



9: **BUT I SAY...** (Matthew 5:21-30)

Jesus challenged the traditional interpretation of Scriptures with these words:
"You Have heard that it was said...BUT I SAY to you..."
Discover how Jesus digs beneath pious actions, exposes polluted attitudes,
& offers forgiveness to those who follow Him.

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teachingnotes

CATCH the CONTEXT: Jesus has an incredibly high view of the Scriptures. Since Jesus is God the Son, the One who created all things - He also *INSPIRED the Scriptures* to be written in the first place, and can rightly interpret what the Scriptures mean.

Jesus says the Scriptures Speak of Him

Matthew 5:17 (NIV) Do not think that I have come to abolish **the Law or the Prophets; I have not come** to abolish them but **to fulfill them**.

John 5:39-40 (NIV) You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life.

These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

As Jesus teaches this sermon on the mount, Jesus references 6 laws from those Scriptures to show the stark difference between Himself and those who focused on *outward ACTIONS* of obedience without considering the inward ATTITUDE of obedience.

DO NOT MURDER - Outward Action & Inward Attitude

Matthew 5:21-22 (NIV) You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be **subject to judgment**.' **But I tell you** that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be **subject to judgment**. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,' is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

↳ Most understand that **anyone who murders will be subject to judgment**, but Jesus digs in to the ATTITUDE that leads to the *ACTION* of murder.

🔍 *Jesus 1) quotes Scriptures (Ex 20:13) and 2) then explains, **but I say/I tell you**". Jesus warns that **it's not just the ACTION of murder** that a person must stay away from, but **the ATTITUDE of murder** - beginning with **anger**.*

- Jesus was right to be angry when people dishonored God & mistreated people made in His image (e.g. purifying the temple John 2:13-22). It is right to be angry when innocent people are mistreated, manipulated, murdered, or abused. It's right to desire that justice be served in all these cases (God has given us government - to protect the innocent from the wicked - Rm 13:3-4).

Here Jesus is first talking about being deeply angry against those who are a part of the same faith family.

That's what he means when he talks about being angry with a **brother**. (The Greek text only uses the term for brother, but certainly doesn't imply that it's okay to be angry with a sister in in faith, hence the translators of the NIV & CSB including "**or sister**".)

While most everyone could say, "*I've never committed murder*", many **ARE** guilty of being so **angry with a brother or sister** that they *wish them harm*. This must grieve God, like it would any parent whose children hate one another.

1 John 3:14-16 (NIV) **We know that we have passed from death to life**, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death. Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him. This is how we know what love is: **Jesus Christ laid down his life for us**. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.

If we're willing to **lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters**, we should certainly be willing to forgive one another.

One who refuses to let go of the hate **is a murderer**. Jesus digs down to the root of **murder** which is **anger**. While we might never lift a physical weapon to harm another, our bitter **anger** is weaponized by our slandering **insults** & treating others as **fools** - stupid & value-less beings.

- Those who **slandered others** (speak untruths to harm another's character) - were in danger of facing **judgment from the court** (Greek *Sanhedrin*).
- Jesus warns of more than just earthly judgment by a human court ; Jesus is warning of an eternal judgment - being **sent to fiery hell** (term for the burning garbage dump outside of Jerusalem - the Valley of Hinnom) that came to represent eternal punishment.
- Jesus later warns that ***those who refuse to forgive others will not be forgiven by God*** (Mt 6:14-15), Those who stay angry against others should be **warned about judgment from God - if HE TOO refuses to forgive you.**

Be Quick to Reconcile with Brothers/Sisters

Matthew 5:23-24 (NIV) Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. **First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.**

Jewish people didn't have altars (a place to sacrifice animals & crops) within their communities. To take your **gift to the altar** meant traveling to Jerusalem. For people in Galilee (where Jesus was teaching) this was a 3 day journey. Jesus expects them to go reconcile with the other person first. According to Jesus, true worship means we are be right with God AND doing our best to be right with people created in His image, especially our **brothers & sisters**.

BIG TRUTH: Disciples of Jesus should be quick to reconcile the relationship

Be Quick to Reconcile with Adversaries

Matthew 5:25-26 (NIV) Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still together on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.

Here again, disciples of Jesus should be quick to reconcile the relationship. Humble yourself. Make the phone call. Set up the appointment. Start the conversation. Ask for forgiveness. Pay the person back. Do *YOUR BEST* to be at peace with all men, as much as it depends on you (Rom. 12:18). If not, judgment and prison could be next...Jesus could be referring to *more than earthly punishment*, but *ETERNAL PUNISHMENT*.

