

Message #13

Matthew 5:21-26

That is what the O.T. Law does to us—it shows us we are not in the league of the righteousness of God. If one is honest with the O.T. Law or if one is honest with an accurate application of the O.T. Law, one will see oneself as guilty and condemned.

In this next section of Matthew, Jesus Christ compares what the people had heard and had been taught by the Pharisees concerning righteousness with the way true righteousness really works.

The “you have heard” formula introduces to Israel what they had been taught by the religious leaders (5:21, 27, 33, 38, 43). Some of the things that the people had heard were simply not true. Israel had been misinformed and mistaught, a point to which Christ already alluded (5:19). For example, **Matt. 5:43** informs us that Israel had been taught to “hate their enemies.” Nowhere did the Scriptures ever teach to “hate your enemy.” So Christ is contrasting the teachings of the Pharisees with His teachings concerning the righteousness of God.

The main point of this section is this:

A PROPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS OF KINGDOM LAW AND RIGHTEOUSNESS LEADS ONE TO CONCLUDE ALL HAVE COMMITTED MURDER AND ARE GUILTY AND CONDEMNED, AND DO NOT DESERVE THE KINGDOM, BUT DO DESERVE JUDGMENT.

Israel did not have the righteousness Jesus Christ describes in these verses; however, one day she will. Jeremiah predicts there will come a day when Jesus Christ will give Israel the righteousness she needs (Jer. 31:34).

KINGDOM POINT #1 – Law righteousness demanded court liability for murder. **5:21**

In the first statement of the O.T. commandments “You shall not murder” was commandment number five. Actually, when Adam and Eve fell—the first fruit that the fall had taken place was a murder—Cain killed Abel. Now in the olden days, the penalty for murder was some type of judgment. Sometimes it was a death penalty and sometimes it wasn’t. For Cain, his judgment was to spend his entire life cursed by God. For David, he suffered greatly because he took the innocent life of Uriah the Hittite. The Pharisees had somewhat of a proper perspective of human life and they taught that murder was wrong. They drove home the idea that one should not commit murder and, if one did commit murder, he would be liable to a decision of the court, much like today. However, their teaching is somewhat shallow because kingdom righteousness is more than just not physically killing someone.

KINGDOM POINT #2 – Kingdom righteousness demands court liability for attitudes and words concerning a brother. **5:22**

Now I want to point out that the “But I say to you” is emphatic in Greek. This is the God/King talking. Now you will notice that three times in this verse the word “guilty” shows up.

This particular Greek word means to be guilty in the sense of being liable to a specific charge or action (Smith, p. 155). In a righteous kingdom there are three actions that makes one guilty or liable to a court appearance.

Action #1 - Everyone who is angry with his brother is liable for a judgment in court. **5:22a**

The verb “angry” is present/passive. The present tense means one is continually or habitually angry with his brother. The passive voice means the one who is angry is not the source of the action. In other words, a brother did do something that promoted the anger—the person who is angry is not the cause of the problem. Now the actual word “angry” is one that describes a very passionate, habitual attitude of anger or wrath. Now the point is that anyone who has a continual passionate anger toward his brother—even if the brother did something to make you angry—will make one liable to a court judgment in a righteous kingdom.

Action #2 - Everyone who says “raca” to his brother is liable for a judgment at the Supreme Court level. **5:22b**

The verb “says” is aorist tense, meaning this is a statement made at just one point of time. The word “raca” is Aramaic, which means one who has an empty head or one who is good for nothing.

Action #3 - Everyone who says “you fool” is liable to a sentence of hell. **5:22c**

The verb “say” is aorist tense, meaning we are speaking of one point in time. The Greek word for “fool” is the word “Moros” from which we get our English word “moron.” The word refers to one who is dull or sluggish of mind (Smith, p. 299).

KINGDOM POINT #3 – Kingdom righteousness demands one first be right with his brother before one gives his offering. **5:23-24**

Now the Pharisees taught people that in order to be right with God they had to bring their offerings to the altar at the Temple. In the Kingdom age, this will mean an appearance before the King of Kings. If one had offended a brother, he needed to make it right before God would accept him of his offering.

KINGDOM POINT #4 – Kingdom righteousness demands one do everything possible to make things right with a brother before it comes to court. **5:25-26**

Even though this is kingdom teaching, there are many Christians who are going to be shocked at the Bema Seat judgment because they did terrible things against someone and never made it right. One can lose all rewards because of the way he related to his brother.