

Turn Away From Unrighteous Anger

Matthew 5:21-26; Genesis 4:1-15

Introduction

I. The scribes and Pharisees got around the commandment by placing a too narrow interpretation on it

- A. They had improperly combined 2 Biblical teachings to come to a restricted application
 - 1. Exodus 20:13 –
 - 2. Numbers 35:30-31 –
- B. Their interpretation was only external
 - 1. They didn't apply the commandment to the attitude in a person's heart
 - 2. Inward ungodly hatred was not considered a sin that violated this 6th commandment

II. Jesus gives us the true interpretation of the 6th commandment – as we think about this, examine your own heart to see if you have violated this commandment

- A. Murder begins with an attitude of sinful anger
 - 1. Sinful anger is anger without a Biblically proper cause –
 - 2. William Hendriksen's translation of verses 21 & 22 in his commentary brings out the meaning of the commandment – "You (*pl.*) have heard that it was said by the men of long ago, 'You shall not kill', and 'Whoever kills deserves to be punished (with death)'. But I say to you (*pl.*) that (even) anyone who is angry with his brother deserves to be punished (with death). And whoever says to his brother 'You blockhead,' deserves to be condemned (to death) by the supreme court. And whoever says, 'You idiot,' deserves to be cast into the hell of fire."
 - 3. Jesus makes clear to us that sinful anger is itself a form of murder
- B. Is all anger a form of murder?
 - 1. Jesus is not condemning godly anger
 - a. Godly anger has a legitimate cause – zeal for God, His Word, and His Kingdom
 - b. Rebellion against God should provoke God's people to anger
 - 2. But we must be very careful when we believe we are expressing godly anger
 - a. It's very easy for sinners to assume they are right about something they really are wrong about
 - b. Scribes and Pharisees were guilty of being wrong but assuming they were right about something
 - c. We must examine our motives when anger starts to arise within us

III. How do we keep from breaking the 6th commandment?

- A. Love your neighbor as yourself
 - 1. Remember how Jesus answered the scribe who asked, "Who is my neighbor?" (The Good Samaritan – Luke 10:25-37)
 - 2. Refuse to give Satan the opportunity to plant the seeds of ungodly hatred for your neighbor in your heart – take to heart the instruction given in Ephesians 4:25-32
 - 3. Demonstrate the Fruit of the Spirit in all your relationships – Galatians 5:22-23
 - 4. Be an example of Christian love – 1 Corinthians 13:1-13
- B. When you realize a brother has something against you, seek to be reconciled
 - 1. Note that Jesus doesn't just command us to not murder our brother
 - 2. Jesus commands us to take the positive step of seeking to be reconciled with one who has something against us
 - 3. We must not even let evil thoughts about our brother remain in our minds (Ephesians 4:26)
 - 4. Note the significance of Christ's command in verses 23-24
- C. Any time it's hard to go to be reconciled with someone, remember the mercy of God in reconciling us to himself through the sacrifice of Christ – even when we were enemies in rebellion against Him – Colossians 1:19-23

Conclusion