Job 31:1-12; Matthew 5:27-28; Job’s Purity Defended I. The Context for Purity II. The Call to Purity III. The Reason for Purity

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we think of covenants we tend to think of serious, religious events. We confess that circumcision was, and baptism is now the sign of the covenant. Marriage is a covenant between two people where they promise- they vow to love and live together until death parts them. But what about a covenant with your eyes? What would be so pressing as to move Job to make a covenant with himself- a member of his own body? Well, today as we return to Job we find Job defending his righteousness in the presence of his friends who constantly accuse him. In chapter 31, Job is presenting his final appeal to his friends- defending his own character. And one specific example that Job gives to prove his own piety is that of his sexual purity. Now we might be tempted to think of Job as an old man living many years ago in a time with little to no similarities to our life today. Why would Job need to worry about sexual purity when everyone wore long robes? We also remember that Job was a man of wisdom- one of the richest and wisest men of the east. He often taught others with his lips of wisdom- so today Job will teach us about purity. Job is pointing to his own actions to prove to his friends- to show his friends that he is a righteous, holy and upright person. He is not the wretched rebel that his friends accuse him of being. But rather, Job is the righteous man who is committed to purity. So today we consider this theme: Jesus Christ call His people to purity as Job covenants with his eyes.

**I. The Context for Purity**

Before we dive into this commitment to purity that Job has, in our first point we will briefly look at the context of this call to purity. In other words, what was going on in Job’s life? Well, as you will remember, Job is married. He has 7 children- but all of them had recently been killed when a house fell on them. After this tragedy, his wife turned against him. We noted back in chapter 2 that Job’s wife said- why do you hang onto your integrity? Curse God and die! So instead of being a comfort in this terrible time of sorrow, Job’s wife has turned against him- even encouraging him to sin and end his own life. We saw the same thing last week in chapter 19. In 19:17, Job’s breath was offensive to his own wife. His wife could not bear to be around him! So what do we find? Well, Job is really in the pit of despair. He is having some serious marriage problems- his wife has abandoned him. He is separated from all his loved ones. Job is depressed and despised. Humanly speaking, Job has every reason to be enraged! As you know, this is the very kind of situation that the devil uses to tempt people into sin. A married man despised and rejected by his wife is often tempted in this area. A businessman who has just lost it all needs an outlet. A father who has had to bury his children needs an escape. This is a recipe for sin if you will- it is these kinds of situations that often lead to sin such as adultery or alcoholism. According to human wisdom, we would understand why Job would look around and seek some kind of solace- some kind of escape or release! Something to numb the pain! But that is not what we find with the righteous man Job.

**II. The Call to Purity**

No, Job is so committed to holy living that he has made a covenant with his eyes as 31:1 puts it. Now a covenant with your eyes is a pledge. Job has made a vow with himself- to himself. He is committed and dedicated to this pursuit. And his pledge is this- that he would not look lustfully at a maiden. Or that he would not gaze at a virgin. Unlike David who gazed at Bathsheba, Job would not look. A key part of avoiding lust is found in our ability to control our eyes! Job has self-control- he will not allow his eyes to wonder and look at a girl in a way improper. Now the fact that Job is so committed that he made a covenant with himself proves something of his dedicated. The problem is- far too often- we like sin more than we long for holiness! Instead of making the hard decision to cut off the sin- to pluck out the eye if you will- we keep the sin in a cage so that we can let it out from time to time. But Job has made a verbal or perhaps even a written agreement with himself- I will not do this! I will not allow my eyes to lead me into sin- I will not allow my heart or mind to go after the things of the flesh. Even though my wife is ignoring me- and I am in the pit of despair- I will not allow these situations to be an excuse for me to sin! Job has a wholehearted commitment to avoiding sin- to flee from it! Even as we find with young Joseph in Genesis 39- Potiphar’s wife could not seduce him so he fled from her presence. So Job will not be led into sin by his eyes- by his desires. Stated again in 31:9- it would be a heinous crime if my heart has been enticed toward a woman. But do we really think that lusting after someone else is a heinous crime- as Job sates in 31:11. It’s just a look, right- it doesn’t harm anyone. You can look- just don’t touch- right?! Well, Job would understand what Jesus taught in Matthew 5, anyone who looks lustfully at a woman commits adultery with her in his heart. So looks are not innocent- rather they display a heart that has gone astray. So both Joseph and Job can teach us something important here- that God’s people are to avoid situation and looks that tempt us into sin. The lusting second gaze- the double take- the lingering look. These are not innocent things- but they pollute the body and enflame the flesh.

