

Deadly Sins and Saving Virtues From Lust to Love

Genesis 1:26-28a, 2:24; Matthew 5:27-28

8:30 AM BLENDED

WELCOME AND CALL TO WORSHIP

Clay Brown

*SONGS OF PRAISE

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE

SONG OF RESPONSE

GIFTS OF GRATITUDE

MESSAGE

Deadly Sins and Saving Virtues: From Lust to Love

Alf Halvorson

RESPONSE OF THE PEOPLE

9:45 AM CONTEMPORARY

WORSHIP INVITATION

*CALL TO WORSHIP

*MOMENT OF CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE

Trevor Harris

MESSAGE

Deadly Sins and Saving Virtues: From Lust to Love

Alf Halvorson

GIFTS OF GRATITUDE

RESPONSE OF THE PEOPLE

Musicians in these services: Meliza Gómez and Michael Middleton, worship leaders • Daniel Amaya, bass • George Heathco, guitar • Daniel Martinez, keys • Asher Pudlo, drums

11:15 AM TRADITIONAL

PRELUDE

What Wondrous Love Is This

arr. Hal Hopson (b. 1933)

WELCOME AND CALL TO WORSHIP

Clay Brown

CHORAL INTROIT

God So Loved the World

John Stainer (1840-1901)

*HYMN OF PRAISE

For the Beauty of the Earth

#473 Vs. 1, 2, 4 | Dix

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE

Beth Case

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH from the Apostles' Creed

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

The Gloria Patri

Hymn #579

ANTHEM

There Is a Balm in Gilead

arr. Bruce Saylor (b. 1946)

OFFERTORY

Anthems of Love

Dan Forrest (b.1987)

MESSAGE

Deadly Sins and Saving Virtues: From Lust to Love

Alf Halvorson

*HYMN OF RESPONSE

In the Cross of Christ I Glory

#84; Vs. 1, 4 | RATHBUN

POSTLUDE

Toccata on Nearer My God, To Thee

arr. Diane Bish (b. 1941)

Musicians in this service: Charles Hausmann, conductor • Monica Isomura, soloist • Kathryn White, pianist/organist

*Please stand if able.

CCLI # 182374

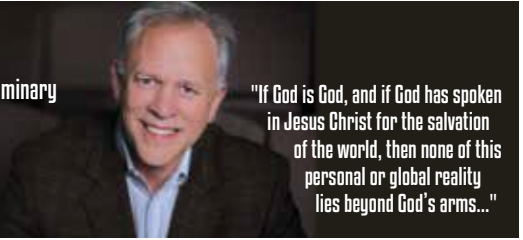
Dr. Mark Labberton

President & Professor of Preaching, Fuller Theological Seminary



Thursday, April 26
at 7:00 PM

speakers.mdpc.org



Easter Lily Dedications

The Easter lilies that will adorn the chancel may be dedicated in memory of and/or in honor of those close to you. Dedications are inserted into Easter Sunday's bulletin. Purchase online at the address below.

Order deadline: Sunday, March 25 at 5:00 PM
flowers.mdpc.org • \$9 per dedication

Discover MDPC with Alf

Want to know more about MDPC? Thinking about membership? This info meeting is about who we are and how we operate, within our walls and out in the world. No commitment required!

Sun, March 25 | 10:45-11:10 AM | Gathering Room

Next New Member Class

If you are interested in membership, or in becoming a Christian, any of our pastors would love to meet you and discuss your questions! Taught by our Pastors and Elders, the class includes an outreach service project.

Sundays, April 8-29 | 11:00 AM-12:15 PM | Parlor

Registration: membership.mdpc.org

Journey to the Cross

Children and families: Walk with us through Holy Week on a guided tour of the stations of the cross.

Good Friday, March 30 | 9:30-11:30 AM

Register: journey.mdpc.org

Does the OT Have a Dark Side?

Different guest speakers will tackle Old Testament topics such as Violence, Women's Issues, Rituals & Sacrifices, and Slavery. There will be opportunities for Q&A, and each scholar or professor will bring his/her own flavor to the discussion, so it's sure to be interesting. This is for ALL ages and stages of faith.

Sundays, April 8-29 | 11:00 AM | Amphitheater

Details: darkside.mdpc.org

The Five Love Languages Class

For couples of all ages, whether looking for a marriage tune-up, or to turn joy-filled engagement into wedded bliss. Learn the tools to create a lifetime of love!

