The Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 5:21-37

*21"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' 22But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire. 23 Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. 25Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. 26 Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny. 27"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. 30And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.31"Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.'* *32But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery. 33"Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.' 34But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; 35nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. 37But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.*

* Uncontrolled anger and losing your temper makes us in God’s eyes to be a murderer.

This is an early example of the change in nature between the old and new covenant. Under the old covenant, an actual commission of bad behavior was required to be in sin. In the teaching of Jesus, wishing for harm to someone was as bad as actually bringing the harm. The reason is that Jesus is determined for us to have clean hearts. There are several valuable passages to help us with our attitude.

James 1:19-20—"*So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; 20for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.”*

Other relevant passages are Proverbs 14:29, Proverbs 15:1 and Colossians 3:8. It is very interesting to note that in scripture, God is shown to have great wrath against people who work against or disobey His teaching. (Jesus cleansing the temple. Another *“do not let the sun go down on your wrath.”* Ephesians 4:26)

Calling people people degrading names like “fool” or “empty head” doesn’t help the situation. It reveals the attitude in our own hearts. It shows that we are not humble or “pour in spirit.” This behavior results in “killing” people by destroying their reputation and destroying their value.

Making a gift to God is of no value while you are purposefully at odds with your brother, i.e. people in your family whether of the flesh or the church. Are we people who tried to have peace or are we simply trying to cover up our angry heart?

Do we accept this teaching? Romans 12:17-21*—"Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. 18If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. 19Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.*

*20Therefore if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head. 21Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”*

* Do not try to beat people out of a debt you owe them. To not payback what you owe or to not give back something you borrowed is to steal, to be a thief. God tell us His view through David who wrote in the Psalms “The wicked borrows and does not repay.” (Psalm 37:21)
* Adultery is not limited to a physical act of sex with someone not your mate, but includes lusting after someone not your mate. Jesus again making the point that our heart is the place where righteousness or sin in found. Consider the following passage.

1 Corinthians 2:13-16*—"These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

 *14But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. 16For "who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.”*

* No part of your flesh is of such great value that it is worth going to hell for. If I cannot look at woman without lusting for her, I would be better off having no eyes to see. If I cannot pick something up in store without wanting to steal it, I would be better off having no hands.
* Marriage is intended to be “till death do us part.” Matthew 5:32 *“But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.”*

What about the “certificate of divorce?” Deuteronomy 24:1,2

*"When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house,”*

We are given permission to divorce if our mate commits adultery. A divorce is not required in such situations. Another chapter on marriage is I Corinthians 7. In that chapter we also find these permissions.

 --If I am married to a non-Christian and that person does not want to be married to me

 and divorces me, I am free in God’s view.

 --If I am in a situation where I just cannot tolerate the abuse I am facing, I can get a

 divorce, but I am to remain unmarried in the hope the person will repent, then I

 can marry them again.

What If I got divorced and have remarried and I did not have scriptural justification for it? Ask for God’s forgiveness and make your current marriage one that will not be broken by you.

* We do not need to swear an oath to be believed. We should just be people of honor who tell the truth and do what we say we will do. When we do not do what we said we would do, we have lied. Lying is a serious offense.

*“God cannot lie.”* Titus 1:2

Proverbs 12:22*—"Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who deal truthfully are His delight.”*

Two of the seven things Solomon says the Lord hates are *“a lying tongue”* and *“a false witness who speaks lies.”* Proverbs 6:16-19

Jeremiah 17:5*—"Thus says the Lord: Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the Lord.”*

Jeremiah 17:7*—”Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose hope is the Lord.”*

Jeremiah 17:9-10*—"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; Who can know it? 10I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.”*

What is the solution to the “heart problem”?

Psalm 51:10-13

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. 11Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit. 13Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted to You.