

Series: Sermon on the Mount

Lesson: #15

Title: The Law of Murder

Scripture: Matthew 5: 21-26

Date: 8-23-2009

Place: Sovereign Grace Baptist Church, Princeton, NJ

I. NATURAL MAN IS IGNORANT OF SPIRITUAL THINGS

Matthew 5: 21: Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

"Them of old time" are the false interpreters of the law. They perverted the commandments of God. How did they do this? They used God's law which states: Thou shalt not kill. But they added this: "And whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment." By "judgment" they did not mean the judgment of God but the judgment of their own civil courts.

By this, they interpreted the law of God as only the physical, outward act of murder. This was the only interpretation which made them to appear as having obeyed the law. It was the only way they could make others imagine obedience to the law is possible. And it was the only way they could give themselves the power to enforce the law.

Yet, by their false interpretation and teaching, they broke the law and taught others to break it. The scribes and Pharisees of our Lord's day were the strictest of all, yet all they knew was the letter of the law. They tried to live by it. They did not appear outwardly immoral. So they presumed that they had kept God's law. That is why they were so full of pride, self-righteousness and were content with an outward form of godliness. The same holds true of multitudes in our day.

I Corinthians 2: 11: For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. 12: Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13: Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14: But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

II. GOD'S HOLY LAW IS SPIRITUAL

The Lord Jesus says, "But I say unto you."

Matthew 5: 22: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

The law of God requires inward, spiritual perfection, perfection in heart, in thought, and in mind, as well as outward perfection. "Thou shalt not kill" requires more than not committing murder it forbids all unjustified anger:

whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause

It forbids all malice and mean speech

whosoever shall say

God looks beyond actions to our words even our thoughts!

I Samuel 16: 7: ...for *the LORD seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

Psalm 51: 6: Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden *part* thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

Matthew 12: 35: A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. 36: But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. 37: For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

III. WE CONFESS WITH THE MOUTH FROM THE HEART THAT WE ABSOLUTELY MUST BE MADE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS ALONE.

This is why the Son of God was made flesh and dwelt among us.

Matthew 5: 17: Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 18: For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, fulfilled the righteousness of the law for all those he represented.

Romans 8: 3: For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

The righteousness of the law requires holiness of nature, righteousness throughout life, and death for all who disobey. The active obedience to the precepts of the law by Christ is the righteousness he fulfilled for his people. His death in our room and stead satisfied justice on behalf of his people. Christ's obedience to the holy law of God is the righteousness fulfilled in us.

Having been born of the Spirit, having been made a partaker of the divine nature, through faith in Christ we have fulfilled the law by what Christ has done for us. And we trust him alone. We are free from the law of sin and death, and we now are taught of Christ in the inner man. We walk after the Spirit.

IV. THEREFORE THE BELIEVER FOLLOWS AFTER PEACE WITH GOD AND MEN.

Matthew 5: 23: Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; 24: Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

We do not have the peace Christ gives if our worship is the means whereby we attempt to justify ourselves. Notice the Lord does not say "If you have ought against your brother", but if "thy brother hath ought against thee."

Though the Pharisee knew his brother was offended by him, he would bring a sacrifice and by his religious works think he had made up for what he had done to his brother. This is more of the same outward form of religion. It is self-justification by a work of religion. If we know that we are not justified by works of righteousness which we have done, we will be ready to be reconciled to our brother.

The love which God imparts in the heart of the believer is both toward God and men. The believer desires peace with men, as well as peace with God. We both cast all our care on Christ and seek to be void of offense with men.

1 John 3:15: Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. 16: Hereby perceive we the love *of God*, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.

But that so-called love which professes to worship God with no regard to an offended brother is not the love of God, in fact it is not love at all; it is carnal, dead, will-worship. The believer follows after Christ and here is what our Master teaches us in the heart.

Matthew 5: 23: Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; 24: Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

The believer does not have to be forced by the law to obey God because the Lord teaches us such a thing is dishonoring to our Father.

Matthew 5: 25: Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. 26: Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

If it takes a courtroom judge or being locked up to make a man pay what he owes, we do not manifest that the love of God abides in us? The believer desires agreement with our adversary quickly so that our Father's name is not dishonored in a public way such as this. It is not a stiffnecked, rebellious spirit that glorifies God but a peaceful disposition, a heart that desires forgiveness, that glorifies our Father.

Ephesians 4: 32: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. 1: Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; 2: And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. 3: But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;

Our Lord is teaching us to trust him alone for righteousness, to walk in love, to follow after peace with all men, because this is what it is to walk after the Spirit, this is what it is to delight in the law of God after the inward man. This is the grace and love which makes up the inner man which is born of God. He is teaching us to walk in the Spirit.

Galatians 5: 13: For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. 14: For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 15: But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. 16: *This* I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.