Sundays, April 8-May 13 | 11:00 AM | MC 116

Details and registration: fivelove.mdpc.org

Registration Is Open! The Spoken Word

Experience God's Word in a special way and prepare your heart for the miracle of Easter! Come to read or to listen, strengthen your faith, and enjoy the fellowship experience of this Holy Week tradition at MDPC.

Pastor Alf kicks off reading at 6:00 AM, March 26; we conclude on Maundy Thursday by 4:00 PM.

Sign up to read for a 15-minute increment by visiting spokenword.mdpc.org.

Allow Us to Bless You

Are you rebuilding your home? Feeling anxious about moving back in? Allow us the honor to bless your home for you no matter where you are in the rebuilding process. A member of MDPC will come to lead your family in a blessing ceremony. These blessings are for anyone in our midst whose homes were impacted by Hurricane Harvey.

More information and sign-up: home.mdpc.org

Contact Amanda Grace Caldwell with questions:

acaldwell@mdpc.org, 713-490-0931

MDPC Focus Newsletter

The second-quarter issue is available now around campus. Pick one up to see upcoming programs and events, and to read Barbara Mueller's article about the servant-hearted Tyler softball team, and the impact they had while on mission in Houston.

Pick up a hard copy, or download the PDF: publications.mdpc.org



Today's Chancel Flowers are given

by Gayle Adamson in memory of Burton and Olga Ostrander.

Please Pray for MDPC Ministry Partners

This week, we're lifting in prayer these MDPC partners:

Casa El Buen Samaritano shares the love of Jesus Christ while providing whole-person (body, soul, and spirit) healthcare to low-income and uninsured Houstonians. Volunteer nurses and doctors treat patients for a number of general health issues, including women's health, diabetes, and hypertension.
casaelbuen.org

Child Advocates trains and supports volunteer caseworkers to handle court-appointed abuse and neglect cases of Houston children. In 2017, it helped more than 2,350 children, but there are thousands more young victims lost in the system who need advocates.
childadvocates.org

MDPC Field Partner Alyssa is living and working in South Asia among high-caste Hindus, sharing the gospel with them and meeting their families. Her aim is to start ongoing house churches all over the city. Please pray for the Gospel to trickle down from the high caste to the most forgotten street children.

WEEKLY FINANCIAL UPDATE

2018 Operating Budget	\$11,600,000
Expected Income to Date	\$ 1,829,904
Actual Income to Date (3/11/18)	\$ 2,129,971
Current Income Surplus	\$ 300,067
Needed to Meet 2018 Budget	\$ 9,470,029



Loving God. Proclaiming Christ. Living Generously. Engaging All.

11612 Memorial Drive | Houston, Texas 77024 | mdpc.org | 713-782-1710



From Lust to Love

Gen. 1:26-28a, 2:24; Matt. 5:27-28
Alf Halvorson preaching

It bears repeating: As we work through our study of 7 deadly sins and saving virtues, we must reinforce the truth that we are not saying we must work our way toward God's grace. Instead, we note that "grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone" is designed to lead to a life given in thankfulness to God. Therefore, as we grow in our relationship with God, we acknowledge, confess, and strive against the sins that hurt ourselves and others, and we will seek to develop virtues that glorify God.

Now we talk about the change from lust to love. Can anyone argue successfully we do not live in a sex-infatuated age?

Look at all the leading indicators. Perhaps the largest growth factor rests with the Internet. Pornography is big business, and viewing online porn is widely accepted. Human trafficking related to the sex trade is at an all-time high. Both men and women fall prey to sexual addictions and dysfunctions made possible by the availability of pornography and the digital means to arrange illicit and sometimes illegal encounters. A news cycle rarely goes by without yet another powerful person being accused of using sex to advance and to maintain that power.

However, we must remember in every age, sex has been a source of fascination, attention, debate, and anxiety. We are sexual beings, and to deny this is to deny a basic element of our humanity. At the same time, Scripture establishes limits and standards for sexual relationships, particularly as it distinguishes between love and lust, between God's plan and our deviations from His plan. Our Scripture passages this week provide both Old and New Testament witness to divine wisdom and insight here.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Genesis 1:26-28a

ESV: Then God said, "Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply..."

