

“You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’²² But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.

²³ **“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you,²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.**

²⁵ **“Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still with him on the way, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison.²⁶ I tell you the truth, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.**

²⁷ **“You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’²⁸ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.²⁹ If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.**

³¹ **“It has been said, ‘Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.’³² But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery.**

³³ **“Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.’³⁴ But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God’s throne;³⁵ or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King.³⁶ And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black.³⁷ Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one. (NIV84)**

Theme: A Believer’s view of Sin

1. He sins all the time.
2. He hates sinning
3. He knows he is forgiven by Christ.

How you view sin indicates who you are. We all love to sin by nature. But the people of the world flaunt it. They have become more and more bold in their sinful actions. No longer do they try to hide their detestable acts, but they commit them out in the open for all to see. Sexual immorality of all kinds, drunkenness, a general disrespect for those in authority—we could go on and on. People used to hide what they were doing, doing it in private, and were embarrassed when they were caught. But now they are proud of their sin, it feels good to them, and it’s how they want to live their lives—and if you dare tell them otherwise you are accused of being an intolerant bigot. But that’s not the believer’s view of sin. First off he realizes that he sins all the time; but he hates sin. And finally believers know that he is forgiven by Christ.

By nature we have the tendency to think that we are pretty good people. That we do a good job of obeying the 10 commandments. At least some or parts of them. Take the fifth commandment for example—that’s what Jesus brings up here in his Sermon on the Mount. **You shall not murder.** As far as I know, no one in this room as ever committed murder. No one has struck and killed someone else on purpose. Therefore none of us have broken the fifth commandment. Right? Not exactly. Jesus gives us the true meaning of this commandment. **Anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment.** It’s not just with our actions that we sin against the fifth commandment. But also with our words and thoughts. Every hateful word and speech about someone is a sin against this commandment. Every time you have said “I hate you” to someone you break the fifth commandment. And then there are our thoughts. The detest we get toward someone. The anger that arises in side of us when someone doesn’t do what we want them to do. These are all sins against the fifth commandment. And so we sin against this commandment all the time.

Or take the sixth commandment for example. How many of you have committed adultery? This, too, seems like a commandment we don't have to worry about. We can puff out our chest and be proud with ourselves. We have kept the sixth commandment at least. We have stayed pure and remained faithful. Right? Not exactly.

Jesus again teaches us the true meaning of this commandment. And we realize that we haven't kept this one either. Because it's not just with our actions, but our words and thoughts. Jesus explains, **anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.** Lust. It happens all the time. Our eyes stray; our minds wander. Not just every once in awhile. But all the time.

So we can see that we are all guilty. We sin all the time. **There is no one who does good, not even one.** We may have never murdered someone. We may have never committed adultery. But we hate, we lust. We sin. Not just every so often, but constantly. Every single day—numerous times a day you fail to obey God's commands. And so you deserve his wrath and punishment. As Jesus said about the fifth commandment, **anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.** And it's not just sins against the fifth commandment that deserves eternal damnation. But all of them. Any sin deserves punishment. Our actions have consequences. Their not small and insignificant. We deserve to go to hell for what we have done. For we have sinned against the Lord. So a believer's view of sin is that he sins all the time. And he deserves to be punished for his sins.

And so you hate your sin. You despise what you do. You are ashamed of all the times have gone against God's Word. Guilt starts to rise up. You hate who you are and what you have done. You don't want to sin. You want to obey God. You know what's right. You know what's wrong.

But thoughts pop up in your mind. Anger rises inside of you. Someone catches your eye. You can't help it. But you sin all the time. So should you look at this sin like the rest of the world and play it off as no big deal? After all, everyone else is doing it; it's only natural. Why suppress your natural feelings and thoughts? No, instead we hate

sin. And we hate ourselves for sinning. And we hate that we are leading ourselves away from God and toward the devil.

