

# Heart Work

## Series on Prayer & Holiness

- Matthew 5 – 9
- Life in Kingdom of God – different
  - exchange rules for transformation
  - exchange religion for relationship
  - exchange cultural lies for truth and life satisfaction
- Two Weeks ago – got to be better than that!
- Matthew 5:21-27

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***"You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell. "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. "Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still with him on the way, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. I tell you the truth, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny."***

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## 1. Shocking Reality

- Jesus uses common truth to make amazing point

### a) murder = judgment

- physical action brings consequence

- laws of the day – society rules & guidelines

- fairly easy to stay away from – not many breaking this

- Jesus uses visible and despised actions in his examples to make a point!

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b) angry with brother – will face judgment!

- ‘angry’ – unforgiveness, a settled anger, malice that is nursed inwardly, hatred in the heart towards.....
- bitterness, choosing to nurse the injury – pick at the scab, not seek healing – brings consequence
- subject to judgment – will be dealt with
- harboring ill feelings, nurturing injustice and dreaming of revenge and retaliation – brings judgment on us
- God is watching our hearts, motives, not enough to simply avoid physical action

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c) speaks to brother 'Raca' – face Sanhedrin

- like slander or defaming character today
- courts of the Sanhedrin place of judgment dispensed

d) says – you fool, danger of the fire of hell

- critical spirit – you must have screwed up
- rebellious spirit – refusal to submit to authority in life
- judgmental spirit – look at your mistakes

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Big Point of this:

- Not enough to keep the rules – hearts & attitudes matter
- Sustained anger, unforgiveness, speaking out against others, is all serious in God's eyes.
- Forgiveness & This Kingdom
  - parable of debtor – Matthew 18:23-35
  - Lords Prayer – vs. 12
- In light of what we have been forgiven – no basis for harboring hatred, remaining angry with brothers – not what God did for us... still sinners, Christ died for me

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## 2. Therefore.....

- always look carefully – point is being applied

### a) Unforgiveness Blocks Your Worship

- leave the gift – go and make right – come back
- history of God's people – hearts matter in worship
- Romans 1:21 *“For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened”*
- great importance to deal with this issue

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## b) Reconciliation is Our Goal

- wording – ‘your brother has something against you..’

- Rom. 12:18 *If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."*

- ‘make every effort’ – do not be the one causing hard feelings to remain and block your sacrifice of praise& worship



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## 3. Justice and Our Lives

- adversary taking you to court:
  - both convinced there is a case, desiring vindication
  - both clear about offense – want to see rule of law applied
- settle quickly – do it before demanding ruling
  - you never know the outcome –
- \* Key thought – we are all sinners deserving of death
- \* Forgiven much by God – we are to forgive others

Perhaps those who demand justice will receive that from God!

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## So What

### 1. Hard Reality

- heart attitudes and actions matter – and bear consequence
- in God's Kingdom – followers are those who:
  - love their enemies – we have been forgiven much
  - practice forgiveness - pursue reconciliation
  - leave offence with God – live in peace
- our words about others matter – need to be aware

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## 2. Cannot Ignore this Truth

- affects ability to praise and worship God
- has consequence:
  - witness to a world
  - harmony in the body
  - freedom to live life fully
  - spiritually

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## 3. In Your Desire for Vindication

- drive to be right
- desire to be proven – see others get theirs
- Be Very Careful
  - do you desire to be held to that standard?
  - For forgiveness
  - for grace
  - for blessing