

“Kingdom 101 ~ Interpretation vs. Reality (1)” [5.31.09]

[INSERT] ☺

Let’s pick up where we left off last week: (R) Matthew 5: 17 – 20 or p. 736 in pew Bible

v. 20 “Unless you do far better than the Pharisees in the matters of right living, you won’t know the 1st thing about entering the kingdom.” [MSG]

The riddle is actually not hard to solve!

Jesus expects the righteousness of His followers to be much greater than the Pharisees, because it is much deeper; it’s a righteousness of the heart!

The Pharisees weakness was that they were content to obey the laws outwardly without allowing God to change their hearts or attitudes. The inner (private) recesses of our soul that only you and God know about!

Jesus was saying that the quality of goodness should be greater than that of the Pharisees. If it’s not we have wasted our time & God’s!

So, what does this quality of goodness look like? From verse 21 thru the end of chapter 5, Jesus unpacks what He is looking for in us.

I. Teaching about ANGER

A. (R) Matthew 5: 21a + 22a

- Pay attention to the unique wording Jesus introduces;
 - “You have heard that our ancestors were told,” vs. “But I say;”
 - It’s critical that we understand ‘with whom’ Jesus is contrasting Himself. The contrast-conflict is not between Moses’ teaching [O.T. law] & Jesus’ teaching, because Jesus has already established His desire to fulfill-complete the O.T. law!
 - Remember when Jesus quotes the O.T. He says, “It is written,”
 - But when He introduces the Pharisees’ & other mistaken teaching, He begins, “You have heard” or “It has been said”
 - Indicating that what He was rejecting is not O.T. law but those human interpretations- -oral traditions that had been distorted!
 - Vast differences between Scripture & man-made tradition
&
 - Jesus explains the difference between Reality & interpretation

B. (R) Matthew 5: 21

1. The Pharisees had reduced the 6th Commandment = “You must not murder,” down to its most elementary form, to refer only to the specific act of killing.
2. Jesus explained the reality of the Commandment, it’s divine intent:
 - a. Is that all murder is? Asked Jesus. Is it nothing but killing?
 - b. Suppose a man wants to kill his enemy but is stopped by some unexpected circumstance. Is he innocent just because he didn’t get a chance to follow thru on his desire?

- c. Suppose he is too cowardly to kill but would like to do it.
- d. Or suppose he is just afraid of getting caught. What if he only hates his enemy?
- e. Or insults him? Is he still innocent of breaking this 6th Commandment?

3. Jesus says = NO, that person is guilty!

- a. In a human court the only acts that can be judged & punished are external acts, because human beings can look only on outward things.
- b. The court systems cannot SEE the heart.
- c. In God's divine courtroom "anyone who is angry with someone is subject to judgment.
- d. Don't neglect that God can SEE our hearts & He knows our intent.

C. Matthew 5:22

- Angry outbursts & destructive comments are a big deal w/God:
 - Jesus says, "...calling someone an idiot...cursing @ someone will literally put you in danger of the fires of hell."
 - Calling someone an 'idiot' represents a destructive attack upon an individual's character & identity.
 - Bible teaches in Genesis 1: 26, "Then God said, let us make human beings in our image to be like us."
 - Attacking another person literally means to attack God's beloved-state of the art creation.

King Solomon described the power of words in Proverbs 18: 21, "Those who love to talk will experience the consequences, for the tongue can kill or nourish life." [NLT]

& "Words kill, words give life; they're either poison or fruit – you choose." [MSG]

D. (R) Ephesians 4: 26 – 27 or p. 897 in pew Bible

- Thankfully, the passage doesn't say do not ever get angry. There will be anger in the Christian life – but it must be the right kind of anger.
 - [Mark 3: 5] Jesus healing a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath. Jesus was angry because of the religious standards that unnecessarily piled upon an already wounded individual.
 - [John 2: 13 – 17] Money changers in temple. Jesus drove them out with a whip from the His Father's house. Angry for them making it a market place instead a place of prayer.
- Moodiness / bad tempers / & irritability are w/out defense = serious business!
 - Anger makes us vulnerable to the enemy's attacks!
 - Solid Rule – "Don't let the sun go down on your anger."
 - The longer we postpone mending a quarrel, the less likely we are to mend it.
 - ☆ Don't give the enemy any unnecessary footholds!
 - God's action plan = (R) Matthew 5: 23 - 26

2 Guidelines =

- 1st ~ We must make the wrong right = being reconciled to our adversary.
[ROMANS 12: 18]
- 2nd ~ We must make things right immediately; even before we worship God!

