

Spiritual Adultery

“But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown, and pouredst out thy fornications on every one that passed by; his it was.”

Ezekiel 16:15

“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”

James 4:4

Suggested reading: Numbers 5; Jeremiah 3; Ezekiel 16; Ezekiel 23; Hosea 2; II Timothy 3

Introduction:

1. Having recently considered delighting in the Lord and His Son Jesus Christ, we should apply it personally.
2. Having recently considered the death of our Lord, we should be absolutely faithful and fervent to the Lord.
3. Having recently considered the sovereignty of His grace over rebel sinners, we should be incredibly thankful.
4. There is no simpler and better comparison to provoke our repentance and affection than considering marriage.
5. The purpose for this sermon is the same as Ezekiel’s in graphically describing spiritual adultery (Ezek 16:2).
6. Men of God must hew their people by the Word of God and show them their sins (Isaiah 58:1; Hosea 6:5).

Our Relationship to Jesus Christ Is a Marriage

- A. Jesus Christ has a relationship with his church, similar, but far superior, to marriage (Eph 5:32).
 1. Marriage is not a type of our union with Jesus Christ; He rather is an example for our marriages.
 2. The spiritual relationship is a mystery; the natural relationship of marriage is not a mystery at all.
 3. We may properly draw comparisons, as the Lord does, to fully appreciate spiritual faithfulness.
 4. The union between Jesus Christ and His saints is glorious, revealed only by the Spirit to saints.
- B. A psalm of love, Psalm 45, describes the Lord Jesus Christ and His marriage night with the church.
- C. Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven like a king holding a marriage for his son (Matthew 22:1-7).
- D. Paul was jealous for the faith and doctrine of the Corinthians like for a virgin wife (II Cor 11:1-4).

The Nature of Spiritual Adultery

- A. Scripture describes Israel’s idolatry and sin as whoring after other gods (Ex 34:10-17; Lev 17:1-9; 20:1-8; Num 14:33; 15:37-41; Deut 31:14-21; Judges 2:17; 8:27,33; II Kings 9:22; I Chron 5:25; II Chron 21:12-15; Psalm 73:25-28; 106:34-43; Jeremiah 3:1-5,9; 13:25-27; Ezekiel 6:8-10; 16:15-38; 20:28-32; 23:1-49; 43:7-10; Hosea 1:1-3; 2:1-5; 4:12-19; 5:1-7; 6:4-11; 9:1; Nahum 3:1-7).
- B. The LORD Jehovah is Jealous, a jealous God; He will not share our affection (Ex 20:5; 34:14; Num 25:11; Deut 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; 29:20; 32:16,21; Josh 24:19; I Kgs 14:22; Ps 78:58; 79:5; Ezek 8:1-6; 16:38,42; 23:25; Nah 1:2; Zeph 1:18; I Cor 10:22; II Cor 11:1-4).
- C. He has a right to be jealous – incredibly jealous – given Who He is, what we are, and what He has done for us! This is the most one-sided relationship in the universe! Do you love Him like it is?
- D. Jealousy is part of strong love; but what man can actually be jealous of his wife, when he is compromising and adulterous spiritually in his relationship with God (Song 8:6).
- E. Consider just how offensive even the thought of adultery truly is (Num 5:11-31; Pr 6:34-35; Jer 3:1).
- F. He will not share His glory with any other, for He knows He alone is worthy of worship (Is 42:8).
- G. Paul brings God’s jealousy forward to the N.T. to support reverence and godly fear (Heb 12:28-29).
- H. The first commandment is to love the Lord God with all we have and are, which is the first request He makes of His bride for His gracious espousal to her in marriage (Deut 6:4-5; Mark 12:30).
- I. When we are baptized, we answer His proposal of marriage, practically (Acts 2:37-38; I Peter 3:21).
- J. There is a church totally committed to the filthiness of worldly fornication – Rome (Rev 17:1-6).
- K. Since the LORD Jehovah created us, we owe Him all that we are, have, and do, as His creatures.

