

The Seventh Commandment

Lord's Day Sermons

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Bible Text: Galatians 2:11-21
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Before we pray there is one announcement. The Lord blessed John and Rachel with the birth of a son this morning, Daniel Marcus. Both mother and child are well. We'll remember them in our congregational prayer.

Let's worship our covenant God together now.

Our Father which art in heaven, we call upon thee as the God of our salvation who according to thy eternal good pleasure and everlasting love has chosen us to be thine own in Jesus Christ and in the fullness of time has sent our Savior in our flesh, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, for us and for our salvation, and who has brought us into the world each according to the precise time of thy decree, and who has given us to our Savior to be united unto him, to have his Spirit abide with us, and us have our Lord himself abide with us, and who has given us thy gospel of salvation, the glad tidings of the good things of the Lord Jesus Christ, the son of David who has borne upon himself all our curse and has accomplished for us all of the obedience to thy law that we might be for his sake righteous before thee. And we thank thee for thy great and precious promises that there awaits us in heaven, an inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, and that this inheritance is reserved by us who are kept by thy power. And we thank thee, Father, that thou dost comfort us in all our afflictions, that thou dost give to us the assurance and peace of the Savior himself. And we thank thee that thou hast gathered us in thy house this day that we might worship thee and proclaim thy praises that we might hear thy gospel proclaimed to us, and we pray that thou will feed us and nourish us unto everlasting life by it. Would thou comfort our weary and troubled hearts, would thou declare unto us thy love and mercy in Jesus Christ, would thou declare unto us the gospel of thy marriage to us in our Savior, and thy purity and thy faithfulness and thy grace in that marriage to us, that thou will give to us the union and communion of the covenant of grace with thee, our covenant God.

We thank thee also, Father, that thou hast been pleased in this day to give unto John and Rachel a son. We pray thy blessing upon them. Would thou give unto mother and child both recovery that they may be able to go home at the appointed time according to thy will. We pray that thou will watch over us and our families, that as families we may serve thee, that we may know thy grace and thy care, and pray that thou will bless us as

husbands and wives, as parents and children, would thou bless us also as single members and in all of our circumstances in the midst of this earthly sojourn, Father. And we pray that we may know thy gospel and have the comfort and peace of that gospel.

We come before thee also to beseech thee for thy mercy upon our denomination. We thank thee for the churches that thou has federated together and for the fellowships that thou dost pull out here and there. We pray, Father, that thou will continue to bless our denomination with the gospel of Jesus Christ. We see, Father, how weak we are and how utterly unsuited we are in ourselves for this whole matter of church federation. We see how utterly weak and helpless we have been. We confess that we have stood by as thou has gathered thy church and we thank thee for it, Father, for then we know too that our foundation is no man, no mere man but the Lord Jesus Christ himself and his gospel.

We pray that thou remember Second in their walk, wilt thou bless their pastor giving unto Reverend Langerak the strength that he needs for his labors. We thank thee, Father, that we and they and the denomination may hear the gospel at his mouth. We pray, Father, that thou will continue to give to us the preaching of the pure gospel from that pulpit. We pray that thou will remember also the saints in Edmonton, be with them especially in this week as they anticipate their joining the federation of the Reformed Protestant churches, and we pray that thou will open that path for them and make that way plain that they may be received indeed into the full of this federation. We pray for Reverend Vanderwal, that thou strengthen him in the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and we thank thee that we may hear and others may hear the gospel at his mouth also. We recognize, Father, that the gospel thou has committed in earthen vessels to us so that the men who bring that gospel are frail and weak and their weakness and frailty is evident and apparent to all. We thank thee for this that the excellency of the knowledge of the hour, God, and the glory of that gospel might go on to thee and to no man.

We pray that thou will remember also the saints in the Philippines. Would thou give unto them much grace in these days as thou dost speed along the reformation that thou art working in that land and among thy people there, and as the events unfold with such rapid pace it seems to us that we cannot keep up. And we thank thee, Father, that thou has given such an open door in the Philippines and that there is such a need for ministers of the gospel there. We pray that thou will bless Reverend Florence as he considers the call extended to him from his own congregation to serve as missionary to the outlying areas. We pray that thou will give him understanding of that call and lead him to decide according to thy will.

