

# Matters of the Heart [Part 2] (Bilingual Teaching)

by Pat Kenney

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*True righteousness is not just about outward show, but a matter of the heart, and we must deal with our inner struggles in order to follow Jesus.*

**Duration:** 1:03:14

**Scripture:** Exodus 20:13, Matthew 5:20-22, Matthew 5:25, Matthew 5:27-28, Matthew 5:43-44, Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Heart"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of the condition of one's heart in relation to following God's commandments. He emphasizes that while the law teaches not to murder, Jesus reveals that anger towards others is the root of murder. The speaker advises listeners to quickly reconcile with their adversaries and settle differences, as unresolved issues can escalate and hinder one's relationship with God. Additionally, the sermon highlights the Pharisees' strict adherence to religious laws and the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation over religious duties.

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## Transcript

In chapter 5 we have Jesus' first recorded sermon. We know it as the Sermon on the Mount. And the Mount was where Jesus left the crowds to teach his disciples.

So this instruction is for followers of Jesus. If you're a follower of Jesus, pay attention. Now, in Judaism at the time of Christ, the Jewish nation was run by the Pharisees and the scribes and the Sadducees.

The Pharisees spent their whole lives trying to keep the most minute portions of the law. The law would refer to the law of Moses, known to us in general as the Ten Commandments. But they had created literally hundreds of rules to keep those commandments.

As a result, they were perfectionists in religious law. But there was a problem with their heart. How many of you know you can be religious but still have a problem in your heart? So Jesus is going to be dealing with six issues of the law and show that what the Pharisees were teaching was not what God intended.

In verse 20, we read, For I say to you that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. In verse 20, we read, For I say to you that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by

no means enter the kingdom of heaven. You see, the problem with the Pharisees is their righteousness was all outward.

But their hearts and their attitudes were rotten. How quickly they sought to kill Jesus because of his popularity with the people. So Jesus is going to be dealing with what true righteousness is.

And it's not just outward show, but a matter of your heart. Now in those days, the common people did not have the scriptures. They basically learned the word from the Pharisees and the scribes.

Realmente lo que hacían es que aprendían la ley, las escrituras de los fariseos y de los escribas. Lo que Jesucristo va a hacer es que les va a decir lo que escucharon, pero después le va a decir lo que realmente Dios trató. Vimos tres de estos la semana pasada.

And I want to summarize the first couple of them. The first thing that they heard was that you shall not murder and whoever murders will be in danger of judgment. And it's true, the law did teach that.

But Jesus said the problem is with the heart. Because he says, I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of judgment. It is anger towards a person that leads to murder.

It starts in your heart. So we should all understand that. Be careful of anger.

If anger is brewing inside you, it's going to lead to danger. God calls us to forgive one another. If you allow bitterness to stay in your heart.

In God's eyes, it's the same as murder. In God's eyes, it's the same as death. And in verse 23 he says to them, therefore, if you bring your offering to the altar and you remember that your brother has something against you.

What he says to them is that first go and settle things with your brother and then come and bring your offering to the altar. Jesus sees it more practical, in his estimation, to settle the problems you have with your brother than to bring your offering to the altar. Instead of saying, nope, I'm not going to do anything until they come to me.

Because they were wrong. So I'm not going to forgive them until they say they're sorry. No, Jesus says you take the initiative.

You make things right with your fellow man and then you can make things right with God. Because if you allow bitterness to remain in your heart, you're not going to get close to God. So go first.

Verse 25, he says, 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're thrown in prison. Assuredly, I say to you, you'll by no means get out of there until you have paid the last penny.

Seek to make peace quickly and settle your differences. Learn to apologize quickly and do your best to make things right. Little issues tend to grow into huge crises if not dealt with quickly.

And stubborn pride can so complicate and confuse circumstances that you end up with no way out. So if you have a problem with someone, go to them. And go humbly.

And you initiate the restoration. And you watch God bless. Now the next issue.

And I'll let Roberto just read it in Spanish for time's sake and we can follow along in our Bibles in English. Verses 27 and 28. So, the Lord is saying, you shall not commit adultery.

That's what the law says. But I say to you, if you've got lust in your heart, if you look at a woman to lust, you've already committed adultery with her. Again, can you see that the issue isn't only what you're doing outwardly.

The Pharisees were priding themselves in not committing adultery physically. However, we'll see in the next few verses regarding their attitude towards divorce, that they looked at divorce very shallow. So if they got tired of their wife for any reason and lusted after another woman, they could just divorce her and go after the other woman.

