

Matthew 5:21-22: You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; & whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ 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; & whoever says ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire

Intro: Last week, we ended with this verse: **Matthew 5:20:** For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Lloyd-Jones: Some of the most vital questions that can be asked, then, are these. Do you know God? Do you love God? Can you say honestly that the biggest and the first thing in your life is to glorify Him and that you so want to do this that you do not care what it may cost you in any sense? Do you feel that this must come first, not that you may be better than somebody else, but that you may honor and glorify and love that God who, though you have sinned against Him grievously, has sent His only begotten Son to the cross on Calvary’s hill to die for you, that you might be forgiven and that He might restore you unto Himself? Let every man examine himself.

Lloyd-Jones: The rest of the Sermon On The Mount is an exposition, an explanation, of this verse.

In this sermon Jesus is showing us what it looks like to be a Christian – a true, genuine follower of Jesus Christ – what it looks like to be a citizen of the Kingdom of God – to be in submission to the rule of the King of kings!

1. Jesus’ Audience: Who Is The “You”?

Matthew 5:21: You have heard that it was said to those of old

Matthew 5:1-2: Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.
² And he opened his mouth and taught them

This sermon is preached primarily to Jesus’ own disciples and those following Him: those who are interested in listening to His teaching. Yes, some Pharisees may have been there, but they are not Jesus’ primary audience.

2. Jesus’ Disciples Heard A Wrong Interpretation Of The Law

Matthew 5:21: You have heard that it was said to those of old

You have heard: You disciples heard something. What did they hear and from whom?

Jesus’ hearers heard God’s law and Word from the Scribes and Pharisees and Sadducees. They were the primary teachers of Israel.

But they did not teach God’s law and Word faithfully!

Matthew 16:12: Then they understood that he did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Jesus gives the proper and fully authoritative interpretation and meaning of God’s law and God’s Word!

3. The Pharisees And Sadducees Taught God’s Law But They Mishandled And Abused It

Matthew 5:21: You have heard that it was said to those of old, “You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.”

Who said to those of old “You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment”? God!

Exodus 20:13: You shall not murder.

Exodus 21:12: Whoever strikes a man so that he dies shall be put to death.

a. The Pharisees and Sadducees misused and misapplied God's law: They taught, for instance, that if you didn't physically murder someone, then you have kept the fullness of this commandment. Their righteousness was only external!

Example; Evangelism using the law of God

b. Beware of people who use the Bible and twist it and wrongly interpret it: Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Hebrew Israelites, Prosperity gospel false teachers **(Know the Word and doctrine!)**

c. What's the right interpretation of the sixth commandment: Lev. 19:18: You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

Psalms 37:8-9: Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil. For the evildoers shall be cut off

Proverbs 29:22: A man of wrath stirs up strife, and one given to anger causes much transgression.

WLC 135: What are the duties required in the sixth commandment? A. The duties required in the sixth commandment are, all careful studies, & lawful endeavors, to preserve the life of ourselves & others by resisting all thoughts & purposes, subduing all passions, & avoiding all occasions, temptations, & practices, which tend to the unjust taking away the life of any; by just defense thereof against violence, patient bearing of the hand of God, quietness of mind, cheerfulness of spirit; a sober use of meat, drink, [use of doctors or medicine], sleep, labor, & recreations; by charitable thoughts, love, compassion, meekness, gentleness, kindness; peaceable, mild & courteous speeches & behavior; forbearance, readiness to be reconciled, patient bearing & forgiving of injuries, & requiting good for evil; comforting & [helping] the distressed, & protecting and defending the innocent. **GOSPEL!**

d. Preservation of life: Take precautions during Covid-19 (distance, wash hands, masks). But other dangers too.