And ***if you're not right with God...be quick to reconcile THAT relationship.*** God allows U-turns!

BIG TRUTH: Disciples of Jesus should be quick to reconcile the relationship

DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY - Outward Action & Inward Attitude

Matthew 5:27-28 (NIV) You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' **But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.**

Most of the men in the ancient audience had likely not participated in an adulterous affair, because adultery could cost your life in that day. But now Jesus digs below the fruit of **adultery** to the root of **lust** and **coveting** *what* and *who* isn't yours.

➡ Once again, Jesus quotes the Scriptures and then says...**BUT I SAY/I TELL YOU** - and rightly interprets the intention of the Scriptures.

According to Jesus, to allow and feed sexual thoughts outside of your heterosexual marriage, is to commit adultery in your heart.

✓ Thankfully, God and spouses CAN forgive adulterous actions and thoughts.

Hope for Adultery - Spiritual Surgery

Matthew 5:29 (NIV) If your right **eye causes you to stumble**, gouge it out and throw it away. It is **better for you to lose one part** of your body than for your whole body to be **thrown into hell**. And if your **right hand causes you to stumble**, cut it off and throw it away. It is **better for you to lose one part** of your body than for your whole body to **go into hell**.

This is *hyperbolic language* (an exaggeration to make a point). Jesus wants us to take whatever causes us to sin and **do some spiritual amputation** - get it far away from our lives. Put some distance between you and that person or image.

Biblical Examples - Joseph Left

Joseph's boss puts the moves on Joseph.

Genesis 39:9-10 (NIV) No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. **How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?** And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.

Genesis 39:11-12 (NIV) One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside. She caught him by his cloak and said, "Come to bed with me!" But **he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house.**

›This is an example of what it looks like to "gouge out your eye" or "cut of your hand".

Biblical Examples - David Lingered

2 Samuel 11:2-4a (NIV) One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof **he saw a woman bathing.** The woman was very beautiful, and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite." Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and **he slept with her.**

David's lustful thoughts led to David's lustful actions (see 2 Sam. 11), & his whole family suffered due to his adultery. David eventually repented and was forgiven, but OH THE COST! What if he would have responded BEFORE that?

What if WE refuse to wait until we're busted?

- What if WE would **approach our brother or sister** and asking for forgiveness or extending forgiveness?
- What if WE would **seek out** the person we have harmed - **our adversary** - and ask for their forgiveness, and pay them back what we owe?
- What if WE would **run away from adultery in the head & in the bed?** What if we gouged out or cut off the thing that is leading us to adultery - break off that relationship with that person or that screen?
- ✓ It's not too late for God's grace. You can TURN from your SIN and TURN to Jesus! Make things right with people & right with God.

BIG TRUTH: Disciples of Jesus should be quick to reconcile the relationship

❓ *What do I need to do with what I heard today?*

heretoserveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

- * Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Christy** (850-673-9764), **Caleb** (864-315-8015), or another follower of Jesus soon!
- * Or call our **deacons & wives**: Alan & Christy Androski (850-464-1428), Steve & Debbie Bass (850-673-7952), Freddy & Joyce Howard (850-973-0047), Tim & Joni Hughey (850-464-1156), Mark & Dot Mancil (850-253-5405), Boss & Amelia Mulkey (850-464-6717), or Tom & Martha Waddail (850-973-0011).

discussionquestions

Take some time to discuss these questions with your family, friends, or group.

1. What challenged or encouraged you most from today's teaching? (look back in your notes to help explain your answer)
2. **Read Matthew 5:17 & John 5:39-40.** What would you say to a person who said *THIS* about him/herself today?
3. Discuss the significance of what it means when Jesus quotes Scriptures and then says, "**But I say/tell you**" (Mt 5:22, 28). What would you say to the person (even the person in you see in the mirror), who disagrees with how Jesus interprets the Scriptures?
4. **Read Matthew 5:22-24 & 1 John 3:14-16.** Why is hatred toward a brother/sister something that needs to be settled? Why is it good to settle differences quickly as opposed to taking your time to let them work out on their own?
5. Tell about a time when you experienced genuine reconciliation with another follower of Jesus (spend more time talking about the restoration than what caused the broken relationship).
6. **Read Matthew 5:27-30.** According to Jesus, how weighty is spiritual adultery of the heart (or the mind)? What is the correct response when tempted to lust after another? What are some practical ways we can stay away from adultery?
7. Do any of US need to approach another person to make things right with someone who has wronged us OR one we have wronged: a brother/sister in Christ, an adversary, a spouse...OR God Himself?
8. Share prayer needs and pray for one another.