

Matthew 5:17-30

“The Law & the Heart of a Kingdom Subject”

The heart of the problem is the problem of the heart. Even if your behavior complied with all of God’s commands you would still not measure up, because our attitudes are not perfect. So how can you be right with God?

Discussion Qs

1. How do people in our culture think they can be right with God (go to heaven) based on their performance?
2. What should Christians learn from the Mosaic Law?
3. How does the culture [the world] view angry outbursts and lust?
4. How might repenting from sin reveal that Jesus is your king?

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subject: God’s Law reveals our need for a Savior

objective: allow Jesus to be King & be right with God

I. God’s Law should be obeyed (vv. 17-20)

A. God’s Law is still valid (vv. 17-18)

1. Law & the Prophets = the Old Testament
2. Jesus guaranteed all of the Law would be fulfilled

B. God’s Law has consequences (vv. 19-20)

1. righteousness = being right with God

II. we all break God’s law (vv. 21-30)

A. a hateful heart breaks God’s Law (vv. 21-26)

1. Jesus expands application of the Law beyond the act to the attitude

B. a lustful heart breaks God’s Law (vv. 27-30)

III. Jesus fulfilled God’s Law (vv. 17-18)

- A. Jesus lived a sinless life (Hebrews 4:15)
- B. Jesus paid the penalty the Law required
- C. Jesus made a way for us to be righteous

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”
(Romans 10:4)

“He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” (2 Corinthians 5:21)

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Intro. The heart of the problem is the problem of the heart

Subject: The Mosaic law reveals our need for a Savior [heart trouble]

Object: Make Jesus king and cure your heart trouble

Thesis: The 5 books of Moses (Torah) contain 613 commandments that reveal God’s standard but also reveal that we don’t measure up. Cf. problem of self-righteousness - trying to achieve right standing with God by your behavior - fails because our hearts/attitudes don’t measure up.

A. Only Jesus can make you right with God [17-20]

1. Jesus fulfills the Law [17-18] Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill: Jesus does not abolish the law and prophets [God’s Commandments] as a standard but fulfills the moral and ceremonial law through the only perfect life, his sacrificial death, and life through us.

a. The law continues to reveal God’s standard of righteousness [18] For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled: jot or tittle are smallest marks in Hebrew language

How do people in our culture think they can be right with God (go to heaven) based on their performance?

2. You cannot be right with God through your own efforts [19-20] Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

a. Violating one law makes you guilty before God [19] No unrighteousness can enter Gods presence. Have to be perfect as the Father is perfect [5:48].

i. No one can completely keep the law. The scribes were the scholars of the law, and the Pharisees sought to separate from sin [20]. The saying at the time was that if only two men entered heaven 1 would be a scribe and the other a Pharisee. They were the spiritual giants of the day, and if they weren’t good enough no one was.

3. What is the purpose of the law?

a. The law reveals our guilt before God to lead us to Christ our Savior [Gal. 3:19-25]

i. Jesus redeems us from the curse of the law [Gal. 3:13]. Jesus’ followers are not condemned by the Law [Rom. 8:1] because He fulfilled it.

ii. Christ’s righteousness is given to us when we make Him our king.

b. The law instructs and guides us re God's moral standard

c. The law is not the way to enter the kingdom, but Jesus is [Jn. 14:6]

i. Know that Jesus is your King and you are His. Guaranteed unique blessings

B. A murderous heart is guilty before God [21-26]

1. The law prohibits murder [21] You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment. The 6th of the Ten Commandments [Ex. 20:13]

a. Jesus reveals God's standard [22] But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire.

i. Unrighteous anger and hatred create guilt before God

ii. **You have heard:** six times vs. 21-48; Cf. **But I say** contrast rabbinical interp. vs. God's standard. Cf. Tend towards self-righteousness "I haven't murdered"

iii. **Raca** Aramaic "empty head" **fool:** immoral person; danger of judgment

iv. *World would not likely see unrighteous anger as immoral, but God does*

2. The King's subjects seek reconciliation [23-26] Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

a. Unrighteous anger and hatred are obstacles to worship of God [23-24]

i. A heart that is reconciled with God will seek to reconcile with others

ii. No issue re who is at fault

b. Resolve differences quickly before consequences cause hardship [25-26] ²⁵ Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. ²⁶ Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny.

i. Do all you can to reconcile now before problems of judgment escalate

ii. Those who refuse to forgive may not have received forgiveness

cf. forgiveness relates to no longer wanting to avenge or seek revenge

** don't destroy bridges over which you must walk to be reconciled

C. An adulterous heart is guilty before God [27-30]

1. The law prohibits adultery [27] You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery: 7th of the Ten Commandments [Ex. 20:14]

a. Jesus reveals God's standard [28] But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

i. Lusting creates guilt before God

ii. **look:** continuous observation with desire **lust is adultery is the heart**

iii. *World would not likely see lust as immoral, but God does*

2. The King's subjects restrain their lust [29-30] If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your

members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell: The right eye and hand are associated with strength. The command is not intended to be literal.

a. The problem is neither the eye nor hand but the heart and mind

* Problem of objectifying a person made in God's image. She is someone's daughter, or wife or future wife, and a child of God

** Problem of access to pornography via web

* Don't deal with a foul mouth by brushing your teeth but changing your heart

i. Required to radically deal with sin: repent and yield to Christ

How might repenting from sin reveal that Jesus is your king?