

Matthew 5:17-32. Christ Explains the Spiritual Nature of the Law.

by Favell Lee Mortimer

Christ came to fulfill the law, not destroy it, and to take out of man's heart, his hatred of God's law.

Scripture: Proverbs 10:12, Matthew 5:20-23, Matthew 5:44, Romans 8:7, Ephesians 4:31, 1 John 3:15

Topics: "Christ And Law", "Spiritual Obedience"

Description

Favell Lee Mortimer preaches about the true purpose of Christ's coming, emphasizing that He came not to abolish the law but to fulfill it, taking on the punishment for man's sins and aiming to remove the hatred of God's law from man's heart. The sermon delves into the spiritual depth of the commandments, revealing that even sinful anger and hatred are violations of God's law, as seen in the examples of Cain's hatred towards Abel and the Pharisees' anger towards Jesus.

Transcript

It is a very common idea, that Christ came to set aside the law; but it is a mistaken one. He said himself, "I came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill." He knew that man had broken it; and he came to fulfill it in his stead, and to bear the punishment due to man for breaking it. But he came to do still more; he came to take out of man's heart, his hatred of God's law. Forever since the fall, men have hated that law. As it is written, "The carnal mind is enmity against God--for it is not subject to the law of God--neither indeed can be." (Rom. 8:7.) The Pharisees professed to keep the law--but in their hearts they hated it.

No doubt it astonished the people exceedingly to hear Jesus declare, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall never enter the kingdom of heaven." But what sort of righteousness can those men have had, who in their hearts hated righteousness! But this was the case with the Pharisees, and it is the case with every unconverted man. The law is too holy to please such sinful creatures as we are by nature.

It may appear, at first sight, an easy thing to keep the sixth commandment, "You shall not kill." But if we think it easy to keep it, it is because we do not understand its spiritual meaning. It forbids not only the act of murder, but the thought. Hatred is the beginning of murder. This may be proved. When we hate a person, we do not like the presence of that person; we feel uncomfortable when he is near, and wish he were at a distance. This must have been Cain's first feeling against Abel. It was fostered in his bosom, until it led to murder. Before he murdered Abel with his hand, he murdered him in thought. And what is the

beginning of hatred? It is anger.

There is a righteous anger. God is angry with the wicked; but if they would turn from their wickedness, his anger would cease; for he says, "Let the wicked man forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him." But sinful anger is very different from the anger of God; it is anger without a cause, or without a sufficient cause. Perhaps someone has slighted us and wounded our self-love; or, perhaps, he has gained some advantage that we should like to possess, and has excited our envy. Perhaps he has faithfully reproved us, or set us an example which makes us feel ashamed of our own conduct. This was the reason that Cain was angry with Abel, and it was the reason that the Pharisees were angry with Jesus. Worldly people are still angry with real Christians on the same account. How sinful is such anger! It is usually vented in abusive words. Raca and fool were terms of reproach used by the Jews. Raca signified "vain worthless fellow," and fool, "wicked and abandoned wretch."

And have none of us in our anger been led to use very improper expressions? Even little children sometimes utter very violent words in their fits of passion. And does not God notice these words? He does notice them, and though we may forget them, He will not. He is an adversary to the wicked, and will shut them up in a prison whence they can never escape. We are now going to pray to God. Do any of us cherish malice in our hearts? Malice is the worst kind of hatred. God will not accept the prayers or the praises of any person who hates his brother. It is a difficult thing to part with our sins. Many people would rather part with a foot, or an eye, than with their sins. But we must part with them, or we shall be cast into hell. Blessed be God, He will give new hearts to those who ask for them; He will make them righteous, and He will pardon all their sins for his dear Son's sake.

Source:

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