we can disparage and discriminate them. Doesn't mean we can put down on them.

Doesn't mean that we should victimize or vilify anyone. Because the thing is, we're all made in the image and likeness of our great God. We're all made in the image and likeness of God.

Therefore, we are to love one another as Jesus loves us. We're to love one another as Jesus loves us. But you know, in relation to House Rule Number 7, the discussion and the debate around Kate Forbes has actually reminded and reaffirmed to our nation that God is pro-marriage.

God is pro-marriage. And this is why House Rule Number 7 commands us, you shall not commit adultery. But the thing about adultery is that it doesn't often begin in our heart or with our hands.

[11:43] It actually begins in our head. More specifically, adultery begins with our eyes. Adultery often begins with our eyes. That's why Jesus was proclaiming and saying in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus was saying, you have heard that it was said, you shall not commit adultery.

But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

And isn't it interesting that Jesus says that from a male perspective? Because men are often visual. I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

And when Jesus expanded and explained the Seventh Commandment, He said that adultery doesn't actually begin in our heart or in our hands. It begins with our head. It begins with our look. Adultery often begins with a look. A look that leads to lust. A look that leads to lust. And you know, that was the story of Lot and his lust for the sinful city of Sodom.

[12:57] It was also the story of David. We mentioned him from Psalm 51. That was the story of David and his desire for Bathsheba. He saw her bathing on the rooftop.

It was a look that led to lust and that led to adultery. And we'll come back to Lot and David in a moment. But you know, what Jesus said about a look that leads to lust, what Jesus says there about the eye and looking and lusting, it not only addresses the dangers and the deceptions of flirting and affairs and also pornography.

But you know, it also reminds me of a children's hymn, a children's rhyme. You know, what we teach our children is often so relevant for adults. Be careful, little eyes, what you see.

Be careful, little eyes, what you see. For our Father up above is looking down in love. Oh, be careful, little eyes, what you see.

That's what Jesus is teaching us here. Watch your head. Watch the look that will lead to lust. Be careful, little eyes, what you see because what we see affects our soul.

[14:16] What you see affects your soul. Our head affects our heart. Our head affects our heart. That's what I want us to consider secondly, our heart.

So our head, three-dimensional, this commandment. It's our head, and secondly, our heart. Our heart. We're told in verse 14, you shall not commit adultery.

You shall not commit adultery. Now, when Jesus expanded and explained this house rule in the Sermon on the Mount as we read it earlier on, when we read that, he used very stark and very stern words to emphasize the seriousness and even the solemnity of sin because he said, I don't know if you stopped and gulped when he said it, but he said, if your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away.

It is better that you lose one of your members than your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away.

For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell. It's a serious and a solemn warning about sin, that if there's lust in our life, if there's sin in our soul that's stopping us from coming to Christ, then it's going to take us to hell.

[15:42] And you know, the amazing thing is when Jesus speaks about hell, he doesn't do it to scare us or manipulate us. He speaks to us in love. Jesus speaks to us about hell in love because

Jesus is the one who has created hell.

He speaks about that in Matthew 25. It's the place that he has been prepared, that he has prepared. So when Jesus speaks to us about hell, he speaks to us in love. And as you know, Jesus doesn't mince his words.

But when Jesus tells us to pluck out our eye or cut off our hand, he's not actually giving us the solution to sin. He's not saying, pluck out your eye and you'll be perfect.

Cut off your hand, you'll be fine. He's not giving us the solution to sin or the remedy to our ruin because the truth is if we were to pluck out our eye and cut off our hand, the knife would never go deep enough.

The knife would never get to the heart of the problem, which as my good friend J.C. Ryle will remind us, the heart of the problem is the problem of the human heart.

[16:51] And the problem of the heart is that there's no sin that we are not capable of. There's no sin that we're not capable of. Therefore, we can't, we cannot cure this heart problem ourselves.

that's why Jesus came. He came to be the solution to our sin. He came to be the cure to our chaos. He came to be the remedy to our ruin.

You know, this is the good news of the gospel. We might not like hearing about sin and our heart and hell. We don't like hearing about these things. But the good news of the gospel is not the message that you're going to hell.

