



- In fulfilling the Law, Jesus would obey the law, implement the law, and accomplish the intentions of the law.
- 1 Tim.1:8-11 ...the law is good, a restraint against lawbreakers, murderers...not just for an ancient people, but for today. Embedded in the gospel message is the awareness of God's loving law to restrain our lives from disorder.
- Deep in the consciousness of humanity there is an awareness of the wrong-ness of murder, though it has been a constant part of human society since Cain killed his brother.

Remaking...or restating? (v.21)

- Jesus uses six examples to illustrate *fulfilling the Law*. Each begins with *"You have heard that it was said...but I tell you..."* Jesus is pretty certain that what God said and what they thought He said or meant were very different things.
- Rabbis and scribes had passed down these teachings, mixed with many traditions which had enslaved Judaism, virtually replacing the authority of the Scriptures. So Jesus re-states the law to correct their interpretation of the command.
 ☆ *It is important to immerse ourselves as much as we can in the Bible. Traditions that work for others must never be put on the same shelf as God's Word.*

Going Deeper Than the Letter (v.22)

- The Pharisees had infected their culture with shallow, legalistic interpretations of the Law. They saw *murder* as "taking someone's life in cold blood"! If they didn't do "that" they assumed they had upheld the sum-total of what God expected of them. Not according to Jesus (v.20).
- Jesus moved the commandments from outward actions to inward attitudes and motives.
- In three ways, Jesus reinforces that "murder is not merely an action, committed without reference to the character of the murderer. Before and behind any such action is one's view of other people." (D.A.Carson)
 ☆ *Even when we feel we have a legitimate issue, our own egos get in the way and lead us to sinful anger.*

(turn over)

Taking it to Heart

- Jesus didn't just state the Law with its penalty. He gave examples of how anger needs to be dealt with—providing a redemptive path. s
1. **Reconciliation in the Context of Worship.** (v.23-24.)
 - You've offended someone—and you know it., but you show up for 'duty' at church, trying to put it behind you. Jesus says, *"Go deal with it. It's far more important to reconcile with your brother than go through the motions of service and make a sham of your worship to God."*
 - We are to repent , confess our anger or hatred to God (1 John 1:9), then go and reconcile, diffuse the murderous spirit of anger in our souls and invite Christ's forgiveness, freedom and life into our relationship toward another.
 - 1 John 3:11-15; Satan is a ruthless enemy, and he doesn't care if you never 'pull a trigger'; if he can get you to hate a fellow human, he's succeeded at his job! Jesus gives the **antidote. Repent. Reconcile. Forgive.** And don't use your service to God as a smokescreen to reconciliation.
 2. **Settling Conflict Out of Court.** (v.25-26)
 - Jesus is aware of our neglect; He gives an example of seeking reconciliation even when we've allowed the relational conflict to travel as far as the court!
 - Jesus is stressing the urgency of personal reconciliation. We're never to *just let it go, it's no big deal...*any more than we would with murder.
 - Jesus came to address both the external law-breaking, as well as the inner workings of the heart where anger, hatred, bitterness can destroy a life. Jesus doesn't want judgment for us. He came to set us free.

TAKE IT HOME...for personal reflection

1. In Matthew 15 Jesus addresses erroneous treatment of His law. What is Jesus opposing, and how does this inform the issue in Matthew 5:21-26?
2. Some people suggest that Jesus is forbidding killing of any sort. What do you think, and why?
3. Why are "less serious" things like anger, hate and insults tantamount to murder in God's sight?
4. What hope does the gospel offer for people whose hearts are prone to the spirit of murder?
 (See 1 Tim.1:8-11; 1 John 3:11-15; 1 Peter 3:8-12)
5. Is there a broken relationship you are needing to reconcile. What instruction do you see in this text that inform the steps you need to take?