



Title: The Heart of the Problem

Text: Matthew 5:27-30

CONTEXT |

Jesus teaches his disciples what it really looks like to follow Him and live as a part of His kingdom. The sermon on the mount is foundational teaching on living in light of the gospel. We have already considered the descriptions of the nature of true Christ-follower's character in the beatitudes, and the responsibility we have to be salt and light in the world. God intends to show himself through our peculiar lives. Some will lash out in hatred, but some will come to faith in Christ. The main idea of the entire sermon is found in vv. 17-20. To enter the kingdom, now and for eternity, we must have a righteousness greater than the Scribes and Pharisees. This baffling assertion warranted an explanation, so in this part of the Sermon Jesus explains how the religious teachers' understanding of God's standard was incomplete.

MAIN IDEA |

As Jesus works in our hearts, we must deal with sin aggressively.

KEY VERSE |

But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.
Matthew 5:28 ESV

DISCUSSION QUESTION IDEAS |

- Can you think of how these first two examples of Jesus' standard of righteousness should shape the way we communicate the gospel to lost people?
- We are not plucking our eyes out or cutting hands off, so what are some practical ways we can aggressively deal with sin?
- How would you describe the difference between Legalism, and a proper pursuit of practical holiness?
- Do you have a plan to shepherd your family and protect yourself from pornography and the like?
- Was there anything from the text or sermon that God spoke directly to you that you would like to share?
- **Pray:** for God to create a passion for holiness and His glory in one another. Does anyone have some request for prayer and accountability?

EXPLANATION |

We saw last week that we are guilty of breaking the 6th commandment (murder), as soon as we harbor or act out unrighteous anger towards someone. Fulfilling the law isn't just about abstaining from murder, but loving one another. Here we see that we break the 7th commandment (adultery) when we lust in our hearts.

Sin is not just something we do, it is something within us. We do sin because our hearts are sinful. Yet Jesus gives his followers shocking instruction to aggressively deal with our sin. He challenges us to dispose of whatever prompts us to sin, regardless of how painful it may be. It is not worth compromising eternity. Followers of Jesus must take their own sin seriously. We do not have the power to defeat sin's lure on our own, but the Spirit of Christ in us empowers us to engage in this battle. Of course, it will be a battle we fight until our last breath.