NLT: Then God said, "Let us make human beings in Our image, to be like Us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground." So God created human beings in His own image. In the image of God He created them; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply..."

Genesis 2:24

ESV: Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

NLT: This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.

Matthew 5:27-28

ESV: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

NLT: "You have heard the commandment that says, 'You must not commit adultery.' But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Introducing: Getting Ready to Discuss the Passages

- Many outside the church (and some within the church) believe God is a "Cosmic Killjoy" opposed to human pleasures of every kind, and thus He is against sex in all its manifestations. Is this opinion about God on target? Why or why not?

Discovering: What the Passages Say

- Compare the two translations above for each Scripture passage (Genesis 1:26-28a, Genesis 2:24, and Matthew 5:27-28). What jumps out at you? Similarities? Differences? Overlaps? Things to pursue?
- In Genesis 1:26, why might the New Living Translation's translation team prefer "human beings" as opposed to the English Standard Version's "man"? What contemporary cultural factors may be at work?

- When God creates man & woman, what are they commanded to do according to Gen. 1:28?
- In Genesis 2:24, the phrase “one flesh” is introduced. Who becomes “one flesh”? How does this distinction connect with what was stated earlier in Genesis 1:26-28a? Why might God use this term to express the deepest intimacy?
- Please review the immediate paragraphs both before and after our Matthew 5:27-28 passage in His “Sermon on the Mount.” In your review, you may notice Jesus uses the introductory statement “You have heard that it was said” or “You have heard the commandment that says” a lot. Why might He employ this tactic here? What is He emphasizing by doing this?
- What definition of adultery is the community standard in Matthew 5:27? How does Jesus change this standard in Matthew 5:28?

Exploring: What the Passages Mean

- Since God created us male & female, what may this creative act tell us about God’s view on sex?
- How does God choose to address the sexual natures and needs of people? Why might He have chosen this specific plan?
- Why do many people believe God’s plan for human sexual expression to be difficult, unreasonable, and problematic? What are sound responses to this commonly shared belief?
- Sin usually takes something originally created by God as good, but then twists it into something evil. How does lust fit this description?
- Jesus expands the definition of sexual sin from action only to either action or thought. What is He emphasizing by this expansion?
- What challenges do those single either by choice or by circumstance face with the “one man and one woman as one flesh” dynamic? With the multiple temptations to lust endemic to today? How do these challenges compare to the challenges faced by those married?
- When we say “love,” we often first think of romantic love. How is this view of love incomplete or insufficient? What is love from God’s perspective?
- In *Mere Christianity*, C. S. Lewis states, “You can get a large audience together for a striptease act—that is, to watch a girl undress on the stage. Now suppose you come to a country where you could fill a theatre by simply bringing a covered plate on to the stage and then slowly lifting the cover so as to let every one see, just before the lights went out, that it contained a mutton chop or a bit of bacon, would you not think that in that country something had gone wrong with the appetite for food?” Using Lewis’ analogy as a starting point, what do you think has gone wrong with our culture’s sexual appetites and why? How do you believe God’s love, expressed through His plan for human intimacy and most concretely in the person and work of Jesus Christ, can make a positive difference in our world?

Applying: Wrestling with the Implications of the Passages for Our Lives

- An implication of this study is that God is not the Cosmic Killjoy after all, for He loves us and has a gracious plan for human intimacy. How does your view of God change, expand, or become affirmed because of this truth? How can you communicate this truth about God “with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15b) to your friends who think differently?
- Another implication of this study is we all lust, and this common experience is but one example of our need for God’s grace. How does the gospel address this for you?
- Yet another implication of this study involves Jesus’ definition of lust as not only action, but thought and attitude too. With this new definition in mind, examine yourself as to how you interact with others, how you manage your thoughts, and how you control your heart’s affections. In your examination, please consider the following areas:
 - My behavior and/or attitude with family members, work colleagues, and others with whom I spend a great deal of time
 - My responses when I am tempted
 - My personal priorities and goals
 - My schedule
 - Other areas not listed.
- One more implication of this study is the recognition that fighting against lust and living out the love of God in today’s sexually heightened world is exceedingly difficult, and therefore we need relationships of mutual support and encouragement to help us. Yet we are reluctant to be so vulnerable about this topic. How can you overcome your fears and establish intentional relationships of mutual, grace-filled accountability? Identify some people who may be helpful to you and pray about how you may contact them.

