

Walking Through the Mount - 4

Jesus and the Heart – Matthew 5:21-30

Introduction: Today's text begins Jesus' series of six "You have heard it said... but I say" statements.

1. The Pharisees were focused on externals (Matt 6:1-8), that is, on one's actions, rather than the details of the principles of guidance, etc.
 - a. Little thought was given to the matter of the heart (Matt 23:23).
 - b. This attitude influenced the common Jews -Matthew 7:6
2. Many believe the Old Law was purely about externals, that the heart had nothing to do with the Law. The Law itself dispels this error in Deuteronomy 6:5, 10:12 (cf Micah 6:8).
3. The Sermon on the Mount sets forth the Christian life as guided by principles rather than prescription.
 - a. Our human nature prefers to have things expressly listed and detailed (work or school policy, union contracts, etc).
 - b. Specific lists and prescriptions make us feel secure in our own ability to defend our place or positions - Luke 18:9ff.

Body: Jesus and the Heart

1. "You shall not murder."
 - a. The 6th Commandment - Exodus 20:13. This is also the proper understanding of the word translated "kill" in the KJV.
 - i. "kill" in Exodus 20:13 is from the Hebrew "ratsach" (raw - tsakh'), meaning to murder, put to death, (man)slay (Strong).
 - ii. The word translated in Romans 13:9 is from the Greek "phoneu" (fon-yoo'-o), meaning "to slay or commit murder" (Thayer).
 - iii. The word translated "kill" in Exodus 22:24 and Leviticus 20:16 is the Hebrew "harag" (haw - rahg'), meaning to smite w/ intent to kill. It is used in conjunction with the punishment meted out by God should the Israelites abuse the fatherless or widows.
 - iv. The term "put to death" comes from the Hebrew "muwth" (mooth), meaning one who must die or is worthy of death. Thus, the death penalty is enjoined by the Old Law.

- b. "But I say unto you..."
 - i. "Whoever is angry with his brother without cause"
 - (1) This was the spiritual, yet forgotten, essence of the Law.
 - (2) 1 John 3:15 - "He who hates his brother is a murderer."
 - ii. "Whoever says to his brother, 'Raca'" - lit., "worthless fellow" or "empty head" (Wo ti awu). An expression of scorn or contempt.
 - iii. "Whoever says, 'You fool' will be in danger of hell fire." "Fool" = graceless or impious wretch, and is a curse of utmost contempt
 - iv. This is not a list of transgressions from bad to worse.
 - c. Division among brethren is a hindrance to acceptable worship.
2. "You shall not commit adultery."
 - a. This statement appears (to me) more intense than the first, in that there is no fooling around with the original as with murder.
 - b. Jesus cuts "straight to the heart of the matter" (pun intended).
 - c. Verses 29-30 are not calls for self-mutilation, but rather illustrate the seriousness of sin. Plucking one's eye doesn't solve a lust problem.

Conclusion:

1. Both the Law and the Gospel are founded upon matters of the heart.
2. One can no more hate his brother than kill him - 1 John 3:15.
3. One can no more lust after a woman than to commit adultery.
4. Jesus would later formalize the matter of the heart - Matthew 15:11-20