

**MINISTRY BY MAIL**  
**Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship**  
[www.lutheranlccf.org](http://www.lutheranlccf.org)  
**Twenty-First Sunday After Trinity, October 16, 2016**

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)

Hymns: 624, 287:7, 625, 630, 655.

Lessons: Gen. 2:18-24. Ephesians 5:21-33, Matthew 19:1-10.

Sermon Text: Exodus 20:14.

Sermon by Pastor Robert Mehlretter

In the name of Jesus Christ, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

Today, when the moral sensibilities, especially about sexual immorality, of so many people in the world are so shamefully contrary to what God says in his Word, the Christian must remember and be reminded of what marriage really is.

God's commandments aren't just arbitrary rules made up for no reason. Each of them is protecting something with which God wants to bless mankind. The Sixth Commandment is protecting God's gift of marriage and all that comes with it. He has given us this commandment as a safeguard of marriage and the proper relationship between men and women. When we study

**THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT**

**We realize that**

- 1. We must avoid all impure and unchaste thoughts, words, and deeds.**
- 2. We are to lead a pure and decent life**

When we see so much unchastity, sexual immorality and disregard for God's institution of marriage, we must remind ourselves 'What is marriage according to God's Word?' Marriage is the lifelong union of one man and one woman rightfully living together as husband and wife according to God's will. You especially heard about this in our Epistle lesson. Marriage was instituted by God and is entered into by rightful betrothal, or engagement, that is, by mutual consent and promise.

God instituted marriage, also called matrimony, at creation when he made a wife for Adam and brought her to him to be his help meet, that is, a helper suitable for him, and blessed their union as you heard in our Old Testament lesson. Even today Christians will sanctify their entrance into this estate with the Word of God and prayer. That is why Christians ask for their marriage to be sanctified in a worship service, and not just a show or a worldly celebration.

God blesses us in marriage with a loving companionship in which the man is the head and the woman is his helper. God says "***For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.***" Ephesians 5:23 (NIV) Unfortunately, this idea of God-given roles in marriage is often mocked by the world, even in its entertainment.

God also blesses us in marriage with sexual happiness and his precious gift of children. God makes it clear that children are to be a blessing of marriage. God's will is a direct contradiction to such human opinions as expressed in a Time magazine survey. (October 26, 2015) In that survey of more than 2000 U. S. parents, only about 47% agree "it is very or extremely important for couples to be married before they have children."

Husband and wife should be faithful to each other, love and honor each other, and stand by each other in good and bad days until death separates them.

Marriage consists of the union of one man and one woman. In Paradise in the Garden of Eden God joined one man and one woman together. Paul writes by inspiration of God, "***But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband.***" 1 Corinthians 7:2

(NIV). Polygamy and polygyny, more than one wife or more than one husband, is contrary to God's institution. The fact that under the civil law in the Old Testament men had more wives than one does not prove that this was sanctioned and approved also under the moral law of God.

We are not permitted to marry anyone whom we please. We are forbidden to marry those who are closely related to us as Leviticus 18 tells us. We are forbidden to marry those whom the government forbids us to marry and those who are married or engaged to some other person and we are sternly warned not to marry an unbeliever. God-pleasing courtship is a time to bring an unbeliever to Jesus Christ.

Before men, marriage begins with the wedding ceremony. Before God it begins when a man and woman freely choose to leave father and mother and enter a lifelong union as husband and wife. This is not a time for the couple to reconsider their promise to one another, or begin living together as husband and wife. According to the Fourth Commandment, a Christian man and woman will not promise one another that they will be united for life without seeking the counsel and consent of their parents. Engagement is not a time to begin living together as man and wife. No matter who does it or who might seem to approve of a man and woman living as if they were husband and wife, that is a sin without fulfilling the legal requirements that the government has set down for entering marriage. While a couple may be rightfully engaged in God's sight, they will not risk causing offense, that is, causing others to sin by giving the impression that it is good and right by having sexual relations or 'moving in together'. Not only is this consideration for their Christian brothers and sisters, but it is also a God-pleasing example for the world. We can easily see terrible, unchristian examples in the world around us, even in our own neighborhoods.

Matrimony, marriage, is a lifelong union. It is ended by the death of either husband or wife.

What does God forbid with the Sixth Commandment? Scripture uses the words adultery and fornication to speak of sexual immorality. Adultery is technically one who is married having sexual relations with someone other than the marriage partner, and fornication is technically one who is not married having sexual relations. Yet we often use the general term "adultery" to refer to both.

Scripture makes it clear that adultery is not only the actual breaking of the marriage vow, but also every unchaste desire, word, or deed in matters of sex, by the married as well as the unmarried.

