

## Matthew 5:21-37 NAS

### Murder, Anger, Adultery, Lust, Divorce, and Lies!

*Having been forgiven in Christ, let us live as Jesus' disciples!*

Sunday, February 16 at 8:00 & 10:45 + Monday, February 17 at 7 PM

Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany – 2014

Ash Wednesday is on March 5; Join us at 11 AM or 7 PM

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ: Last week, in vv. 13-20, *Jesus explained good works and the law*; today, in vv. 21-37, *Jesus fully explains three of the commandments!* Remember, **Jesus is speaking to His disciples** – people who ♦believe in Him as their Savior and ♦apply His teachings to their lives!

In each of today's three sections, Jesus will state **what people commonly knew**; then *He will explain the original full meaning!*

1. **You Shall Not Murder**: The topic is murder, *but also our overall relationship with others!*
  - a. Do not murder, be angry, or name call: <sup>21</sup> **"You have heard** that the ancients were told, 'You shall not commit murder' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.'<sup>22</sup> **But I say to you** that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell." // Even though WE make a big distinction between murder, anger, and name calling, *GOD does not*. We tend to do so because of the earthly penalties associated with each offense, yet all are serious in God's sight! They are all linked with broken relationships! So what should we, *as Jesus' disciples*, do?
  - b. Take action quickly to work things out with others:
    - i. <sup>23</sup> "If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you,<sup>24</sup> leave your offering

there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering. // It was typical for a Jew to hand his gift directly to a priest; sometimes, *when about to do so*, a person might recall an unresolved issue of anger. It's logical to *present the gift*, then *go and work things out*. But Jesus instructs us to work things out first! *Reconciliation with others is very important!*

- ii. <sup>25</sup> **Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, in order that your opponent may not deliver you to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison.** <sup>26</sup> Truly I say to you, you shall not come out of there, until you have paid up the last cent." // Jesus is speaking about a window of opportunity – *before our opponent delivers us to the judge*. Before that window closes, we should kindly do whatever we can to work things out. May our *inward relationship with God* be reflected in our *outward relationship with others!*
2. **You Shall Not Commit Adultery** (Acts 20:26-27): The topic is adultery, *but also the sad reality of continuing in unrepentance!*
    - a. Do not commit adultery or look with lust: <sup>27</sup> **"You have heard** that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery';<sup>28</sup> **but I say to you**, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart." // Adultery severs relationships and can end marriages, so we know it's serious; lust ♦is secret, ♦in the heart, and ♦seems to have no negative consequences. But, *in God's sight*, it is a serious relationship-breaking sin!
    - b. Unrepentant sin is a most serious matter: <sup>29</sup> **"And if your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to be thrown**

into hell.<sup>30</sup> And if your right **hand** makes you stumble, cut it off, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to go into hell.” // For those who continue in sin without repentance – *thus without sorrow for sin and trust in Jesus for forgiveness*, the destination will be hell. Since Jesus lived and died to remove our sins, He desperately wants us to benefit from His work; therefore, He is calling for sincere repentance!

- c. Divorce can lead to adultery, so be careful:<sup>31</sup> “And it **was said**, ‘Whoever sends his wife away, let him give her a certificate of divorce’; <sup>32</sup> **but I say to you** that everyone who divorces his wife, except for *the* NET Bible – to the end of this verse: fact that she has been sexually unfaithful, causes her to be looked upon as an adulteress, and whoever marries a divorced woman is looked upon as an adulterer.” // In Jesus’ time divorce occurred simply because *a more desirable spouse had been found*, so Jesus spoke against that practice and explained the implications:
- i. Marriage: A man and a woman enter into a one flesh, lifelong bond which God severs at death.
  - ii. Sexual unfaithfulness: The guilty person severs the one flesh relationship, so divorce is permitted – it legally cuts the tie between husband and wife.
  - iii. Divorce without unfaithfulness: The person taking action to divorce is the guilty person; he causes his wife *and the man she later marries* to be *falsely looked upon as adulterous*. The reverse is also true – *when the wife divorces the husband*.
  - iv. Remarriage of the innocent person: “**Nothing in the words of Jesus forbids such a woman (or, if the case is the reverse, such a man) to marry again.... This man as little ‘commits adultery’ as the woman ‘commits adultery.’ Neither ‘commits’ anything, both have had something committed upon them.**” (Lenski, 233, 235)

- v. “Jesus condemned the easy divorce practices of His day that resulted in adulterous relationships. He teaches that the sacred union of marriage is life-long. Jesus’ authoritative teaching concerning divorce has often been violated... The child of God who is guilty of a sinful divorce has the assurance that Jesus bore this sin also.” (Luth. Sty. Bible, 1588)

3. **You Shall Not Misuse the LORD’s Name:** The topic is our use of the LORD’s name, *but also our honesty in communicating with others!*
- a. For disciples, promises are not needed:<sup>33</sup> “Again, **you have heard** that the ancients were told, ‘You shall not make false vows, but shall fulfill your vows to the Lord.’<sup>34</sup> **But I say to you**, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God,<sup>35</sup> or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.<sup>36</sup> Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black.” // Lying is common: 12% of adults admit to telling lies sometimes or often; 60% of people lie at least once during a 10-minute conversation; the average number of lies per day by women to their partner, boss, or colleagues is **3**, **by men** is **6**.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, *to distinguish between truth and a lie*, people tend to say: “I promise...” Such is *not necessary* for disciples, but, *when required by the world*, making an oath is not a sin!
  - b. For disciples, “yes” or “no” is enough:<sup>37</sup> “**But let your statement be, ‘Yes, yes’ or ‘No, no’; and anything beyond these is of evil.**” // We, *through Jesus*, are God’s holy children, so may our “yes” mean “yes” and our “no” mean “no.”

**Conclusion:** Forgiven in Christ, may our lives honor Him! Amen!

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<sup>1</sup> <http://statisticbrain.com/lying-statistics/>