

EAST CAMBRIDGE CHURCH OF CHRIST

"A first century church in the 21st century"

Bible Reading Plan

Week 45

- Ezekiel 31-33; *John 11*
- Eze 34-36; Ps 86; *John 12*
- Eze 37-39; Ps 87; *John 13*
- Eze 40-42; *John 14*
- Eze 43-45; Ps 135; *Jn 15*

Leading Services

Announcements: Ron V.

Morning:

Song Leader: Bill G.

Opening Prayer: Richard L.

Lord's Table: Larry L.

Asst By:

Closing Prayer: Brock G.

Evening:

Song Leader: Mike V.

Opening Prayer: Larry L.

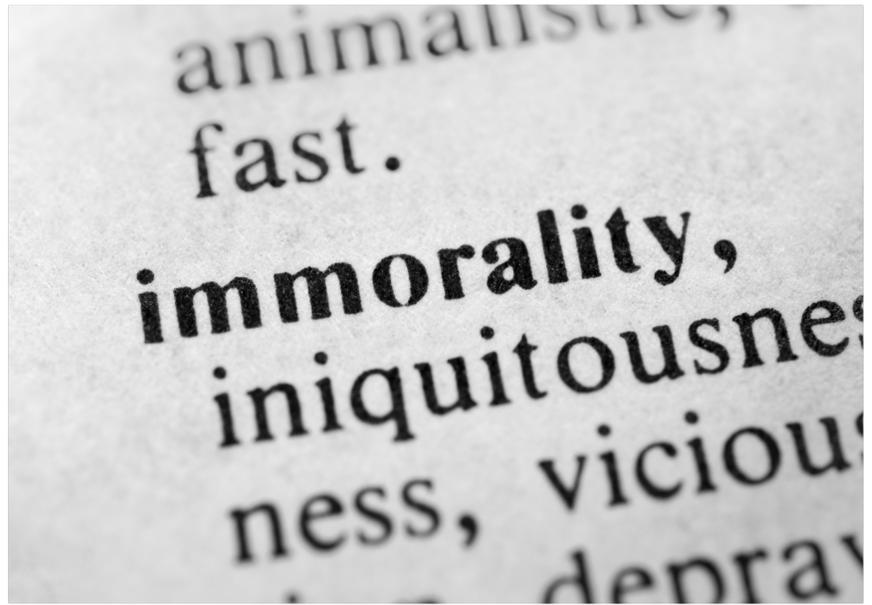
Closing Prayer: Ben V.

Scripture Reading: Richard L.
(Malachi 4:1-6)

Sermons

AM: Addicted To Sin

PM: The Mission Of The Church



Immorality

In 1 Corinthians 10:8, Paul said, "Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day" (NASB). The KJV and ASV say, "Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand." The ESV says, "We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day."

While Israel remained at Shittim, the people began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab, and joined themselves to Baal of Peor. The idol "Baal of Peor" or "Baal-Peor" was a local god of the Moabite mountains. Perhaps this is another name for Chemosh. Because Israel participated in the licentious rituals of this pagan cult, 24,000 Israelites were struck by a divine plague and died (Numbers 25:1-13).

Later Israel was commanded to strike the Midianites because of their hostility and trickery in the affair of Peor (Numbers 25:16-18).

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Avoiding immorality

In the ensuing battle, Balaam was killed along with the immoral women of Midian (Numbers 31:1-18). The tragedy and travesty of Baal-Peor became an enduring symbol of the judgment that falls on those who are sexually immoral (Deuteronomy 4:1-4; Psalm 106:28-31; Hosea 9:10 ; Revelation 2:14-16; 2:19-23).

Christians must abstain from fornication (Acts 15:19-20, 28-29; 21:25; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4). With some sins, particularly those that appeal to the flesh, flight is the only effective means of resistance (1 Corinthians 6:18-20; 10:14; 2 Timothy 2:19-22). This principle is well illustrated by the contrasting examples of Joseph — who fled temptation (Genesis 39:1-12), and David — who did not (2 Samuel 11:1-5). In order to help us all remain as pure as possible, I want to suggest the following three important ways to keep oneself pure.

By Keeping the Heart: To avoid fornication, one must guard the heart and mind (Job 31:1; Proverbs 23:7; Matthew 5:27-30; 15:18-19; Mark 7:20-23). In this regard, we must avoid direct and indirect lust. One can sin by looking directly at a woman, or by looking at a graphic representation, i.e. pictures, television, movies, magazines, billboards, online, etc. Continual caution and self-control is especially needed in our modern voyeuristic culture.

By Covering the Body: To avoid fornication, one must properly cover the body. For men especially, the sight of an improperly/inadequately clothed female produces lust. Jehovah's strict rules regarding priestly modesty stood in stark contrast with the sensuality of pagan idolatry (Exodus 20:25-26; 28:42-43). Nakedness characterized Canaanite life and religion, but it must not be so among the people of God. From a Biblical standpoint, public nakedness is always shameful (Isaiah 20:1-5; 47:1-3; Lamentations 1:8; Micah 1:11; Revelation 3:18; 16:15). Modesty is, therefore, mandated (1 Timothy 2:9-10; 1 Peter 3:1-7). Why? Outside of the marriage bed, sensuality and suggestiveness is improper (Hebrews 13:4). Sight leads to lust, and lust leads to action (Leviticus 18:1-30; 20:11, 17-21; Ezekiel 16:36-37; 22:10-11, 23:17-21).

By Cultivating the Marriage Relationship: To avoid fornication, one must cultivate a divinely sanctioned marriage relationship (Hebrews 13:4). In the Garden of Eden, the Lord said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him." After Eve was taken from Adam's side, the man 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. For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh" (Genesis 2:18-24). Sexual intimacy has its proper fulfillment within marriage (Proverbs 5:15-23). Because of immorality, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband. Furthermore, both should fulfill their duty to the other (1 Corinthians 7:1-5).

Young people should wait for marriage, and not awaken passion prematurely (Song of Solomon 2:7; 3:5; 8:4). Note various translations of this verse. Although the Shulammite longed for the shepherd's embrace, she understood love should not be aroused or awakened until the appropriate time. Even in budding romance, young Christians should demonstrate chaste behavior, avoiding all impurity of thought, word, and action (Philippians 4:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22; 1 Timothy 4:12; 5:1-2; 2 Timothy 2:22).

Regardless of age, Christians should exemplify moral purity. Sexual immorality must not be named among those who are saints (Ephesians 5:3). Exploitative behavior is a grievous sin (Habakkuk 2:15-16). Having been raised with Christ, let us set our affection on things above, and die to all manifestation of evil desire (Colossians 3:1-6).

- Mark Mayberry