



DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE

Getting Rid of Every Hidden Evil ... By Billy

READ: MATTHEW 5: 21-26

- **T**his text cuts deep and challenges to the core of our being. However, it can be easily misunderstood outside of its context.
- Jesus was speaking to the multitudes, including His disciples, a Jewish audience familiar with the teaching of the Torah.
- The scribes and pharisees taught the people according to their tradition, which focused on the outside of the cup, ie., do not murder. On the inside, plenty of evil bitterness was permissible.
 - *“Woe to you scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence.” (Matt.23:25)*
- One has observed that they were ‘seekers after smooth things’ in that they accommodated and compromised the law to fit the realities of life. (*Sproul*)
- In the teaching of Jesus, He restores the true nature of God’s law as demanding total and radical holiness. (Note 5:20 and 5:48)
- These standards are out of human reach, therefore a spiritual rebirth is essential. Unless we are born from above, we will not enter the Kingdom of God and we will certainly be powerless to live according to Kingdom ethics.
- Without the Holy Spirit the fleshly, carnal nature of man will lead him to a lost eternity in Hell.
- Jesus teaching in the Sermon of the mount is both a stern warning to the multitudes and at the same time a caution to disciples to walk according to the Spirit, to keep in step, lest a root of bitterness spring up and defile many. (*Heb.12:14*)
- The command not to murder in Ex.20:13 along with other commands, if obeyed will grant eternal life to those who obey. (Matt.19:18) -murder as distinct from self-defence, capital punishment and war. Failure to keep these commands will result in eternal damnation.
- The pharisees kept to the letter of the law and ignored the spirit, supposing that their hatred against others could be overlooked.
- ‘The one who harbors rage and spews out spiteful words is also guilty of sin and its consequences.’ (*Blomberg*)
 - *“Whoever is angry with his brother (neighbour) shall be guilty before the court..”(Matt.5:21)*
- Surely there is an anger that can be justified, a righteous anger?
- ^a According to Jesus, anger that is left unchecked leads to sin, and sin leads to guilt, and guilt leads to judgment (court) (*Rom. 12:19*)

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Week 44

- “Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY, says the Lord.”
- “And whoever says to his brother, you good for nothing, shall be guilty before the supreme court.”(Matt.5:22)
- The malicious attack on the character of a person is even more serious as this is punishable in the supreme court.
- This behaviour does not serve God’s purpose, nothing is gained, even in a situation in which we have been sinned against badly.
- Hate the sin but love the sinner – love your enemies.
 - *“and whoever says, you fool, shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.” (Matt.5:22)*
- Even more serious is the case when we deliberately defame the character of a person by using the word MORON, which is accusing them of not just ignorance but open rebellion against God.
- When you consider a society in which it is plausible to reserve the right to be angry it will become clear that it is not on a good path.
- It is one thing to hold people accountable for evil actions but another to burn with hatred towards them. (1 John 3:15)(James 3:6)
- Forgiveness of others is key. *“But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.”(Matt.6:15)* - Unforgiveness hinders prayer. (1 Tim.2:8) - without wrath.
- When the heart of the worshipper is not right before God the sacrifice is meaningless and detestable. (Isa.1:13 and Mal.2:12-13)
 - *“Bring you worthless offerings no longer”*
- Notice in v.23 that it is not the one who is offended that is to initiate the reconciliation but the one who is the cause of the offence.
- As our Father in heaven initiated reconciliation with His enemies, so must we. We are to go to our offended brother and seek reconciliation.
- Of course our attempts may fall on deaf ears. Christian are called to work for reconciliation in all areas of life.
- Even when we are brought to court over an issue, we should seek to win the favour of our adversary. (Psa.25:8)
 - *“Make every effort along the way..” (Luke 12:58-59)*
- Remember we are seeking that righteousness which is by faith in Jesus Christ. This comes not by our inherent moral goodness, not by our power or strength of character, but by the abiding Spirit of the Lord.