

The Sermon on the Mount #4

The Sixth Commandment Corrected (5:21-26)

Introduction:

1. Our Lord now began the body of His sermon by rescuing true righteousness from the perversion of Pharisees.
2. Having explained clearly and forcefully that His intent was not to destroy the Law, He then applied the Law.
3. Having explained the importance of the least commandments and the totally inadequate righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, He began by demonstrating their hypocrisy in personal relationships.
4. The Lord Jesus Christ began His definition of kingdom righteousness by applying the sixth commandment.
5. What is the simplest commandment of the Ten? Even here the Fundamentalists had grossly missed the mark!
6. The Pharisees through tradition had reduced the sixth commandment to only the overt act of taking a life.
7. Self-righteousness, or presumed blamelessness before God, is always by limiting God's laws to fit your life.
8. It is extremely important to see that Jesus opposed what had been said, not what Moses had written earlier.
9. It is not an uncommon error that this sermon was Jesus Christ correcting and improving the Old Testament.
10. Men, and especially women, who miss the lesson here, end up denying capital punishment, promoting pacifism and effeminacy, and otherwise turning godly men and righteousness into sentimental mush.
11. Since the Lord Jesus commended those who do and teach the least of His commandments, I will this day expand the sixth commandment of Moses to the full extent of the righteousness of our holy God (Matt 5:19).
12. Let the position of this lesson be instructive: Jesus began the body of His sermon with relationship problems, because that is where the pride of man rears its ugly head most often to deny the true religion of Jesus Christ.
13. The Pharisees limited the commandment until no one was guilty; Jesus Christ expanded the commandment until everyone is guilty! But He obeyed His interpretation perfectly, and that righteousness is yours by grace!
14. Every one of you is a serial killer, and you will give an account for your killing spree on Judgment Day.
15. Let us tremble before the word of God, search our hearts, guard our lips, and wash our hands from blood!

The Text Explained

- A. Jesus identified the traditional interpretation Israel had been taught by scribes and Pharisees (5:21).
 1. He refers to what they had heard about the sixth commandment, not what was written about it.
 2. Our Lord did not identify or correct, "It is written," but rather what had been preached in Israel.
 3. He did not correct, change, or modify Exodus 20:13; He corrected the wrong application of it.
 4. He condemned the oral teaching and traditional interpretation the Jews had heard in synagogues.
 5. The scribes and Pharisees taught the tradition of the elders, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time," which limited the sixth commandment to the overt and specific act of murder.
 6. Jesus Christ did not correct the law of God at all; He restored the law from Pharisee corruption.
 7. There are foolish and weak men who have become pacifists by totally missing the Lord's lesson.
 8. They foolishly conclude Jesus rejected the sixth commandment and even any anger or names!
 9. The oral tradition included judgment of the congregation in capital offences (Num 35:12,16-34).
 10. Murderers seeking shelter in the cities of refuge would be tried and condemned as murderers.
- B. Jesus contrasted the righteousness of His kingdom to the teaching of scribes and Pharisees (5:22).
 1. There is a very definite contrast and opposition here by our Lord's use of the disjunctive "but."
 2. Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; He did not apologize for His superior religion!
 3. He dogmatically declared that God's standard of righteousness was far higher than the Jews!
 4. He did not flatter the false teachers or commend them in any way, because they were heretics!
 5. The teaching of Jesus Christ was powerfully superior to the Jew's oral tradition (Matt 7:28-29).
 6. Our Lord's words assume a state of affairs as if the law were interpreted and enforced rightly.

