

TRANSFORMING RELATIONSHIPS

Romans 12:2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect

Jesus starts with “righteousness has to exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.” What He means is the reason the scribes and the Pharisees were so harsh and so narrow was not because they were *too* righteous; it was because they weren’t righteous enough.

Jesus’ hearers knew that the law given to their forefathers forbade murder (not the taking of all life, which could, for instance, be a judicial mandate) and that the murderer must be brought to “judgment.” But Jesus insists (the “I” is emphatic in the saying) that the law really points to His own teaching. Jesus says that the root of murder is anger, and anger is murderous in principle.

Someone has not conformed to the better righteousness of the kingdom simply by refraining from homicide. The angry person will be subject to “judgment,” but it is presupposed this is God’s judgment, since no human court is competent to try a case of inward anger.

The expression “fire of hell” comes from the Hebrew *gê-hinnôm* (“Valley of Hinnom,” a ravine south of Jerusalem once associated with the pagan god Moloch and his rites which were prohibited by God). When Josiah abolished the practices of Moloch he defiled the valley by making it a dumping ground for filth and the corpses of criminals (2 Kings 23:10). Traditions suggest that in the first century it may still have been used as a rubbish pit, complete with smoldering fires. The valley came to symbolize the place of punishment.

“Brother” refers to people beyond physical brothers. This also suggests that the Christian habit of calling one another “brother” goes back to Jesus’ instruction. Among Christian brothers, anger is to be eliminated. Many Jewish sayings warn against anger, but this is not just another saying. Here Jesus offers not just advice but insists that the sixth commandment points prophetically to the kingdom’s condemnation of hate.

What Jesus does is He lays down a principle for all relationships.

- **Lovelessness is murder.**



He says you break this law if you do any one of these three things.

- 1) **If you treat somebody as *raca*.**

Jesus is talking not about **hostility**; he is talking about **indifference**.

- 2) **If you say, “You moron!”**

This is the power of the tongue. To murder means also to murder somebody’s reputation. But even more it can also means to murder their confidence in who God sees them to be.

- 3) **If you are angry with your brother.**

He is talking about resentment.

The “law” can show us how to love but it CANNOT give us the power to do it. *Charles Spurgeon says the mirror can show you how dirty your face is, but you cannot wash your face in it.*

The last thing Jesus hints at, at the very end, is that if you do not obey the law of relationships (with the help of the Holy Spirit), you are not fit for worship. If you’re not willing to forgive and make up relationships, you’re unfit for worship. *25 Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. 26 Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.* It’s a warning, but it’s also a promise.

We are people who are saved freely by grace, completely accepted. The more we see that, the more we are transformed by that knowledge and we are able to forgive. We become able to love and able to let go of the anger. Jesus paid every last penny we owed for our forgiveness at the moment of the cross, understanding His grace is how all of our relationships will be restored.

GOSPEL CLASS

Starts Wednesdays
July 2nd, 6:30p

MEMBER INTERVIEW

For a Member Interview,
email info@ourelement.org

TAPE DAY!

June 8th after 3rd Service
\$1 Per strip of Duct Tape or 6 for \$5!

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