- L. Since the LORD Jehovah chose us for eternal glory, we owe Him even further and farther for this.
- M. Faithful saints, who have not fornicated with this world, are described as virgins (Revelation 14:1-5).
- N. Both a loss of first love and a lukewarm approach to Jesus Christ are very offensive (Rev 2:5; 3:16).
- O. Read about His broken heart seeing wandering eyes and hearts for others (Ezek 6:9; 16:43; 23:35).
- P. Read the expostulations of the Lord with these people set on other lovers (Jer 2:31-37; Hos 13:5-8)!
- Q. The Lord reasoned about the perversity of spiritual adultery compared to prostitutes (Eze 16:30-34).
- R. Sodom was not as bad as Israel, and sodomites are not as bad as carnal saints (Ezekiel 16:47-48).
- S. He condemned having a stranger and husband in the same day, like carnal Christians (Eze 23:38-39).
- T. The warning is clear of last days being perilous with feigned love (II Tim 3:4-5; 4:3-4; Matt 24:12).
- U. Friendship with the world – affection and effort toward it – is spiritual adultery, which turns our intimate relationship of love into enmity (Jas 4:4; Matt 6:24; Phil 3:18-19; I John 2:15-17; Is 63:10).
- V. All aspects of literal and natural adultery should be used, as the prophets did, in showing us our sins.
 - 1. What does a husband feel, when he realizes his wife's heart loves another man, even his enemy?
 - 2. What does a husband feel, when he sees his wife's eyes adoring and speaking to this enemy?
 - 3. What does a husband feel, when his wife is discontented or frustrated, wishing life was different?
 - 4. What does a husband feel, when his wife gives herself to another, repents, and does it again?
 - 5. What does a husband feel, when his wife takes his gifts and gives them to another to buy love?
 - 6. What does a husband feel, when his wife chases men and goes to them, not them coming to her?
 - 7. What does a husband feel, when his wife tries new lovemaking and admits it came from another?
 - 8. What does a husband feel, when his wife can talk with the most animated joy about other lovers?
 - 9. The blessed God justly feels all these offences of our worldliness, just to a much greater degree.
 - 10. It is your duty to take each of these cases and apply them to your treatment of the Lord Jesus.

The Causes of Spiritual Adultery

- A. Idolatry is a great cause, but the Lord sees lukewarm and casual worship (Ex 20:1-7; Heb 12:28-29).
 - 1. Covetousness, unlawful or discontented desire, is idolatry, which is adultery (Eph 5:5; Col 3:5).
 - 2. It is idolatry, because you have raised another object to a place to compete with and replace God.
 - 3. Since He promised to be with us forever, that should be enough to cause contentment (Heb 13:5).
 - 4. Discontented unhappiness is the unspoken statement that you wish you were not married to Him.
 - 5. Contentment is satisfaction, which is the necessary ingredient for a faithful spouse (I Tim 6:6).
- B. Loving other persons in your life that even comes close to competing with the Lord is offensive.
 - 1. So Jesus Christ taught plainly that we must hate all others in comparison (Luke 14:25-26).
 - 2. The Lord Jesus will test our love of Him by bringing about a painful choice (Matt 10:34-37).
- C. All men know that a lukewarm, perfunctory approach to lovemaking is offensive and repulsive.
 - 1. A wife that acts like a partner, roommate, and/or maid with her own life is bitterly painful.
 - 2. Many men ridicule the lovemaking of their wives as a mannequin? How do you worship God?
 - 3. The Lord Jesus is no different – He will severely judge those losing their first love (Rev 2:1-5).
 - 4. The Lord Jesus is no different – He will severely judge those only lukewarm (Rev 3:14-20).
 - 5. A woman who no longer shows her earlier affection and just goes through the motions is painful.
 - 6. If He is our Portion forever above anything in heaven or earth, we are faithful (Psalm 73:25-28).
- D. It is as simple as having friendship with the world, which is to have enmity with God (James 4:4).
 - 1. The world and God are opposites. Trying to participate with the world is offensive to God.
 - 2. This powerful verse condemns the carnal love of pleasures and enticements of the world.
 - 3. Paul considered Christ's cross to have done a full job of eliminating the world (Gal 2:20; 6:14).
 - 4. If you are enamored with any aspect of the world, the love of God is not in you (I John 2:15-17).
 - 5. This is a major cause of it today – love of pleasure and contentment with a ritual (II Tim 3:1-5).
 - 6. It is impossible to love two opposites – for you will sacrifice one of them for sure (Matt 6:24).
 - 7. Minding earthly things makes you a belly-worshipping enemy of Jesus Christ (Phil 3:18-19).
 - 8. The world is the antithesis of God, and flirting with it is to be highly offensive to the Lord.