Lo que ellos hacían es que si tenían a su esposa y se cansaban de ella, o les gustaba alguna otra, la dejaban y se iban con la que les gustaba. Jesus calls that sin. Now, since Jesus considers adultery in the heart a sin.

We know what we think about and what we allow our heart to rest on is based on choice. Lo que pensamos o lo que dejamos que esté en nuestro corazón está basado en un... Based on choice. Well, let me rephrase it.

What you think about is a choice. What you allow your mind to go over and over is a choice you make. Lo que tú permites que tu mente esté pensando y pensando es una opción que tú tienes.

Now, in that day, as well as today, many believe that they have no choice and therefore no responsibility for what they think about. But this contradicts the clear teaching of Jesus here. We may not be able to control passing thoughts and feelings, but we certainly do decide where our heart and mind will rest.

So I may be tempted, but I have the choice of whether to fix on that temptation. Therefore, I do have the power, through Jesus in me, to fix my mind on Him and not allow anything that would be embarrassing Him. Jesus takes this so seriously that He gives them a radical example here.

On how serious sin is. How devastating sin is. He says in verse 29, I'm going to read this in English.

If your right hand causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. For it's more profitable for you that one of your members perish than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

What is Jesus saying here? Is He telling us to poke out our eyes and cut off our hands? If I poke out my eye, my right eye, I still got my left eye. If I cut off my right hand, I still have my left hand. If I poke out both eyes and cut off both hands, I still have my heart.

So what's Jesus saying? Jesus is commanding us to deal drastically with sin. Jesus is telling us to remove from our lives anything that would pamper wrong desires. Jesus simply stresses the point that one must be willing to sacrifice to be obedient.

If part of our life is given over to sin, we must be convinced that it is more profitable for that part of our life to die rather than to condemn our whole life. We have to be willing to sacrifice to be obedient. As you grow in the Lord, you understand sin.

As you read through God's Word and understand God's heart, you realize what is pleasing to God and what is not pleasing to God. And we make a choice to please God or to please ourselves. Am I willing to sacrifice the things that please me to honor God? That's the bottom line.

Jesus said, if anyone comes after me, let him deny himself. Let him take up his cross and follow me. The cross is not just a piece of jewelry.

It was an instrument of death. So Jesus says, if you're going to follow me, are you willing to die to those things that would come between you and me? And I want to say, yes, Lord. I don't want anything to come between me and the Lord.

Now, we can get caught up with just looking at what we should not do and not really have victory. If I'm told, don't do this, don't do that, then I think more about this and that. Amen? But when I fix my mind on Jesus and I direct my heart to be pleasing to God, then the things of earth grow dim.

That's very important to understand in this section. It's not just what you don't do, but it's what you do. To resist the lusts of the flesh is to choose to follow Jesus and to keep our minds fixed on eternity.

This world is not our home. We know that our time is short. And in not too many months or years, we're going to be out of here.

And then all eternity awaits, making our lifetime here just like a... I'm not going to do that. So I want to be focusing the time I have here on who I'm going to be with for all eternity. So love the Lord, your God, with all your heart and soul and mind and strength.

Hunger and thirst after righteousness. And then we can sing that old hymn by Isaac Walker Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all. Now he moves to the next issue.

In verse 31. Furthermore, it's been said, whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce. 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. Basically, the Pharisees were divided into two camps. There were two rabbis that they followed.

One was named Shammai and the other was Hillel. Now those who followed Shammai were very conservative. They said that on the basis of Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 24.

Divorce could be granted only in the case of uncleanness. Which they interpreted to be sexual immorality or adultery. The followers of Hillel were very liberal.

They said uncleanness is much broader than simply adultery or immorality. If a woman, for example, put too much salt and pepper on her huevos rancheros. And that made him lose his virginity.

Lose his temper. She had made him sin and therefore was unclean. A legitimate reason for divorce.

They also said if a man saw a woman who was more righteous or more virtuous than his wife. Then he had the right to divorce her because she was now unclean by comparison. The followers of Shammai said a written bill of divorce must be given.

That took a little time. Not everybody could write. You had to seek out a scribe.

In other words, you had to give it time. However, the followers of Hillel said that all that was required was for the husband to look at his wife and say I divorce you three times. We laugh, but that's a lot like today.

Divorce was occurring for the most frivolous reasons. So Jesus sides more with the school of Shammai here. And he said that fornication is the only reason for divorce.

