

Matthew 19-06-30b

Wonderful contribution of blessing in music through our instrumentalists. I enjoyed not only This Is My Story, Blessed Assurance, but Thursday night as well they played To God Be the Glory, which was my dad's favorite hymn. And I was afraid I could not successfully talk about that on Thursday, so I omitted to mention my appreciation.

But all of the music that you heard today during the interlude, during the intermission, was done by our very gifted and faithful instrumentalists, and we thank them for that. It's just my favorite part of every time we meet is getting a chance to hear that wonderfully performed music that reminds us of the name of God, the character of God, His provision and His grace. And it should be our story, and it should be our song.

And that's what the Lord Jesus is talking about in Matthew 5 as we resume our study. This is going to be the theme and the way to understand people of grief. There have actually been a few people down in history that chopped off body parts trying to be faithful.

And it is the same mistake that was made by the Israelites when they would tie a phylactery to their hand, or they would put a frontlet between their eyes and have a little copy of the law. You know, you can't read the thing when it's in a little container and you strap it to your hand. All you're doing is impeding yourself.

God said, put it on your doorpost. What is He talking about when He says, put it on your doorpost? You should be reminded of who you are and your covenant relationship, your dedication to God. Anytime you're leaving your house, bring it back to your mind.

I am about to go out as a representative of the Lord, Creator God of Israel when I leave here, when I come back in, and I'm going to spend time with my family and the servants, whoever else was in there. Every time you pass that, it ought to be a reminder of the actual righteousness, the actual reality. It is not righteous to simply tack a mezuzah on your door.

That's not where the righteousness is. And that distinction is the key to understanding Matthew 5. It's going to become very evident. But let me remind you of that truth, and then as we go through these, it's going to make a lot of sense.

Keep your finger in Matthew 5 and turn over to Romans 8. Romans 8. I alluded to this a bit earlier, and we're going to formally see it now. There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. Cross out the rest of the verse.

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, period. They have pulled up a phrase from verse 4 into verse 1 in the majority text. It doesn't belong there.

It's got a perfectly proper place down in verse 4. So cross it out. It is a mistake. It is erroneous.

It's not what Paul said. It's not what was written in the original book. But what is the actual first word of verse 1, even in your English? Now, there is *is* in italics.

What's the actual first word? Therefore. What must you do when you encounter this word? Ask yourself the question, what is the *therefore*? Therefore, right? Always, always, always. If it says therefore, that means there was an argument up above, and this is a conclusion.

This is an application. Part of your observation has to be, look at all of these poor people at our borders. Therefore, we should let them in.

No, you need to go back and get some context before you draw a conclusion. So, therefore, what is the *therefore*? Well, all of chapter 7. Do you not know, brethren? I speak to those who know the law. The law has dominion over a man as long as he lives.

Jesus says, I have not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. The law has dominion over a man as long as he lives. And guess what? That has not changed.

And you say, well, wait a minute. Aren't we about to read that I've been set free from the law of sin and death? Yes, you are. But you've got to observe.

Pay attention in the observation step. Paul doesn't say, do you not know, brethren, that the law used to have dominion over a man as long as he lives? Did he? Once upon a time, men of old, he doesn't say any of that. Paul says, brethren, do you not know that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? This is a present truth for Paul.

And he's in the church age. He is the apostle to the Gentiles. And he says, brothers, you know the law has got dominion as long as you live.

A woman who has a husband is bound by the law as long as he lives. If the husband dies, she's released from the law of her husband. Look down at verse 4. Just as a wife is free when the husband dies, and she's not an adulteress, though she's married to another man, therefore, my brethren, you have also become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another, to him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.

When we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law, passions aroused by the law. Now, this sounds like, well, any time I go back and read Leviticus and Deuteronomy, I'm just getting all kinds of evil thoughts. Maybe I shouldn't read those because the law arouses evil passions.

Arouse is not a real good translation here. This is more brought out. They're brought out.

The evil passions that were brought out by the law, and not brought out in the sense that they were brought out of my nature so that they could be expressed, but the law made them evident. The law, even when I keep the letter of the law, I realize that my heart's not in it. I want to keep my brother's possessions and not tell him that I found them.

