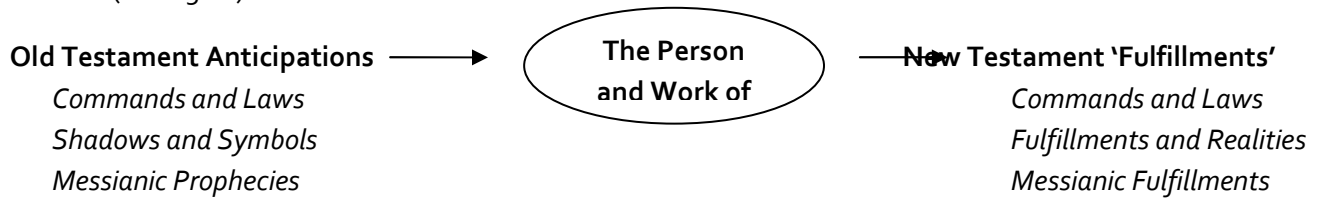


THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT: Matthew 5:21-32

A Christian's Righteousness

I. Review: Christ, the Law, and True Righteousness

- A. Jesus describes the citizens of the Kingdom He is bringing to earth (Matt 5:1-12)
- B. Jesus explains the positive function of the Christian in a fallen world (Matt 5:13-16)
- C. Jesus announced Himself as the fulfillment of the entire Old Testament (Matt 5:17)
- D. God's entire plan of redemption, foreseen in the OT, will be completed through the reign of Christ (Matt 5:18)



- E. Because Jesus consummates the OT, the Christian should be zealous for the whole OT law.
- F. Jesus' teaching, in full harmony with the Old Testament, utterly contradicts the so-called 'righteousness' and 'law-keeping' of the scribes and Pharisees.

II. Clarifying the "6 Antitheses": What was Jesus Doing?

- A. Main Options:
 1. Jesus contrasts Himself directly with the OT and replaces it.
 2. Jesus is transcending OT Law (goes beyond it and develops it further); raises the bar (i.e., adds lust to adultery law)
 3. **Reformed View** – Jesus is re-establishing the original intent of OT, revealing Himself as the object to which it all pointed.
- B. Why are options (1) and (2) false, especially in light of Jesus' early comments (Matt 5:17-20)?

III. Sticks and Stones...and Words Do Kill

"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.'²² But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire.²³ So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you,²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.²⁵ Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison.²⁶ Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny." (Matt 5:21-26)

- A. Does Jesus mean that it makes no difference whether we gossip or stab someone to death? If not, what? What do the two have in common?
- B. What was the cause of Jesus' anger (Matt 21:12ff, Mark 3:1ff)? What is the cause of ours? How do they compare?

C. What are the main points of Jesus' two illustrations concerning anger in relationships?

"When I find myself adding an explanation to my confession, I'm not asking forgiveness but instead appealing for understanding." - C.J. Mahaney

IV. Holy Amputees

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.'²⁸ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹ If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell." (Matt 5:27-30)

"As our society moves away from the seventh commandment in one direction, Jesus moves in another."
- D.A. Carson

A. What does D.A. Carson mean in the quote above? What is God's plan for sexual instincts?

"But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband...To the unmarried...if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion." (1 Cor 7:2, 9)

"If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death." (Lev 20:10)

"Sexual infidelity is a sure way to ruin marital joy, whether it takes place before or during marriage. It either hardens our heart and blights a truly Christian marriage or it sears our conscience and creates a guilt that God may indeed forgive, but that we will probably never forget. Worst of all, Jesus says, it may be the first stepping stone leading to the crossroads of our whole spiritual pilgrimage. Sexual immorality (like any other sin) makes repentance far more difficult...Beware of the deceitfulness of a momentary gratification that will lead to life-long recrimination." - Sinclair Ferguson

B. How then can we keep ourselves pure in this area?

1. Realize where yielding to sinful lusts leads you--hell. "Fix that in your mind." --Ferguson
2. Think of sin in terms of the Son of God and what it meant for Him, not just right and wrong, and hate it.
3. Continually remember the design and power of the cross of Christ, and what is true of you.
4. Deal with the real cause of your sin instead of offering substitute obedience to God. Do this by calling on the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:13).
5. Act decisively, immediately, even if it must be painful.

V. 'Till Death Do Us Part...or Bad Cooking?

"It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.'³² But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery." (Matt 5:31-32)

- A. What is the logic behind 'sexual immorality' as the condition for lawful divorce (Matt 19:5-6)?
- B. What is the logic behind the former spouses' committing adultery after an unbiblical divorce?