

Jesus explains the law spiritually [Matthew 5: 21- 37]

Introduction

- Jesus who fulfills the Law and the Prophets reveals the original intent of the Law

Even common-sense laws seem to explode into a morass of regulations.

The scribes and pharisees accept that scripture cannot be broken

- They seek righteousness by keeping the law by their works
- Jesus expounds the true meaning of the law as sweeping truth and revelation from God on six subjects: murder, adultery, divorce, oaths, revenge, and love.

Jesus first aims at the Fifth Commandment: *You shall not murder*

- Whoever murders is liable to divine judgment
- The Greeks call anger: *a short madness – a sickness*

TRUE OR FALSE: You can murder a person with just words and bitter insults

- True - poisonous root. [The Large Catechism]
- Horizontal relationships within the church are NOT independent of our relationship with God – especially in Holy Communion
- Divisions and factions are a contradiction of faith [Share the Peace]

Jesus next speaks to the Sixth Commandment on adultery and sexual purity in terms of thought and deed

- Lust is the same as adultery in every respect - sin
- But if we do sin – we turn in poverty of spirit to God for forgiveness [John 8:11]

The next subject is divorce

- The Jews are experts at focusing on how to divorce rather than on the limited circumstances that permit divorce
- Deuteronomy 24: the schools of Shammai and Hillel
- Divorce is the same as adultery in the sight of God

The common presumption: Divorce is not a big deal - Jesus says – *do not divorce*

In beginning the second triad of law explanations - Jesus tackles the subject of oaths

- Any oath is a promise to God
- The promises of sinful beggars are worthless when it comes to binding force
- Large Catechism: Focus on the promises of God that find their YES in Christ

The Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York: *Mediocrity is the Enemy.*

- Jesus tells his disciples; *therefore, you shall be perfect* (Matthew 5:48)

Jesus raises the bar of obedience and moral behavior for his disciples in Matthew 5

- But his love, mercy, and grace raise us up infinitely and eternally over the bar of the law and safely all the way home to heaven
- Jesus is the Lamb of God that manifests absolute perfection for us
- Jesus is the beatitude of blessing who says: *your sins are forgiven.*