We pray that thou will remember also the students who are examined in the week to come, would thou give unto them recall of what they have studied, would thou use the instruction that has been given thus far for their good, use also their speaking a word of edification in the pulpit for their good as well as for the true edification of thy people. We pray, Father, that they may sustain their examinations according to thy will, that they may be declared eligible for a call in due time, and that they may receive that call according to thy will as thou dost rule and guide thy church.

We pray, Father, that thou wilt continue to send forth thy word with power in the Philippines that the gospel of sovereign grace may be heard far and wide. We pray that thou will also raise up more men for them and for us to preach that gospel. The fields are white unto harvest, the laborers are few, and thus it has always been and thus it shall always be. We pray, Father, that thou according to the word of our Lord would raise up men for the harvest and we pray that thou wilt lay upon the hearts of the boys and the young men even in this congregation to consider whether it is thy calling for them to preach that gospel and wilt thou provide. We pray that thou will be with those men upon whose heart thou hast already laid that call, that thou give unto them grace and strength for their studies, and would thou give them joy also in being able to take from thy word the firstfruits and anticipate being able to bring that word to thy people.

Father, we pray that thou will bless the meeting of classes this week and give unto the delegates much wisdom for their decisions that must be made and wilt thou guide according to thy word and Spirit and keep far from the meeting of classes all of the wisdom of man which wisdom is always lurking and which wisdom is always seeking an entrance, and may the delegates themselves deny themselves and may they confess that they are nothing and that they know nothing, and that they stand in need of the wisdom from on high who is Jesus Christ, and give them that wisdom that they may by thy word and Spirit decide all matters that come before them for the good of the churches and the glory of thy name.

We thank thee, Father, also that thou dost give to the churches a lively interest in the things of the kingdom. We confess too that even this interest and this desire to have the agenda and to read the agenda and to study it and to come to conclusions and judgments regarding all these matters, that this is from thee. We thank thee, Father, that thou has given to us the gospel, will thou preserve it and preserve us.

Father, we pray for thy people wherever they might be over the length and breadth of the earth and give to thy saints who are persecuted a rich measure of thy grace that they may not flag in the day of persecution, and indeed as persecution increases around the world and even in our own land and even in our own circles in our own lives, that thou wilt sustain us by the grace and as the antichristian kingdom rises steadily and as all of the servants of the antichristian kingdom including the false church show themselves and go around here and there with the cup of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, that as all of these things take place that we might not be afraid, that we might see in this the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ for all of the signs of his coming are not only visible but they press themselves upon us and they shout with unmistakable clarity. And we pray, Father, that in all of these things we may lift up our heads and look for the coming of our Savior on the clouds of glory. Come, Lord Jesus. Yea, come quickly.

We pray, Father, that thou wilt remember us in our frailty as we battle in this life the devil and the world and the false church and our sinful flesh. Father, the battle is fierce and hot and we would be soon overcome, indeed we could not stand a moment if left to ourselves. We thank thee for the Captain of our salvation who is Jesus Christ and who stands at our right hand and left, who goes before us so that we see his leading as the

Good Shepherd whose goodness and mercy follow us behind all the days of our life. We thank thee for him whose banner is love, which banner is set over our heads, and for thy everlasting arms which are underneath so that right or left, before or behind, above or below, we are surrounded by thee and led by our Lord.

We pray, Father, that thou wilt forgive the sins we have committed against thee, blotting them out in the blood of our Savior and assuring us in the gospel of Jesus Christ which carries the word, the living word to our hearts and comforts us by that living word that all our sins are forgiven indeed, for he who is our Savior hung upon the cross and cried out regarding our salvation, "It is finished," and finished it is. Father, we thank thee for the blessed gospel and hope of our Savior. Wilt thou also keep us from sin that our life may be a testimony of gratitude unto thee.

Remember also our school, would thou bless the teachers and the students and the board, would thou give unto them all that they stand in need of. And we pray, Father, that thou will continue to use this means for the covenant rearing and instruction of our covenant see. We thank thee for thy goodness and we thank thee for thy gospel, and we thank thee for thy Son whom thou hast given as our salvation, and it is in his name alone that we pray. Amen.

