

“Treasure My Mysteries:
The Father's Ten Good Words (Part 7)”
Psalm 51:1-19; Matthew 5:27-32; Exodus 20: 1-2; 14

The Heart's Body
The Heart's Eyes
The Father's Eyes
The Son's Body

1. The Heart's Body

Everything we do with our bodies is an expression of our hearts.

That's why there's a thing called “body language.” That's why our posture matters. That's why we communicate our hearts through rituals, in which we do things with our bodies.

I once heard of a story of a young woman in her twenties who had grown up in a home with a physically aggressive father. As a result she did not have much hope that she could grow up and marry a man and expect anything other than aggressiveness. But then she was given a ride home by a couple from her church. The gentleman was ... gentle. The very way he opened and closed the doors of the car for the two women with gentleness and care, she said, changed her. She realized that a marriage did not have to be full of fear, but could be one of peace. The heart has a body, which expresses itself by what we do with our bodies.

And that's why we have to be very aware of what we're doing with our bodies.

You remember what Jesus says in Matthew 5? “Cut off your hand if it causes you to sin.” Jesus knows that our hands don't cause us to sin. Our *hearts* do. It's like Jesus is saying “if your *heart* causes you to sin, cut it out.” He knows that when you do that, you're dead. And that's the point. We do sin *with* our bodies. But the body, when it does good or ill, is serving at the pleasure of the heart.

And because the heart has a body, God our Father regulates what his image-bearers can and cannot do with their bodies. He made us in his image, and it's his right and authority to say:

“If you violently touch someone sexually; if you romantically touch someone else's spouse; if your body says “I love you” to someone sexually, but you have not committed your life to them;

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if you use and discard the bodies of others by using porn; if your “body language” says these things, your body is not telling the truth about who I am.”

“But if you hug, kiss, shake hands (or whatever it is we’ll do post-coronavirus) in a way that communicates a brotherly, sisterly heart to others made in my image; if in the covenant of marriage you give and serve with sexual faithfulness and tenderness, you’ll be saying something true and good and beautiful *about me* with your body language. Namely, faithfulness and lovingkindness.”

But even though the Good Father regulates bodily image-bearing, that doesn’t mean the Father is embarrassed by bodies and sexuality.

In fact, the very first time a human being speaks in the Bible, what comes out of that human mouth is an erotic love poem! The very center of our Bibles--Song of Songs--is an erotic love poem.

What’s funny is that in Song of Songs, the poet uses plants and animals to describe the beauty of the beloved’s body.

But in Genesis 2, it’s the opposite. All Adam has *seen* is plants and animals. And he’s impressed with their beauty and their form. But none of them are enough *like* him, and still *different enough* from him, to be his partner. But when he sees the world’s first woman, who was made to be married to him, he explodes with poetic joy!

The marriage of Adam and Eve is wonderful because it expresses the best of the two ways humans have done marriage historically:

It’s an arranged marriage, arranged by the Good Father.
It’s love at first sight, full of physical attraction.

Our marriages, ideally, should have all of the commitment and sobriety of an arranged marriage--because it *is* arranged by our Father. Our marriages are also meant to partake in all the sensual delight of the erotic poems that are right at the beginning and middle of the Bible.

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In Proverbs 5:18, the Father tells the adult son to rejoice in the wife of his youth. We work intentionally for romance. We don't wait for it to come. If we wait around, we'll get lazy and bored and we'll end up doing what the Seventh Good Word forbids: taking someone else's body for cheap, uncommitted pleasures.

The call of the Seventh Good Word is to work on your heart by practicing image-bearing holiness through what you do with your image-bearing body.

2. The Heart's Eyes

Let's take a minute to think about eyes. The human eye is a paradox. It's the most expressive part of the face. Looking into the eyes is extremely personal. Your eyes are the central communication channel of your body. When you're talking to me, I don't look at your mouth, or your hair, or your feet.

BUT, at the center of the eye is an *absence*. A hole! Whoa!

The gaze of the eyes doesn't make physical contact with another person. But the gaze of the eyes is the place to look if you want to know whether someone wants to bless or curse, give or take, learn or lecture, help or harm.

So the eyes can't touch, but they reach out with the heart, for good or for ill, as powerfully and revealingly as the hands.

If you don't think that the heart, the eyes, and the hands are connected to one another, either for blessing or cursing, just look at the United States of America in the past 2 weeks.

What is the cry of the black community? “The violence of your hands is an expression of the gaze of your eyes. The gaze of your eyes is a window into the contempt of your heart. What do we have to do to get you to stop killing us with your hands, to stop gazing at us that way with your eyes? When will your hearts toward us change?”

