



A Spiritual Encouragement Message

April 30, 2020

You Fool!

Jesus' Sermon on the Mount is perhaps one of the greatest discourses in human history. Far beyond Martin Luther King's "I have a Dream" speech, Winston Churchill's famous, "We Shall Fight", Platos' "Apology", or any other prominent speech in history. The speech is not great because Jesus is the perfect orator, or the most educated pupil, it is profound in the fact that Jesus addresses concepts that still pierce our hearts today. He addresses "The Golden Rule", prayer, giving, righteousness, law, providence, and so much more! Yet, in times like we are facing today, I have found one text to be extremely beneficial...

"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire. (Matt. 5:21-22)

If I were to give a full translation of "fool" or "raca" (as some translations put it), I'd have to divulge into some pretty foul language. Perhaps that is shocking? Why does Jesus employ such language within His Sermon? One reason is due to the fact that Jesus is making an emphatic point. Imagine, if you will, listening to a sermon and all of the sudden a foul word is dropped. At that very point, every single head pops up. The sleepers arise from their "religious" dreams, and the children stop fooling around. You could hear a pin drop! Now, our attention is HIS!

If I chose to use such language in a sermon, there would not be a single person in the audience who would miss that part of the speech. With such rapt attention, Jesus emphasizes that anger is just as bad as murder. Yes, you heard that correctly. Anger is equally as bad, as *murder*. Not righteous anger, but the kind of anger in which we look to our brother and sister and think, "ugh, I just can't stand them", or "I sure hope they're not coming". The kind of spite that would *lead* to murder. The kind of spite that makes someone "as good as dead" to us in our minds.

In our current climate, there are vast opinions and loud voices. It seems everyone has a

viewpoint, and everyone is ready to share it! One thing we need to be cautious of is how we view one another *after* everything is said and done. Let me encourage us all to cast aside our opinions and remember that we truly are in this together. There is no reason to create divides and factions over something that is out of our hands and above our pay grade. We have civil leaders who make decisions regarding our public comings and goings. We have religious leaders who operate under those civil mandates and make decisions based on our law, scripture, and lots of prayer. Thankfully, you and I have one simple task: submit. The best thing about submission is that I don't have to agree with or even like the authority that is handed down. I simply have to obey the authority **(Rom. 13:1; Heb. 13:17)**.

Brethren, be careful during this time of duress how you view the children of God. I need this reminder as equally as I am giving it. Let's remember that Christ died for all of us, and that he finds you as equally precious as He finds me. I love you! God bless!

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