We worship the Lord now in the giving of our offerings. The first offering is for the building fund and the second is for Grace Reformed Protestant School.

Psalter #143. We consider the seventh commandment tonight, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," and that commandment calls for purity and forbids pollution. Stanza 3, "From all pollution make me clean, white than the snow." The four stanzas, all four of 143.

"O God, according to Thy grace
Be merciful to me,
In Thy abounding love blot out
All my iniquity;
O wash me wholly from my guilt
And make me clean within,
For my transgressions I confess,
I ever see my sin.

Against Thee only have I sinned,
Done evil in Thy sight;
Lord, in Thy judgment Thou art just,
And in Thy sentence right.
Behold, in evil I was formed,
And I was born in sin,
But Thou wilt make me wise in heart,
Thou seekest truth within.

From all pollution make me clean,
Yea, whiter than the snow;
O let my broken heart rejoice
And gladness make me know;
Blot out all my iniquities,
And hide my sins from view;
Create in me a spirit right,
O God, my heart renew.

From out Thy presence cast me not,
Thy face no more to see;
Thy Holy Spirit and His grace
Take not away from me.
Restore me Thy salvation's joy,
My willing heart uphold;
Then sinners shall be turned to Thee
When I Thy ways unfold."

We turn in God's word tonight to three passages. In the first place, Genesis 2, beginning at verse 18.

18 And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. 19 And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. 20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. 21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; 22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. 23 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. 24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. 25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Next we turn to Ephesians 5. After Paul gives instruction to wives and husbands beginning in verse 22 he comes to the conclusion of the matter in verses 31 through 33. We'll read those three verses. Ephesians 5:31-33.

31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

And then finally we turn to Galatians 2 beginning at verse 11. Galatians 2:11,

11 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I [that is, Paul] withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. 12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. 13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. 14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? 15 We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, 16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. 17 But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. 18 For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. 19 For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. 20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. 21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

This is the word of our God holy and inspired. May he bless it to our hearts this evening.

On the basis of those passages and many others, we have the instruction of the Heidelberg Catechism in Lord's Day 41 regarding the seventh commandment which commandment is, "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

Q. 108. What doth the seventh commandment teach us?

A. That all uncleanness is accursed of God; and that therefore we must with all our hearts detest the same, and live chastely and temperately, whether in holy wedlock or in single life

Q. 109. Doth God forbid in this commandment only adultery and such like gross sins?

A. Since both our body and soul are temples of the Holy Ghost, He commands us to preserve them pure and holy; therefore He forbids all unchaste actions, gestures, words, thoughts, desires, and whatever can entice men thereto.

Beloved congregation, in our Lord Jesus Christ the seventh commandment is, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," and you and I have that commandment thou shalt not commit adultery because Jehovah God in his marriage to you does not commit adultery and that's your salvation, that's your joy. The Lord your God is pure. There is no pollution and no uncleanness in him in his marriage to you as his bride, and that is your hope and that is your salvation. This whole matter of adultery brings before our view the absolute purity of God and his absolute faithfulness to you as his church so that this whole matter of purity and faithfulness is a matter of the gospel, the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ who not once was unfaithful to you, not once, and who never never will be unfaithful to you. That's what comes first, that gospel truth of the marriage of God to his people in Jesus Christ, and following that gospel comes the law to you that shows you and shows me the life of gratitude and thanksgiving unto God. God has never committed adultery in his relationship and his marriage to you and therefore you do not commit adultery in gratitude and thanksgiving to our God.

We consider this word of God to us tonight, then, under the theme "The Seventh Commandment. In the first place consider the gospel of marriage; in the second place consider what is forbidden; and in the third place what is required. The seventh commandment: the gospel of marriage, what is forbidden and what is required.

