

## Matthew 5:21-37

There was a traffic cop sitting in his police car holding a radar gun at oncoming traffic. The speed limit was 60 mph, but not one was doing 60...not even in the slow lane. But there he sat, not making a move to pull anyone over. The drivers were not concerned. Everyone was speeding. So they ignored the cop and kept following the car ahead of them, even though they were all doing ten to twelve mph over the limit. About seven to ten days later every one of those drivers received a ticket in the mail. The cop was not holding just a radar gun; it was also a camera that took pictures of every single license plate.

Today we come face to face with that radar camera gun in our text. If you have been coasting through life at a high rate of speed, yet not too concerned because everyone else is doing it, today is your wake-up-call.

God posts His signs along our highway through life..."Do not murder; Do not commit adultery"...and we think we are obeying His speed limits by going just a little faster than what He commands. We haven't actually murdered anybody. We are not currently cheating on our spouse. So what's the harm in looking a little with our eyes as long as we stop at that? What's the big deal in holding a grudge or two? And divorce is the American way of life. Everyone, or at least one out of every two, is doing it. And why get upset over a little swearing now and then?

This is where most people are at in their thinking. Is not this also where you and I are at? But this is why Jesus points His radar gun at us in our text. Rather than relaxing God's Commandments, He strictly enforces them. "So you think you're living well enough? Since you're not a reckless driver, going twenty to thirty mph over God's limits, you think you are abiding by His Commandments? Well think again." Hatred is murder in the eyes of God, says Jesus. If you are angry at your brother you will be judged by God. Lust is the same thing as adultery. If you even look at a woman with lustful eyes, you have committed adultery with her in your heart. A divorce on paper is not a divorce in God's eyes. Just because the judge allows it does not mean that God accepts it. Swearing to the truth, even if it's true, does not make it okay with God. A simple yes or no is all He allows.

With these strict words, Jesus points His gun directly at us. And here's what's going to happen. Most people are going to ignore Jesus sitting there by the side of the road holding His radar gun at them. They will ignore Him because everyone else around them is ignoring Him. They will, therefore, not slow down and consider with remorse their sinful ways. They will not turn from their sins to repent before God. "Since everyone else round me," they think, "is speeding, God cannot pull us all over."

They thought the same thing in the days of Noah. God was pointing His radar gun at them all through the preaching of Noah, but they ignored him...all of them did. They went on speeding past God's speed limit signs. "What's He going to do," they thought with arrogance, "destroy us all?" But that's exactly what He did. Only eight people--Noah and his family--out of all those millions upon millions of people living on the earth, were saved from the flood of destruction. And so for us...the ticket will be coming in the mail, and we do not know when the mail will arrive. But when it does, God's Judgment Court will not show any leniency. He will be strict and severe with His final Judgment.

So what does God want us to do now...start living a better life? Friends, He wants us to repent. He desires not the death of any sinner, but that all would turn from their wicked ways. What does the police officer do with the speeding driver who is pulled over and given a warning, but pulls back onto the highway and begins to speed again? Does he not pull him over again, but this time instead of a

warning, he issues a speeding ticket without any mercy? If you or I show remorse over our sins today, but intend on going back to our sinful ways tomorrow, then we are not repentant. If you speak peaceably to your neighbor here in church, but out there continue to harbor anger in your heart, then you will face God in the Judgment. If I proclaim faithfulness to my spouse, but desire to look upon other women, I am not being faithful but unrepentant. Repent! You and I cannot keep ignoring God's radar gun. Let us turn from our sinful ways and ask God to help us not go back to them anymore.

Now listen carefully to this good news. It is for you who have been speeding through life. It is for you no matter how many times you have fallen back into your sins. The same Man who spoke these words of strict and severe judgment, turned His radar gun on Himself, and though He was not speeding, He was found guilty in your place. Friend, Jesus went to court for you. Jesus stood before Pilate and heard God's judgment through his mouth..."You are condemned to die! Death by crucifixion." With each blow of the hammer pounding the nails through His flesh, Jesus was hearing God's hammer of judgment declaring Him guilty for you, and you, and you. Jesus hung on the cross and He endured the fire of hell that was waiting to devour you and me. Jesus never held a grudge. He hated no one. And yet He was condemned for our hatred. Jesus never lusted in His heart, not once. And yet God punished Him for all the adultery within our hearts.

And Jesus, though He had every right to divorce us, for we have been an unfaithful bride to Him, chose instead to forgive us. You, my sinful friends, every one of you He forgives. No matter how reckless your life has been. No matter how much anger is in your heart, no matter how much lust is in your eyes, no matter how long you have been ignoring Him, Jesus, your God and Lord, forgives you.

God is not letting you off with just a warning. God is declaring you innocent of every charge. He sees no wrong-doing in your heart and life. Jesus paid the price for all of your sins. You are truly, in every way, forgiven.

So go forth from here today, back out onto your highway in life, whether it takes you to Augusta, or Defiance, or Marthasville, Washington, or St. Louis...and do not look with dread upon Jesus who is watching over your life. He is not there to pull you over and condemn you for your wrongs. He died for you. He is with you to lead you, to help you obey God's Commandments, to remove the anger from your heart, the lust from your eyes. He is with you to show His mercy to you, to be your forgiving Lord, your loving Savior. Amen.