

Mathew 5:21-22: Sin begins in the heart

²¹ **“You have heard that the ancients were told, ‘YOU SHALL NOT MURDER,’ and ‘Whoever commits murder shall be answerable to the court.’** ²² **But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be answerable to the court; and whoever says to his brother, ‘You good-for-nothing,’ shall be answerable to the supreme court; and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ shall be guilty *enough to go into the fiery hell.***

When Jesus says “you have heard”, he might have well have included “from the scribes and Pharisees”, because they were the ones who were telling them what the word of God said, and what it _____.

²¹ **“You have heard that the ancients were told, ‘YOU SHALL NOT MURDER,**

The first time that the Israelites were given the Ten Commandments, it was directly from the _____ of God. (Ex. 19:9; 20:1) but the people were afraid, so they wouldn’t _____ it directly from God (Ex 20:9). So, it is the same as in the Exodus: Jesus’ clarification will come directly from the _____ of God, Jesus.

‘Whoever commits murder shall be answerable to the court.’

God has imposed the death penalty for anyone who kills with _____, but not for accidental manslaughter (Ex. 21:14). There had to be at least two eye-witnesses to _____ a murderer (Num 35:30). The witnesses had to be the _____ ones to lay hands on the murderer, or to throw the first stone to kill him (Deut. 17:7). And of course, if it were found that you gave false witness, this would _____ that you were guilty of premeditated murder yourself.

Ransom or restitution for murder _____ the value and dignity of human life, and appropriates God’s power to take life, and gives it to man. So both the _____ of God, in declaring that man has dignity and value because he is created in God’s image, and the _____

_____ of God in that only He has the right to destroy life, since He created it, is impugned by these measures. God considers unpunished murder a defilement of the land (Gen 9:6, Num 35:33). That is why the enemy works so hard to _____ hatred, abortion and murder in our society. The enemy knows that sooner or later, God will have to _____ us for it.

What was the result of all of these specific laws of God? It’s clear throughout the Bible, that although quite a few were threatened with capital punishment, it was not at all a _____ thing. In terms of stoning, we have instances recorded in Lev 24, Num 15, Josh 7, 1 Kings 12, 1 Kings 21, 2 Chron 24, and Acts 6 the stoning of Stephen. There were attempted stonings of Moses in Exodus 17, David in 1 Sam 30, Jesus in John 10, the captain of the temple in Acts 5 and Paul in Acts 14. Courts very rarely executed a capital punishment, with Talmudic sources saying that if a Sanhedrin _____ more than one man to die in 7 years, it was considered a murderous Sanhedrin.

²² **But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be answerable to the court;**

Jesus, in His authority as God takes it a step further, to clarify for the Pharisees that the _____ interpretation of the commandment has fallen short of what God had intended.

Jesus in no way replaces the law with His own commands, but _____ it, showing that God intended the law to extend to matters of the _____, not just outer actions. Jesus not only condemns the action taken, murder, but condemns all the _____ that lead up to the murder, starting with anger in the heart. Anger is generally the _____ cause of murder, and so if the root cause is dealt with, then the murder will not occur. And Jesus’ argument points to God as _____ not to man.

and whoever says to his brother, ‘You good-for-nothing,’ shall be answerable to the supreme court;

Whoever says to his brother “Raca” shall be answerable to the Sanhedrin. Now Raca was a semi-swear word in Aramaic, and it meant empty-headed, good-for-nothing, worthless one, etc. In calling someone worthless or useless, you deny the _____ and dignity that God gives them as those created in His image. Murder is the ultimate _____ of someone’s worth and dignity from which there is

no opportunity to take it back or be reconciled, but saying something like this has a lot in _____ with murder.

and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the [m]fiery hell.

This word has a lot of history for the Hebrews in the Old Testament, and so when they used it, they were thinking of verses like Psalm 14:1 **the fool has said in his heart, "There is no God."** (also Prov 9:13, 14:9). A fool to them was an unrighteous, godless, immoral person, a wicked person _____ for hell. So, it was a curse. Eternal destruction is God's purview, not ours. And so, it's very similar to what Jesus is getting at when He says a little later in Mathew 7:1 **"Do not judge, so that you will not be judged. 2 For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.** And so, by condemning someone in this way, Jesus is saying that we sin, and condemn ourselves.

One of the best _____ to illustrate how anger in the heart leads to worse sin, which brings in the Law of Moses concerning murder, the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, and the shallowness of their wrong legalistic interpretation of the law comes from the Gospel of John, chapter 8 verses 3-11, the account of **the woman caught in adultery.**

In order to catch her in the act, they pretty much had to be laying a _____ for her, so it was likely a set-up. Both the man and the woman would have been guilty of adultery, so if this was not a setup, where is the _____?

Verse 6 tells us plainly that this was a setup, saying —**6 Now they were saying this to test Him, so that they might have grounds for accusing Him.** The Pharisees are trying to get Jesus to _____ the Law of Moses, so that they can accuse Him of heresy and stone him. See, they are _____ with Jesus and He's the one that they want to kill, not the woman. It's the murderous anger in their hearts that has brought about this situation and is the _____-cause of the problem. And so, He must address this _____.

I think that Jesus probably started out by writing the law that they'd just referred to: Leviticus 20:10 **10 'If there is a man who commits adultery with another man's wife, one who commits adultery with his friend's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death.** It begs the question: where is the _____ who was caught in adultery? This is a question that the Pharisees really didn't _____ to answer. When they persisted, and still didn't get what was going on, all Jesus had to do is begin writing: **Deut 17:6-7 6 On the testimony of two witnesses or three witnesses, the condemned shall be put to death; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of only one witness. 7 The hands of the witnesses shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people.** We know from our verses today that Jesus was not going to condemn this woman outright, and let them stone her to death right there. He would have allowed this to proceed _____ to the Law, which meant a trial before the court. Did those Pharisees really think that at least two of them could have claimed to be eye witnesses, and yet not reveal the _____ that they had hatched? Jesus would have made them look like the callous, angry, jealous attempted-murderers that they were in that trial, and they knew it. And of course, since the Pharisees would have had to give _____ witness in order to cover their tracks, and their plot. And if they succeeded in stoning the woman, and it were found out that they gave false witness, they would be guilty of premeditated murder against this woman, and would be liable to be killed themselves.

By calling them out on their _____, Jesus was able to demonstrate His mercy toward them, and then follow the law, as He later demonstrated toward the woman.