The truth of marriage is the truth of the gospel. The truth of marriage is a matter of the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ and that gospel truth of marriage begins in Jehovah God himself and with Jehovah God himself. That's where we begin with regard to marriage, we begin in God for Jehovah God lives in his own Triune life the life of the covenant and fellowship and friendship. Father, Son and Holy Spirit abide and dwell together from eternity to eternity the same as the God of fellowship and as the God of family. He is Father, he is Son, and he is Holy Ghost and that's what we mean when we speak of the living God. Jehovah God is a living God. He is not a cold dead God who knows nothing of fellowship in himself, but he is the living God who lives that life of covenant fellowship in his own divine being. Before there is ever the church, before there is ever the taking of that church into his own covenant fellowship, there is the covenant fellowship of Jehovah God himself and in that fellowship is the essence of marriage.

Now when we speak of God as the God of fellowship, we must be careful not to make any of the persons in the Godhead subordinate to the others; that error is being made today by those who try to find the form of marriage in the Trinity, who try to find the arrangement of marriage in the Trinity. There are those today who teach that in earthly marriages the husband is the head of that marriage and the wife is to submit in that marriage. That's true doctrine. That's good doctrine. The problem with one particular school that teaches that today is that they try to root that form of the husband as the head and the wife as subject in the Trinity itself and say that in the Trinity there is the Father and there is the Son with the Son subordinate to the Father. That's false doctrine. That's heresy. Within the Triune God among the three persons there is no subordination. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are coequal and coeternal so that when we speak of marriage beginning in the Triune God himself, we do not have reference to that form and

that structure of marriage, we have reference only to that fellowship and communion which is the fellowship and the communion of the Triune God.

Jehovah God in his covenant fellowship as the Triune God condescends to us to take us into his own fellowship and into his own covenant, and there you have marriage, there you have the real marriage, there you have the true marriage. Jehovah God taking to himself his church as his bride and there you have the form and the structure of marriage for there you have Jehovah God who is sovereign and who is head in Jesus Christ over his people, and there you have the church as the bride who is subject to her Lord and to her husband. There in that covenant fellowship of God with his people you have marriage. That marriage of Jehovah to his people is the marriage of union. That belongs to marriage. It is union and that union is accomplished in Jesus Christ who is the bridegroom so that the church, who is the bride, is united to him and one flesh with him, and in her union with him is united to Jehovah God and through Jesus Christ has fellowship with the Triune God.

That's the truth taught in Ephesians 5 which we read when Paul speaks of the great mystery of marriage, the great mystery of a man leaving father and mother and being joined unto his wife and the two of them being no more two but one flesh. When he speaks of that great mystery he says, "But I'm speaking concerning Christ and the church." That is the marriage. That is the gospel of marriage that Jehovah God unites us to himself in Jesus Christ and by that union brings us into his own covenant fellowship.

That marriage is union and that marriage is communion, it is fellowship, and those two things cannot be separated. The communion of God's marriage is that he comes to dwell with us and takes us to dwell with himself in Jesus Christ so that being united to Christ in that union we have fellowship and friendship and communion with him and that's the fellowship and communion that the church of Jesus Christ enjoys in the house of God and the fellowship and communion that the church enjoys by the word and by the Spirit. God talks to you in the preaching of the gospel. He speaks to you now and he says, "I love you and I am with you, and I am yours, I am your God." And he says to you and to me, "You are mine. You belong to me and I have done and given everything that is necessary for you to be mine. I am yours. I am your God and you are mine, you are my people." That is the fellowship and the communion and the closeness of the covenant of marriage and the marriage of Jehovah God to his people.

Now how is it that God brings you into that fellowship with him and how is it that he abides with you in that union and in that fellowship? It's a very important question, it's a question that may be becoming controversial in our own midst. It's a very important question, how is it that God abides with you and makes you abide with him and dwell together with you? That communion of God with his people in that bond of marriage is by his word and is by his Spirit. That's his dwelling with you. That's his communion with you. It is by his word and by his Spirit. Jehovah God sends forth that word of the gospel which word of the gospel enters into your heart and enters into mine, and that word of the gospel that enters into your heart and mind is not a dead letter. It is not a matter of some empty words that any human being might speak so that those words go forth into the air

and they enter into a man's ear and he thinks about them for a little while and then those words are forgotten. That's not the word that God speaks to you. The word that he speaks to you in the gospel is the living word, it is the living word who is the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

It is that living word who is the eternal word and that eternal word abides in the hearts of God's people and that it is by the Spirit of God that he abides with us, and those two, the word and Spirit, always go together. The Spirit of God is the breath of God that carries forth the word of God and brings that word into our hearts, and the Spirit is the breath of God that takes that living word of God and applies him to our hearts. That's always how it goes in God's speaking of the word by his Spirit. That's the way it went in the beginning. When God said, "Let there be light," that word that proceeded from his mouth was not a dead letter, it was the living word that was carried forth by the Spirit moved and made ripples upon the face of the waters, the face of the deep. The Spirit of God carries forth the living word of God, "Let there be light and there was light."