Notice he does not say those who remarry following a divorce will live in constant adultery. The wording in the Greek is very clear on that. The verse does not say or imply that if a person divorces and remarries he or she will live in adultery.

I like what John Corson had to say on this. He said if divorce and remarriage occur you have missed the best. God's best is that there is one man for one woman until death separates them.

That was God's intent for marriage. God's best is that marriage be redeemed and restored. And if that doesn't happen you miss the best.

You miss the mark. Now I have to ask you a question. In the cases where divorce has occurred is there redemption? Is there forgiveness? Yes there is.

God forbid that we should say all manner of sin is forgiven you except for one, divorce. Is that what Jesus said? No he didn't. What Jesus said was all manner of sin is forgiven you except the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.

Every kind of sin you can imagine can be forgiven you except the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. And what is the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit? Very simply the rejection of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit came to bear witness of Jesus.

If you die without ever responding to the witness of the Spirit of Jesus if you die without having Jesus Christ without the Holy Spirit bearing witness of Jesus Christ you go into eternity without Christ. It is very sad to see how the Church today has taken the role of making people feel bad for the people who have divorced as if they were lepers or alone. The truth is we are all sinners.

We have all missed the mark. Look around you and you will see a murderer sitting next to you and a bunch of adulterers in front and behind you. We are all sinners and we all need a Savior.

And Jesus Christ forgives us adulterers and murderers and divorced people. That is the good news. Now does that mean we march merrily on to greater sin? If you do you are missing the whole point.

If you are an unwise individual go ahead, continue on in sin and keep hurting yourself and your kids and your family. Those who are wise know that sin hurts and they learn to stay away from it. Jesus also said here that divorce is not permissible except for unfaithfulness.

Now this does not mean that divorce should automatically occur when a spouse is unfaithful. The word translated unfaithfulness implies a sexually immoral lifestyle. It does not speak about a confessed and repented act of adultery.

Those who discover that their partner has been unfaithful what should they do? Should they say you are out of here? Or should they make every effort to forgive and reconcile and restore the relationship? Most

of us would probably say you are out of here. How dare you? You made a commitment to me and you broke it. And I hereby break my commitment to you.

Is that the way of Jesus? Jesus forgave me of all my sins. 34 years ago 34 years ago I asked Jesus to forgive me, come into my life make me a new person. And he said muy bien, ok.

He said ok. He forgave me. Now a few days later I sinned.

I can't tell you exactly what it was but I know I did. And Jesus didn't come to me and say you are out of here. No more.

But rather he continued to forgive me. And he continued to love me. And I didn't mess up just once.

Many many times. And the Lord was faithful to forgive and to cleanse. And I am so grateful to this day that he didn't kick me out of his kingdom.

Unfaithfulness is horrible. It just breaks the heart and we broke the Lord's heart. And so we depend upon his grace and his love to forgive.

That's the way of the cross. We are always to look for reasons to restore the marriage relationship rather than for excuses to leave it. We have people calling us from time to time who have experienced this.

And they are very angry and deeply hurt. And humanly it's very hard to say you need to forgive them. But we know that God is not finished in any relationship.

And we want to keep the door open for God to work. And that's where we need to lead people. So just because someone may have the grounds for divorce that doesn't mean that you divorce them.

Now that may happen and if it does happen because of uncleanness, because of fornication, because of adultery, it's legal. God recognizes it. And the other person is free to remarry.

But we have to ask is it God's best way? Or is there something more that God might do miraculously in that situation? And frankly the fact that I would be forgiven of my sin is a miracle. And that God would still love me and tell me that I'm his own. It's beyond me.

And so I want to be a vessel of love. And I know all of the pastors here want to continually encourage people to love. That will always be our counsel.

Exercise every option possible. Seek as much help as you can to restore what was broken. And thereby glorify God.

Again, this is a matter of the heart. The Pharisees just let anything cause a divorce. And Jesus says that's not the intent of the law.

Now he moves to another issue if we can move on. By the way, we'll deal with this more in depth when we get to chapter 19. Okay? So just don't hold your breath, but we will be there.

The fourth issue that he deals with has to do with what you say. Now he says, you've heard that it was said to those of old you shall not swear falsely, but you shall perform your oaths to the Lord. But Jesus says, don't swear at all.

Don't swear by heaven or by Jerusalem. Nor shall you swear by your head because you can't make one hair white or black. But let your si be si and your no be no.

