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The Uncomfortable Christian Part II

Hollywood must be on to something. When was the last time an original movie idea? And when was the last time you saw a sequel? I think Star Wars really made the sequel popular and I've heard this is the year of the sequel. We have already seen Sylvester Stallone in his sixth installment of the Rocky series. I've seen an ad for Spiderman 3, for Pirates of the Caribbean 3 even Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 3. And so today we have a sequel a carryover from last week. Today's featured sermon is The Uncomfortable Christian Part II. Now let me explain something here, I am not trying to emulate Hollywood no, actually I messed up last week. I left out the entire the entire premise for the title of the sermon. Call it a brain freeze, a gray haired moment or whatever you like I just missed it and messed up. So what was it? Well let me re-fresh your memory.

As you remember I was going to talk about bearing fruit, this is what Christ had told us to do. To bear fruit we must live as Christians and Christ's command for Christian living is summed up in Matthew 5:48 where He said, "Be perfect therefore as your Heavenly Father is perfect." Christ also gave us instructions on how to fulfill this. We are to live by God's law. We saw that not one iota, or one small embellishment of a letter of the law can be missed. We are to live not only by the letter of the law but also by the spirit of the law. Then Christ became specific and gave individual examples of what that all means. Here is where I messed up this is where I left out the premise fro the title of the sermon The Uncomfortable Christian.

In Matthew 5:21 Jesus says, "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago do not murder anyone who murders will be subject to judgment." This is a reference to the previous verse where Jesus was talking about the Pharisees and teachers of the law. He's speaking to this large group of people at The Sermon on the Mount when He says, "You have heard it said." You is plural, He's' saying all of you have heard the teachers of the law the Pharisees say do not murder and if you do you're subject to judgment, which agrees

totally with what, the scripture says. But the next verse has a dramatic change Jesus says, “But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment.” You might ask what’s the dramatic change? It’s right there in the first four words, “but I tell you.” You might be going so? Well this is one of those cases where the English language doesn’t do justice to what is originally written. This you is singular not plural like the “you have heard it said.” This is personal. To accurately put this into English we would have to say something like, “then looking each person in the eye and pointing His finger at each person individually Jesus said you, you and you if you’re angry, if you say rakka or you call your brother a fool you yourself are in danger of hell.”

Now how many uncomfortable people there were at that sermon? In fact, what would your reaction be if I did something like that? From the pulpit said, “you, you and you.” Don’t worry I won’t because I can’t I am not Jesus I can’t stand at that level of judgment but if you felt a little twinge last week maybe it was the holy Spirit saying you need to reconcile with your brother. As we ended we saw that there is no alternative James 1:22, “Do not just merely listen to the word and so you deceive yourselves, do what it says.” The good news or the bad news is that Jesus continues this pattern of “you have heard it said”, followed by, “But I tell you”, five more times. Good news because its Christian Living bad news because we might feel uncomfortable.

And so we continue on with verses 27-30 where Jesus says, “You have heard that it was said do not commit adultery but I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to commit a sin gouge it out throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown in to hell. If your right hand causes you to sin cut it off throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.” Jesus says if you look at a person lustfully then you break the commandment concerning adultery. That’s right, look at a pornographic magazines you’re guilty, pictures on the internet guilty, rent a DVD guilty, daytime soap opera you love to watch guilty, HBO show that full of sex guilty. If it’s selling sex, its promoting lust in Christ’s words, “cut it out.” He goes to the extreme if your eye can’t help looking take your eye out. If your hand cant help but type in that web address cut that hand off. Jesus is speaking in extremes

because this is an area of sin that goes to extremes. But His message is clear cut out the sin. If you don't want to take out an eye or cut off a hand then cut off the subscription to the magazine, cut out the trip to the magazine store or the movie store, rent only clean movies, cancel the premium cable service channel that's bringing the lust into your house, block the internet site that is tempting you. Jesus says, "I tell you." James says, "Just do it."

The next ones hard, I have to be honest I didn't even want to touch this one. Jesus says, "It has been said anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce but I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife except for marital unfaithfulness causes her to become an adulteress and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery." I know there are several people here today who have been through a divorce. Jesus makes it clear if it was for a reason other than unfaithfulness it was not right. And believe me I know like the person who holds a grudge or the person with a lustful heart this makes yet more people uncomfortable but what is the answer? Its twofold, number one, if you are married stick it out through thick and thin as you've said for better or for worse you don't have an option. You say well I cant you don't understand. You might be right, maybe you cant but we worship an almighty God and He can together with your spouse fall on your knees and pray, have devotions together, worship together and watch the power of God transform your marriage together. Look to Him for the strength.

Number two; you've already been divorced. Well, here's what the bible says to do first and foremost John 1:9 tells us, "If we confess our sins God is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us of all unrighteousness." So if you've been through a divorce or several, look at your past marriage or marriages. Identify your part in it and go back to what we had two weeks ago in the sermon what Jesus called people to do, repent. Confess your part to God ask for forgiveness God will forgive you He is faithful and just and make the change and let God know this wont happen again God. But then secondly, do the same with your ex, confess to your ex ask for forgiveness from your ex be reconciled and watch how God heals the wounds and give you peace.

The next lesson in Christian living deals with a person of integrity. Jesus says, "Again you have heard that it was said to the people long ago do not break your oath but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord but I tell you do not swear at all either by heaven,

for it is God's throne, or by earth for it is His foot stool. Or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great king. Do not swear by your head for you cannot make even one hair white or black. Simply let your yes be yes and your no be no anything beyond this comes from the evil one." In a nutshell, why do people feel the need to swear? Well. Lets define what swearing is. There's cursing and cursing is when you condemn something to hell, that's the big "GD". It's wrong because it breaks the third commandment, "you shall not take the name of your Lord God in vain." To cuss is to use fowl language again this is wrong, Ephesians 4:29 says, "Let no unwholesome talk come out of your mouth." Cursing is wrong, cussing is wrong. Swearing is when you call on God as a witness. When a person says, "I swear it", they're making both a statement and a prayer, they are saying, "with God as my witness", I'm telling the truth and they are praying, "God be my witness." This too is using God's name in vain but why is there a need to swear? Well, because people felt that others wont trust them, why? Because they've lied before. A Christian is a person of integrity they speak the truth. Speak the truth and there will be no reason for someone to doubt what you say. Let your yes really be yes and your no really be no, be a person of integrity and speak the truth this is what Jesus is saying.

It's a tough sermon I wasn't looking forward to it; it has a tough message. I know I felt uncomfortable many times for myself personally and I knew there are others that will feel uncomfortable too but this is what you and me personally are called to do. If you're uncomfortable right now do something about it. Living as a Christian is hard but that's what Lent is all about; Christian means "Christ like". So we're to be like Christ; Christ was called to go to the cross for us so too we are called to our own crosses for Him. May we walk in His footsteps and may we do that which is right.

In our Savior's name, Amen.