I want to be self-centered and self-interested, and I want to get rid of this one woman and grab another woman, but the law is preventing me. But the passions inside are made evident, because in order to keep the letter of the law, I'm having to suppress and cross and go against my sinful nature. My passion is going in one direction, and the law is constraining me from expressing them.

So these passions are not aroused by the law. They are made evident. They become clear, bearing fruit to death.

But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve. Not so that we're free, free, free. Now I can do what I want.

Now I can express my passions in every other direction. In what sense are we free from the law, and in what sense are we still under its dominion? Paul is saying the same thing here that Jesus is saying in Matthew 5. We are actually formally free from the letter of the Old Testament law. We don't have to sew fringes.

We don't have to show a virginal garment in a court trial. We don't have to worry about eggs and chicks and hens. We don't have to worry about mixing two kinds of thread.

We are free. We have died to that in Christ. And we live to do what? To do whatever we want? The rules have been set aside? Do whatever you feel like? No.

So that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not the oldness of the letter. This is why we talked about hieroglyphics. The oldness was in the letter that was a representation of the spirit of the law.

Now we focus more or less directly on the spirit. The problem with the U.S. legal code, and we've talked about this before, I've mentioned it many times, the problem in the legal code, in the early days of the country, right after we got formed up and had 13 states and quickly added some more, the federal legal code could fit in a small three-ring binder. What is it now? It's so big, they don't even, you know, *corpus juris secundum* in those volumes that Perry Mason has on the table.

Now they've got to put it online. The thing is so huge, and it grows every day. Why? Because for every situation, if there's not a legal precedent, they have to make new law.

And the law in trying to deal with a specific instance, well, if this condition is met, and if this is the case, and if, if, if, if, then, then, then, then, then. But if not, then not. And trying to deal in writing with every potential situation is very difficult.

What would be great is if you had mature, wise, righteous, fair-minded, objective judges you could bring a case before them, and they wouldn't have to go leafing through to find, has a similar case been brought? Are there principles in other cases that apply? A wise judge, like Solomon, could adjudicate and settle fairly, and rightly, and to God's glory, various disputes that come up, and, and be, be fair. Well, the letter of the law is insufficient. It's, you, you can already see.

We had a good question last week after, after class. Well, but let's say that, that, the thing comes out where the man hates his wife, slanders her, the, the parents bring out the shimla, and the case is settled, and he's got to pay the hundred shekels, and can't divorce the girl the rest of his life. Well, what's her life going to be like? She's stuck with this guy that hates her, and he can't divorce her all the rest of the days.

Now he's doubly mad because he lost a hundred shekels, and he's been humiliated in the public. So, what about her? Well, does the law have a provision for her? No. How does she get out of a loveless marriage? How does she get out of an abusive marriage under the law? The law doesn't specify why.

The letter of the law is always going to be insufficient. It can't cover every circumstance. What about the case where the, that you can name endless cases that are not specifically covered in the law.

I mentioned last week, there's no law about houses of prostitution. It's only if the girl is promiscuous in her father's house. Well, what are the shades of that? What if she doesn't do anything in the house? She sneaks out to somebody else's tent, or she goes and frequents a house of prostitution, and comes back and doesn't tell her father, and lives under his roof, and pretends.

What about that? The letter of the law can't cover all that, can it? The letter of the law is insufficient. We do not serve in the oldness of the letter. The law can't possibly cover every case.

There's loopholes, there's gaps, there's insufficiencies. You can't codify everything. We serve in the newness of the spirit, and notice, we serve.

Our freedom from the law doesn't free us to enjoy, it doesn't free us to pursue, it doesn't free us to self-gratification. What is the freedom for? Observe. We have been delivered from the law, so that we should serve.

Just circle those two parts of the verse. We have been freed from the law, so that we should serve. So, I've been freed from one kind of burden, one kind of obligation, one kind of authority, so that I can serve in another.