For whatever is more than that is of the evil one. What's he saying here? You shouldn't have to take an oath to affirm what you are saying is true. Quiere decir que no tenemos que entrar en un juramento para decir que lo que, para asegurar o afirmar lo que estamos diciendo es pecado.

Que tu seas conocido como una persona que da su palabra. Que mantienes tu palabra. Solamente aquellos que no guardan su palabra son los que tienen que dar juramentos todo el tiempo.

Te juro. I swear on a stack of bibles. If we tell the truth all the time we will have less pressure to back up our words with an oath or a promise.

When somebody always says, I promise, I promise. It usually means they are always breaking their promise. And they are trying to impress you with their enthusiasm.

Let your words be yes or no. In other words, your words should always carry accountability. You should be able to back up with truth any fact that you give.

One of the things that I've noticed in church life and Pastor Roberto has noticed this and so has Mark and Richard that sometimes people don't agree with you. Or they don't agree with how the church is being run. And so we'll get little notes sent to us without a signature usually criticizing something that's going on in the church.

Now let me say criticism is acceptable. We want to be open for criticism. But if you are going to criticize do so with open discourse and accountability.

Not hit and run. Sign your letters because when you put your name on it now we have accountability. Because what we do with unsigned letters lo rompemos y lo tiramos a la basura.

So if you want a response, put your name on it. And we're not going to kick you out of the church because you dared to question God's anointed. But we want to resolve issues.

And frankly there's a lot that we can learn. But we want to talk about it with mutual accountability. You understand? Please.

Por favor. I don't know if I have time for this. I want to give just a short example.

A couple months ago after the tsunami hit I was sharing a message in Revelation on judgment and at the end of the message I made a comment about relief efforts in Southeast Asia. And I said that it was mostly Christian agencies that were responding to the needs there. Because the religious system of the area is not intent on meeting needs.

In other words if something bad happens to you I said it's bad karma. And you can't change karma. Now I made that comment it was about 30 seconds of my message.

Some guy from down in San Diego was watching the broadcast that night. He never watched it before. And he tuned in right about that time where I was saying that.

And he had friends in Indonesia who were Buddhists and Hare Krishnas. And so he wrote me a letter and said you Christians always judging. You're just like all the rest of them.

I know for a fact. All of this. And then he signed his name and left his email address.

So I felt obligated to contact him. And I let him know that I didn't want any reproach to be made on the name of Jesus. And that I would review that particular message and if necessary to make a correction or to apologize I would do so.

Now at the time I didn't know what he was talking about. I listened to the whole message and it was 30 seconds at the end of it. But sure enough I was at home listening to it and then I called Joyce in and said listen to this.

And Joyce said you said that? Yeah listen to it slow. And she said I know why he would say that. So I wrote him back.

And I apologized. And I said I didn't really research this out. And furthermore I'm pulling that tape from further media distribution.

And I apologize. He wrote me back. And he said Pastor I'm the one that needs to apologize.

I wasn't raised this way to criticize as I did. Please forgive me. Perhaps we both learned from this incident.

Now I don't know about you but I had a warm fuzzy at the end of that encounter. Because I learned something and because he put his name on it we had the opportunity for discourse. And the guy wasn't a Christian.

But we left the discussion with a much different view of what an individual Christian does. And I prayed for the brother. I pray he comes to know the Lord.

So sign your name sign your letters. But your yes be yes your no be no. Now the next issue, the fifth issue you've heard it said an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

You knock out my tooth I knock your tooth out. You hit me in the head I hit you in the head. And under the civic law at that time that's the way it was.

But they were teaching that this was an obligation you had to do it. They were teaching there was no room for mercy. But Jesus said blessed are the merciful.

Blessed are the merciful. The law was never meant to be a guide for personal revenge. It was given to limit vengeance.

So he says to them I tell you not to resist an evil person. Whoever smacks you on your right cheek turn the other one to him also. Does that go against our grain? Our initial reaction somebody insults me, smacks me there's something about my flesh that goes Muy malo.

Very bad. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic let him have your cloak also. Now in those days the land of Israel was under Roman rule.

And so if a Roman soldier said I want you to carry my spear and my shield he could conscript you to do that right there and you had to do it. So if he says I want you to carry this for a mile and you get to the end

of the mile and you turn to him and say could I carry another one? It doesn't say this in the Greek but it's implied you'll blow his mind. So give to him who asks you and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.

What a wise, potent and practical insight this is about life. You control the situation when you don't fight back. Somebody hits you in anger you hit them back in anger you both have sinned.