There's nothing you can do about it. The good news of the gospel is that Jesus came into this world not only to bear our griefs and carry our sorrows, but also to bear our sin and to endure our hell so that we would be forgiven, so that we would be cleansed, so that we could pray in Psalm 51, create a clean heart.

Lord, renew a right spirit me within. And you know, we need to understand these serious and solemn words from Jesus because He's lovingly exposing to us our heart problem.

[18:14] He's not harsh. Jesus is lovingly exposing to us our heart problem. Why? So that we will respond to Him in time before we are too late.

Do you know, my friend, is it not better for us to find out the truth about the seriousness and the solemnity of our sin while we still have time to do something about it?

Is it not better for you to know that there's a problem in your heart and that Jesus is the remedy to your ruin? Is it not better for you to be told about the seriousness and the solemnity of sin so that you still have time to do something about it?

Is it not better to know the truth or would you rather me told you a lie and said, you're fine. It's okay. Don't worry about it. Don't worry about it.

But I tell you, my friend, and I say it to you so lovingly, on the day of judgment, I will be held accountable for every word from this pulpit and I all want you to know the truth.

[19:25] I want you to know the seriousness about sin. I want you to know the solemnity of hell. But I want you to know one thing for sure. Jesus is a Savior who saves to the uttermost.

I know it myself. We were singing my favorite psalm and I can assure you, pray Psalm 51. Pray, create within me a clean heart, O God.

I assure you, the Lord will forgive, the Lord will cleanse, the Lord will create within you a clean heart. So do it while you still have time. Whilst you are on mercy's ground, seek the Lord while he's to be found.

But you know, when it comes to house rule number seven, Jesus shows us that adultery isn't just a problem in our head. Adultery is a problem in our heart.

Which makes Jesus' next statement in the Sermon on the Mount very interesting. You remember what Jesus said in Matthew 5. He said, everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery.

[20:36] And whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery. Now, I need to clarify and put into context some of what Jesus said there. Because for women in the first century, marriage was often about survival.

As you know, in the first century, women, they didn't work. Men went to work. They worked in the field and they worked and made things. So women didn't work. Women also didn't have rights. And women had no protection in society. Therefore, if you weren't married, you would be, in effect, homeless. Therefore, in order to be provided for, in order to have a level of protection in your life, a woman needed to marry.

However, because of the hardness of men's hearts, there were these foolish and very frivolous laws which permitted men to divorce their wife on the spur of the moment.

So a modern equivalent would be a no-fault divorce. But this is why Jesus was later, when he was later asked about divorce, Jesus said, because of the hardness of your heart, Moses allowed you to divorce your wives.

[21 : 46] But from the beginning, it was not so, from Genesis 1. Because what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. You know, the problem with these foolish and frivolous laws of divorce in the first century, it meant that there was no security, no safety for women and no safety for children.

Because in the first century, men were often in the habit of divorcing their wives for very trivial matters. Trivial matters such as, if she burns the dinner, get rid of her.

If she stains his clothes, get rid of her. If he sees someone prettier than his wife, away with her. And of course, it would immediately create all kinds of problems.

You can see how that would be a major problem. So if you burn the dinner today, don't panic. But you know, a marriage, a marriage that's based upon labor and looks rather than love and loyalty, as you know, it's never going to last.

What's worse was that men with such a shallow view of marriage would often throw their wives and their children out onto the street without issuing a certificate of divorce, leaving her unable to remarry.

[23 : 00] Because if a woman remarried without a certificate of divorce, she was, according to rabbinical laws, she was committing adultery. And this is why Jesus expanded and explained the house rule.

Because our Heavenly Father, as you know, He cares about our homes. He cares about our families. He cares about our children. And out of love for us, as our Heavenly Father, He wants to parent us.

He wants to protect us from all the hurt and the harm and the heartbreak and the heartache that's often associated with divorce. because divorce is very painful.

Divorce is very personal. And this is why Jesus said, He said that as as a Christian living within the kingdom of God, as salt and light in the world, as those who are different and distinct from the faithless and foolish and frivolous actions of the society around them, Jesus says, divorce is permitted, but it's not promoted.

