

REJECTION OF TRADITION

Adultery & Divorce

Matthew 5:27-32

HIS PROCLAMATION 5-7

Crowds follow Jesus; they watch & listen to His words.

Logical questions:

Is HE the one?

If the King has come & the kingdom is about to begin, will I get in?

What are requirements for entrance to the kingdom?

Jesus takes followers up the mountain to speak to them.

Message reveals answer from several perspectives.

Description of the accepted 5:1-16

Their godly character 1-12

Beatitudes describe kind of people who participate in the kingdom & who are content.

It's not people who follow ritual or put on a religious show who will enter the kingdom.

Entrance based on *internal* godly character.

Their permeating influence 13-16

People who enter the kingdom have permeating influence for God in place where He puts us.

Relation with the religious 5:17-7:6

After description of people who enter the kingdom, Jesus deals with people everyone assumes get in: their religious leaders.

Jesus and the law 5:17-20

Fulfillment, not replacement 5:17-19

Jesus is NOT presenting a competing system to replace OT law and prophets.

His message *fulfills* what the Law and Prophets call for.

He has come to fulfill what God promised to His people. He *IS* their promised King who came to establish God's kingdom on earth.

He isn't out to destroy what God established.

Therefore it's important to teach whole truth God has spoken. ***Don't tamper with it.***

That's the game the Pharisees have been playing.

They're tampering with what God has said.

That's central issue in his conflict with them!

People who listen to God's law realize we could never fulfill all that He requires.

So Pharisees came up with their own code, 365 prohibitions and 248 commands.

To hear them, you'd think it's a *higher* code.

It imposes a legalistic yoke on the people.

Actually their legalism *relaxes* God's demands

To be acceptable to God requires more than they do! =>

Greater righteousness required 5:20

To enter the kingdom will require a higher level of righteousness than their traditions require.

His followers are held to a higher, internal, standard.

God requires a different *heart* attitude.

²⁰...unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes & Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Rejection of their tradition 5:21-48

Jesus demonstrates how their traditions “relax” what God requires.

How they don't get it—come up with less!

Jesus points to 6 areas where their traditions weaken what God desires from His people.

These 6 show their rules don't fulfill God's expectations.

To enter the kingdom will take more than that!

Jesus points to this conflict in **Matt 15**

=> they substitute their standards to replace God's.

⁶“...for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God. ⁷You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: ⁸“This people honors me with their lips, but **their heart** is far from me; ⁹in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”

Problem is a HEART problem!

He doesn't propose a different legalistic set of rituals.

He wants us to understand that true religion is about the **HEART!**

Concerning murder 21-26 “**You have heard that it was said** to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; & 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; & whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire.

They're clinging literally to the letter:

“Thou shalt not kill!”

They make a big deal of that,
while missing the spirit.

There's a lot more than just not killing someone.

It's about how we treat other people.

God's people ought to be marked by love for others.

Anger toward others mocking, making fun, calling people names, are offensive acts, equivalent, in God's sight to destroying them.

These sinful **HEART** attitudes mark people who deserve judgment

It isn't the sin itself;

heart attitude shows their destiny

Such attitudes must be dealt with before we come to the altar to go through the motions of the religious.

Summary: Pharisaic, legalistic interpretation of the law of murder is not sufficient to establish righteousness.

True religion requires genuine love for others.

[2nd issue that demonstrates true religion:]

Concerning Adultery 5:27-30

“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 & throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell.³⁰ & if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off & throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

They’re focused on what law says—strictly, legalistically.

Again, Jesus points out: *it’s not about legalistic approach to law.*

True religion deals with *our heart!*

So what’s the heart issue God wants His people to deal with?

This portion of the law is intended to protect our home.

It’s God’s purpose to preserve a holy marriage.

Marriage is given by God to satisfy our physical & emotional appetites.

God’s plan is that a man and a woman be joined together—glued to one another—as one flesh.

That unity is God’s plan for marriage.

The intent of this law is to protect that unity.

To refrain from the physical act doesn’t fulfill the spiritual purpose of the law.

Purpose of the law is to protect the unity of a man & a woman in marriage.

Our hearts are to be committed to each other—Not just our bodies!

Christ warns us to remove the cause of the offense

If the eye causes you to sin, cut it out.

If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off.

So, what part of the body causes us to sin in this way?

What can we cut out to solve this sin problem?

It’s a *heart* problem!

So it will take heart surgery!

We’ll have to cut out our heart to solve it!

What will true religion produce in us?

How can we pull this off?

Remember Romans!!

One discussion question:

What are the implications of this instruction for US?

What difference should our Lord’s words make in OUR lives?

How can we live counter-culturally—against the flow of our culture?

Concerning Divorce 5:31-32

"It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' ³²But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

Background:

Describes attitude of Pharisees

Matt. 19:3-12

Tone of their question: *"Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?"*

=> What kind of excuse is good enough?

Focus of Jesus' response:

God's plan for marriage

⁴He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, ⁵and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? ⁶So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."

Jesus changes the focus.

It's not about divorce;

it's about God's plan for marriage!

By focusing on divorce, they've trampled on God's original plan.

In marriage a man and a woman are joined together—become one!

It's not about looking for an excuse to be free!

*⁷They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?" [=> **Deut 24**] ⁸He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. ⁹And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery."*

=> ¹⁰The disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry."

[¹¹But he said to them, "Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given. ¹²For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it."]

Deut. 24:1-4 "When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency [some defect] in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house,

God's people weren't to be like the "macho" pagan men around them who had the final word to treat their wife however they wished.

Who could just get rid of their wife anytime they weren't happy, for any reason, and who could bring them back at will.

God's people weren't to live that way!

So God gave them rules—because of their heart problem!— they were to be different than the pagans around them.

[²and if she goes and becomes another man's wife, ³and the latter man hates her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter man dies, who took her to be his wife, ⁴then her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after she has been defiled, for that is an abomination before the Lord. And you shall not bring sin upon the land that the Lord your God is giving you for an inheritance.]

=> **Matt 5:31-32**

It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' ³²***But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.***

They want to use the divorce certificate as a way out!

How good an excuse is good enough?!!

Legalistic approach: "Can I check the box, while getting a divorce?"

God's plan is total commitment—for life!

God still hates divorce.

Those who want to do God's will realize God *never* votes FOR divorce

They are trampling on God's plan, using law as an excuse!

They have a heart problem!

This correction of perspective isn't intended to send people who've been divorced on a guilt trip!

It's intended to refocus legalistic religious people on God's purpose for marriage. Legalistic religion will never be good enough!

True religion produces marriages that reflect God's purpose!

—NOT to seek an excuse to get out!

Divorce destroys God's plan for our lives.

That's the heart issue involved!!

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