That's how the conception of the Lord Jesus Christ in the womb of Mary took place. The power of the highest overshadowed Mary and the Spirit of God came upon Mary, therefore that holy thing that would be born of her was called the Son of God, and the Spirit of Christ carried the living word of God forth into the womb of Mary and the Lord Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the virgin Mary. And that's true in God's fellowship in speaking to you as his church, the Spirit of Christ as the breath of God goes forth and carries the living word who is made known in the gospel as no dead letter but as the living word that comes into your heart and abides with you.

That's how he abides with you and that's how he takes you into his own covenant fellowship, by the word and by the Spirit God abides with us, and that means that this union that we have with Jesus Christ in this marriage is a spiritual union. It is emphatically a spiritual union and that spirituality of that union with Jesus Christ is also the explanation for our union and communion with each other. When God's people are united to Jesus Christ, then there is also a union and communion that we share with each other and just as that union with Christ is emphatically spiritual and is emphatically not a matter of a physical union but a mystical union and a spiritual union, so the union of God's people one with another is a spiritual union and that means that the union of God's people with each other does not depend on physical proximity.

Our union with each other as members of the body of Christ is a spiritual union and that's the teaching of the word of God in Ephesians 2 with regard to the Gentiles who now are brought into the church of God and the Spirit says regarding them in verse 19, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." The Gentiles not every one of whom would necessarily know every Jewish Christian, those Gentiles were one building in the church in Ephesus, and in Ephesians 4 the Spirit says regarding that union of the members of the

body, "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

The unity of the people of God is a spiritual unity and that's the teaching of the Confessions as well with regard to the communion of the saints in Lord's Day 21 with regard to the truth of the church, Question and Answer 55, "What do you understand by 'the communion of saints'? First, that all and every one who believes, being members of Christ, are, in common, partakers of Him and of all His riches and gifts." That's the communion of the saints; it is that spiritual partaking of Christ and all of his gifts. That is the communion of the saints with those saints who will never stand in the same room together on this earth. The saints in the Philippines who are united to Christ you'll have union with and communion with and oneness with even now though you will never stand physically in the same room with them likely on this earth. Even when the saints of God have that communion and fellowship when they do stand in the same room, that union and that communion is not the fact that they stand in the same room. Their union and communion is their union to Christ and in Christ as fellow partakers of all his riches and gifts, they have communion together. Being united in one Lord they have communion together. Being united in one Spirit they have communion together. That's the communion of the people of God with one another because that's the communion and the union of the Lord Jesus Christ with his church. By his Spirit and his word he abides with his people and takes them unto himself and by that Spirit and word makes them members of the same body.

To go in the direction of teaching that the covenant fellowship of God's people with each other is a matter of physical proximity is inevitably to lead to legalism. It has to go there because then the church has to make a whole set of rules for what's happening here where there is physical bodies together in the same room, what happens behind the glass where there's only an open doorway, what happens in the nursery and the other rooms in church, what happens in a building across the parking lot where God's people gather, there has to be a whole set of rules for all of those circumstances and the church has to figure out, well, how much communion is here, there or anywhere the further the physical proximity increases.

But that's not the worst of it, that that leads to legalism, the worst of it is this, that to teach the union of the people of God as members of the same body, to be in some sense essentially their physical proximity is to displace Jesus Christ and to make the matter of the union of God's people whether they can see each other or be in the same room together and that's not the union, the union that you and I have with each other in this same room and the union that we have with the saints in the Philippines with whom we may never stand in the same room is Christ alone, Christ alone as the head of his body. That's the truth of covenant fellowship and communion and that does not make the child of God say, "Well, good, now I never have to seek any contact with any of my fellow believers." The child of God loves that contact and seeks that contact as he's able but his communion and union of the saints is that spiritual union he has with Christ his head.

