**SERMON OUTLINE**

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| **SERMON TITLE:** | It’s What’s Inside That Counts |
| **SERMON REFERENCE:** | Matthew 5:20-22 |
| **LWF SERMON NUMBER:** | #1674 |
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1. INTRODUCTION
   1. It’s what’s inside that counts.
      1. Not the outer covering that we sometimes wear or the facade that we put on to try to hide the decaying spiritual life.
   2. The Pharisees were masters at this; outwardly, they looked good.
      1. But Jesus said that on the inside, they were dead, putrefying, spiritual corpses.
         1. Matthew 23:27
   3. Matthew 5:20
      1. Today, a church full of scribes and Pharisees might look like the following:
         1. They would be at church every Sunday.
         2. They would be on time.
         3. They would carry Bibles.
         4. They would tithe.
         5. They would never curse, swear, drink, get drunk, or commit adultery.
         6. They would not be saved.
      2. In this passage, Jesus was not talking about what’s on the outside.
         1. He was talking about what’s on the inside.
   4. The Lord Jesus gave an illustration to show the Pharisees what was truly down deep in their hearts.
      1. Matthew 5:21-22
   5. The Pharisees had a form of religion that was external, superficial, and hypocritical.
      1. Matthew 23:23-25
         1. They would count the leaves on a mint plant and tithe the tenth leaf to God.
         2. But they omitted the weightier matters of the law, which were judgment, mercy, and faith.
            1. Tithing is external.
            2. Judgment, mercy, and faith are internal.
      2. The Pharisees’ religion was like wiping the outside of a dish and leaving the inside full of filth.
   6. The Lord’s first concern was not the outside but the inside.
      1. Sin is an inside job.
      2. Righteousness is an inside job.
      3. The Pharisees’ lives were so straight on the outside; but on the inside, their hearts were still crooked.
   7. It is what is inside that is the problem.
      1. A man is not a sinner because he sins.
         1. He sins because he is a sinner.
      2. A man is not a thief because he steals.
         1. He steals because he is a thief.
      3. A man is not a liar because he tells lies.
         1. He tells lies because he is a liar.
      4. Matthew 15:18
      5. Matthew 5:20
   8. Many people whom Jesus witnessed to were never saved because they never saw that they were sinners.
      1. You have to get a person lost before you can get him saved.
      2. Romans 10:3
   9. In today’s message, we will see how the Lord Jesus took away the Pharisees’ veil of self-righteousness and showed them their need for Him and for regeneration.
      1. Matthew 5:20
2. the malice of murder (matthew 5:21)
   1. Matthew 5:21
      1. No one should commit murder.
      2. Here the Lord Jesus quoted from the Ten Commandments.
         1. Exodus 20:13
   2. The Ten Commandments doesn’t forbid all killing.
      1. When the Bible says, “Thou shalt not kill,” that literally means, “Thou shalt do no murder.”
         1. Exodus 20:13
      2. The Bible doesn’t forbid the killing of animals.
         1. Exodus 20:24
            1. There was nothing wrong with the sacrificing of these animals.
         2. No one should be cruel to animals, but it’s alright to use animals for food.
            1. Jesus ate fish and honeycomb.

There was no sin found in the Lord Jesus.

* + 1. The Bible doesn’t forbid capital punishment.
       1. Exodus 21:12
       2. When a person kills another person, they have committed a crime worthy of death.
       3. No one should ever take personal revenge.
          1. We never have the right to take the life of another person.
       4. The government is ordained to do this.
          1. Romans 13
          2. Genesis 9:6
       5. God didn’t save us because He doesn’t value human life.
          1. He saves us because He does value human life.
    2. The Bible doesn’t forbid, as tragic as it may be, the necessity to defend your loved ones sometimes by taking another life.
       1. Exodus 22:2-3
       2. You have a responsibility to protect your family.
  1. What is forbidden when the Ten Commandments say, “Thou shalt not kill”?
     1. Exodus 20:13
     2. The crime of homicide is forbidden.
        1. People kill innocent citizens.
        2. There are armed robberies.
        3. People take revenge on others they don’t like.
        4. God will avenge the blood of people who are killed by homicide.
     3. Suicide is forbidden.
        1. You don’t have the right to take your own life.
           1. Your life is not your own; it belongs to God.
        2. You may have problems that seem incurable, but you have no right to play God.
           1. Suicide takes the matter out of God’s hands and puts it into your hands.
           2. God alone is wise enough, strong enough, and good enough to handle your problems.
        3. 1 Corinthians 10:13
           1. In this verse, the word “tempted” means “tested”.
           2. God will give you grace, and God will meet your need.

Wait on Him.

* + 1. Infanticide (the taking of the lives of little babies) is forbidden.
       1. There is something wrong with a nation that will slaughter the innocent, yet make a fuss about a spotted owl.
  1. While Jesus was saying, “Thou shalt not kill,” the Pharisees were nodding their heads in agreement.
     1. They would not think of committing murder.
     2. The Pharisees wrapped themselves in the robe of self-righteousness.
     3. But Jesus didn’t stop here.
        1. He began to speak of the acid of anger.

1. the acid of anger (matthew 5:22)
   1. Matthew 5:22
   2. Jesus was going to destroy the illusion of self-righteousness.
      1. There was one sin the Pharisees were sure that they were not guilty of, and that was the sin of murder.
      2. Jesus was going to show that hatred is an acid that destroys its container.
         1. He goes beyond the act of murder to the attitude behind it.
   3. In Matthew 5:22, the Lord Jesus speaks of different types of anger.
      1. Caustic anger
         1. “Whosoever is angry with a brother.”
         2. You are angry because someone has done you wrong.
      2. Contemptuous anger
         1. There is not an English translation for the word “Raca”.
            1. It means, “You don’t have any value,” or “I don’t value you.”
            2. Some translations translate it as “worthless one”.