Instead of serving the law, I'm serving the spirit. What's the great thing about the spirit? The spirit has an answer for everything. There's never an occasion, there is never a

situation, there's never a circumstance, or combination of circumstances, or combination of factors, where the spirit is not going to have the ability to reveal the elements of righteousness, and the elements of faithfulness, and the elements of obedience that the oldness of the letter was designed to communicate.

The purpose of our law is to promote the elements of our Constitution and our Declaration of Independence that talk about freedom, and privacy, and property. Men are equal. Their interests should be treated equally.

Their rights and their property should be treated fairly and equally without preference, because one is rich and another is not. Or one is strong and another is not. Or one is any given set of circumstances.

What shall we say then, verse 7? Is the law sin? Certainly not. On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. It doesn't say I would not have known disobedience, or I would not have known error, or I would not have known crime.

I would not have known sin. Those letters were representative situations pointing to sin in the soul, sin in the heart, selfishness, arrogance, abusiveness, indifference, insensitivity, self-gratification at the expense of others, injustice, impurity, corruption, defilement. I wouldn't have known sin except by these representative and symbolic expressions in the law.

I wouldn't have known what sin is except that the law pointed to it with its particular examples. I would not have known covetousness. Notice covetousness is not a formal crime.

Do we have a law on the books that says take you down to the county or to the state or to the federal court? Well, Sam's been coveting. He's been driving by and seeing that car or that boat or that guitar or that, I don't know what it might be, that thing, that field full of cattle, and he wants it. Charge him.

Jail him. Punish him. Sentence him.

What is covetousness? Covetousness is sin, but it's an intangible. So, yet the law pointed to that intangible sin by the commandment, and notice that there are three expressions of it. You will not covet your neighbor's ox.

Remember the Ten Commandments? You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You will not covet your neighbor's wife. You will not covet your neighbor's slaves or his animals or anything else that he has.

It's detailed. You will not covet them. Well, how are you going to enforce that Tenth Commandment? Tenth and final commandment.

It's the last finger on your hands. It's the... Remember, Aleph, Bet, Gimel, Dalet, Hay, Wau, Zayin, Chayt, Tayt, Yod, the open hand, the empty hand, that's coveting. That's the Tenth Commandment.

Don't covet. Don't look at your empty hand and say, I want to fill it with the stuff that my neighbor's got. I want to put my hands on his wife.

I want to put my hands on his house. I want to put my hands on his possessions. And it's greatly detailed.

I wouldn't have known covetousness unless the law had said, you shall not covet. But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all desire. And when it says produced, it's talking about made it evident.

I detect that this is not right. I was alive once outside the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. I could hold myself guiltless until that law pointed out the rottenness and the death in me.

The commandment, which to life, notice when you leave out the italics, the commandment to life, keep these that your days may be long in the land. I found that I was under death because every time I looked at it, sin was evident in my soul. And I realized that I'm death worthy.

I am condemned. I'm convicted. I've got sin in me and the wages of sin is death.

As Paul says earlier in this letter, the commandment to life, I found death. The commandment for the purpose of life, I found leading to death. Sin taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me and by it killed me.

Therefore, the law is holy. The commandment is holy and just and good because the commandment is to thinking. Well, this is fairly evident.

So where does this take us now in Romans chapter 8? Therefore, there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. Verse two, four, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. The law that focused on showing me my sin was the letter of the Old Testament law.

The law of the spirit is positive. The law of the spirit is aimed at not prohibition, but at attainment, at accomplishment, at being and doing in the light of what we are in Christ and before the Father. So the law of the spirit is life.

We've already recognized that we have a need. Sin has been made evident by the Old Testament law. So we don't need more regulations.

We don't need finer interpretations of the Old Testament law. What we need is a law that brings us up beyond sin, out of what we've been cleansed of and forgiven for, and gives

us that positive outlook. And this is what Jesus is anticipating in Matthew chapter 5. So, there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

And you don't have to talk about not walking according to the flesh. That's further down. What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, verse 3. Weak through the flesh.

Weak because it had to be codified and it had to talk about what I observe in the flesh. I saw this guy pass by an ox in the ditch and not help his neighbor's property be vouchsafed back to him. I saw this guy build a house and not put a rail.

