

Sermon by Pastor Curtis Reed



On September 23, 2014, Pastor Curtis Reed delivered a sermon to the Daystar University's Compassion and Care Center chapel on sexual addiction. Below is a loose transcript of the sermon. Although most of it has been kept verbatim to retain the oral flavor of the text, there are some instances in which I made structural adjustments to make the text read easier. Blessings, Wandia.



Good morning everybody.

I don't want to spend much time; time is already far spent. I want to say a few introductory remarks. First is to thank the Daystar Compassion and Care Center. And I want to thank Sister Susan and the rest of the Care community for inviting me to meet the entire Daystar community. I'm honored to be here. Any time I get a chance to be with you, I'm happy.

Even before we begin talking about sex, or sexuality, or sexual addiction, I want to say that obviously, this is mission impossible. There's no way we can really discuss this topic adequately in twenty or so minutes. But – and this is good news for you – there are two workshops that will take place on this campus on October 8th, and October 15th. Dr. Wandia and myself, and the LPA Department will talk about what we're calling the "Soul of Sex." Those are two consecutive Wednesdays, from 3.30 to 5.00pm. Some of you have been to these "Soul of Sex" workshops, many of them in Nairobi, and we did one [in Athi River] here last year. Obviously this is an important topic.

The other thing I'd like to say, is that it's official: I'll be teaching a class again with LPA Department called "Hip Hop and the Old Testament." I hope you'll attend that class. There are some exciting things God is doing. There are so many connections between hip hop and the Old Testament. Come check it out. That's my invitation to you.

I'm going to read five verses. I wish I could read much more. It's from 2 Samuel chapter 11, verses 1 through 5. Most of you are familiar with it. It reads as follows:

In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem.

One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "Isn't this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. She had purified herself from her monthly uncleanness.) Then she went back home. The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant."

Amen. [Laughter]

So it's an ordinary day in the palace, and David the King is chilling on his roof, enjoying a nice leisurely walk, and while he's doing so, he notices this msupu; this gorgeous lady. And she just happens to be bathing, which would mean that she is naked. And in response to what he sees, he ends up making a horrible decision. He has one of his servants inquire about her, then he fetches her, brings her to the palace, and sleeps with her, and then she gets pregnant. Perhaps he thought that "maybe if we do this little one-night stand, nobody else would know. Her husband wouldn't know, my wives wouldn't know." But it never really works out like that, does it?

So she got pregnant, and in that context, things get progressively worse. He sends for her husband from the battle to try to get him to sleep with his wife, that way Uriah would think that he's the father. But Uriah wouldn't sleep with his wife because he was in battle. So then David tries to get Uriah drunk and he actually succeeds, and then sends him home, thinking "if I could get your defenses down, maybe then you will sleep with your wife." But that didn't work either.

So finally David sends Uriah back off into battle, and he orders his commanders to put Uriah in the front line, in the fiercest part of the battle, and then withdraw so that Uriah is left all by himself.

It's murder.

So there's adultery, there's deception, there's manipulation. And then there's murder. And it starts from this really poor decision to sleep with another man's wife.

I'm not sure you can relate with this. What if this happens over, and over, and over again? What if we make a poor decision like this over again, many times, in the context of years?

That's what I did.

I wasn't necessarily sleeping with people, but I got introduced to pornography, which led to masturbation. I was about your age, a college student. And it lasted for years and years. I thought it would never end. I had just become a Christian. I spent five years in high school, dropped out of college, and finally became a Christian. I was a minister, I was doing Bible studies in my dorm room, we had started a ministry on campus to help African and African American students in the university. I was really loving the Lord and wanting to please Him, but there was an area of my life that was completely out of control. Over, and over, and over, and over again.

I don't know if you can relate to this, but I suspect you can. I read a statistic a few years ago, saying that 90% of men, and 80% of women in America masturbate. I don't know what the statistics are in Kenya, but given all the young people I'm counselling now on this topic, I suspect that the statistics are high.

I tried everything. I heard that if you read the Bible, that would really help. So I'd read the Bible, study and memorize chapters of scripture – Romans 6, Psalms 139 – I was really dedicated to getting free. I was praying and fasting. I'd done everything I knew, and I was not getting free.

I'd done everything that was prescribed to me from the church and outside sources, and it wasn't working. I was finally beginning to believe that I was so messed up that not even God could help me.

And maybe some of you can relate to this. If not about sex, then maybe about something else.

And in the next ten minutes, I want to tell you how to get free.

I think the answer is in the first verse that we read today. It says in the springtime, when kings go off to war, David had sent a bunch of fighting men, but he himself stayed at home.

This passage is not about sex. I know he slept with Bathsheba. The passage is about sex, but on a much deeper level, it's not about sex at all.