It is a term of contempt.

* + - 1. When we look down on other people, we feel that we are superior to them.
         1. Someone takes someone else’s life because they do not see the worth and value of every single human being.
    1. Condemning anger
       1. The word “fool” here does not refer to somebody as foolish.
          1. It involves moral perversity, godlessness, and wickedness.
       2. A person who is a fool, unless he gets redeemed and saved, is going to Hell.
          1. The Bible says that there is no hope for the fool.
    2. A person goes from caustic anger to contemptuous anger to condemning anger.
       1. Something begins to burn and seethe in his heart.
  1. The Bible says that whoever hates his brother is a murderer.
     1. 1 John 3:15
     2. No murderer has eternal life abiding in him.
  2. Not all anger is wrong; some anger is good.
     1. Ephesians 4:26
        1. This is a command.
     2. Wrath is wrong, but righteous anger is different.
        1. In the Old Testament, we read of the anger of the Lord.
        2. In the New Testament, Jesus was moved with anger.
           1. Matthew 21:12-13
  3. You can tell the size of the person by what makes him angry.
     1. What makes you angry?
        1. Do you get angry when someone gets your parking place?
  4. The way to be angry and sin not is to be angry only at sin.
  5. Jesus was moved with anger, but the anger that Jesus warns about is the anger that gives Satan a foothold in our lives.
     1. Ephesians 4:26-31
        1. If you go to bed with anger in your heart and don’t deal with it, then you give the devil a lodging place in your life.
  6. There are certain steps in the progression of anger that show why it is behind murder:
     1. Bitterness
        1. Ephesians 4:31
        2. Bitterness is a feeling of resentment that settles down in your heart when you feel that someone has done you wrong.
     2. Wrath
        1. Ephesians 4:31
        2. The word “wrath” comes from a Greek word which means “to burn”.
        3. Wrath is a slow burn.
           1. It is like smoldering rags in a closet.
     3. Anger
        1. Ephesians 4:31
        2. That which is smoldering bursts into flames.
        3. What you thought happened at a moment had been happening a long time ago.
           1. Bitterness turned to wrath, and wrath turned into anger.
     4. Clamor
        1. Ephesians 4:31
        2. The word “clamor” means “loud talking”.
        3. Voices are raised, and they get louder and louder.
        4. All kinds of wicked things are said.
     5. Evil speaking
        1. Ephesians 4:31
        2. Hurtful and hateful things are said.
           1. You’re out of control.
        3. There is a school of psychology that says that it is good to vent your anger, to just let it all out.
           1. But this is a lie.
           2. The Bible says that we’re not to do this.
           3. It has been said that the weight of evidence indicates precisely the opposite of this.

Expressing anger makes you angrier, solidifies an angry attitude, and establishes a hostile habit.

This is why the Bible says that a soft answer turns away wrath, not ventilating your anger.

Proverbs 15:1

* + 1. Malice
       1. Ephesians 4:31
       2. Malice is doing something evil and hurtful.
       3. This is what leads to murder.
          1. After a person says wicked and vile things, then they have a desire to reach out and strike someone.
  1. Murder starts in the heart.
     1. It starts with a root of bitterness.
  2. Many people carry around a load of bitterness.
     1. They have in their hearts the seeds of murder.
  3. Jesus took this one illustration to show the Pharisees that it is what is on the inside, not what is on the outside, that makes people the sinners that they are.

1. the requirement for righteousness (matthew 5:20)
   1. Matthew 5:20
      1. We cannot behave our way into Heaven.
   2. Self-righteousness is like trying to fill a bottomless cup.
      1. It cannot be filled.
      2. Trying to fill yourself with yourself adds nothing to yourself.
         1. Because nothing plus nothing equals nothing.
   3. You can never be right with God until you have the righteousness which is from above.
      1. Romans 10:3
      2. Self-righteousness in God’s sight is as filthy rags.
         1. Isaiah 64:6
      3. The Pharisees didn’t understand this.
   4. God’s righteousness is imputed righteousness.
      1. God imputes righteousness to us because Jesus died and paid our sin debt.
      2. He puts righteousness on our account.
         1. It is not because of anything that we have done.
         2. It is because Jesus paid for our sins on the cross.
   5. God’s righteousness is implanted righteousness.
      1. God gives us a new nature.
         1. We are made new, clean, and pure on the inside.
      2. God has worked a judicial miracle and a spiritual miracle.
         1. Imputed righteousness is a judicial miracle.
            1. When we trust Jesus, He puts righteousness on our accounts.

Our sins are blotted out.

We are righteous as God’s Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is righteous.

* + - 1. Implanted righteousness is a spiritual miracle.
         1. He puts His righteousness into us.
         2. The love of God begins to come out of us.
         3. Galatians 2:20

1. CONCLUSION
   1. Matthew 5:20
   2. The Lord is not against religion if it is His religion.
   3. The Lord is not against morality, and He is not against love.
   4. He is not against the keeping of the commandment that says, “Thou shalt not kill.”
      1. He is very much for it.
   5. What God was saying in Matthew 5:20 is that the heart of the human problem is the problem of the human heart.
      1. The only answer to that problem is the new birth.
         1. The righteousness of God that is imputed and implanted when we are saved.
   6. Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
   7. Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
      1. Romans 3:23
      2. Romans 10:9-10
      3. Romans 10:13
      4. Acts 16:31
      5. John 3:16