Side point: If you're not in one of the higher risk factor categories for Covid-19 (60 or above, health conditions, or live with those with higher risk, etc.), I would like to gently nudge you to make an effort to be physically present at church with God's people on the Lord's Day. God commands us to meet in person, we need you and you need us, and we need God above all – to preserve our lives. If we're willing to go to grocery stores, beaches, back to work, or shopping malls where there are more people than at church, but we're not gathering with God's people on the Lord's Day, our priorities are not in order. This gathering must be a priority in our lives. Watching the service online is not meant to be a substitute for church. It's actually not church. We need the gathering of God's people for our spiritual health. You need the gathering of God's people to preserve your life. Please come join us!

Hebrews 3:12-13; 10:23-25: Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. ¹³ But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin . . . ²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. **(Events in your life that you will not miss for the world; May this be #1)**

e. Murder in our society: Abortion; Police brutality; games to knock people out; all the violence around us

4. But I Say To You!

Lloyd-Jones: Then we must also consider this other extraordinary statement: "I say unto you." This is, of course, one of the most crucial statements with regard to the doctrine of the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. You see, He does not hesitate here to set Himself up as the authority. [Jesus is not correcting the law of Moses] . . . He is saying, rather, "I am interpreting to you the law of Moses, and it is My interpretation that is true and not that of the Pharisees and Scribes." Indeed there is even more than that in it.

There is a suggestion that He is saying something like this: “I who am speaking to you am the very One who was responsible for the law of Moses; it was I who gave it to Moses, and it is I alone, therefore, who can truly interpret it.” You see, He does not hesitate here to claim for Himself a unique authority; He claims to speak as God. Regarding the law of Moses, as He does, as something which shall not pass away until every jot and tittle has been fulfilled, He does not hesitate, nevertheless, to say, “But I say unto you.” He claims the authority of God; and that, of course, is the claim which is made for Him everywhere in the four Gospels and in the entire New Testament.

Hebrews 1:1-3: Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. ³ He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.

5. Basic Principles Of Jesus’ Six “But I Say To You” Statements

Jesus goes on in the Sermon on the Mount to give us six of these “But I say to you” statements. Martyn Lloyd-Jones gives some very helpful principles in understanding these statements.

1) The spirit of the law matters to God, not merely the letter of the law. Obedience to the law is not in actions only, but also in thoughts, motives, and desires: Why am I doing what I am doing? Is it because God is my joy and delight? Am I doing everything I do for His glory, and is doing what I do for His glory my greatest joy?

Lloyd-Jones: What is my relationship to God? Do I know Him? Am I pleasing Him? In other words, as you examine yourself before you go to bed, [you ask] has God been supreme in my life today? Have I lived to the glory and honor of God? Do I know Him better? Have I a zeal for His honor and glory? Has there been anything in me that has been unlike Christ – thoughts, imaginations, desires, impulses?

Read the end paragraph of Lloyd-Jones’ sermon “The Letter And The Spirit” – page 220

2) The law is not merely about what we can’t do, but it’s about a passionate pursuit of holiness and righteousness for the glory of God: We don’t ask: “What can I do and not be sinning?” We ask: “How can I most honor Christ?”

3) Christ’s commandments are not a burden, but a joy and delight to God’s people: John 14:15: If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

1 Jn 5:3: For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. & his commandments are not burdensome.

4) Christ’s commandments are not an end in themselves: our obedience to them is evidence that we are born again and know God and have a vital, living relationship with Him: 2 Corinthians 5:17: Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Jesus obeyed perfectly, suffered God’s wrath, died on that cross, and then rose again from the dead so that we might be new creatures in Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit live out this righteousness for His glory!

Christ Died And Rose To Save Us All
Murderous Angry Men Who Brawl
Those Aborting Children Small
Loss Of Tempers Make Us Fall
Into Hell Just Like Them All
Christ Never Sinned In Anger Raw
Yet Took God’s Angry Wrath Fireball
For All Our Sinful Rage Like Saul
Then Rose To Save From Angry Maul

By Faith Alone In Christ Wrote Paul
With Righteous Robes In Christ Stand Tall
Our Hearts Are Changed As God Would Call
And Brought Down Every Anger Wall
Now In Patience We’ll Love Y’all
Even Those Who Rub Us Raw
Because The Christ He Is Our All
Who Will Forever Hearts Enthrall!