The Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 5:21-30

What’s Wrong with Private Sin?

After telling the Jews that their righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus then illustrates what He meant by that statement. He draws a contrast between the righteousness required of His kingdom’s citizens and the righteousness of the Jewish leaders. He draws this contrast by bringing up 5 moral and religious doctrines taught by the Jews and then gives their true spiritual meaning. The 6 points are the law against murder, adultery, divorce, lying, revenge, and the law of love.

I. Letter of the Law: You have heard it was said…..

A. This phrase, “you have heard that it was said,” is used at the beginning of each of the 6 points

B. Notice 2 parts to the verse:

1. “You Shall Not Murder”, 6th Commandment
2. “Whoever murders will be in danger of judgment”

   a. Traditional interpretation and application by the scribes and Pharisees.

   b. “Judgment” probably refers to local courts of their day, and ultimately God’s high court.

   c. This interpretation is partly true but it does not get to the root of the sin.

II. Spirit of the Law: But I say to you……. (22)

A. Jesus responds to the 6 points with this phrase, “But I say to you”…. 

B. God notes the things that take place our hearts

1. I Sam. 16:7 “Man looks at the outward appearance, the Lord looks at the heart.”

C. Jesus points to the **root** of sin that leads to murder:

1. Anger
   a. Not all anger is sinful; there is righteous anger
   b. Christians are not to be characterized by anger (Col. 3:8)
   c. Anger **directed** at another person is a sin

2. “Raca”
   a. Anger expressed verbally
   b. Raca – term of reproach meaning “block head”
   c. “You fool” was cause for the council (Sanhedrin)
      1. More intense contemptuous speech
      2. Character assault

III. Illustration of Reconciliation:
   A. Make amends with your brother before offering your worship to God
      1. If you want to be right with God, you must be right with your brother.
      2. Worship is impeded until earthly relationships are reconciled.
      3. If you do the wrong, go and take care
   B. Makes amends with your adversary to avoid legal trouble
      1. Make friends quickly
      2. Courts will be costly and further damage the relationship

IV. Adultery in the Heart:
   A. Every act of sexual immorality is “lust” in the heart
      1. Begins with your “thought” life
      2. Reduces another to an object
      3. Object must be owned
   B. “If your right eye……if your right hand……
      1. What is He saying? Take extreme measures!
      2. Hyperbole-Jesus taught that the **heart** is the place of the sin.