- E. Marrying outside the Lord has always been a horrible cause of spiritual adultery (Gen 6:1-3; 26:34-35; Ex 34:12-17; I Kgs 11:3-4; Neh 13:23-27; I Cor 7:39; 11:11).
- F. When we choose to do things differently, we are going after strange doctrine and worship – adultery.
 - 1. Nadab and Abihu tried strange fire, a different way of lovemaking, to their ruin (Lev 10:1-2)!
 - 2. Israel sought their own inventions, which the world does with contemporary worship and numerous modifications to the instruction of the New Testament (Ps 106:29,39; Eccl 7:29).
 - 3. Christmas and other pagan holidays are just one of the abominations that are offensive to Him.
- G. How do you flirt with the world? Television, family, friends, bodily exercise, music, business, time?
- H. What things get you the most excited? The Lord should be your exceeding joy (Ps 43:4; 137:5-6).
- I. We don't remember enough of what we are and how gloriously we have been saved (Ezek 16:22).

The Judgment of Spiritual Adultery

- A. It is helpful to consider the test of jealousy ordained by God to protect husbands (Numbers 5:11-31).
- B. Solomon described the jealousy of a natural man to his adulterous wife and her lover (Prov 6:34-35).
- C. Love and marriage involve enormous affection, intimacy, and jealousy, as Solomon sang (Song 8:6).
- D. He practically divorces us by withdrawing comfort and chastening us (Psalm 106:15; Heb 12:5-11).
- E. He will withdraw the candlestick – His Presence by the Spirit – from lukewarm churches (Rev 2:5).
- F. Women are judged severely who break wedlock in the manner Israel did (Ezek 16:38,42; 23:45-49).

The Faithfulness of our Spouse

- A. God is jealous, which means He also gets angry for His bride (Isaiah 42:13-17; Ezekiel 36:5-6; 38:18-23; Zeph 3:8-13; Zech 1:14-16; 8:1-8).
- B. It is not wrong for us to actually appeal to the Lord's jealousy to avenge us of harm (Psalm 79:1-5).
- C. He promised He would not withdraw His faithfulness from us, even when disobedient (Ps 89:28-37).
- D. He promises to allure (holy seduction) Israel back from her lovers to be His wife again (Hos 2:1-23).
- E. He has chosen His peculiar people, and He is not going to give them by a few sins. He is merciful!
- F. He always keeps His side of the marriage covenant, and He is willing to take us again, regardless of many and horrible offences (Neh 9:28; Ps 106:43; Jer 3:1-2,12-15; Ezek 16:60-63).
- G. When we cry to Him for forgiveness, He always shows mercy! Unbelievable forgiveness and love!
 - 1. He feels tender pity for us, and He will take us back, when we call for Him (Ps 106:13,21,34-46).
 - 2. His thoughts and ways are higher in pardon – forgiving a repeatedly unfaithful bride (Is 55:6-9)!
 - 3. This record of His mercy toward Israel is not for them alone, but for us as well (I John 1:9).

Restoring the Relationship

- A. If you have been obsessed with anything, shown by discontentment, find contentment (I Tim 6:6).
- B. As I have often said: remember from where you have fallen, repent, and do the first works (Rev 2:5).
- C. We must purify our hearts and humble ourselves to be without distraction toward Him (Jas 4:8-10).
- D. If a woman commits adultery, how does she win her husband's heart back? By II Corinthians 7:11!
- E. We must confess our heinous error and set our affection on things above, by choice (Col 3:2).

The Coming Consummation

- A. The marriage supper of the Lamb – a figurative picture of our final and total union with Christ – is yet in the future. We know little of the details, but it shall exceed any illustration from our marriages.
- B. The rules for admission to supper do not allow carnal Christians (Rev 19:9; 21:8,27; 22:14-15).

Conclusion:

- 1. Measure your daily communion and affection by marriage to the Lord Jesus Christ. Are you the best wife?
- 2. Humble yourself in trembling before your King and repent of your flirting and adultery against the Lord.
- 3. Renew your first activities in conversion, when your soul truly hungered and thirsted after righteousness.