- C. Jesus expanded the sixth commandment to include anger against a brother without a cause (5:22).
1. Consider well. The Lord applied the sixth commandment against murder to merely unjustified anger, which is something that may go no further than your own heart! What powerful teaching!
 2. Is this reasonable? Definitely. Unjustified anger is the basis for most all murders! The two main reasons it does not cause more is due merely to the lack of opportunity or the fear of punishment.
 3. Of course, every murderer had a cause! And every angry man has a cause! But the only cause that is justified by God and Scripture is holy and righteous indignation for the Lord and truth.
 4. It does not matter that you can justify your anger, unless you can back it up with plain Scripture.
 5. Your feelings, your reputation, your money, or your things are not a sufficient cause for anger!
 6. As soon as your personal feelings become the mover, or the cause is minor and trivial, you sin!
 7. Since He contrasted His religion to that of the Jews, He used their congregational judgment.
 8. If the nation were living justly and applying His righteousness, the congregation would so judge.
 9. God ordained civil authorities for the purpose of punishing sinners (Rom 13:1-7; I Pet 2:13-17).
 10. This was not a new interpretation never heard before (Proverbs 19:11; 27:4; Ecclesiastes 7:9).
 11. There is no need to contract or expand the definition of “brother” from “neighbour” (Mat 19:19), for the love we owe our neighbor is the same treatment we owe our brother (Lev 19:16-18).
 12. Most versions delete “without a cause,” which makes all anger a sin by the sixth commandment!
 13. If this were true, then Moses (Ex 32:19), God (Deut 1:37), Jesus (Mark 3:5), and many others would be guilty, for they were angry at men the scriptures would call brothers or neighbors.
 14. This kind of Bible corruption has contributed to Christian compromise and effeminacy today, when anger against sin and sinners is construed and slandered as a violation of this text.
 15. Paul put two limits on righteous anger – do it without sinning, and end it in a day (Eph 4:26-27).
 16. Anger beyond these rules gives place to the devil, a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44).
 17. God will judge hatred, wrath, envy (Gal 5:20), malice, malignity, and despite (Romans 1:29).
- D. Jesus expanded the sixth commandment to include calling a brother a worthless idiot (Matt 5:22).
1. What does “Raca” mean? It is a Chaldean word used by the Jews for a stupid, worthless, vain fellow. See II Samuel 6:20, where Michal described her husband and king David as such a man.
 2. Having condemned unjustified anger of the heart, now Jesus condemned opprobrious language!
 3. Note that the words are spoken to the man, which does usually require anger and/or profanity.
 4. Using such language improperly is reviling (I Cor 6:9-10) and railing (I Cor 5:11). Terrible sins!
 5. The Jewish council dealt with matters greater than the congregation (Acts 5:21; Ex 18:13-27).
 6. We shall give an account of every idle word in the Day of Judgment (Matt 12:33-37). Beware!
 7. There is a time and place to call men such things, but only when they deserve it, and when you are not saying it out of personal anger, spite, or vengeance, and for more than minor reasons that have no meaning to a righteous and holy God (Jer 4:22; I Tim 6:3-5; James 2:20).
- E. The Lord Jesus expanded the sixth commandment to include calling a brother a fool (Matt 5:22).
1. “Fool” in the Bible is one of the most derogatory and condemning words, indicating a reprobate God hater and wicked man that has no use for God, truth, or decency (Ps 14:1; Luke 12:20).
 2. Note that the words are spoken to the man, which does usually require anger and/or profanity.
 3. How is “fool” worse than “Raca”? It is a solemn designation of God for those He has rejected.
 4. Using such language improperly is reviling (I Cor 6:9-10) and railing (I Cor 5:11). Terrible sins!
 5. Showing astonishing authority in His teaching, Jesus declared such railing is worthy of hell fire.
 6. As the God of hell fire and the appointed Judge of the quick and the dead, He had the authority!
 7. If you hate your brother by reviling speech, you are a reprobate murderer (I John 2:9; 3:14-15).
 8. There is a time and place to call men fools, but only when they deserve it, and when you are not saying it in personal anger, spite, or vengeance, and for more than minor reasons that have no meaning to a righteous and holy God (Luke 4:25; 11:40; 12:20; Gal 3:1; I Cor 15:36).