Jesus is clear not just about the murder of the hands and the contempt of the heart. He's also clear about the assault and adultery of the hands and the lust of the heart: no one takes someone else's spouse, someone else's daughter or son, someone else made God's image, and uses them for

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selfish sexual purposes with their hands without first taking and using that image-bearer with their eyes.

And just like we heard the Son say last week that you can murder with your heart, you can also commit sexual assault and adultery with your heart's *eyes*.

3. The Father's Eyes and Body

If the heart has eyes, and if all of our eyes are capable and guilty of taking instead of giving; cursing instead of blessing; using and abusing instead of praising and affirming, then to whose eyes can we look? Are there a pair of eyes that have not been compromised by the violence and objectification of lust?

Thank God, the Father's eyes are holy. The Good Father's eyes are completely reserved for the good purposes of the Good Father's heart.

Flannery O'Connor: “For the writer of [stories], everything has its testing point in the eye, and the eye is an organ that eventually involves the whole personality, and as much of the world as can be gotten into it. It involves judgment.”

God is a writer of a true story, the story of the whole creation; the story of women and men, girls and boys. And his eyes are more perceptive than the most carefully observant storyteller. Details, resonances: the Father's eyes take it all in. His eyes are the center of his whole personality, and he takes the whole world into his experience through his eyes.

And yes: he judges. He sees truly, evaluates truly, and is the eye-witness of all things. The Father alone can be Judge without being judgmental. The Father alone sees all truly, with a true heart.

But something surprising happens in the eyes of this perfect, all-seeing judge.

Our Good Father makes all things, and looks, and judges and declares them good. Our Good Father makes women and men as image-bearers. Now he sees that things are *very* good, and he says so. When our hearts first doubted God's Fatherly goodness, we *looked* at the forbidden tree, and judged it independently of God's fatherly wisdom and rule.

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We said “my body, my desires, my choice.” And we joined our bodies with the fruit that our Good Father *told us* would kill our bodies and kill our relationships.

We lusted with our hearts, then with our eyes, then with our bodies, until we *gave* our bodies for pleasure, right in front of God and everyone.

But when the Good Father saw with perfect eyes what we had done; when he saw even the *shame* resulting from what we did with our bodies. And he covered us with animal skins, to mitigate the shame we knew in our bodies, eyes, and hearts.

And then the Father makes his great promise. Genesis 3:15. He promises to win us back, hearts, eyes, and bodies, through the faithful heart, eyes, and body of his only Son, given to us.

All this to say: the Father, who can see with a pure heart, and perfect eyes, has:

1. Seen and judged our lust and adulterous eyes correctly
2. Spoken truly in condemning what we have done with our eyes of lust
3. From those same eyes, looked in compassion, mercy, and kindness upon us.

For God so looked at the world, and saw that it was good, and saw that we had become so bad at loving it and one another, and so loved the world, that instead of moving from judgment to condemnation, the Good Father moved from honest judgment to perfect mercy. In Jesus, his only Son.

The Son *is* the Father's eyes. The Son Jesus judges all things with the Father's eyes. The Son looks with the Father's eyes of compassion despite what we have been and done.

4. The Son's Body

And the Son expresses the Father's eyes and heart in the Son's *body!*

Though you have been unfaithful from the heart, with the eyes, and with your hands; though you are ashamed of what you have done openly or in secret, with body, eyes, and heart; though your sins are many, his mercy is more.

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When we are baptized, and the water comes on our bodies; When we commune with bread and wine, which comes into our bodies; when we are united to the crucified and resurrected and glorified body of Jesus Christ; when we are joined to his body, the Church— his *bride* ...

We can sense with our bodies and see with our eyes and know with our hearts the reality of the Father's heart:

So much did he love us that he sent his only Son to welcome us with open arms, with tender eyes, with a soft and warm heart, back into his heart.

Your heart, eyes, body, all of who you are ... redeemed and restored in Jesus, and destined for the splendor of holiness.

I don't know about you, but when I hear the heart of the Seventh Good Word from our Good Father, and when I see the eyes and the body of the Father's true Son Jesus, I want to say:

“I am not my own, but belong, body and soul, both in life and in death, to God my Father, and to my faithful ... *my faithful* Savior, his Son, Jesus Christ. Therefore I will honor my Good Father and my faithful Savior in my body, with my eyes, with my whole heart.”

So help me God. So help us all, Holy Spirit of God. For Jesus' sake. Amen.