And sexual addiction is not about sex, believe it or not.

The passage says that David was at home, chilling while the fighting men were out in battle, which is really where he should have been. In other words, David is bored, and he's walking alone on his roof, admiring his city. But he's not bored because there's nothing to do; he's bored because he's disengaged from battle. That's the issue.

And that's the issue with our lives as well. What is it that you're passionate about? What is it that turns you on? What does it do for you? What is it that you would do for the rest of your life and be satisfied and fulfilled even if you did not get paid for it? Ultimately, that is what this is about. It's not about sex.

God has put a primal force, a primal energy that we call sexuality, but which is passion. It is supposed to be expressed in every single dimension of our lives. And when that does not happen, often times it becomes expressed in one powerful dimension, and we call that dimension sexuality. But our sexuality is only meant to enhance life; it's not supposed to be the core or the meaning of life. And so our sexuality begins to crumble under the weight of what we're putting on it. We want sexuality to be the answer to life when it's supposed to be an enhancement to life.

So the question really becomes: what turns you on? What excites you? What do you fantasize about? That's besides sex, because sex is easy – we can all fantasize about that.

You know, our sexuality is really heavy. It's great, but it's also a burden, if we're honest. And for many of us, our sexuality is more an enemy than a friend. It's supposed to be our friend, a tool among other divine tools by which we can worship Him. But for many of us, it's not. And for the hundreds of young people that I counsel regarding sexual addiction, when you peel back the layers of their lives, the issue is not about sex at all. It was about disengagement from a divine assignment God called them to, for whatever reason.

Why was David not in battle? The text doesn't tell us. Was it fear? War is dangerous. Was it fatigue? We really don't know.

But what about us? What keeps us from engaging?

You could be a student, and your heart's desire beats for music, but you're studying accounting because that's what the market demands. The market says we need more accountants in Kenya, so you study accounting, even though the core of your heart beats for music. That's passionless living, and eventually you'll pay a price for that.

The same thing for teachers or the administrators here. When we do things for reasons less than purpose, our lives suffer as a result.

The answer is found in the Swahili proverb *Dawa ya moto ni moto*. Sex is a great passion, a great fire, and the way we get free is not with cold showers. The way we get over it, the answer to whatever sexual dysfunctions or addictions we may be struggling with, is more fire. Our lives have to be immersed in something infinitely beyond our own lives. Because then, our sexuality is put into perspective; it precedes a context.

So we need something in which we can completely immerse our lives. Something for which we can live with reckless abandon. Something worth living for. Something worth dying for. If we do not have that, what usually happens is that our passion will be relegated to one dimension of our lives, namely sexuality, and that has dire consequences. I'm a witness.

So my encouragement to you is live your lives, young people. Live them. Engage in the things you are passionate about with everything that is within you. It doesn't matter what it is. If you believe you're not ready to do what you believe God has called you to do, train for it. May this be a time of sharpening, and training, and skill development. May this be a time when all your energy, all your focus is designed towards that thing that God has put in your heart to do. Nothing else.

Amen?

Here's what happened to me. Finally I went to a Christian counselor because I didn't know what else to do. I thought his counselling was foolish at the time, but he saved my life. God used him. He said: "I want you to start journaling how you're feeling when you're most tempted to masturbate." I was like, "what? You're not going to lay hands on me? Literally?" Out of obedience to him and respect for him, I did. And this is what I discovered when I'd read over my journals.

A pattern emerged. I was feeling primarily rejection when I was most tempted. And that's what needed to be addressed in my life. Not sex. I stopped addressing masturbation directly and started addressing the spirit of rejection over my life.

It's not about sex. When I started addressing rejection, the masturbation started to take care of itself.

What's keeping you from living your life with complete and reckless abandon to the kingdom of God? What's keeping you from discovering and living out your unique role in within the kingdom? That's the bigger thing.

What's keeping you? For me it was rejection.

What's keeping you? For David it was fatigue. Maybe it was fear.

What's keeping you from expressing this primal force that God has put within us in every dimension of your life? In all your relationships, your family relationships, in your sexuality, your academic studies, in your pursuit of this or that?

When we start to address those things, then our hearts start to unfold like flowers, and we blossom in the things of the kingdom of God. The answer is living by the Spirit (Romans chapter 8).

There's a lot more to say, but I hope at least we got the ball rolling today.

October 8th, come for the Soul of Sex workshop. We've got to put sexuality in its proper context. Many of us are carrying around our sexuality but we don't know what it means. On the 8th, and on the 15th, we are going try and build a theology of sex.

And here's a hint: we don't have sexuality just to make babies. It's got to be deeper than that. God has made animals that can reproduce without having sex. He could have made us like that, so sex has got to be deeper. We're going to talk about that, and keep building. Amen.