



Daily Reflections

June 13, 2019

Scripture

Matthew 5: 20-26

Jesus said to his disciples:

"I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter into the Kingdom of heaven.

"You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, You shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment.

But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment,

and whoever says to his brother,

'Raca,' will be answerable to the Sanhedrin,

and whoever says, 'You fool,' will be liable to fiery Gehenna.

Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar,

and there recall that your brother

has anything against you,

leave your gift there at the altar,

go first and be reconciled with your brother,

and then come and offer your gift.

Settle with your opponent quickly while on the way to court with him.

Otherwise your opponent will hand you over to the judge,

and the judge will hand you over to the guard,

and you will be thrown into prison.

Amen, I say to you,

you will not be released until you have paid the last penny."

Our Scripture Reflection

You can be sure that there were people in the crowd who gasped when Jesus said, "Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees...". "How could He say such a thing?" they likely wondered because the scribes and Pharisees were the religious teachers and scholars, the Holy men of Israel. Jesus takes them to task time and time again because they are practicing the faith on a surface level while paying lip service to the Law. He calls them "Hypocrites", stage actors. Jesus came to show us how to live God's way to the fullest, not simply at the level of doing the least one can get by with. Maximum effort not minimalism is what Jesus expects from us.

Food for your Journey

God wants to stretch your faith. And just like physical stretching, spiritual stretching is not easy. Stretching requires us to push beyond our normal level of comfort.

I've seen some pretty amazing feats when watching MMA fighters on TV. It's stunning to see how a fighter can effortlessly swing his foot over the head of his opponent with no thought at all. But one thing I know about that fighter is that he took many, many years to stretch those muscles so that he could get to that level. And the stretching in his gym was always designed to push him beyond what felt comfortable.

And so it is with our faith. God wants to stretch you beyond your normal comfort zone. And that is where you will begin to see growth and progress like never before.

--Chris Russell, "10 ways God wants to stretch your faith today," Bible Study Tools,

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear God, It's amazing what we will do to show our love for someone. We will give them expensive gifts and spend scads of time with them as well. But somehow, You get short changed. Help me to realize that You are my first

love, my Lord and Creator. May I always seek to put You first as I organize the rest of my life around You. Amen