I saw this guy doing wrong. It's weak through the flesh. It's only what can be observed.

Man looks on the outward appearance. Can't see the heart. The law was weak in the sense that it only addressed visibility.

It only addressed actions. The law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh on account of sin, he, God, condemned sin in the flesh. So that, verse 4, the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled.

Whoa! Are you observing that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled? What did Jesus say? I have not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. Yokes and tittles won't pass away. Heaven and earth won't pass away until it's all fulfilled.

What does Paul say? The righteous requirement of the law is going to be fulfilled in us. Oh! Can't just say, well, Jesus died on the cross. Don't have to worry about the law.

The righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in us. When? Who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. We're not watching to make sure that we don't let an ox fall into the ditch, or that we're not doing some formal overt fleshly activity, that we're tithing the spices in our cabinet, and we're whitewashing the outside of the tombstone.

If we are walking according to the Spirit, and not according to the flesh, we are fulfilling the law. Are fulfilling. It can be fulfilled in us.

It's an ongoing fulfillment. When Christ says, I've come to fulfill the law, it's kind of like tag. You're it.

We, who are seeking to walk according to the Spirit, and not according to the flesh, are that fulfillment. This is what Matthew is talking about. This is what Jesus is talking about in that chapter.

Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh. If you're busy scrupulously watching what you do, and modeling behavior, and trying to set an example, but you're walking around full of dead man's bones, this doesn't apply. Those

who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh.

Those according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. So, we're already going to be thinking, if I'm going to not only observe and interpret, but I want to apply, I need to know what it means to be according to the Spirit, and concentrating on the things of the Spirit. According to the Spirit, things of the Spirit.

To be carnally minded, death. Now, I told you I was going to give you a little memory aid here, and it's going to be at somebody's expense, and I apologize in advance for it, but I've picked on him before, so it's nothing new. Henry Blackaby came out many years ago with this experiencing God idea.

Well, it's been updated, revised, enhanced, and people are still going through that thing. Some people close to me have been working through the workbook and going through it to see what it has to say. Experiencing God.

And the theme of that is find out where God is at work and join Him in His work. Okay? Now, I'm going to use this not because I want to continue to pick on Reverend Blackaby, or his book, or his program, or those who find it helpful in some way, but let me tell you what it, in my view, and in scriptural perspective, ought to say. It shouldn't be called, in my view, experiencing God.

It ought to be called knowing God. We're not here to experience God. We are here to know God, to know Him through Christ.

What's Paul's fervent prayer? I pray that I may come to know Christ and the power of His resurrection, what it is to live in the presence of God. Resurrection isn't to walk around on this earth. Resurrection is to be qualified to stand in the presence of God.

I want to know God. Knowing God is what you want. Experience will follow, but you've got to know Him to experience Him.

And when the theme is look around and see where God is at work and then join Him in His work, find out what God thinks and join Him in His thinking. You don't do any task, you don't perform any action, you don't move toward any purpose by working unless you first think about it, hopefully. It is the thoughts that drive the actions that count.

As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. And the whole thrust of what we've seen last Sunday and this Sunday is don't get stuck at the physical expression. Don't tack a mezuzah on your door.

Don't strap a phylactery to your head and think you're righteous. Or to your hand. It is entering into God's thinking.

Because if you know God and you join Him in His thinking, what are you going to do? If

your thinking matches God's, what will your actions be? They will by definition and by default be in the will of God because you're in with His thinking. You know the difference, have you ever had some unskilled help? Maybe a child, you're trying to do a thing and they say, oh, let me help. And so you say, well, I need this board nailed.

But they don't know how to drive a nail. You say, well, can you make a box out of that plywood, which requires sawing and measurement and some planning and some execution and put the four sides together and then put the bottom on and make sure that it's square. There's experience and wisdom and knowledge that you have in building and if they don't have it, it isn't really help.

You can use it as a teaching tool so that they can what? Begin to think like you do. Begin to plan like you do. Begin to see the problem and its solution the way you do.

