

The Sermon on the Mount
Class Notes
Session 7

Matthew 5.21-26 “You have heard that it was said to those of old...”

Jesus wants to get to the Source of why people murder. Which is often Anger!

ὀργίζομαι (*orgizomai*)... “To enrage” (Wrath)

Anger is a part of us *and* it should not control us. Anger can be dangerous and harmful.

Reconciliation with others is paramount.

(vs.22): “Insults” ... ῥακά (*rhaka*) (Semitic idiom): “Worthless” “Empty Headed” (Idiot) “You fool”
μωρός (*moros*): “Dull” (Stupid/Foolish)

Jesus pictures the judgments in this case in the strongest terms! “Hell of fire” γέεννα (*geenna*)...A Greek transliteration of the Hebrew, “Hinnom Valley”.

What are the alternatives to being angry? (Look at *verses 23-24, 25-26*). Both illustrate the self-discipline of reconciliation. The prohibition in *v.22* is overcome in *vs. 23-26* by making peace.

The picture here is the disciple going about the awkward task of trying to right wrongs. In other words, the anger is dealt with!

Matthew 5.27-30 The prohibition against adultery was one of the most significant commandments, allowing no exceptions (*Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18*).

Lust and Adultery. Here, and throughout the sermon, what we will hear from Jesus is the Heart is the Issue!

Jesus identified the sinful heart as the source of all evil (Matthew 15:19). Following Jesus and living in the Kingdom of God is about the transformation (healing) of our hearts.

Do not commit adultery...even more...Do not WANT to want to commit adultery!

The sin lies not in the entrance of the thought but letting it incite us to wrongful passions/intentions.

“...who looks at...” βλέπω (*blepō*): “To watch for” “Pay attention” A continuous “looking” with intention.

(vs.29-30): Jesus uses Hyperbole—(Rhetorical overstatement) to underline the moral intensity of His command...Do whatever is necessary to separate one’s self from the sin.

Eyes and hands are primary offenders in sexual sin. Jesus probably mentions the eye first because of the sin just mentioned

The “right” side in antiquity was considered the valuable, honorable side. The eye reflects the lustful perspective/focus. The hand reflects the action (doing).

“Jesus uses hyperbole (deliberate exaggeration) for the sake of emphasizing the seriousness of single-minded, single-eyed, single-handed spouse commitment.” (C.E. Arnold. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*).

“...better maimed in heaven than whole in hell.” (Craig Evans)

“This stern preaching of the Law causes us to take stock of our own behavior and to confess that we often, through sinful anger, fall. Our only hope for salvation is to trust the reconciliation that Christ accomplished by His sacrificial death (cf 2Co 5:19). Having been reconciled to God, we may be reconciled with one another.” (*The Lutheran Study Bible*)

Matthew 5.31-32 Divorce, Adultery and Remarriage. The natural follow up from lust and adultery. (One often follows from the other (?))

Deuteronomy 24.1-4

A certificate allowed divorce and a wife to remarry...The key phrase...“You are now free to marry another man” (Sometimes abbreviated, “You are now free”).

(v.32): Jesus provides one exception...For sexual immorality. In the time of Jesus, there were opinions given by the Rabbis... One school of the Pharisees (the school of Hillel) allowed divorce for any reason.

The other (the school of Shammai) allowed it only for “sexual immorality.” Marriage creates a bond of kinship that cannot be easily broken...Similar to children. Marriage (was/is) meant to image God’s relationship with His people.

Ephesians 5.29-31

Divorce then, like now, was considered a little thing by those in control.

This prohibition by Jesus is an antithesis to those who felt “righteous” according to the law even though people (women) were hurt.

Jesus demands a new way of looking at human relationships...A new heart that values the spouse.

Divorce... and Remarriage?? Jesus acknowledges that divorce was allowed by God because of human sin. (Hardness of heart)

Matthew 19.7-9...1 Corinthians 7.12-14

“...divorce is *never desirable*. Married people should always be seeking ways to improve and enhance relations with spouses rather than wondering how they can get out of the commitments they have made. Those who divorce and/or remarry on any grounds must admit failure, repent of the sins that led to the dissolution of their marriage, and vow to remain faithful to any subsequent relationships. A new marriage is not continuous adultery. At most, the first sex act with a new partner is what violates the previous relationship, but more likely Jesus is using the term “adultery” in a metaphorical sense to refer to the divorce itself.” (Craig Blomberg, *American Bible Commentary*).

Repentance runs through Matthew. In other words, scripture is clear that new beginnings are possible and desired...Because of the *new heart* transformed by the Holy Spirit!

Going Forward: “The entire Sermon on the Mount is the statement of an absolute ethic. Any attempt to work out little legalistic loopholes so that we may “keep” the Sermon on the Mount is a perversion of its purpose. Jesus gave it to us to stand there as a constant challenge and rebuke. It sets before us a goal which we will never reach until we have come into the presence of the heavenly Father. It brings us to our knees in repentance, and to our feet for a new effort to follow him more perfectly every day.”¹

¹H. F. Paschall & H. H. Hobbs, Eds. *The Teacher’s Bible Commentary* (Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1972).