That's the marriage of Christ to his church. That's the communion that he has with us. It's by his word and by his Spirit. It's a mystical spiritual union that is a great mystery, that is deep and is a matter of our salvation, and that is the marriage of Christ and his church. Now when the Lord Jesus Christ takes us into that union and communion, when he takes us into that marriage, the Lord Jesus Christ is utterly utterly gracious. That's what stands out in the marriage of God to his people. He is gracious. It's your salvation and mine that he takes us to himself because the bride that he takes is a bride cast out in her blood according to Ezekiel, and the bride that he takes to himself is a bride who is a harlot according to Hosea. The bride that he takes has nothing in herself to recommend her to him. That bride is a rebel. That bride is treacherous. That bride according to herself and her strength has departed from him and departs from him. When the Lord Jesus Christ comes and takes his bride to himself, that is pure grace, it is the grace of the everlasting God who says about this dust who has rebelled against him, "I make you mine and I give myself to you and I take you for my own."

The marriage of God to his church is utterly utterly gracious. The bride of Jesus Christ then never never has to worry, "Am I pretty enough for him?" She never never has to wonder, "Am I attractive enough to him?" Because the matter of the Lord's marriage to his bride is a matter of his grace and his compassion, and when the church finds in herself her corruption, her sin, her treachery, then her hope is in the grace of her husband who says, "You who were cast out in your blood and you who have treacherously departed from me, I love and I take to myself and bind you to myself in marriage."

And when God takes his church to himself in marriage, what stands out in the Lord is his absolute purity. The Lord's purity, that's God's own purity, is God's own faithfulness to his bride, and that purity is the purity of God himself. God is pure and faithful in his own covenant life. God is never unfaithful to himself. He never denies himself. He never allows his own glory to be besmirched. Jehovah God is perfectly faithful to himself, perfectly pure in his own love for himself, and when he takes his bride, the church, in the Lord Jesus Christ, he is utterly utterly faithful to her, never besmirches his own purity in his dealings with her but abides with her and lives with her and takes her back to himself.

That's the purity of Jehovah God in Jesus Christ which is why the seventh commandment is all about purity, that all uncleanness, impurity, is accursed of God, and that his church is to live in purity with him and in purity in wedlock and in single life. Jehovah God is pure in his dealings with his church and faithful in his dealings with his church. His promises for his people do not fail. They do not fail which is why the Lord forbids divorce in the symbol of that marriage for the Lord himself is faithful, always faithful to his own people.

The Lord has given as a symbol of all of that truth of his marriage to his church our marriages to one another. He has given among men that symbol of his own union with his people so that a man as the husband, and woman as the wife, are brought together by God and out of two one flesh is made. And even that union of the husband and wife which is a physical union as well as all kinds of other union, a union of goal and purpose and all

other things, that union into one flesh is a picture, a symbol of the spiritual union of God with his people in Jesus Christ.

Now there's something about that symbol that is so lovely and so deep that it's hard to get ahold of, and what's so beautiful about that symbol of marriage is that God gave that marriage before the fall, God gave that marriage as a creation ordinance. When Adam was perfect God took from him a rib and of that rib he made a woman, and brought the woman unto the man and married them in the first wedding ceremony. This is before the fall and this is before the promise of the seed of the woman as salvation in Jesus Christ, and that's so wonderful and so hard to get ahold of because from a certain point of view that symbol didn't belong there yet. How could it belong there yet? Man had not fallen. The promise of the Lord Jesus Christ had not been uttered into the world yet. How could that marriage which was a symbol of grace, a symbol of the union of God with his people in Jesus Christ, how could that belong there? And the loveliness of it is that here we have another instance of the counsel, the eternal counsel of Jehovah God breaking into history, governing all history, yes, but breaking into history so that before there's ever the promise made of Jesus Christ that promise is already seen in that symbol of marriage.