II. Teaching about LUST

A. (R) Matthew 5: 27 – 28

- Once again the Pharisee's had reduced the 7th Commandment, "You must not commit adultery," down to its most elementary form, limiting it to abstaining from the very act of adultery itself.
 - Redefining (inserting) a man-made interpretation of God's divine intent;
 - Jesus taught differently.
- Let's be real clear, Jesus is not saying that it is wrong to find someone attractive or desirable – this is part of being human!
- Original word for lust means to mishandle /mismanage /or to have a misdirected sexual desire or fantasy.
 - Even if you have never committed physical adultery...
 - Changes the rules of interpretation – Jesus' point is, if you think you are sexually perfect & need no repentance because you have not engaged in physical activity – THINK again.
- In the Kingdom of God we can commit murder with our words & we can commit adultery with our minds = re(R) Matthew 5: 28

B. LUST is an all-conclusive problem.

Imagine the setting & how offended the religious leaders were when JESUS told them that they have problems w/sexual righteousness?

- It would be like Jesus coming into our worship space & saying, "Anyone here this morning that has lusted in the past month – who has engaged in any behavior or thought that was sexually inappropriate - lusted in their ♥ will die in 10 seconds. ☆ I very possibly could be speaking to an empty auditorium ☺

Whose sexuality is not marred by the FALL?

- Maybe you are tempted to escape from your spouse & fantasize about someone else in inappropriate ways.
- Maybe you are keenly aware that we live in a society that idolizes sexual attractiveness in which Beauty is Power. So you find yourself needing to be sexually attractive or flirting to try & fit in.
- Maybe you carry around deep guilt because of this issue:
 1. Maybe you got pregnant outside of marriage
 2. Maybe you have difficulty w/pornography?
 3. Maybe you had an affair? Maybe you struggle w/some form of sexual addiction?

4. Maybe you struggle w/homosexual feelings?
5. Maybe you watch adult movies or call 1 -900 numbers
6. Maybe the truth is today, you are kind a drifting towards disaster one way or the other, kind a playing games.
7. JUST maybe you have crossed some lines you should have never crossed.

Some of you carry deep burdens & guilt in this area. LISTEN! You are not by yourself - - I'M INCLUDED as well!

There is nothing that you have done so bad that it can't be covered by the precious blood of Jesus that was shed on the cross.

C. (R) Matthew 5: 29 – 30 = Jesus' Plan of Defense

- The Greek word “causes you to sin, is a strong word. It is (scan da lid zo). Do you know what word we get from this? SCANDAL that leads to sin! Listen to Jesus words...
- v. 29 says, “If your eye cause you to sin – take a very sharp knife & gouge it out , place in hefty bag by the curb to be taken away.
- v. 30 says, “if your hand causes you to sin,” [Same Drill]

What is Jesus up to here? You want to be real clear on this! Jesus is NOT recommending self mutilation for sin - management

Jesus is using humor to show the absurdity of the way Scribes & Pharisees understand & practice righteousness.

D. Religious leaders limited understanding of righteousness

- Scribes & Pharisees would say something like this, “the law is satisfied as long as you avoid sinning.”
 - Reasoning & logic – If you had not sinned physically = righteousness.
 - Therefore, if looking @ a woman causes you to sin; DON'T look @ a woman...
 - Religious types took this real serious...
1. In Jesus' day, when a woman left her house in Jerusalem she was required by law to wear 2 veils & a hair net w/ribbons in effort for her features not to be recognized. Believed if she uncovered her face w/ hair down men would go Hog Wild ☺
 2. If a woman did not observe these strict modesty codes – her husband could legally divorce her.
 3. There is writing from a woman in the 1st century who records “that beams of her house have never seen the hair of my head.” Indicates this dear woman never undid her hair in the privacy of her own home ☺
 4. Middle ages, their were monks who would lived in isolation & they would keep journals on how many years since they had looked @ a woman's face.
 5. Jesus answers w/some humor – if not looking @ a woman makes you righteous, if your eyes are the problem, then go all the way – CUT THEM OUT.

Because of course – Your eyes & hand are not the problem! The core of your problem is your ♥, your inmost being, your thoughts & desires.

☆ God doesn't want to destroy your ability to see & touch or your sexuality. He wants to REDEEM them!

I John 1: 9 encourages us, "If we confess our sins to Him, He is faithful & just to cleanse us from every wrong!"