- F. Jesus applied His argument for righteousness under the sixth commandment to worship (5:23-24).
1. In believing and trusting every word of God, we accept His “therefore” as a definite application.
 2. Since God considers anger and abusive language great sins, He will not accept such worshippers.
 3. Sin turns worship and prayer into vanity and iniquity – especially murder (Is 1:10-15; 59:1-8).
 4. Sin ruins worship, no matter how otherwise sincere the worshipper or correct the worship (Ps 66:18; Jer 7:8-10; Amos 5:21-27; Micah 3:1-10; Matt 15:8-9; Rev 2:1-5).
 5. Self-examination must precede acceptable worship, and it must include any we have offended.
 6. This certainly applies to all Christians before approaching the Lord’s Table (I Cor 11:28-31).
 7. In His application, Jesus made us accountable for offences we have committed against others.
 8. It is too bad that most human hearts can only remember what others have done to offend them!
 9. Though you are worshipping God with a gift at His altar, He wants your heart and life pure first.
 10. Before giving a gift, you should be reconciled to your brother; then God will receive your gift.
 11. Personal offences and strained relationships include spouses, children, parents, and siblings.
 12. Since you were at fault, reconciling your brother requires repenting and begging for forgiveness.
 13. The pure worshippers of God know judgment, mercy, and faith are superior to gifts (Matt 23:23).
 14. God has taught the righteous in their heart the importance of just and merciful actions (Mic 6:8).
- G. Jesus applied His standard for righteousness under the sixth commandment to all dealings (5:25-26).
1. Having taught the incompatibility of personal offences with worship, Jesus proceeded further.
 2. If you have an adversary, it is your duty, as much as lieth in you, to establish peace (Rom 12:18).
 3. The illustration our Lord gives is again of our offence against another, who is suing for damages.
 4. Since the laws of God and the Jews were severe, there were great reasons to avoid their courts.
 5. Our Lord recommended that while you were on the way to court you should settle out of court!
 6. The adverb dictating the manner of your agreement with your adversary is quickly! So being stubborn to punish your adversary or letting him feel your wrath is totally contrary to Scripture!
 7. Of course, settling out of court will cost you! No cost justifies breaking the sixth commandment!
 8. But beyond the threat of paying the uttermost farthing, Jesus taught the implied act of murder.
 9. Offending a brother by hurting him in some way that drives him to seek damages is murder.
 10. He will explain very shortly that minor things are not worth fighting about (Matthew 5:38-42).
 11. Paul taught righteous reconciliation as choosing to be defrauded by an adversary (I Cor 6:7-8).
 12. It will usually cost you, either pride or money or other service, to fully reconcile your adversary.
 13. There is also the implication that God will extract the last farthing from all murderers (Rev 21:8).

The Text Applied

- A. Our Lord Jesus Christ began with the most pervasive problem among men – godly relationships.
1. Remember, the second and great commandment is love of neighbor (Matt 19:16-19; 22:34-40).
 2. Remember, the greatest rule of the New Testament is love of others (John 13:34-35; I Cor 13:1-7; Eph 4:31-32; Phil 2:1-4; Col 3:12-14; Jas 2:8-9; I John 2:7-11; 3:11-19; II John 1:5).
 3. Remember, we are born hating one another, so true Christianity shows itself in brotherly love.
- B. It will be our wisdom and righteousness to review ways in which we break the sixth commandment.
1. God’s laws are exceeding broad: it is our duty to examine ourselves in their breadth (Ps 119:96).
 2. We know that taking a life by any means not called for in self-defense, national defense, or capital punishment is a direct and obvious violation of the sixth commandment.
 3. This applies as well to abortion, which the whoremongers of our nation have categorized as nothing more serious than removing a cyst or tumor; but God condemns it (Exodus 21:22-25).
 4. Murder is more than taking life, for you can kill a reputation or soul, or have the rage for murder but lack opportunity. God declares malice, rage, vengeance, and such spirits to be murder.
 5. Given our Lord’s expanded interpretation of murder, we will apply it to any personal violence, whether it is of the heart, in word, or in deed, directly or indirectly, actively or passively.