You control the situation when you don't fight back. I said that already, don't repeat that. It opens the door for God to work in the situation.

When you respond in a wise way it opens the door for God to work in that situation. Our desire should be to love and forgive not to keep score. This takes a dependency and trust and surrender to God so that my actions and words and thoughts would be pleasing to him.

And it takes supernatural strength that only God can give. In myself in my own emotions I can't love that way. My buttons can get pushed and my limit of love with my own ability is passed.

So I need supernatural love to get passed that. And that supernatural love is given me through Jesus Christ. Jesus is also dealing with our attitude towards our possessions.

Many are very possessive. They are bound by their possessions and they can't let go of anything. Are you entangled by your material possessions to the point that it destroys you? To the point that it destroys you if you lose something? God has blessed us with many things.

He wants us to be sure that those things don't possess us though. We are a blessed people. We have so many material goods.

Jesus is not saying don't have any material goods. Just don't let the material goods possess you. Just don't let the material possessions possess you.

Because all that you have is a gift. Everything you own is on loan to you from God. And you can't take it with you when you die anyway.

You gotta leave it to your kids and Lord knows what they're gonna do with it. So have a light hold on things. If God has blessed you bless others.

If you see someone in need and you have something that can help them go ahead and help them. And we have people in need around us all the time. This is just simple sound counsel from the Lord.

The last issue before the carne asada verse 43 you have heard that it was said you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. The problem is it doesn't say that in the scripture anywhere.

Back in Deuteronomy 23 Moses was dealing with the Ammonites and the Moabites and they were enemies of Israel but he simply said they shall not enter the congregation of the Lord even unto the tenth generation but he didn't tell them to hate them you see the people of Jesus' day were being taught to love every neighbor that was a Jew but hate every non-Jew sometimes we see that in the church we love the Christians but we hate the heathen where is that in the bible? we are called to love and let our light shine that many more would come to Christ so Jesus said I say to you love your enemies bless those who curse you do good to those who hate you and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you John Corson said always love and forgive your enemies nothing will annoy them quite so

much that you may be sons of your father in heaven and he makes his son rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the just and the unjust you know there is a secret here if you pray for your enemies for the people who bug you the most you will experience power in your life and an ability to love them that will blow you away because when you pray for your enemies two things happen they change and you change it might take some time but slowly yet surely you will see a change if I am praying for Roberto and you are not my enemy but if I pray for Roberto every day something happens I become involved with him and interested in him as I pray for him there is a linkage established through prayer as you pray for your enemy guess what happens he won't be your enemy for very long because you

will find yourself interested in how he is doing and curious about how your prayers are being answered this is practical advice you keep the situation in control when you don't lose your temper and you make the way for God to be glorified when you pray for God's blessing on your enemy so when the person who bugs you the most comes down on you look at him and say the Lord bless you the Lord be with you the Lord make his face to shine upon you and give you peace and that will blow his mind but God says pronounce blessing upon him do good to him, pray for him and what a radical difference that makes now please not just your enemies your enemies outside but this applies to those that are closest to you your spouse your parents your children are you praying for them or are you just complaining

about them my husband never does this my wife always does that those kids it's easy to complain it takes faith to pray make us a people of faith so if you love those who love you what reward do you have don't even the tax collectors do the same and if you greet your brethren only what do you do more than others what's Jesus saying he wants us to go higher he wants us to reach out to those who are unlovely who we're not comfortable with the church is not meant to be a bless me club we're to be a light in our community and go out but that means we have to mix with people who are different than us but that's the way of the cross Jesus who is perfect mixed with me and you and how many of your lives have been changed because of that glory of God let's keep on with it and he says therefore you

shall be perfect just as your father in heaven is perfect we all need the strength and help of God to be what God wants us to be amen none of us can be perfect as he is but we must not lose sight of God's standard and continually be dependent upon the Lord may our inner attitudes may the matters of our heart look more like Jesus every day in the sermon on the mount you have practical counsel that can bless you every day let's have the worship team come on back out if you need prayer this morning if you know your heart is not right before God if you've been dealing with issues of anger or impurity or hatred God wants to minister to you his healing and he wants to restore you and the pastors will be down here in the front after the service to pray with any of you that have need if you need

to open your heart to Christ today Christ is knocking on the door of your heart and you can open that door today and his light will shine in the darkness and you'll never be the same are we grateful for Jesus' counsel? we will get even more into it in chapter 6 next week read ahead and ask God to show you where your heart needs to change where you need to be more like Jesus amen? let's stand together

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