

03 – MORE STRATEGIES AGAINST SIN

The Sermon Was Taught at the Crossroads of 2 Dispensations:

- ✓ The “Age of the Law” was closing, and the “Age of Grace” was about to begin. Jesus was “standing on His tippytoes”, looking over into the Age of Grace, and describing it. That’s why He says things like, “You have heard that it was said by them of old time, but NOW I say unto you.” (He wasn’t saying that Moses was wrong! He’s shifting His disciples from Old Covenant to New Covenant thinking.)

There’s a Diff. Between Sin in the OT & Sin in the NT:

- ✓ In the OT, sin was an Act. (Murder: When I took out my sword, cut you up, and you died ... *then* I was guilty of murder – not before.)
- ✓ In the NT – (1 John 3:15) – When I reach the point of hatred, and say in my heart, “I wish he were dead! I’d kill him if I thought I could get away with it!”, God looks at my intention and says, “You’re guilty!”
- ✓ In the OT, I was guilty when I DID it. In the NT, I’m guilty when it’s in my heart to do it. (WHICH IS BETTER?)

NT – I can be convicted and repent before the outward act ever takes place. (**Strategy # 1 – Deal with Sin While It’s on the Inside.**)

Matt. 5:21 – “You have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit murder (the act); and whosoever commits murder (the act) shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause (Gr: lightly angry) with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, ... and whosoever shall say, You fool ...”

There’s a Progression:

- a.) “Whosoever is lightly angry” – Irritated – (“Left socks on the floor!”)
- b.) “Whoever shall say ‘Raca’ ...” – Mental judgment – (“Blockhead!”)

c.) “Whoever says, ‘You FOOL’ ...” – “Worthless!” – (“Contempt, Hatred in the heart, finding its expression in words” – Martin Lloyd Jones)

- ❖ QUESTION: When is the easiest time to uproot that anger? When it’s light anger or intense hatred? (**Strategy # 2 – Deal with Sin While It’s Small.**)

A Scripture No One Obeys:

Matt. 5:23-24 – “So when you offer your gift at the altar, and you remember that your brother has something against you, abandon your offering, leave immediately, go to your brother and make things right. Then come and offer your gift.”

- ✓ Have you ever seen anyone do that? (Walk out of the service, get in their car, start the engine, and drive off?)

v. 25-26 – “Agree with your adversary quickly ... (**Strategy # 3 – Deal with Sin Quickly.**)

“Agree with your adversary quickly, while you’re in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver you to the judge, and the judge deliver you to the officer, and you be cast into prison. I can guarantee this: You will not leave there until you’ve paid the uttermost farthing.”

A Closer Look:

“Agree with YOUR adversary quickly, while you’re in the way with him; lest at any time THE adversary deliver you to the judge ...”

- ✓ I missed this for years! There are two adversaries in that verse! “YOUR” adversary and “THE” adversary.
- ✓ “Your” adversary is the fellow you’re having trouble with. “The” adversary is the devil. If you don’t make peace with “your” adversary, you leave a door open for “the” adversary (the devil) to “deliver you to the Judge”. From there, you could be cast into “prison”! (What does *that* mean?)

Cast into “Prison”?

Matt. 18:23-34 – “Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king – (God) – who wanted to settle accounts with his servants (us). When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents (Margin KJV: 9 ¼ million dollars).

- ✓ One Talent – equaled 6000 denarii, and one denarius was what a common laborer could earn in one day. Therefore, to pay off his debt, he would’ve had to work sixty million days – (or just over 164,000 yrs. That’s 2300 lifetimes!) That’s an impossible debt!

“Because he couldn’t pay, his master ordered him, his wife, his children, and everything that he had to be sold so that payment could be made. But the servant fell on his knees and begged, ‘Be patient with me. I will pay you everything I owe.’ And his master’s heart was moved with compassion, and he released him and forgave him, cancelling the debt.

“But that same servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii (15 dollars). He laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe me.’ And his fellow-servant fell on his knees and begged, ‘Be patient with me. I will pay you everything I owe.’ But he would not: and went and cast him into prison, till he should pay all that was due.

“When the other servants saw what had taken place, they were deeply distressed and went and reported to their master everything that had happened. Then his master summoned him and said, ‘You evil servant! I forgave your entire debt when you begged me for mercy. Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ The king was angry and delivered him to the tormentors till he should pay all that was due.”

Delivered to the Tormentors?

- ✓ He’s not referring to hell! (Unforgiveness won’t land you in hell. But you WILL be delivered to the tormentors. Who are the tormentors?)

- ✓ In New Testament times, there was a jailor who was referred to as “the tormentor”. It was his job to torment people until they were willing to do what they were supposed to do. (But, in this verse, Jesus is referring to Satan as being the “tormentor”).
- ✓ Unforgiveness puts you in “prison”, where Satan has the freedom to torment you! (That thing you refuse to forgive? He’ll make you live it over and over, tormenting you with the thought. And he’s got the right to do it – UNTIL you forgive. Once you forgive, THEN God can start to heal your pain.)

The Struggle of Forgiveness: (Facts About Forgiveness)

- ✓ We ALL struggle with forgiveness. (If you haven’t struggled, it means you haven’t been hurt badly enough yet.)
- ✓ Forgiveness is not saying that what they did to you is okay. (It’s *not* okay, and it will *never* be okay.)
- ✓ Forgiveness is not letting the offender “off the hook”, it’s letting yourself out of prison. (He’s still on God’s hook!)
- ✓ Forgiveness is not a feeling. It’s a decision you make by faith, out of obedience. (You can make the decision to forgive. But then, you see the person who hurt you, and all those feelings come rushing back. You might be tempted to say, “I thought I forgave! I guess I didn’t!” That’s not the right response! Instead, say, “Mr. Devil! I made the decision to forgive, and I’m sticking with it! It doesn’t matter what I feel! I’ve released him! He’s forgiven!”)
- ✓ There’s a difference between “forgiving” and “being healed”.

How You Can Know You’re Healed:

- ✓ You don’t let everyone know what was done to you (Gen 45:1).
- ✓ You can be near that person (Gen. 45:4).
- ✓ You can let them move on with their lives (Gen. 45:5).
- ✓ You can speak kindly and treat them kindly (Gen. 50:21).