That's lovely and that's wonderful for that means that even in the giving of the symbol of marriage Jehovah God was revealing and showing the truth that his church's marriage to him and belonging to him is a matter of his counsel and that can't change. That cannot be annulled. That cannot be undone. The salvation of the church in her fellowship in Christ is secure and sure. That's beautiful. That's a lovely lovely truth regarding marriage and the gospel of marriage, now therefore thou shalt not commit adultery. The law of God comes as part of its office and work to accuse you of doing that, to accuse me. The law of God exposes what you are by nature, what I am by nature, and what you have done and what I have done. This is an assembly in ourselves and by what we have done of adulterers.

There is no one who has come to age in this sanctuary who is free of that sin. The law of God exposes that sin, that's part of its office. "What doth the seventh commandment teach us? That all uncleanness is accursed of God and that therefore we must with all our hearts detest the same." Is that true of you? Do you detest with all your heart uncleanness, fornication and adultery? Or do you harbor it? Do you love it? Do you cherish it? This law of God, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," exposes us as we are in ourselves.

"Doth God forbid in this commandment only adultery and such like gross sins? Since both our body and soul are temples of the Holy Ghost, He commands us to preserve them pure and holy; therefore He forbids all unchaste actions, gestures, words, thoughts, desires, and whatever can entice men thereto." What have you seen and continue to see that you ought not? How has your heart been enticed in this culture that swims in pornography and lewdness and a complete disregard for chastity in dress and fashion? What have you seen and what have you thought and I thought that ought never have crossed our minds? This commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," exposes you and exposes me as guilty of this sin.

"Thou shalt not," says the law, "commit adultery," and you and I say, "But we have. We have." And what is required in this commandment? That I live chastely and temperately whether in holy wedlock or in single life. Chastely and temperately, that is, purely. That's the calling of the seventh commandment that reveals and exposes our sinful hearts and all of that sin against this commandment is not walking according to the truth of the gospel. It's a violation of the law, yes, but it is not walking according to the truth of the gospel and that happens, not walking according to the truth of the gospel, when a man says with his mouth one thing, he confesses salvation by Jesus Christ, he confesses the grace of salvation by Christ, he confesses the purity of his God in dealing with him, and then with his feet he makes an entirely different confession.

And that was Peter's sin that Paul rebuked him for in Galatians 2. "when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed." Paul saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel. In Peter's case that was the confession with his mouth as long as there were no men from Jerusalem there, that these Gentile Christians did not have to obey all of the commandments of the law for their righteousness, that Jesus Christ was their righteousness, but then when the Jews from Jerusalem came, Peter withdrew himself and others with him and by their feet said, "But you are not righteous for your failure to uphold all these laws." They walked not uprightly according to their gospel. Their feet gave the lie to their mouth and they had to be rebuked. And that is you and that is me when it comes to the gospel of marriage. The gospel of marriage is beautiful and lovely, with our mouths we make a beautiful confession about that gospel of grace and the purity of God, and whenever we commit adultery and have uncleanness, then we walk not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel.

What will turn you from that and what will turn me from that? I can preach the law to you all day long, I can preach the law to you and to myself for the rest of our lives, that law won't turn you, that law will not give you the comfort and the peace of the Savior, and it will not give you purity in your life. That law cannot do it. It's not its office to do it. It's not its work to do that. What will give you comfort and peace is the gospel of marriage, the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the graciousness and faithfulness of God to you. And as you hear that gospel, God by his Spirit and by that living word fills your heart with the peace of it because when you have been condemned by the law, you adulterer, then you hear the peace of the gospel but Jesus Christ never did, he never committed adultery, he was always faithful even unto death, and his perfect purity is counted as yours, there's your peace. There's your peace. And that Spirit by that word that is carried into your heart has also the power to turn you and to turn me from that sin to serve God according to his law, not because of it, but according to it as the guide and the rule of our thankful life.

So beloved, as you hear the law, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," hear this gospel, Jehovah God has never committed adultery against you but is pure in his grace and his love for his church. Amen.

Our Father, which art in heaven, we thank thee for thy word to us this evening, wilt thou bless it to our hearts. We thank thee for thy faithfulness and thy love. Forgive all our corruption and filth and impurity and uncleanness. And we pray, Father, that thou wilt give us the hope and peace of the gospel of our Lord and keep us from this sin of adultery that we may with our bodies and souls serve thee.