God forbids the breaking of the marriage vow by unfaithfulness or desertion. Although a man and a woman voluntarily enter into marriage, marriage may not voluntarily be dissolved. Because God has joined husband and wife together, they cannot break up this union without committing a grave sin. It is broken by fornication, unfaithfulness, or malicious desertion. In such cases the innocent party has God's permission, although not a command, to secure a legal divorce, and is now free to marry another person. God also forbids all unchaste and unclean thoughts, desires, words, and deeds.

Married and unmarried people sin against this Commandment by deeds, words and thoughts. We have many scriptural examples of the shameful of fornication and adultery, uncleanness, and all sorts of immorality.

Paul wrote to Christians in Ephesus: ***"among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person--such a man is an idolater--has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them."*** Ephesians 5:3-7 (NIV) Scripture tells us ***"For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret."*** Ephesians 5:12 (NIV) So we must be warned against filthy talking, dirty jokes, immodest dress or lack of dress, suggestive movements of the body, lustful expressions of the eye, as Peter called them, ***"eyes full of adultery."*** 2 Peter 2:14 (NIV) Many of these sins are done in secret but God knows and will punish them. We have learned of dreadful diseases in the body caused by sexual immorality, and if men do not repent, surely also punishment in eternity.

A married person sins against God's will in regard to his gift of marriage if he or she destroys the loving companionship of the marriage, or if he or she has sexual activity with anyone other the marriage partner, or if he or she divorces for any reason except marital unfaithfulness of desertion.

An unmarried person sins against God's will in regard to his gift of marriage if he or she has sexual activity before marriage. But we must realize that married or unmarried also sin against this commandment with impure words and lustful thoughts.

We must also remember that God condemns homosexuality as sin – men with men and women with women – in both the Old Testament and the New Testament, regardless of what anyone or even any church might say. Today we find many people demanding approval of activities and attitudes characterized by the letters LGBTQ – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender. Many have added the letter Q for “Queer”, used by those of the LGBT communities, or for “Questioning” as if inviting anyone who does not know God's will to participate in all sorts of what God identifies as sexual immorality and breaking this commandment.

What does God require of all of us in the Sixth Commandment? We should lead a chaste and decent life in thoughts, desires, words, and deeds. We've used that word 'chaste' before. What does it really mean? It means pure and clean in heart, having no filthy thoughts and desires. It means virtuous, celibate, decent thoughts and desires in our behavior, dress, and deeds. God knows our thoughts and hears what is spoken in secret.

God requires married people to love and honor each other, the husband his wife as his God-given helper, and the wife her husband as her God-given head. Scripture tells us: ***“Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.”*** Ephesians 5:22-25 (NIV)

God also requires those not married as well as married people to lead pure and decent lives and tells us ***“Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.”*** 1 Corinthians 6:18 (NIV)

What must we do to lead a chaste and decent life? In the fear of God we must fight to overcome all impure thoughts and desires with God's Word and prayer, work and temperance.

We must flee and avoid every temptation to unchasteness. We read in Proverbs: ***“My son, if sinners entice you, do not give in to them.”*** Proverbs 1:10 (NIV)

Impure thoughts and desires sometimes do arise in our hearts against our will. We must not nurse and cherish them but suppress them by remembering that God always sees us, keeping in mind what he says in his Word, praying him to keep us pure and avoiding everything that arouses evil, sinful lusts. And sinful, evil lusts may be aroused by indecent dress, activities, gestures, books, pictures, videos, idleness and bad company, drunkenness and the like. ***“Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.”*** 1 Corinthians 15:33 (NIV) Even idleness can lead to temptation, because when King David was idle, he fell into the physical sin of adultery with Bathsheba, which also led to the murder of her husband, Uriah. We must not expose ourselves to temptation, despite the fact that it is all around us. We need not invite it into our homes through television, videos and even music. In addition, we must also avoid everything that might lead others into temptation. One of God's best tools is sincere prayer, asking ***“Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.”*** Psalm 51:10 (KJV)

As a mirror, this commandment surely shows us our sins; that we have not always been pure in thought, word, and action. But we must remember that Jesus saved us from our sins against this commandment, by keeping it perfectly for us, and by dying for all our sins. The Psalmist assures us of God's will that ***“there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.”*** Psalm 130:4 (KJV)

So this commandment and all of the positive Scriptural examples show us that God wants us to thank him for all his goodness by honoring his gift of marriage in ways which are pleasing to him. As a final encouragement to let this commandment become a guide for us, we must remember ***“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.”*** 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NIV) May we always fight against the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh to honor marriage and dedicate our bodies to God each day! Amen.