

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MARCH 7TH-8TH, 2019 // BOOK OF MATTHEW

## MURDER (MATTHEW 5:21-26) DISMISSIVE ANGER

The Scribes and the Pharisees could easily boast that they had never committed murder. Moses had, David had, but not them. Jesus, knowing their hearts, looks beyond their outward righteousness. Murder is a blatant disregard for life. Dismissive anger basically says, **"You are worth nothing to me."**

## MURDER OF ANOTHER SORT

**These religious leaders treated people created in the image of God as trash.** They insulted these precious, and often, fragile people and felt justified in doing so, because they were "fools." The Scribes and Pharisees didn't physically commit murder, but their words revealed how they really felt about these people.

## THERE WILL BE CONSEQUENCES

God champions the causes of the "least of these." Jesus says that dismissive anger can lead to civil consequences, can affect our worship, and greatest of all, can lead to eternal separation from God. God takes seriously how we treat one another. Paul says this about our relationships with others (Rom. 12:18)

## GO MAKE THINGS RIGHT

Instead of looking down on people, first look at yourself. "Don't murder" is a warning shot that Jesus lovingly gives us so that we'll look at our hearts to see if we have murderous tendencies. If we do, then we can confess them to God and humbly ask for His forgiveness as we go and reconcile with those whom we've dismissed.

## SEXUAL SIN (MATTHEW 5:27-32)

### MORE THAN JUST A PHYSICAL ACT

Sexual sin is as much about the mind and the imagination as it is about the physical act. The greatest sex organ humans possess is the mind. Whenever we lust for someone, imagining sexual acts with anyone other than our spouse, according to Jesus we've committed adultery in our heart.

### ALL SEXUAL SIN IS AN OFFENSE TO GOD

Jesus moves from the 7th commandment to lust in the heart. Lust isn't just sin against a spouse, it's sin against the family structure that God established at the very beginning, one man and one woman in covenant relationship until death alone parts them. In essence, all sexual sin breaks the 7th commandment.

### WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

If it's only in my mind, how do I break it? My spouse (or future spouse) doesn't know, their spouse (or future spouse) doesn't know. It's only a little "innocent" thought that doesn't hurt anyone.

- **Breaking any of God's commands is never "innocent" because we make ourselves God.**

### DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO REMAIN PURE!

Lust and sexual sin involve the eyes and the hands. Jesus said it's better to lose these (the right eye and hand being seen as more valuable) than to spend an eternity in hell. It's hyperbole but there's a point!

- **Get rid of streaming, use Covenant Eyes, quit watching sex scenes, don't go to the beach or pool.**

### MARRIAGE IS A LIVING PICTURE OF GOD'S LOVE

Paul tells us in Ephesians 5 that a faithful marriage points people to Jesus, who is a faithful "husband" to His "wife," the church. In the OT, Israel often played the role of an adulteress as she chased after other gods rather than God. **We take purity in marriage seriously because God does.**

### JESUS NARROWS THE REASON TO DIVORCE

There were some in Jesus' time who believed a man could divorce his wife for any cause at all, including a badly cooked meal! Jesus said that biblical divorce could only be for sexual immorality. Jesus did not allow for a "no fault" divorce. **While Jesus permits divorce, He doesn't command it.**

### PAUL ADDS ONE MORE PERMISSIBLE REASON

In 1 Corinthians 7:10-16, Paul speaks of an unbelieving spouse abandoning a believing spouse as a permissible, not commanded, reason to divorce the unbelieving spouse. Abandonment can carry many forms, but again, the goal is always reconciliation.

### WHAT IF WE DIDN'T RECONCILE? ARE WE ADULTERERS?

The beautiful story of the Bible is that it's not how we start that's important, but how we finish. Your marriage may have begun in all the wrong ways and for all the wrong reasons. God's grace and mercy is for all of us who have sinned. **No matter how you started, honor Jesus in your marriage now.**

### TRUTH (MATTHEW 5:33-37)

#### DOES YOUR WORD/PROMISE MEAN ANYTHING?

In Jesus' day, oaths made in the name of God were considered more binding than other oaths in heaven, earth, Jerusalem, or one's head. If a person swore an oath, but invoked something else besides God, that person had an "out." Today, an oath where I swore on my children's lives might be more truthful.

