

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105).

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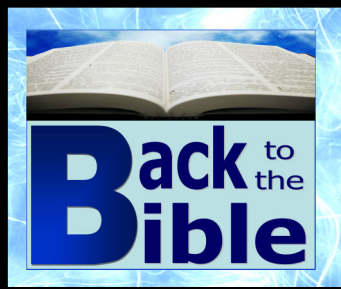
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that a religion, the essence of which is *love*, can suffer at its altar a heart that is revengeful and uncharitable, or which does not use its utmost endeavors to revive love in the heart of another."

Verse 25 begins with, "Agree with your adversary quickly..." Literally, "Be well-minded toward your opponent quickly" (Green, 13). The adversary is an accuser in a lawsuit. This statement is in the context of being angry. It does not refer to doctrinal issues or compromising the truth! "Emphasis is put on agreeing with the adversary (accuser) quickly...if one will agree {be well-minded-TAC} quickly, anger will not have time to take deeper roots in the heart" (Boles, 137). Brother Seals noted:

Finally, the urgency of this matter is impressed upon us by the Lord with these words: 'Make friends quickly with your accuser... (Matthew 5:25-26). It is ever so much easier to overcome a difficulty if we tackle it immediately, at its inception, than it is after the matter has had time to establish itself in our mentality. We can concentrate on the injury to the point that we amplify it so strongly that it will be quite difficult to handle at all. Just as in a court case, the longer the case drags on, the more time and money and inconvenience is involved in settling the issue. In like manner, the original difficulty with a brother becomes greater and greater as wrong thoughts and actions are multiplied all out of portion. (77)

In matters of opinion, it would be better to take a loss of things physical, than to lose our soul because of anger. Our desire should be "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:18). You see, these religious leaders "thought that as long as they did not murder a man, they were innocent. They missed the whole spirit of the law. People can make the same mistake even with the Sermon on the Mount" (Stevens, 86-87).



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Times of Services:

Sunday

Bible Study:... 10:00am
AM Worship:...11:00am
PM Worship:...6:00pm
2nd Sunday:.....1:30pm

Wednesday

Bible Study:.....7:00pm

Radio Program

Sunday:.....7:30am
"Back to the Bible"
AM 580 WSKS
93.5 FM

**We Extend A
Warm & Cordial
Welcome
To All Our
Visitors!**

"Thou Shalt Not Kill" (Matthew 5:21-26)

Tim Canup

The thematic statement of the Sermon on the Mount is: "For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:20). To illustrate this, Jesus gave six examples. "Jesus' primary desire here is to reveal the true meaning and intent of the law. He desired to correct the false interpretations of the law which were being advocated by the scribes and Pharisees" (Seals, 72). Brother Leslie Thomas wrote: "It should be kept in mind that Jesus is contrasting the *inward* and *spiritual* righteousness, which he requires, with the *outward* and *formal* righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees" (51). These religious leaders thought Jesus was trying to "destroy" the law of Moses (because He did not keep their traditions); therefore, He said, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill" (5:17). His desire was for them to follow God's Law as He intended.

In His first example, Jesus reminded them the Old Law stated, "Thou shalt not murder." The traditions of the Jews had added, "will be in danger of the judgment" (cf. Lloyd-Jones, 222). Judgment here refers to the local court; they had left God out of it. They had weakened God's law "by making it appear that disobedience brought only punishment at the hands of civil magistrates...They made it something purely legal...Thus the Pharisees felt really good since they had not murdered" (Stevens, 89-90). The Scribes & Pharisees view of the law was:

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...That the law of the sixth commandment was only external, and forbade no more than the act of murder, and laid no restraint upon the inward lusts.... This was indeed...the *fundamental error* of the Jewish teachers, that the divine law prohibited only the sinful act, and not the sinful thought; they were disposed...*to rest in the letter* of the law, and they were enquired into the spiritual meaning of it. (Henry, 90)