And we have our children help us with dishes or help us with house cleaning or help us with chores or help us with projects. Why? Not because, wow, I can really use the help. I mean, that might come later as they get older.

But in the initial stages, we do it so that they can come to think and see and view and share the wisdom that we have and the viewpoint that we have and the thinking that we have. And there's nothing better than going out to help your dad do fence or manage cattle or work on something and when he turns around because he needs a wrench, you saw that he was going to need that wrench and you've already got it in your hand. It's like a great nurse in an operating room and when the surgeon turns around and says, he's about to say retractor or scalpel or forceps or blot this, the nurse is already halfway there with it because she knows how he thinks.

She's seen him operate before, literally seen him operate before and can anticipate because she's thinking right along the same path. This is what the law of the spirit does. The reason the law of the spirit is life is we enter into knowing God and sharing his thinking.

That's the idea. And you see this, Romans, of course, you can spend a lot of time there, but that's the idea in Romans chapter 8. The righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit. We're not just deciding what would look good here but what would God have me do? What would be pleasing in his sight? What is the better part of love? What is the better part of being sacrificial towards self and beneficial towards others? What would be the part of faith? What would be the part of genuine commitment to God? Trusting that even though it's going to cost me something, it's the right thing.

God will bless it. God will be pleased. My father in heaven will be proud of me for doing this this way and not doing this other thing.

And that's my heart. That's my goal. That's my thinking.

That's the fulfillment of the law. The righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled. Jesus said, I have come to fulfill the law.

Well, God often does things by proxy. God often dispenses his grace through his people, doesn't he? And the fulfillment of the law is a part of our opportunity in this life. So back to Matthew 5 now.

And look at these examples. You have heard that it was said, do not commit adultery. That's an action.

Oh, look, here's somebody transgressing the bonds, the bounds, the covenant of marriage. And adultery is specifically breaking marriage vows. One or both of the people involved are married and they're entangling themselves physically with someone else.

I say to you, it starts in the heart. If you let that seed of desire that eventually gets planted and germinates and sprouts and grows and matures and produces adulterous behavior, it's not even just Barney Fife nipping it in the bud. This is, go back to the seed and expunge the seed.

The weed is never going to grow in the field if you pull the weed seeds out. Jesus says, if you even look at a woman to desire her, to have a passion for her, that's what the adultery prohibition was designed to show, to evidence. We saw this in 7 of Romans.

It says the law aroused passions. No, it made them evident. And the prohibition against adultery is designed for us to see at the inception, this desire I have to be intimate with this woman.

That's wrong. And before any actions eventuate, you kill that. You extinguish that.

You use the grace of God and you redirect your attention and you redirect your focus. I've already got a wonderful woman. I don't need to taste forbidden fruit.

I don't need to say, Oh, secretary, can you work late? I've got a report because you just want to hang around or she's dressed nicely that day or whatever. You recognize at its inception that there is an impure motive. There's an impure thought.

There's an impure idea and you kill it there. We just had a giant, and I mean giant tumor taken off of our dog Major's leg. And the thing was the size of the biggest baking potato you can buy.

And when we first started, he just had a little lump and took him to the vet at the time and said, What is this? And she said, Well, it's a cancer and it's going to grow. And I said, Well, can't we remove it while it's small? Wouldn't that be better than just letting it grow? And for various reasons, they said, No, what will happen is if you start messing

with that thing, it's just going to make it angry and it's going to really go. And it was in its earlier stage.

They didn't know exactly what kind it was, but they said, Leave it alone. It's kind of like letting the tears grow in the field until the harvest. But now it's been this huge thing and 30 staples and a day of surgery later that it's been taken off, but you can't get it all and the remnants are going to grow back.

But wouldn't it be great if you could take the first few cancer cells in anybody's cancer, any cancer anywhere, find the first few cells and just eliminate those and none of the rest of the stuff is going to follow. You don't have to have chemo. You don't have to have radiation.

You don't have to have therapy. You don't have to have all of these measures after the fact because when it started, wouldn't it be great if they had a vaccination or an inoculation or a pill you could take? Well, you know, any little cancer that starts to form, this thing will kill it and stop the source. It can never become anything.

