

Le Nouvel Esprit:
A Video Series on the Theology of
the Body

TOB 35, General Audience of Aug. 13, 1980

His Listeners

- Matt. 5:27 cites the 6th commandment, “you shall not commit adultery”
- Christ’s listeners
 - God’s chosen people, whom God gave His law
 - Received the prophets who repeatedly described transgressions to that law
- Christ and the law
 - When Christ speaks about these transgressions, he is concerned with human interpretations that cancels the right meaning of the law
 - Christ does not accept these human interpretations of the law that were passed down historically for centuries
 - These laws were weakened through concupiscence
 - Christ came to fulfill the law, which means to provide a correct interpretation and understanding of it

The History of Deviating from the Law

- Casuistic interpretation of the law
 - Casuistry, “the resolving of moral problems by the application of theoretical rules to particular instances”, Oxford Dictionary
 - Imposed over the original meaning
 - Been part of the history of the Old Testament since Abraham
 - Defined by JPPII as the systematic defection from monogamy
 - Desire for offspring led to sexual relations outside of monogamy
 - Examples: Abraham and Sarah, Rachel and Jacob
 - The patriarchs had the highest authority, which was religious in character as it was tied to the covenants and promises of God

The History Continued

- The 6th commandment did not change this tradition
- The examples of David and Solomon showed that polygamy was established for reasons of concupiscence
- The adultery in the case of David and Bathsheba was understood in terms of taking another man's wife, not in terms of having multiple wives
- The tradition of the Old Covenant never revealed the consciousness of the 6th commandment as requiring monogamy

Understanding Adultery

- Old Testament view
 - A violation of man's property rights
 - Defined in limits with severe consequences, e.g. death penalty
 - Polygamy was acceptable in various ways, multiple wives, concubines, or sexual relations with slaves
 - Not take into account monogamy
- Christ defending the adulteress in John 8
 - Identifies that adultery is still a sin
 - Appealed to the conscience of the Jews who wanted to stone her
 - This shows that conscience can discern good and evil in a deeper way than through legal norms
- The history of the Old Covenant unfolded outside the true interpretation of the 6th commandment
 - Christ wants to correct this distortion

Thank You for Watching

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