It is permitted, but not promoted. And it's not promoted because God is pro-marriage. God wants us to be together.

[24 : 10] God wants our homes to be happy. But that doesn't always happen in life. We live in a broken world. We are broken people living broken lives in a broken world. But the ordained order that God has given to us at creation is at marriage.

is to be between one man and one woman. Therefore, we're to be joined together. We're to be bound together as one flesh. Marriage is something, you know, marriage is something we need to work at.

And I don't say that in a harsh way. Marriages are very tough. Marriages are very hard. This is a very difficult subject to talk about. But marriage does.

In every home, every family, it requires energy. It requires effort. Marriages, as it was created to be in creation, it was to be a lifelong commitment, contract, and covenant.

Marriage is to be a lifelong commitment, contract, and covenant. Marriage is a covenant. It's a legally binding contract. That's what we're saying to the children. It's a binding contract where commitment is given, where vows are confessed, where promises are confirmed.

[25 : 27] More than that, marriage, as the Bible goes on to teach us in the New Testament, marriage is a mirror image of Christ's marriage to His bride, the church.

Marriage is a mirror image of Christ's marriage to His bride, the church. That's why Paul stresses and Paul states in the New Testament.

He says to husbands, instead of getting rid of your wife when she burns the dinner, husbands, love your wives. Husbands, love your wives how?

And how much? As Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her.

And that, gentlemen, is a very high standard. Love your wife as Christ loved the church. And so we see that household number seven is three-dimensional.

[26 : 27] It addresses our head, it addresses our heart, and it also addresses our hands. Lastly, our hands. You shall not commit adultery. Now, I don't know if you've ever seen a man in Stornoway.

I don't know who he is. He wears a t-shirt that reads, God hates divorce. I don't know if you've seen the man in Stornoway. He wears this t-shirt that reads, God hates divorce. I don't know who the man is.

I don't know why he's wearing the t-shirt, but I assume he's been hurt or heartbroken about a divorce. That's only an assumption. But his t-shirt, God hates divorce, is from a verse in the Bible. It's taken from Malachi chapter 2, verse 16, which reads in the NIV, it reads, I hate divorce, says the Lord, the Lord, the God of Israel.

But I want to be clear, the t-shirt is taken out of context. There are a number of passages in the Old Testament and the New Testament where divorce is permitted, although divorce is not promoted, it is permitted because God is pro-marriage.

[27 : 32] Therefore, the divorce which the Lord hates is not the divorce between a man and a woman. The divorce that the Lord is talking about there in Malachi 2 is a spiritual divorce between God and his people.

The amazing thing about the Bible is that it mirrors God's relationship with his people like a marriage. God's relationship with his people is a special and sacred relationship.

God has covenanted himself to his people. And in the book of Malachi, the Lord is declaring to his people that they have divorced him. They have deserted him for another lover.

They've breached and broken their marriage contract. They've broken their covenant relationship by going off and worshipping other idols, other lovers. And instead of being committed to the Lord, who had been so loving and so faithful and so gracious towards them, they themselves committed spiritual adultery against the Lord.

And now due to their disobedience and their desire for idols, God's people wanted a divorce. That's why the Lord said, I hate divorce.

[28 : 43] He didn't want to let his people go. He didn't want the relationship to break down and fall apart because the Lord loves us. He doesn't want us to be lost. He doesn't want us to be lost.

By living for and looking at other lovers. And you know, this is why house rule number seven is three-dimensional. It addresses the head, the heart, and the hands.

It addresses the head, the heart, and the hands. The Lord wants us to be in a relationship with Him. And you know, with this I'll conclude, we mentioned earlier about Lot and about David.

There are two examples in Scripture of those who were led away from the Lord by the sinful things they could see. Lot in the sinful city of Sodom, it all started with a look.

A look that led to lust. And our Bible describes Lot's movements towards the sinful city of Sodom. If you read the passages in Genesis, you can see that Lot looked towards Sodom.