Wouldn't that be wonderful? Well, that's what this exhortation of the Lord is. Identify it and expunge it at the thought level because if you don't, it's all the same as if it's already gone to its conclusion. There is an inevitable chain of events.

If you do not expunge that thought, it is going to eventuate in sin. It's going to eventuate in unfaithfulness. It's going to eventuate in evil.

So identify it as soon as it crops up. Looking at a woman already committed adultery and if your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. What is Jesus saying here? He says, it's not the looking.

Get your mind past the law of the flesh, the law of sin and death. It isn't as though by plucking your right eye out, you're not going to continue to look at that woman with your left eye. Right? Would this actually be a preventative? You look at many of the provisions of the Old Testament law and you say, well, but does this actually take sin out of Israel? Because what about the abused wife? What about this girl who's hypothetically wrongly stoned? Is this really going to solve the problem? And Jesus says, look, the measures of the law were never designed to solve the problem.

They were designed to manifest the problem. And what you should do is, if your right eye causes you to sin, meaning you are using that eye to lust after this woman. That's the context.

You're looking at her and that's what is creating this desire. You're looking at her to desire her and your eye is making that opportunity. What does it mean to pluck out the eye? Do whatever you have to do to stop the looking.

The law of the flesh says, well, rip the eye out, chop the hand off. But the law of the spirit says, what does that actually convey? If there is an observation, maybe the kind of salacious tripe they put on television now causes you to have impure thoughts. Well, turn off the TV.

Quit looking at it. If a guy begins to look at his attractive secretary in unwholesome ways and it starts engendering thoughts in his heart, make a change. Let her be somebody else's secretary.

Do something different. Make a change that takes that gateway drug. Marijuana is a gateway to harder stuff.

Take the gateway out. Stop the source. Quit watching that channel.

Quit hanging around that place. Quit exposing yourself to whatever the temptation is that is creating these impure thoughts. That is, in symbolic terms, tearing out the eye.

And we're pretty familiar with this from the past. Same thing if your right hand causes you to sin. Cut it off and cast it from you.

It is more profitable that if one of your members perish than for your whole body to be cast into hell. And as my final note this morning, because we'll talk a little bit more about these you-have-heard-it-said-but-I-say sections next time. But one point of observation, back in verse 22, because all of these, Jesus says it would be better to lose a member of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

Well, what is hell? We look at hell from the standpoint of Lake of Fire, Revelation chapter 20, and we say Jesus is talking about if you don't stop this at its early stage, you could go to hell for it. And we need to go back to the observation step. What's the first reference to hell in this context? It's back up in verse 22.

Whoever is angry with his brother without a cause, danger of the judgment. Whoever says to his brother, witless or minus mind or empty head, danger of the counsel. Whoever says, you fool, you moron, shall be in danger of hellfire.

Now, what is hellfire to you? What is hellfire? In the literal terms, what's your first knee-jerk thought? Hellfire, Lake of Fire. Cast into the Lake of Fire. We say hellfire, Lake of Fire, right? So, anger with your brother puts you in danger of hellfire.

And hell is the destination for Satan, the beast, the false prophet, the fallen angels, right? And unbelievers at the great white throne judgment. Lake of Fire. So, danger of the Lake of Fire is our mental association, much as evidence of virginity, token of virginity must be a bloody sheet.

It's a faulty assumption based on inadequate observation. There is no word here for fire.

There's actually no word for hell.

The word here in Greek is Gehenna. Now, for the listeners, those disciples that climbed up for the teaching on the hill, what did Gehenna mean? What is Gehenna? It is Gehenim, G-E-H-E-N-I-M. This is the hillside, i.e., the Valley of Hinnom, the Sons of Hinnom.

This was a guy and it was named for him. How would you like to have hell named after you? But the Sons of Hinnom originally owned this and they became the proprietors of the dump. It was the city dump.

And so it was like, you know, you got so-and-so's trash service out here. Well, it was the Hinnom trash collection for Jerusalem. And they took this ditch at the edge of the city, this giant ravine, and they ran the dump.