#### "I REALLY MEAN IT THIS TIME."

Jesus said that even if you didn't invoke God but something lesser than God, you were still bound to your oath because whatever you invoked belonged to God, even your head!

- **Jesus called His followers to have such integrity that their word carried its own weight.**

#### LIES BELONG TO THE REALM OF THE DEVIL

In John 8:44, Jesus said that "when he (the devil) tells a lie, he speaks from his own nature, because he is a liar and the father of lies." In Matthew, Jesus says that if you have to invoke something to be believed, you take on the devil's character. **It's hard to tell others of God's truth when we're untrustworthy.**

#### MY ENEMIES (MATTHEW 5:38-48)

##### THE PUNISHMENT FITS THE CRIME

In the OT, because mankind's tendency was for revenge, God instituted a law of retaliation so that the punishment would fit the crime. However, this was not to be for an individual but for the society as a whole. While at times imperfect, God has set up governments as the primary restrainer of evil, not individuals.

##### TREAT THEM WITH KINDNESS

Instead of escalating situations, Christians are called to de-escalate rising tensions. This doesn't mean never to defend ourselves, but our first instincts should be to return love and kindness for hatred and violence.

- **Christians follow Jesus' model, not the world's madness.**

##### LOVE THE ONE YOU'RE WITH

It's easy to love the ones we agree with. It's really easy to love the ones who agree with us. But what about our enemies? Jesus calls us to love them, too. Why? Because that's when we most look like our Father in heaven. We must fight against tribalism which says I can only love those just like me.

##### NO ONE WAS JUST LIKE JESUS

If anyone had a reason to hate his enemies, it was Jesus. At our very best we still let people down, say the wrong things, and act in unchristian ways. Jesus never had a bad day or acted out of character, and yet His enemies beat Him and crucified Him. **Still He prays that the Father will forgive.**

##### WE FOLLOW THE FATHER'S EXAMPLE

Even the worst people to ever live know what warm sunshine feels like and the relaxation of a rainy day; all gifts from God. God loves us, not because we can do anything for Him, but because it's His character.

- **We love others not to receive, but to give as we've received, freely.**

##### PURSUIT OF PERFECTION & FALLING SHORT

If we get all these commands right, we'll be perfect like our Father in heaven is perfect. All we have to do is treat people as humans created in God's image, see people as more than sexual objects, be faithful in marriage, be truthful, be kind & love our enemies perfectly every day.

- We may never have committed the actual acts of murder and adultery, but there's not one of us who can say we've fully kept the heart of what Jesus calls us to. In fact, if the condition of our hearts is reflected in our relationships as Jesus has just shown, we've all fallen short in some way.

##### WHAT IF WE'VE BEEN THE VICTIM? WHAT IF WE'VE ACTED HORRIBLY?

Some of us here have been treated horribly by people, maybe even by those who call themselves Christian. We have a Father who sees Himself in us, who is faithful to us, who will not cast us out when He's tired of us, who always tells us the truth, who is always kind, & loves us even when we don't love Him.

- Some of us have committed these sins against others. We've treated people according to our anger, we've been unfaithful to our spouse, we've divorced our spouse, we've lied, retaliated and hated. We've kept neither the letter nor the heart of the commandments. Is there hope for us?

##### THERE'S HOPE

If you've been the victim, **you are not damaged goods who will never be loved. You're sons & daughters of the King who died to heal the broken. If you've been the perpetrator, you are redeemable because Jesus died for sinners, to bring them home and to give them a new name, His name.**

##### A NEW HEART

- Everyone who will repent of their sins and by faith trust in what Jesus has done for them **will be saved and will be given a new heart.**
- Today can be the day that you are set free to be what God created you to be, His son, His daughter, forever.