We realize that nothing is as bad as sinning. We want to avoid sinning as much as we can. Jesus talks about that. **If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.** I don't see anyone here to day with an arm cut off. I don't see anyone who has plucked their eyes out of their sockets either. Yet I know that your eye has wandered and caused you to sin. I know that your hand has done some shameful and detestable things as well. So why didn't you listen to the Lord? Why aren't you obeying him and cut off your hand and pluck out your eye?

Because that's not Jesus' point. If we were to do literally what Jesus says, than we'd have nothing left. First we'd cut off our right hand. But then we'd sin with our left—so we'd have to cut it off too. Our right eye would stay so we pluck it out, but soon our left would do the same. It wouldn't be too long and we'd have a limbs and body parts strung out all over the place. But that still wouldn't stop us from sinning. For even a blind man can lust. His thoughts betray him. And a man with no hands can still hate, steal, and so on. So it doesn't matter what we cut off, we'd still sin just as much.

So what's Jesus point? It's about the believer's viewpoint of sin. He'd rather do anything but sin. He hates sin. He wants nothing to do with it. He flees from it. He runs away from it as much as he can. Instead of gravitating toward it. Instead of getting as close to it as he can without crossing that forbidden line, he flees from it. He does all he can to avoid it.

If that means giving up certain things that he loves, so be it. If that means he doesn't hang around some of his friends, he'll do so. If it means that he doesn't visit certain places, then that's what he'll do. Why? Because he hates sin just as much as the Lord does. He understands that each sin separates him from God. He knows that every sin is detrimental to his faith. Since they don't bring him closer to God, his sins move him further away. They put his faith in

jeopardy. So he flees from sin. And when he falls, he seeks forgiveness.

That's where Jesus leaves us in our text for today. He leaves us in our sins. He shows us that we sin numerous times a day, that we deserve to be punished for our sins, and so we should flee from sin. But now, where are we—what can we do? Nothing. We can't do anything about our sins. We can't remove them or pay for them ourselves. We're hopeless. So what do we do?

We look to the one he is standing on that mountain. We look on the one who is preaching. He may have left us alone here in our text. But he never leaves us alone. He doesn't leave us to deal with our sins himself. He makes that abundantly clear throughout the rest of Scripture. Later on in this sermon, Jesus taught his disciples the words of the Lord's Prayer. In it, the fifth petition, we ask God **to forgive our sins as we forgive those who sin against us**. We turn to God for the forgiveness of our sins. And we know that he freely gives it to us.

For it was on the top of another mountain, Calvary, that Christ dealt with our sins. It was there that Jesus was nailed to the cross. And on that cross Jesus nailed all of our sins. He took them upon his shoulders. He became guilty of everything we have done wrong. And so he was punished for sins and offenses. He was forsaken by his Father and suffered through hell—the punishment that we deserved. And then he took his perfect life and gave it to us. He transferred it to us. And his life became ours.

Jesus didn't leave us in our sins. He doesn't force us to cut off limbs and other body parts to pay for our sins. No he gave it all up for us. He gave up his life on the cross so that we may not die eternally. It doesn't have to be earned or deserved. It's simply received through faith in him as our one and only Savior. And this faith, too, is freely given to us as a gift of faith. So forgiveness of sins is given freely to us by Christ.

So we are now considered perfect and holy in God's sight. We are without sin in his eyes. And he considers us his own dear children. And as his children we know that we will inherit his eternal kingdom. He will give us our inheritance of eternal life. We will live with him in heaven forever. And there is no sin in heaven. No temptation. No

crying, pain, or gnashing of teeth. Just a perfect life with our Savior forever.

The world loves to sin—and they flaunt it. But that's not the believers view on sin. He knows that he sins all the time—countless times a day through his thoughts, words, and actions. But since sins go against God's will and deserve death he hates sin. So he does all he can to avoid it. Yet at the same time he knows he is forgiven. Christ has paid the price for his sins and has given him the gift of eternal life forever. Yes, a believer hates sin. But he loves Jesus Christ, his one and only Savior. Amen.