

Sermon Reflections

Getting to the Heart of the Law (Matthew 5:17-30)

Summary: King Jesus roots sin out of your life by rooting it out of your heart.

1. Jesus Fulfills the Law by Changing the Heart (vv. 17-20)

- Jesus fulfilled the Law and the Prophets (i.e. the entire Old Testament). He then says that our righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees (who were hypocrites) in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. Christ desires a righteous heart without hypocrisy. What enables believers to conquer sin and pursue a righteousness within the heart (see Ezekiel 36:27, Romans 8:1-5, etc.)? What are some ways you can better read the Old Testament and recognize the spirit of the law and how it relates to believers who are in Christ?

2. Jesus Roots Out Murder from the Heart (vv. 21-26)

- The first law Jesus addresses is murder and the anger that produces it. Jesus explains that one of the most seemingly egregious sins (murder) and one of the most common attitudes of the heart (anger) are equally transgressions of God's law, warranting judgment. How shocking is it to realize that your angry heart and tongue are as deserving of "the hell of fire" as murder? What are some ways you can remind yourself (and others) that in God's kingdom, an angry heart is as sinful as murder? What are some areas in your life in which your heart needs to be cleansed from anger? What are a few steps you can take to ensure that your heart is not quick to anger?
- Not only does Jesus want to rid our hearts of anger, but He also wants us to actively make peace with those around us who are angry with us. What are some ways in which you can humble yourself and be reconciled with those whom you have wronged? Who is someone with whom you need to make peace considering the Lord's command?

3. Jesus Roots Out Adultery from the Heart (vv. 27-30)

- As with murder, Jesus explains that at its core, the command not to commit adultery is aimed at the heart. Galatians 5:24 tells us that "those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." Knowing that (for a believer), our old sinful heart has been crucified, how should this impact our battle with sin? What are some ways we can further cultivate the desire to obey Christ with our *entire* heart?
- As with anger, a lustful heart is something that each one must battle. This battle will likely require radical steps in order to win, as illustrated by Christ's reference to throwing out your eye and hand. What are some steps you can take in this battle against a lustful heart that the world may consider extreme? What are some habits you should throw away in order to ensure that your hands and eyes are used as "instruments for righteousness" (Romans 6:13) rather than vehicles to sin?