

# **GATECITY CHURCH**

## **THE CULTURE OF THE KINGDOM, PT. 4**

### **MAY 5<sup>TH</sup>, 2024 – BILLY HUMPHREY**

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#### **I. Review**

- A. Last week we covered the call to be salt and light. Jesus' strong encouragement to believers is that we have the power to impact the world when we look the least like it but the most like Him.
- B. We also talked about how greatness in the Kingdom of God is not measured by who has the biggest platform or greatest sphere of influence but by those who live and teach others to live the Sermon on the Mount.

#### **II. Introduction**

- A. This week we are going to cover the six corrections (Matthew 5:21-48). These verses are known as the six "antitheses" where Jesus said, "you have heard it said, but I say unto you." With each one of these areas, He continually points to an inner reality of righteousness instead of an external reality of religious form.
- B. Jesus reorients His hearers to understand the teachings of the law through Holy Spirit interpretation. The problem was not with the law. The problem was with the way the Jewish leaders had interpreted it and misrepresented God through it.
- C. The major truth that Jesus communicated was that the issues of our hearts are just as important as the actions of our hands. If we commit a sin on the inside, it's just the same as if we've committed it on the outside.
- D. He addresses six different areas of sin that are contrary to His value system. These are:
  - 1. Anger (Matthew 5:21-26)
  - 2. Lust (Matthew 5:27-30)
  - 3. Covenant breaking (Matthew 5:31-32)
  - 4. Swearing falsely (Matthew 5:33-37)
  - 5. Retaliation (Matthew 5:38-41)
  - 6. Hatred (Matthew 5:42-47)

#### **III. Anger**

**Matthew 5:21-22** – "21 You have heard that it was said to those of old, '*You shall not murder*, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' 22 But I say to you 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.

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- A. The Pharisees taught that murder was the key issue, allowing people to harbor deep contempt and anger in their hearts toward one another, as long as they did not murder.
- B. Jesus' correction is that murder is an issue of the heart. Unchecked anger and contempt in our hearts toward another is the spirit of murder.
- C. The thoughts and intents of our hearts are no less important to God than the works of our hands.
- D. Raca – Idiot; Fool – Worthless Idiot. It's where we get moron. In this context has to do with an individual's dignity
- E. He has in mind the deliberate and malicious belittling of a person's dignity as a human being. He is describing that *demeaning, denigrating disdain and contempt for another person*.
- F. The Answer to Anger is found in the following verses:

**Matthew 5:23-26** – “<sup>23</sup> Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, <sup>24</sup> leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. <sup>25</sup> Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. <sup>26</sup> Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny.”

- 1. When you think a brother has something against you, you go to them and reconcile, even before you worship or offer to God.
- 2. The principle of “agreeing quickly with your adversary” is that we should listen to the person who has an issue with us and see it from their side. Wherever you can agree with them, own what your part is.

### **IV. Lust**

**Matthew 5:27-28** – “<sup>27</sup> You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' <sup>28</sup> But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

- A. The Pharisees had made the issue physical adultery but had not dealt with the internal issues that are resident before someone commits the specific act. It's lust in the heart.
- B. Adultery or Fornication is not simply an external act, it's something that takes place in the heart well before any physical act is committed.
- C. Jesus answer to the issue of lust in the heart is to deal with it ruthlessly because it has the potential to destroy you. (Matthew 5:29-30; 1 Corinthians 6:18; 1 Peter 2:11)

### **V. Covenant Breaking**

**Matthew 5:31-32** – <sup>31</sup> Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' <sup>32</sup> But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery."