Now Job was a middle-aged man living many years before Moses- long before the 7th Commandment had been committed to stone- but already then- man’s heart was prone to stray! Our eyes are prone to wander! You shall not commit adultery the Law says- and Job would by way of oath be committed to purity! Job did not have to deal with the swimsuit models and ease of access that we have to deal with today! In many ways, it is much harder to remain pure in eye and thought today! Pornography is ramped- seductive clothing and dancing- streaming unlimited access to content designed to do the very thing that Job wanted to avoid! But there are three steps to purity that we can learn here. 1. Sexual sins like lust are serious and must be dealt with. 2. Your heart, mind and eyes must be guarded! You have to protect and defend your body. And number 3- you have to take practical steps to guard this purity! It takes both dedication and action to uphold a covenant with your eyes. But that brings up an important question- just who is responsible for purity and chastity? Is it man- the men in society who must refuse to look and lust after maidens and virgins? Do husbands have to have eyes for their wives only? Do young men need to keep their eyes pure- and their thoughts clean towards women? Well, the answer is yes! Job took responsibility for his own eyes! So men have to be committed to purity- and it starts with what they look at! But woman also share responsibility in this area. Listen to I Tim. 2:9- woman should adorn themselves in respectable apparel- with modesty and self-control. And again, in I Peter 3- have a respectful attitude and be pure in conduct. Do not just adorn the outside- don’t just make the external beautiful; but rather pursue the inner beauty like a gentle and quiet spirit. So both Peter and Paul remind the women of the church of their shared responsibility here. Purity and chastity is something that everyone in the church must be committed to! Married or single- male and female. Since our God is holy- we His people must be holy!

**III. The Reason for Purity**

So we come to our last point witch is- why should God’s people be committed to purity? Why was Job so concerned with purity in sight and thought? Well, the reason he gives in 31:4 is this- does God not see my ways and number my steps? The fact is, God is present and always at hand. Living in the presence of God- Corum Deo- before God’s face- is a sobering fact. Our God knows what you think- what you see- and nothing is hidden from His sight! Understanding God’s omnipresence helps us- keeps us focused. Job is confessing that God sees his own actions- and he wants to live and act in a way that honor’s his God! He does not want to displease his maker. Job wants to be consistent- blameless in God’s sight. It is not possible to trick God- or to pull the wool over His eyes. Not only do we not want to kindle the anger of God, as His children it is our desire to obey and honor Him at all times. Since we live in God’s presence, all that we do is before Him! As Psalm 139 puts it, where can I go from your Spirit. Can I flee from your presence. Everywhere I go, you are there! A second reason why Job would desire and pursue holiness is linked to his hope for the resurrection. Last week we saw in Job 19 that Job would see the Redeemer in the flesh. With these eyes, He would behold God! The very eyes that would behold God are the same eyes that Job has covenanted with! In other words, the hope of the resurrection of the flesh motivates God’s people to be pure with their bodies! Job wants his eyes to be pure when he sees his Redeemer! As Job askes in 31:2, what would my portion from God above be if I did not seek to be pure with this flesh? There is a future that Job has in view- a portion and heritage that God will give. The reality of the coming physical resurrection, judgment and life with God in the flesh spurs Job in his piety! Another reason for purity is that of being a part of the body of Christ! God’s people are called to see their own body as a member of Christ. As I Cor. 6 puts it, shall we take a member that has been joined to Christ and then join that member to a prostitute? Basically, Paul is saying that once you belong to Jesus, your entire body- each member of it belongs to Christ! We are joined to Him- united to Him in the flesh. To allow thoughts or actions or adultery to remain in our bodies is to pollute what God has made clean! In other words, what you do with your body, as a Christian, matters! What you look at and what you think about is to reflect the one to whom you belong! You were bought at a price- so glorify God with your body! May we all be as committed as Job was- not thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought. If you think we stand, beware lest you fall. No one is so holy- so mature as to not be tempted by what they see. Our heart is an idol factory as Calvin would put it. The wonton eye is never filled.

To conclude, as a wise man of the east, Job’s covenant with his eyes instructs us in the pursuit of holiness. As our theme states, Jesus Christ call His people to purity as Job covenants with his eyes. Like Job, Christians are not just concerned with the action of the hand but also the heart, mind and eye! As John Bunyan put it, “the eye is the gate by which all kinds of evil things gain access.” So Job would be echoed by Prov. 4:25, let your eyes look directly forward, and let your gaze be straight before you. Ponder the path of your feet, and do not swerve to the right or to the left. God’s people will guard their heart, mind and eyes because we want to be a holy, chaste people. So glorify God with your body!