And so it was the Valley of the Sons of Hinnom. It was Gehenim. And so when Jesus says you're in danger of Gehenna, he says you're in danger of the city dump.

Was there a fire in the city dump? Tradition says there was, that there was a constant fire because if you've ever done this, you burn trash and you bury it, the stuff can smolder for weeks. And evidently so much trash got dumped into this and they tried to burn it. But corpses were dumped here, dead animals, offal, which is the product of the butcher shop, the carnage and the waste products, were dumped down there.

And so it was a smelly, awful place of final destination for that which would never be retrieved and never brought back. It went there. It was a one-way trip.

It's like the landfill. Okay? So Jesus says if you're angry, cross out without a cause with your brother, you're in danger of the judgment, which the Old Testament law said, here's your severe penalty. You're going to be taken to court for murder.

But it is as serious to just have the anger because why did Cain kill Abel? Why are murders often committed, you know, crime of passion? I'm so angry and you lash out and you end up killing the person. Empty head, danger of the counsel. And counsel, this is the Sanhedrin.

This is the Supreme Court of Israel. So you're going to the elders for anger. You're going to the Supreme Court for calling them witless.

And if you say you fool, which is the ultimate expression of anger and exasperation and insult, you're in danger of the garbage pit. But to say hellfire leads to all kinds of false conclusions. Now, it's already been referred to up above as the city dump.

And that means essentially if you're in danger of that, it means your current situation, your future situation, your inheritance. We see in Revelation those whose portion is in

the lake of fire, their inheritance. It's all the same as if it went to Gehenna in that sense.

It is utter and complete loss. It's a one-way trip to nowhere. Nothing comes back from there.

In Shakespeare, I think it's that burn from which no traveler returns. They talk about the one-way trip into death and so on. Well, here, more profitable that one of your members perish than for your whole body to be cast into Gehenna.

What is your body here? It's all of what you do. You interact with the environment. You make a difference.

You shape things. You move things. You influence people.

You are a presence. Well, everything you are, all of the fruits of your labor, it's all going in the trash. You will be hopeless, helpless, and useless.

That's the spiritual concept. And he doesn't say you. He says your body.

And your body, this is your eyes and your hands talking about what you look at and what you do. Well, your whole body is everything you affect. Your entire walk, all of your work, all of your interactions, it's all in the dump.

It becomes meaningless and has no enduring value, no enduring fruit. That's what Gehenna was. Nobody had a notion of the Lake of Fire.

Nobody had ever seen it. John's not going to see it for another 50 years. So, observe.

Don't get led astray with a false premise. It's true politically. It is true personally.

As much as it is true biblically. And the Lord Jesus, in leading us into the ways of the Spirit, is leading us into a productive life and a peaceful life. Mental peace, spiritual peace, comes to us when we are abiding in the truth.

Abiding in the Spirit. It is the letter of the law that kills. It is the Spirit that is life and peace.

That's what Jesus is communicating. This is the future, by the way, for Israel in the Millennial Kingdom. Because the Spirit will be poured out.

I will pour out my Spirit on all of your flesh. You're not going to be operating in the law of sin and death, in the law of the flesh and the carnal mind. It's the realm of the Spirit.

And it gets at the truth behind the symbols and behind the communication devices. And that's what we need to do if we're going to live our lives in a way that pleases God and glorifies the Lord Jesus and fulfills every jot and tittle of the law. Let's close here in a word of prayer.

We'll pick up in these, you have heard it said, sayings next time. Father, thank you for the freedom that we have in Christ. The freedom to serve.

The freedom to fulfill the law of the Spirit. To enjoy life and have it more abundantly. To pursue righteousness that comes by faith.

To be obedient, to be of use, to be of service. And to fulfill all of the potentials that the Lord Jesus died to give to us. We pray that these things will reside in our heart and be active.

And in the same way that the law provoked the knowledge of sin, we pray that our ever-growing understanding of the law of the Spirit will increase our sensitivity to righteousness and to the opportunities that we have to be pleasing in your sight and to glorify the Lord Jesus. We pray these things in his name. Amen.