

Matthew 5:21-37

You might have missed seeing it in the bulletin because rarely is there a sermon title. Today there is: "*Roy G. Biv.*" Those of you who know what Roy G. Biv stands for might know where this is heading. The rest of you will find out.

Last Sunday we heard Jesus say, "*You are the light of the world.*" In today's text He tells us what our light will look like. Before Isaac Newton, people believed that all light was white. But using a triangular prism, Newton was able to demonstrate that there are many colors in white light. After a storm, rain clouds can act as a prism deflecting the white light of the sun into the colors of the rainbow. These colors are beautiful to our eyes, but unfortunately I need to point out that all of these colors have a negative connected to them.

What are these colors? Roy G. Biv - red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. And now the negative attached to each. Red is the color for anger, and also for sexual aggression and passion. Orange is the pessimist. Yellow - impatience and cowardice. Green is envy and selfishness. Blue is frigid and unyielding. Indigo - addictions, and Violet - immaturity.

The only color which has no negative connected to it whatsoever is white. So when Jesus tells us to let our light shine before others, He wants it to shine as white light.

But there's a problem. This world in which we live acts as a prism. The world is sinful, and so are we. In our text we hear very clearly that our heart is full of sin. And so what happens to the white light of Christ which shines into our hearts is this: our sinful hearts act as a prism deflecting and bending that pure light so that we come across to others as Roy G. Biv.

We're not little white lights wherever we go. We may think we are. Like the people who lived before Isaac Newton, we may think that we only shine as white light. But look closely at your heart. Jesus does. And so He gives us the Law's warning in our text for today. "*Everyone who is angry with his brother,*" He says, "*will be liable to judgment.*" You and I may be attempting to hide that red light of anger, but if it is here within our heart, we are guilty of murder in God's eyes. Jesus says so.

The same with adultery. "*Everyone who looks at a woman with lust,*" He says, "*has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*" Here that red light is one of sexual lust. You don't need to go to the "red light district" to engage in adultery. The red light district is in our heart whenever we look with lustful intent.

Jesus speaks of divorce in our text. What causes divorce? Roy G. Biv. When the green light of selfishness and the blue light of being unyielding come out of the prism of a spouse's heart; and perhaps mix in the violet light of immaturity and the red light of sexual lust, troubles can erupt in a marriage. And just because a couple has stayed together does not mean that those negative colors are not there. Roy G. Biv lives in all of us no matter how white and pure we think we come across to others.

What's the solution? It's Jesus. We need to lay His cross over this text before us. He does, just as He lays it over you. The cross is the most wonderful prism because it has the power to shape the way we see each other. When I'm angry at my spouse or my children, the cross of Jesus puts things in a different light. Christ died for them just as He died for me. Who am I to be angry at them, whether my anger is justified or not, when they are covered with the cross of Jesus?

When we look at the cross, we see red. The red blood of Christ. Red is the color for anger. Jesus' blood was shed on the cross because God became angry at Him, and not at you; not at your spouse, your children, or your parents; not at your pastor, your fellow church member, or your neighbor. God has forgiven them just as He has forgiven you. The cross is able to remove the red colored light of anger from our heart and put there the white light of forgiveness.

Your Baptism into the cross and resurrection of Jesus is a wonderful prism. In that sacred water the sinful colors of Roy G. Biv are removed. God always looks at you through the prism of your Baptism. It's an "opposite" prism. Through it, the white light of Christ completely covers you. You are bathed in that pure light. You are radiant, says St. Paul, spotless, clean, innocent.

When you and I are tempted to lust, we must look to the prism of our Baptism. I am God's child in Christ; declared holy and innocent. How can I desire what is unholy? Instead, I will flee sinful lust. The power of Baptism is greater than the power of sin. And also, the power of Baptism is greater than any trouble, any negative color, that can enter into a marriage.

When we look at the cross, we should see Roy G. Biv hanging there. That's Jesus. He became all those negative colors which bring so much trouble and guilt into our lives. He became sin for us. But think of this, Roy G. Biv died on the cross and was buried, and on Easter morning, not Roy G. Biv, but Jesus rose from His tomb in a blaze of light, and that light was white - pure white.

This is the light in which you now live. Put away the sinful prism in your heart. Christ, the pure light, lives there. When your brother tempts you to anger, look to the cross, go to your Baptism. The light you will see is white, not red. When you are tempted to lust with your eyes, put the cross before your eyes. When negative colors enter your marriage, see your spouse as Christ does - bathed in the pure, white light of Holy Baptism.

Jesus lays His cross over you. He declares you to be holy, clean, forgiven. He lives in your heart as God's pure light. There is no room for Roy G. Biv to dwell there; not with Christ living there. Whatever negative color of light has been shining in you and through you, as people who live in the holy prism of Christ, with His cross laid over you, your light to your family and to all others will be the white light of God's love and forgiveness. Amen.