

The Gospel of the Kingdom Pt12

How many times have you read a passage of Scripture and you think you know what it is saying, and then you read a commentary or hear a sermon and it changes the way you think about that verse?

This is the reason for doing a verse by verse, expository series of sermons on a book of the Bible.

I pray that the Lord gives you new insight on what these verses meant to the Jewish audience in the time of Jesus and what applies to our lives now in the 21st Century.

1. Anger 21-26

"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' 22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire.

One of the reasons that Islam has become so attractive to so many people is that it has a simple list of 5 things that you need to do to become a good Muslim.

1. Believe that there is no other God other than Allah and that Mohammed was his prophet.
2. Pray 5 times a time at designated times facing Mecca.
3. Fast during the daytime for the whole month of Ramadan.
4. Give money to charity.
5. At least once in a lifetime, make a pilgrimage to Mecca.

The people of Israel had become dedicated rule followers, and there were thousands of rules to follow. Now Jesus is saying, while I will fulfill the Levitical Law, which means you no longer have to follow it, I am going to expand the moral law.

He starts His "you have heard" section by addressing anger. Yes, we know that the Ten Commandments and the civil law address murder, but then He adds that merely thinking about, entertaining the thought in your heart makes you guilty of it.

See, Jesus understands that actions have their roots in thoughts. The more that you entertain an idea the more likely it is that you will follow through with action when the opportunity presents itself.

Eph 4:26-28

Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and give no opportunity to the devil.

Therefore, don't give any opportunity for these thoughts to take root in your heart. Go and deal with any and every situation between yourself and someone else, even if it's their fault. Deal with issues before they get out of hand.

23 So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and

offer your gift. 25 Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. 26 Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

In the Beatitudes, Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers".

Now, He is telling us that we need to be the bigger person. If anyone has anything against us, we need to take the initiative and go deal with it. We need to reconcile with them, so that our offering and our praise will be acceptable to God.

The word "reconcile" has three meanings.

- To restore a friendship, to bring harmony to a relationship.
- To settle or resolve a dispute.
- To bring oneself to accept.

Don't let unsettled issues fester and grow out of proportion. Deal with it while it is fresh.

Course corrections are always easier when you are only two or three degrees off course. If you wait and don't deal with things, then you will find yourself hundreds of miles off course and it will be that much harder to correct.

Many of us hate confrontations, but it is much easier to confront things before they grow in people's minds. It's amazing how minor miscommunications can turn into major blowouts because they were not addressed in time.

(Who Will Do What by When)

2. Lust 27-30

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

The first time I got to vote, I voted for Jimmy Carter. He was a Christian and I identified with so many things he said. Sadly, he turned out to be an ineffective president who led the nation into a time of "malaise", as he called it, which included the oil crisis, inflation and ultimately the Iran hostage crisis.

One thing he did say during his presidency was that he was guilty of adultery, not because he had an affair, but because he had lusted in his heart.

In this day and age, where pornography is readily available, even on our phones, it has become "normal" and even Christian men watch it. Jesus made it very clear that looking at these images with lust **is** adultery. He makes it clear that the sin is not just having an affair, it is looking at someone with lust as well as masturbating while entertaining those thoughts.

Sorry to be so graphic, but we live in a world that normalizes sin and says that it's ok because everybody does it, and that it's better than actually going out and having an affair.

Almost everyone that I have talked to who has had an affair tend to say the same thing, "It just happened, I don't know how." Of course, when we talk further, I find out that they had been having an emotional relationship with this person for some time. They say, "They just get me" or "they really listen to me". They spend more and more time with this person, and they start entertaining thoughts in their mind about how it would be like to be with this person. It never just happens. It always starts in the mind and Jesus knows this.