- A. The certificate of divorce under Moses' served a few purposes:
  - 1. It cleared the wife of being known as an adulteress.
  - 2. It freed the wife of having to perform any marital obligations.
  - 3. It was a deterrent to hasty, frivolous divorce.
- B. Whereas the Pharisees, specifically those of the school of Shammai, had taken Moses teaching from Deuteronomy 24, that said divorce was allowed for "some indecency" and applied it to almost dislike a man had toward His wife. Jesus raises the bar by saying, you can't divorce for these other frivolous reasons if there is no sexual immorality.
- C. The original intent of the law was to show the holiness of marriage and not allow men with perverse hearts to demean the institution that declared God's love for His people.
- D. Divorce was permitted but not prescribed, never commanded, only a concession. Even in cases of sexual immorality, divorce is a concession not a command.

### **VI. Swearing Falsely**

**Matthew 5:33-37** – <sup>33</sup> Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.' But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. <sup>36</sup> Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. <sup>37</sup> But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one."

- A. The Pharisees taught that certain oaths were binding while others were not. If you took an oath by the Temple, it was not binding; but if you took an oath by the gold of the Temple, then it was binding. If you swore by the altar, you didn't have to keep it; but if you swore by the gift on the altar, then you had to keep it. (Matthew 23:16-22)
- B. Jesus desires that our "yes" would be "yes" and that our "no" would be "no." He is calling us to faithfulness. He is encouraging all those who follow Him to follow through on their commitments. He desires that we'd honor and keep our word even when we don't feel like it. He exhorts us to not go back on our word even when it causes us pain or creates challenges.

- C. Some have been raised where lies, exaggerations, falsehood were the norm. Some have experienced households where honest conversations, sharing of hearts, truthful assessments were absent.
- D. When truth is absent, reality is absent. When truth and reality are absent, we live in fantasy, believing lies, disconnected from the Lord and others.

### VII. Retaliation & Personal Rights

**Matthew 5:38-42** – "38 You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.'<sup>39</sup> But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. <sup>40</sup> And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. <sup>41</sup> If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. <sup>42</sup> Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you."

- A. The intent of "eye for an eye, or tooth for a tooth," was that it would set a limit of recompense for someone who had suffered injury. The point was that it was to prohibit an individual from exceeding the wrong they had suffered in their retaliation.
- B. Secondly, this was a restrictive commandment to be used by the courts to prevent escalation of a feud. The Pharisees not only allowed it to be applied in a personal way, but they required men to bring retribution upon one who had wronged them, rather than seeing it as a concession they saw it as a command.
- C. The other examples Jesus gives each have a specific application in different areas we want to claim our own rights:
  - 1. Turn the other cheek – is about not returning insults and deals with our *reputation*.
  - 2. Tunic and cloak – is about giving up our *property* and deals with fighting over our rights.
  - 3. Go the extra mile – is about giving up our *time* to others.
  - 4. Give & lend – is about giving up our *money*.

### VIII. Hatred

**Matthew 5:43-48** – "<sup>43</sup> You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'<sup>44</sup> But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup> that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. <sup>46</sup> If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? <sup>47</sup> And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? <sup>48</sup> Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

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- A. Jesus introduces love as the central feature in His Kingdom. He says, “Love your enemy.” An enemy is not a person you hate because we are called to love all men. An enemy therefore can only be defined as one who hates you. As Christians, we are not to have those that we hate and label as ‘enemy.’ There may be individuals who hate us and label themselves as our adversary, but we are to treat them not with contempt but kindness. What does it mean to authentically love your enemy?
- B. “Nothing will more quickly capture the attention of non-Christians than loving your enemies, if only because nothing is more contrary to human nature and more in conformity with the divine nature.” - Sam Storms
- C. St. Augustine once said, “*Many have learned how to offer the other cheek, but do not know how to love him by whom they were struck.*” We can’t just ignore our enemies or simply tolerate them; we must love them with the very love of God.
- D. The call to perfection is the call to perfect love: “Be perfect in love, just like your Father is perfect in love.” In other words, Jesus says, “I want you to love the way Your Father loves; love your enemies.” Jesus manifests this on the earth by loving us and laying down His life for us even while we were still sinners and haters of God (Romans 5:8).