

Week 4 – Sermon on the Mount

“Surpassing Righteousness, Part 1”

Matthew 5:21-30

The key to understanding the remainder of Matthew 5 is verse 20 where Jesus says, “For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.” After dropping this massive verbal bomb on His disciples, He goes on to illustrate His point by drawing **six contrasts** between their traditional understanding of righteousness and the surpassing righteousness required in God’s kingdom. This surpassing righteousness, of course, is a righteousness-of-heart that can only be attained through faith in the saving work Jesus

- Each of the 6 contrasts follows the same basic pattern:

“You have _____ that it was said....but _____ say to you.”

- He is not challenging the Old Testament, but rather their _____ of it.
- To them righteousness was a _____ you must not cross. To Jesus, righteousness is the _____ of a redeemed heart.

I. The righteous-of-heart flee from _____ and pursue _____ . (vv. 21-26)

- “angry” - to be very angry, to be full of anger, to be furious; speaks of an _____ of contempt or animosity toward another person
- Note that in God’s eyes we can commit murder with our _____.
- Both examples Jesus gives in verses 23-26 emphasize the _____ of _____. His point: DON’T _____!!!!
- When we are truly pursuing reconciliation, we are just as concerned with the anger we provoke in _____ as we are the anger they provoke in _____.

II. The righteous-of-heart flee from _____ and pursue _____ . (vv. 27-30)

- “looks...with lust” – to covet, long for, desire greatly; speaks of the kind of gaze that goes far beyond normal attraction to mentally contemplating and committing sexual sin

- b. No sexual sin was ever committed that was not first _____.
- c. Jesus is not calling for the literal *mutilation* of our flesh, but rather the _____ of it.
- d. John Owens: "It is the constant duty of believers to render a death blow to the deeds of the flesh, that they may not have life and strength to bring forth their destructive influence. . . . Do you mortify? Do you make it your daily work? You must always be at it while you live; do not take a day off; *always be killing sin or it will be killing you.*"
- M - _____
 - O - _____
 - R - _____
 - T - _____
 - I - _____
 - F - _____
 - Y - _____
- e. This pursuit of purity will require that we be culturally _____ . "We have to decide, quite simply, whether to live for this world or the next, whether to follow to crowd or Jesus Christ." (Stott)

Time to MARINATE....

- 1) Jesus' words certainly challenged how His original audience viewed obedience to the Law. How have His words challenged your view of obedience?
- 2) Think of the times you've let anger linger. Why did you hold onto it? What damage did it do?
- 3) What needs to be "cut off" from your life in order for you to run in the direction of purity in your thoughts, attitudes, and actions?
- 4) Why are we (as Christians, in general) so afraid of being culturally handicapped? What truth(s) can we use to fight this fear so that we can pursue lives of courageous purity?