

Matthew 5:21-26

The Spirit of the Law

Introduction:

It is here in the Sermon on the Mount that our Lord now deals with the spirit of the law. He differentiates between the letter of the law (murder on the surface) and the spirit of the law which is more inclusive dealing with the very thoughts and intents of the heart. Leon Morris puts it, “for in no case does Jesus relax a provision of the law. Rather, he shows that, rightly understood, the law goes much further than his hearers had reckoned. For them it was enough to put somebody to death, for Jesus that was only the beginning”

I. The Letter and Spirit of the Law

A. True account of the Law – (v. 21,27,31,33,38,43)

1. What was said or heard but not written.
2. Tradition – Turn To: Matthew 15:1-9
3. Time of the Reformation
4. Israel’s Babylonian Captivity

B. The Authority of Christ v.22

1. Jesus gave the Law and is the interpreter of the Law
2. Moses wrote about Jesus

C. The Letter of the Law:

1. The problem with the Pharisees and Scribes
2. The problem with the Rich Young Ruler – Luke 18:18-23

D. The spirit of the Law:

1. Comes down to our thoughts and desires – Turn To: Matthew 15:15-20
2. Concern with the positive and not merely the negative – 5:6
3. leads to a free development of spiritual character – I John 5:3
4. Gives us our Lord’s summary of the whole Law – Matt. 22:34-40

II. The Law Regarding Murder

A. Amplification of the Law

1. Anger of the heart – v. 22
2. Paul taught the same thing as our Lord – Turn To: Romans 7:7-12
3. Illustrated with the word “Raca” which means, “empty headed fool” Matt. 15:19

B. Is Anger always wrong?

1. How do we reconcile this with our Lord’s woes upon the Pharisees? Ans. Jesus is the divine Judge – Matthew 23:1-33
2. How do we reconcile this with the Imprecatory Psalms? (Rom. 12:17-21; Psa. 7:6; 58:6-9; 94:1-ff)

C. Righteous Indignation

1. Compatible with the will of God – Luther Protesting the Roman Church’s fallacies Knox before Queen Mary
2. The imperatives “to be angry and sin not”

D. Be reconciled to your brother:

1. Before you bring your gift to worship – v.23-24 (Martyn Lloyd-Jones)
2. Don’t delay! And Don’t give place to the devil!
3. Avoid law suits – Turn to: I Corinthians 6:1-11

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