Jesus then said, “But I say unto you, {showing His divine authority-TAC} that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire” (Matthew 5:22). The Pharisees’ interpretation of the law forbade the act of murder, but Jesus included, “whoever is angry without a cause...” The word “Raca” literally means, “worthless fellow” (Lloyd-Jones, 224). “‘Raca’ in the KJV means a term of abuse. It has been identified with the rabbinical *reqa*’ – ‘good for nothing’” (Seals, 101). By using such a word (or phrase) demonstrates an attitude of contempt; to dismiss someone as unworthy of attention. “But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire” (literally, “the fire of hell”). It is referring to eternal judgment, that is, before God! “You fool!” is a strong term of an expression of anger. “[I]t expresses a stronger degree of reproach and contempt than Raca...” (Boles, 136).

Concerning the use of the word “fool,” someone may then ask, “How about Jesus’ use of the term fool in such passages as Luke 12:20, and others?” In these passages, Jesus is speaking judicially, after all, He is God; He is the judge of all, who knows the hearts of all men. We must be careful our anger is against sin and not the sinner (Psalm 14:1). Brother Seals noted:

It is just not possible to develop spiritually until resentment, anger, condemnation, and hatred aimed at one’s fellowman is put out of one’s life. Indignation, resentment, the desire to ‘get even,’ or to see others ‘get what they deserve,’ are all things which form an impenetrable barrier to spiritual growth and entrance into the kingdom of heaven. (Seals, 74)

Also, brother Boles wrote:

Jesus here makes three grades of crime, rising each above the preceding one; these three corresponding grades of punishment as penalties are also expressed. The sin of murder lies in anger itself; anger, though only a passion of the soul, which has not yet resulted in the overt act of taking life, is really a breach of the

commandment, ‘thou shalt not kill.’ The second grade of the sin—saying to his brother, Raca—adds to anger *contempt*. This attitude ignores his brother’s rights of common humanity.... The third grade, that of calling him a fool, adds an element of extreme wickedness, holding him to be abandoned of God, outlawed, and a reprobate among men. These are the three grades of crime recognized by Jesus.

The three grades of punishment are denoted by the terms ‘judgment,’ ‘council,’ and ‘hell of fire.’ ‘Judgment’ refers to the lower tribunals which were established in the towns of Palestine; the next higher court was ‘the council,’ the Jewish Sanhedrin. The third grade of penalty should be interpreted in harmony with the two preceding ones. The penalty of the ‘judgment’ was death for murder, which was inflicted with the sword; while the penalty of death sentenced by the Sanhedrin was inflicted by stoning; while the third grade of penalty inflicted by the civil law for the crime of murder was inflicted by exposing the dead body to the detestable valley described by ‘Gehenna’; this penalty made a death odious and revolting in the extreme. (136)

In verses 23-24, Jesus illustrated proper relations with one another. Mr. Eddleman wrote: It is not “if thou hast aught against thy brother” but “if he has aught against thee.”

Your conscience may be clear. The misunderstanding may stem wholly from the other party. He may or may not have cause for the unwholesome attitude, but if he thinks he has, it is the duty of the worshiper to go seek reconciliation. (50)

We cannot have the attitude that if someone has wronged us, then we will wait for them to make the first move. We must be active and not passive in restoring and maintaining our relations with others. It may be the case that we may never be reconciled with that person, but we must make every attempt to make things right. We must make sure our heart is right and pure; that we have no hatred toward anyone. Also, notice that Jesus puts life before worship (cf. Psalm 66:18). Brother Thomas observed: “Some one has wisely said

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

- July 18 – Men’s Business Meeting & Ladies’ Bible Class after Evening Worship
- July 25 – Prayer Service after Evening Worship
- Aug 1 – Men’s Business Meeting & Ladies’ Bible Class after Evening Worship
- Aug 8 – Preach-N-Eat & 1:30 Worship Service (Song Service)