

Do You Murder and Commit Adultery?

by Timothy Tow

Timothy Tow's sermon explores the deeper implications of murder and adultery as taught by Jesus, emphasizing the importance of reconciliation and the seriousness of sexual sins.

Scripture: Matthew 5:23

Topics: "Moral Accountability", "Spiritual Purity"

Description

Timothy Tow preaches on the contrast between the legalistic teachings of the scribes and Pharisees and the true interpretation of God's laws by Jesus Christ. He emphasizes that not only actions but also thoughts are accountable to God, warning against anger, bad words, and unresolved conflicts that lead to sins like murder. Tow highlights the importance of reconciliation before worship and the severity of harboring evil in one's heart. He addresses the seriousness of sexual sins, adultery, and divorce, stressing the need for purity and faithfulness in relationships based on Jesus' and Paul's teachings.

Transcript

Text: Matt 5:20 -32

The answer is no and yes! No according to the casuistry of the scribes and Pharisees, yes according to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The scribes and Pharisees who are the theologians and legalistic teachers quote the VII Commandment, but with a twist. You are only responsible if you actually kill, but if you are not found out you are innocent. After eating, wipe your mouth clean that the act be not seen. This sort of reasoning is also of the modern world. It is astounding that decent people and men on the high rung of life are accused from the least expected quarters. So you do not murder nor commit adultery until found out.

Jesus gives us God's requirement on these two laws. Not only are the acts guilty but also the thoughts behind the acts. By getting angry with your brother without a cause you are guilty of the sin of murder! From the heated passion it will result in bad words such as Raca , Blockhead and Fool which in English is coupled with Blood. So watch your words. How often we hear words of anger spued out from a murderous heart, "Go and die!" We hear cursing from offended mothers on their unfilial children, " Yau shiu ," i.e. "cut short the life." And though words are not used there is often confrontation between husbands and wives in mutual non-speaking. I would suggest a retired husband should go back and work instead of glaring at his wife at home, since long familiarity has bred much contempt. "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go

down upon your wrath" (Eph 4:26) might refer to a quarrel between husband and wife. How can they go to bed together after sunset while anger simmers in each other's heart?

Further extended it may result in blows and the using of a knife. The story is told of an American elder having an argument with his pastor about church matters. In his anger the elder whipped out a pistol and killed his pastor. Anger without a cause and bad words, coming to blows, are sins of the family of murder.

"Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." When you go to Church and know in your heart there is a member you have offended, go make up with him. As it is required that you forgive your brother first before you ask God for forgiveness, this is the right procedure in worship.

There were two elders of one church. Over the support for the pastor they quarrelled. One elder sat at one corner of the church while the other sat at the opposite corner. Could they worship peacefully in the same church? The answer is no, until they made up. The next two verses 25 and 26, "Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing" refer to the severity of harbouring any more evil in your heart against your neighbour, for when God comes into the picture you will have nothing that you can hide and you will be dealt with in every detail without any escape whatsoever.

The matter of committing adultery is not in the act only but also in a mere glance of your lustful eye. What male can escape from this condemnation? We men are all guilty, not once but many a time. On the other hand Matthew Henry, writing in more modern times, observes the sinfulness of women exposing their bodies in order to attract men. As the neckline plunges down the hemline flies up. Do you know who invented the mini-skirt? It started in England . As if minis are not enough we have teeny-weeny versions. That's how divorce rates have gone up.

When I studied in America 50 years ago the ratio was one in three. Now, in the western countries it has degenerated to one in two. Singapore was one in ten. Now it is one in seven.

Sexual sins bring havoc to the family. It deserves our utmost attention. It is so serious that if need be, you should pluck out your offending eye and cut off your offending hand.

From sexual sins we are led to divorce. In the Old Testament, Moses, for the hardness of the heart of the man, allowed him to put away his wife when he discovered some uncleanness in her (Deut 24). This was to make the best out of a bad situation. Today the law of divorce has also been much watered down. Incompatibility is one. The husband complains to the judge, "My wife beats my dog." The wife retorts, "My husband bashes my cat." In America I saw it advertised by lawyers, "Divorce at \$120 only." The quickest place to get a divorce is Tokyo : 5 minutes!

While Moses, to accommodate the unforgiving husbands, allowed divorce, Jesus upholds its original standard, "It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery" (Matt 5:31-32).

According to Paul's fullest treatment on the subject:

The innocent and injured party can remarry (Matt 19:1). (This is Presbyterian law.)

Either man or woman can remarry upon death of the spouse (Rom 7:2).

If an unbelieving partner leaves the marriage bond, the believing one can remarry (I Cor 7:15) e.g. between a Roman Catholic and a Protestant.

If it is a case of irremedial desertion, the innocent party also can remarry (Buswell). I am sympathetic to this view and I have remarried a brother who was walked out upon by his wife for several years. There is a law of a person taken as dead if that person is not found for 7 years, or now shortened to 3 years.

In Jesus' sermon recorded in Matt 5:20-32 we have dealt with sins committed against the VI and VII Commandments and given the Biblical interpretation by Jesus and Paul against the erroneous notion of the scribes and Pharisees. Amen.

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