

Matthew 5:20-26 (part 2)

Verse 20

The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees was external actions. God is looking inward to the heart as from it the desires and motives flow. God has always looked at the heart and not just the external actions as they can be done for wrong motives which are displeasing and sinful to God. Only the believer whose heart has been regenerated can produce motives and desires that are pleasing to God. The righteousness that is required to enter Heaven is perfect righteousness which no one has. Unlike the scribes and Pharisees who thought they themselves could produce this level of righteousness, the believer is poor in spirit and understands the only righteousness that meets the perfect requirement is that of Christ's. The perfect righteousness of Christ is imputed to the believer when they place faith in Christ, and they are justified. Throughout the next sections of the sermon on the mount, Jesus will state "you have heard, but I say to you." He is not changing the law, but rather He is going to explain the true meaning of the Law and correct the incorrect interpretation being taught and lived by the scribes and Pharisees. They were holding to their own interpretations and traditions as seen in [Mark 7](#). Nothing rises to the level of authority of Scripture! Let us be willing to lay all tradition aside that is not in agreement with the Bible. To believe only the parts of the Bible we choose to believe and ignore those that go against denominations or traditions is to believe man over God! "You have heard, I have said" still applies to today and let us will all sincerity and urgency desire to surrender to all of Scripture and believe what the Bible says and not what we want it to say to fit our traditions.

Verses 21-22

Jesus quotes [Exodus 20:13](#) which is the 6th commandment: You shall not murder.

- Murder was punishable by the death penalty in the Mosaic Law: [Lev 24:17, Ex 21:12](#).
 - This is prior to the Mosaic Covenant as this is a creation law ([Genesis 9:6](#)).
 - Human life is different that the lives of other animals because we are created in the image of God ([Genesis 1:27](#))
 - When someone kills someone else in murder, God sees it as an attack of Himself and that person forfeits rights to his own life.
 - God gives the one guilty of murder over to the governing authorities rather than the victim's families.
- The scribes and Pharisees believed that refraining from the act of murder was good enough, but the intended meaning of the law went to the heart.
 - [1 Chronicles 28:9](#) "As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with ^[a]a whole heart and a willing ^[b]mind; for the Lord searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever.
 - [Jeremiah 17:10](#) "I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the ^[a]mind, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the ^[b]results of his deeds.
 - [1 Samuel 16:7](#) But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for ^[a]God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."
 - [Proverbs 16:2](#) All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, But the Lord weighs the motives.
- Jesus will state that the sinful motives from within the heart such as bitterness, anger, malice, contempt, and hatred are the foundation for the actions that can eventually lead to slander and murder. Therefore, the sinful desires and motives that are internal are where the Law looks and judges and therefore the internal desires and motives are sinful as they come from within the heart and are a violation of the 6th commandment.

- **Ephesians 4:31** Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³² Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven ^[a]you.
 - **Colossians 3:8** But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, *and* abusive speech from your mouth.
- Fiery Hell- The Greek word γέενναν geenna translates into Gehenna, Gehenna or fire, or the Valley of Hinnom which is the reference for hell.
 - Gehenna or the Valley of Hinnom was a place in the Old Testament where child sacrifices were performed the pagan god Molech (**2 Chronicles 28:1-3, 2 Chronicles 33:1-6, Jeremiah 7:31-32**).
 - This place was located south of Jerusalem and at the time of Jesus was said to be used as a trash dump where animal and human carcasses were burned as well as trash and excrements. The fire was said to continually burn as bodies and trash was continuous and therefore the smell was putrid, and worms were in abundance continuous. This is the horrific site that would be a reference to eternal damnation that everyone in this period of time would have understood.
 - As children of God, we are to show the love of Christ and this is done from a pure heart that has been changed by the power of God in regeneration. This can only be accomplished by a heart that has been born again.
 - **1 John 3:11-19** For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; ¹² not as Cain, *who* was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous.¹³ Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you. ¹⁴We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. ¹⁵ Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. ¹⁶ We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. ¹⁷ But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his ^[a]heart ^[b]against him, how does the love of God abide in him? ¹⁸ Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. ¹⁹ We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will ^[c]assure our heart before Him.
 - **Romans 12:10** Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; ^[i]give preference to one another in honor.
 - **Mark 12:30-31** and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' ³¹The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

Verses 23-26

We are to seek with all urgency and eagerness reconciliation with any brother or sister in Christ that we are at odds with even at the cost of humbling ourselves and preferring one another over ourselves. Any dispute or situation that harbors unforgiveness, resentment, and anger in us or the other party can lead to sinful motives, thoughts, or actions which are sinful to God and impacts worship in all those involved. We are to attempt to reconcile and make peace as much is possible within us (**Romans 12:18**). Paul instructs the Corinthians in grievances and disputes between believers in the church in **1 Corinthians 6:1-8**. Jesus calls for His believes to seek reconciliation and resolution of matter swiftly and with urgency from a heart with pure motives that are honoring and pleasing to God.

*God looks at the heart. As in water face reflects face, so the heart reflects man (**Proverbs 27:19**). From the heart comes the inclination, motives, and desire of a man. Jesus is teaching that murder is not just in an outward action, but from within the heart. As believers we are to love as Christ loved and this is only done by a heart that has been regenerated by the power of God. We are to love our neighbors as ourselves, but this can only be accomplished by loving the Lord our God. We only love Him because He first loved us!*