[29 : 53] Lot moved towards Sodom. And then Lot dwelt in Sodom. There was this progression of sin. He looked, he moved, he dwelt.

The same was through with King David when he saw Bathsheba bathing in her bathtub on the top of the roof. It started in his head. It progressed to his heart and went straight to his hands.

David looked at Bathsheba. David lusted after Bathsheba. David laid hold of Bathsheba. You read it there in 2 Samuel chapter 12.

David, with one stare at sin, it led to lust, it advanced to adultery, it got lost in lies, and it ended in the messy murder of Bathsheba's husband, Uriah.

And you know, you read it, and you'd think, you read 2 Samuel chapter 12, read it when you go home, and you'd see that it's something like EastEnders or Coronation Street. And yet it's there in the Bible.

[30 : 56] It's all there in the Bible. There's nothing new under the sun. But do you know what's also there in the Bible? What's also in the Bible is that despite our messes and our mistakes and our mishaps, in the Bible, we have the promise of redemption, restoration, and reconciliation.

And that's what David discovered in Psalm 51. That's what we're singing in Psalm 51 this morning. Psalm 51, in Psalm 51, David discovers that God is good, God is gracious, and God is glorious.

In Psalm 51, David discovers that God is good, gracious, and glorious. And that's what I discovered. I discovered at the age of 18 that God is good, gracious, and glorious. That's why Psalm 51 is my favorite psalm. And you know, my unconverted friend, I want to say to you this morning, as we conclude, if you don't have a favorite psalm, make Psalm 51 your favorite psalm.

It's a great psalm. I know I'm biased in saying that, but it is a great psalm. After thy loving kindness, Lord, have mercy upon me. Then to pray, verse 10, or verse 7, to wash me as white as snow.

[32 : 17] Then verse 10, create a clean heart, Lord, renew a right spirit me within. Do you know, my friend, earnestly plead and pray to the Lord, create within me a clean heart, create within me a clean heart.

And I assure you, He will. He will. If the Lord is able to create in me a clean heart, He's able to create in all of us a clean heart.

My heart was black, filthy. I find it amazing that I'm in a pulpit today. I think it's, God is good, gracious, and glorious.

That's why. So my friend, I want to say to you this morning, seek the Lord. Ask Him to create within you a clean heart.

And don't leave here today. Don't leave here today without asking Him. Because I promise you, if you earnestly ask Him, if you earnestly seek Him, you will find Him.

[33 : 23] That is His promise. Ask, and you shall receive. Seek, and you shall find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you. So please do ask Him.

Create in me a clean heart. Well, may the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. Oh Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks to Thee for Thy Word.

Thy Word that is so real and so relevant to us even today. And help us, we pray, never to lose sight of it. Help us never to cast it aside, but to know that when God speaks, He speaks with authority.

He speaks lovingly. He speaks knowing what we do not know. And He speaks into our situations and our circumstances with such care and compassion and concern.

Lord, remember us, we pray. Uphold us, we ask. And do us good, we plead, for we ask it in Jesus' name. And for His sake. Amen. We're going to conclude this morning by singing the words of Psalm 51.

[34 : 35] If I haven't told you already, it's my favorite psalm. Psalm 51, we're singing in the same version of the psalm, Scottish Psalter, page 281.

Psalm 51, at verse 11, down to the verse marked 15. Cast me not from thy sight, nor take thy Holy Spirit away.

Restore me thy salvation's joy, with thy free spirit may stay. Then will I teach thy ways unto those that transgressors be, and those that sinners are shall then be turned unto thee.

We'll sing down to the verse marked 15 of Psalm 51 to God's praise. Christ. Amen. Amen. Amen. Cast me not from thy sight, nor take thy Holy Spirit away.

Restore me thy salvation's joy, with thy free spirit with me stay.

[35 : 52] Then will I teach thy ways unto those that transgressors be, and those that sinners are shall and be be turned unto thee.

O God of my salvation, God, be from blood guiltiness, set free thee, that shall my tongue aloud, sing of thy righteousness.

My righteousness, my closet lips, O Lord, by thee, thee, let them be opened, and shall thy praises by my mouth abroad be completed.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forevermore.

Amen.