6. We will consider a few other Holy Spirit examples of God's expanded definitions of hate and violence as well (Lev 19:17; Prov 12:18; 18:8,21; 26:22; James 3:6-8).
7. Each and every one of the offences that follows is a violation of "Thou shalt not kill," or murder!
8. It is a horrible shame to our religion, when (a) we commit these sins ourselves, (b) allow others to commit them with relative impunity, or (c) do not treat the offenders as heinously as we would an unrepentant murderer. Consider how you would watch and resist an unrepentant murderer.
9. Talebearing is a crime of murder, for you destroy others' reputations (Lev 19:16; Pr 18:8; 26:22).
10. Giving a false testimony in court against the life or character of another is murder (Lev 19:16).
11. If you do not rebuke a brother for sin by God's definition, you are a hateful murderer (Le 19:17).
12. Bearing a grudge against another, especially a brother, is a horrible sin (Lev 19:18; James 5:9).
13. Thoughts, words, or actions out of revenge are devilish murder (Lev 19:18; Romans 12:19-21).
14. If you do not forgive a brother attempting to reconcile, you are a hateful murderer (Matt 6:15).
15. If you do not resolve an offence you cannot forget, you are a hateful murderer (Matt 18:15-18).
16. Scornful and unmerciful criticism and marking minor offences is a violent crime (Is 29:20-21).
17. Slandering a person by spreading lies about him is a hateful act of character murder (Pr 10:18).
18. Backbiting, unnecessary criticism of someone not present, is murder to God (Ps 15:3; Pr 25:23).
19. Dishonor to parents by thought, eyes, words, or active or passive deeds is profane and seditious murder and a capital offence worthy of death (Ex 21:15,17; Lev 20:9; Deut 21:18-21; 27:16; Prov 20:20; 23:22; 30:11,17; Ezek 22:7; Matt 15:4-6; Mark 7:9-13; I Tim 5:8).
20. No matter how well you hide secret hatred, God counts it as murder (Pr 26:24-26; I John 3:15).
21. Whispering, or telling secrets by words or insinuations, even when the information you communicate is true, is capital murder and worthy of hell fire (Pr 16:28; 17:9; 25:9; Rom 1:29).
22. Sexual defrauding of either spouse is a cruel and violent crime against him or her, and in many cases is worse than death, for it is cruel pain over a long period of time (I Cor 7:1-5).
23. Emotional, verbal, or sexual abuse by a spouse is an outrageous act of hatred and malice that deprives a spouse and/or children from the contented, happy, loving, peaceful, and satisfied life they deserve (Pr 12:4; 15:15; 18:14; 19:13; 21:9,19; 25:24; 27:15; 30:21-23; Col 3:19; I Pet 3:7).
24. Sarcastic criticism of another that demeans, humiliates, or shames him is murder (Prov 12:18).
25. Do not lie about bitterness in your heart toward another, for it is devilish in origin (Jas 3:14-16).
26. If our Lord condemned anger, how much more would He condemn envy (Prov 27:4; Jas 4:1-5)?
27. An angry, overbearing, or unmerciful father is a terrible predator, but there is a God in heaven that will not miss a single persecuted child (Ps 103:13-14; Pr 29:22; Eph 6:4; Col 3:21).
28. Railing is the use of abusive language, which our Lord indicated was murder, and He applied capital punishment in the case of Nabal (I Sam 25:14; I Cor 5:11; I Pet 3:9).
29. Reviling is to abase, abuse, or degrade someone with opprobrious language (I Cor 6:10).
30. If critical speech between peers is murder, then so is answering again to authority (Titus 2:9).
31. Debate, a sin of arrogant and implacable arguing, is murder and/or sedition (Is 58:4; Rom 1:29).
32. Despite is the hateful sin of contemptuous, insulting, and opprobrious actions (Romans 1:30).
33. Evil surmising is the malicious act of putting one's actions in the worst light (I Timothy 6:4).
34. Malice is the hateful desire to injure another person – active ill will or hatred (Romans 1:30).
35. Malignity is wicked and deep ill will or hatred: intense desire to cause suffering (Rom 1:29).
36. Scorn is ridiculing, mocking, despising, and condemning others and their words (Pr 22:10; 24:9).
37. Sedition is the effort to overthrow an established authority or act of rebellion (Gal 5:19-21).
38. Strife is fighting, quarreling, enmity, contention, antagonism, discord (Gal 5:19-21; Jas 3:14-16).
39. Not training children is hatred and murder, as it will harm them in the future (Prov 3:12; 13:24).
40. Not helping your parents when they are enfeebled is a torturous act of parricide (I Tim 5:8).

Conclusion:

1. Do not despise murderers in your thinking, unless you are free from the expanded interpretation of murder!
2. Do not think highly of yourself in the sight of God, until you are free from anger, name-calling, and such sins!
3. Do not presume that your worship of God is accepted, when you have blood in your heart or on your hands!
4. Do not yak about principle or rights or your importance, when you fail to reconcile with your adversaries.
5. Consider the great Day of Judgment, when you shall give an account for every violation of the sixth commandment, whether you or anyone else considers it murder or not. You will be charged with all unjustified anger, sarcastic and critical speech, and condemning name-calling among many other sins.
6. While holy hearts and hands under the sixth commandment purify all worship, we can easily grasp the greater importance of examining and perfecting our relationships before the Lord's Supper – for it is common union!

For Further Study:

1. The sermon outline, "Love Is the Greatest," uses many angles and Scriptures to prove love is the greatest commandment.
2. The sermon outline, "[Forgotten Sins](#)," contains many sins and detailed definitions that fit within the sixth commandment.
3. The sermon outline, "[Brother Love](#)," which deals with our Lord's positive commands to love one another in a church.
4. The sermon outline, "[The Definition of Love](#)," which isolates, interprets, and applies each phrase of I Corinthians 13:4-7.