

DENAIR FRIENDS CHURCH

Devotions with Matt

May 14, 2020

THE LAW OF LOVE

In an episode of Perry Mason, a person on trial was very angry at one of the defendants. He blurted out in his anger, "I'm going to kill him!" His lawyer, Perry Mason, said, "Don't ever say that. That can be used against you if that person is found dead." That's really good advice don't you think? Whenever you feel like killing someone, try to remember not to say so, it might be used against you one day.

That's the way it works in the court room, but is that the way it works in God's Kingdom? Jesus says no.

Continuing in the deep end of the pool, Jesus says in Matthew 5 that The Mosaic Law says, "Do not murder." But He continues and says that if anyone is angry with another they are subject to judgment and if anyone with contempt for another is guilty. In fact, He says if we call another a "fool" we are subject to the fire of hell. Contempt and name calling are not punishable in a court of law, so what is going on here?

First of all, let's get this out of the way. Murder is wrong. Taking another's life in anger or hatred has never been right. All life is precious and sacred and belongs to God. Murder then is putting ourselves in God's place and deciding who gets to live and who doesn't. I am not talking about self-defense, wars, euthanasia or even suicide here. They are all bigger issues. What Jesus is talking about in referring to The Law is the physical taking of another's life in anger, hatred or revenge. There is no justification for it at all.

But Jesus takes The Law deeper. It is a moral Law that even surpasses the taking of life. If we look at The Mosaic Law closely, especially the Ten Commandments, we see that they are all about relationships. The first four of the ten are about our vertical relationship with God. That must come first. We shall have no other gods before Him and must stay in a right relationship with Him. The next six are about our horizontal relationships with others: our parents, our families, our neighbors and our communities. Why is this so important? This gets to our heart condition and the heart of Creation.

God created us in His image. That means a lot of things, but at the top of that list is that we were made in His Triune image. The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit have been in mutual submission, unity and love for all of eternity past and for all of eternity future. Our Triune God is therefore a God of relationship. We, in His image, are therefore made to be in relationship with Him and each other. Hatred, anger and revenge all break the relationships we were created to have and therefore break God's moral code, His highest standards and His heart. That is why God's greatest commandments are to love Him and love others. It is His highest calling for us in life. Murder is wrong, but hatred for another in God's eyes is just as wrong. Calling another a "fool" is a measured degradation of someone and goes against how He created us to live in relationship with them. The remedy of our hatred is not disdain for another. It is not social, cultural and relational degradation and separation from the one we hate. It is not to distance ourselves from them and remain in a broken relationship.



"Dear friends, let us
continue to love
one another,
for *Love* comes
from *God*.
Anyone who loves is a
Child of God
and knows God."

1 John 4:7

The remedy for our hatred and anger is Jesus. As our Creator He had every right to kill us. He had every right to hate us. After all, it was us who sinned against Him and pushed ourselves far away. It was against Him that we rebelled and went our own way. It was against Him that we have hated others in His creation and even killed in our anger. Our hatred and murder of what God has created is deserving of the fire of hell.

Yet, He loves us so much that He was willing to die in our place in order that we might be reconciled back to Him. He sacrificed all so we can be restored to the way we were created to be and to live. He restores us back to our original relationship with God. In His healing love for us He helps us restore our broken relationships with others. He renews our hearts and drives out all hatred, anger and contempt for another. Just like in the image of our Triune God we were made for relationships; we were created for community. Hatred divides community and destroys relationships. Those might not be punishable in a court of law, but it goes against God's Law of love. The sanctity and value of all life finds its roots and healing in Jesus. Love for Him and others is our highest calling.

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 1 John 4:7-10

In Christ,

Matt