

I. Closing doors to death: Confronting Six Weeds (Mat. 5:21-48)

A. Six Weeds – Jesus puts forward six particular aspects of the law in which the outward action of obedience was being walked out by the scribes and Pharisees, but the death within the heart still remained. In our day the same expectation of outward obedience to these six aspects is insisted upon not just in the church but even in our culture at large. In general, the death that grows in the heart is viewed as a cavalier problem at best. Whereas the action that results from the death in the heart is viewed as a serious problem.

1. Do not murder
2. Do not commit adultery
3. Do not divorce your spouse
4. Do not lie
5. Do not take revenge
6. Do not be consumed by selfishness

B. The incarnation, death, and resurrection of our Savior is a clear statement about how He feels about the death in our hearts from His vantage point. There is no question about how dedicated and intentional He is to eradicate it from our lives. (Rom 8:1-6; Heb. 9:1-14)

1. In His kindness the great Shepard of our hearts (Pastor) refuses to ignore the weeds of death in the garden of our hearts. In His relentless pursuit of the fullness of love, not only did He die and rise again on our behalf to free us from death within, but continues to expose areas of death in our heart in order to bring us to fullness. (Heb. 12:25-29; Rev. 1:14)

II. Confronting the Spirit of Murder (Mat. 5:21-26)

A. Jesus begins to bring examples to the principle “of righteousness that exceeds the scribes and Pharisees” that He put forward a few verses earlier. Without question the letter of the 6th commandment commands us not to murder. Jesus gives us the proper interpretation of walking out this commandment. It is not merely the act of murder that leads to death but the seed of violence and unrighteous anger that dwells in the heart and mind. Remember He is not adding to the Law but rather bringing it to fullness of understanding. (Mat. 5:17-18)

1. Spirit of Murder – The term “spirit” (pneuma) is used 385 times in the New Testament. It is used to speak of God’s Spirit, the life force of man, evil demonic beings, angelic beings, or the disposition of emotional influence that governs the soul. When I speak of a spirit of murder, I am referring to the disposition of emotional influence over the soul.

- a. Examples of this use of “Spirit” - meekness, adoption, slumber, fear, bondage, power, joy, faith, ect.
- B. Angry without a cause – Jesus tells us the spirit of murder that arises in our hearts should justly receive the same judgment as the actual act of murder. This unholy anger arises from a place of pride where our personal interest is affected negatively (comfort, money, position, possessions, honor, reputation, etc.).
- C. Righteous anger – In contrast, righteous anger (Gods anger) is birthed out of love and concern for righteousness to be manifest unto the glory of God. This sort of anger is against sin, but burns in holy love toward the one we desire to see set free from their struggle with sin. Jesus never displayed anger because of mistreatment or injustices committed against Him, though they were many. His righteous anger however was stirred up because of the injustices against His people. (Mat. 23; Eph. 4:25-32)
1. Whoever says Raca – Jesus shows us that infant stage of the spirit of murder looks like. It starts out as insults to someone’s identity that are first thought then voiced. “Raca” is the equivalent of calling someone “empty-headed” or “stupid.” This word would be used to insult someone’s intelligence, or to show contempt for their way of thinking.
 - a. Danger of the Council - This refers to the Sanhedrin, which was the highest court amongst the Jewish people. In the kingdom of God, the severity of this act of murder should be addressed by the highest court in the land.
 2. Whoever says You Fool – This goes beyond the previous insult by cutting down someone’s entire dignity and worth. Using this particular phrase of “fool” would be to refer to someone’s entire identity as useless or worthless. Contempt for someone’s value as a person such as this makes it easier for us to hurt that person and see them further degraded.
 - a. Danger of Hell Fire - This refers to Gehenna, which was a place where garbage was disposed and burned, and became a euphemism for the fire of hell. In other words, allowing the spirit of murder to grow in your heart to this degree has invited enough death into your heart to compromise your relationship with Jesus.
- D. The righteous one who longs for you to come into the fullness of life exposes the death that exists in the murderous heart. Many of us have never thought of actually killing someone as an outlet for our rage against them. However, all of us have had thoughts of wanting someone to disappear from our sphere. We have all murdered them with our words and thoughts. We must understand that these

thoughts and words come forth from the same spirit of murder as the actual action of killing someone in a fit of rage. (Jam. 4:1-3; Rev. 3:17-22)