

Word notes Sunday 29/04/2012 Clare Reed
The Ten Commandments: Murder & Adultery

Summary (read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday)

Key Text: Matthew 5:21-30 (& Exodus 20:13,14)

Clare has been talking about the Ten Commandments looking at them in the light of the New Covenant through Jesus in whom the Law is fulfilled and so how the Law shows us what is God's best for us as we live under grace. NB that we can't put say these sins are worse than others by putting them on a scale, for example: "evil" – "bad" – "not so bad" – "not good" but instead should see only two ways – Gods Way or Not God's Way.

Looking at murder and adultery as Jesus teaches on the issues we can ask three questions:

1. What does the Bible say is sinful?
2. What is God's way?
3. What practical tips can the Bible give us to avoid falling?

A: Murder.

1. Jesus doesn't just talk about killing people he also includes being angry, calling someone "Racca" – "empty head", and a fool (meaning "Godless"). All these undermine the value of the person to whom our anger and insults are directed. We are saying they are lacking in worth and so it's OK to kill them or let our anger demean them and identify them as worthless – when in fact they are worth so much to God that Jesus died for them.
2. The Bible encourages us to lay down our lives for others just as Jesus did – even to return love for hate from enemies.
3. Instead of harbouring anger, go and be reconciled if they have something against you. If you have something against them then forgive them before God in your heart (it may not change the situation but you'll not be twisted up by bitterness).

B: Adultery

1. Jesus use of the word adultery here literally means to have sex with another man's wife yet we must also consider the many other times in scripture that sexual immorality is described. Our culture throws many ideas at us of what is OK and acceptable – how do we meet the challenge of these ideas?
2. In order to understand how God planned sex and marriage we should look at Genesis 2:18-25: It is not good for man to be alone – he needs a helper. Yet none of the rest of creation would do. God makes a special creation from out of Adam himself – woman. She is one flesh with Adam and this is why a man and a woman will leave parents and be united as one flesh. They were naked together but not ashamed – sex was not shameful in this context.
This is a covenant relationship, not to be broken. There are a number of covenants in the Bible and each has a sign – eg the covenant with Abraham had a sign of circumcision. The sign of the covenant of marriage is sex – it is meant to be unique to that relationship and a sign of something that should not be broken. A picture of what that relationship is like can be found in the Bible's "Sex Scene" – Song of Songs. What's more there is a deeper significance seen in the relationship between Christ and the Church (Eph 5:25-32)
3. Matt. 5:29-30. If something is going to cause you to fall – get rid of it, even if it is good. This is hard to apply and Jesus language shows that he knew this yet if we want to walk closely with God we have to take him seriously. It may not be a hand you need to cut off but might be eg your Internet connection, in today's world that's probably about as necessary for work and life as a right hand.

Application (this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points)

How recently were you were angry with someone? Without sharing details was there reason enough to consider them worthless and disposable? How do you feel about that anger having read the key text?

Anger is an emotion – are emotions wrong? What are emotions for and what should we and shouldn't we do with our anger?

In Matt 23 & 24, who is the offending party and who has been offended against? Who should take action? How then do we deal with acts that offend us, seek out the perpetrator or forgive in our heart? Read Matt 18:21-35 for guidance.

If Jesus is tough on anger and hate-crime and he is just as tough on sexual sin. How would you define “Godly” or “Holy” sex? Does your definition allow for freedom within a context and the ability to judge for oneself what is good or not good, or is it a list of rules? Which is best?

(HINT to help discussion if you get bogged down or no suggestions discuss this proposal: “Sexual acts within marriage that do not demean the other person”.)

Jesus’ boundaries of what is not good are much tighter than the world would draw and his tips to walk free are dramatic. Read 2 Cor 10:5 in the context of Matt 5:28 and discuss how we should deal with temptation. Along the process of seeing a tempting image, indulging a tempting thought and acting out a sexual sin at what point do we need to need to be vigilant not to give in?

What place does accountability with another trusted brother or sister have in this fight?

If appropriate, share difficulties in these areas (perhaps break up into smaller same-sex groups). Seek to confess and assure each other of God’s forgiveness as we come in line with His purposes and agree accountability partnerships to assist each other in keeping to God’s way.

Witness (this is the bit where the cell talks and prays about how to share the Good News)

When you look at people who don’t know Jesus what do you see? Write these down. Now try to think how Jesus saw them – what did he say? Are there differences between the two sets of answers?

Pray for one another to see non-believers as Jesus sees them and for Him to show you something of the love He has for people so you can be motivated by love.