

The Tribunal of Matthew 5:13-26

Let's look at Mt 5:22 to see if we can learn something, to see if we can at least come to the knowledge of the truth. In Mt 5:22 we see the terms *fool* and *raca*. Note that the first thing listed is *anger*, as in whoever is *angry* with his brother.

Saying *Raca* means you have to go to judgment. *Raca* is a colloquial expression of contempt for someone's mind, like calling him stupid or a blockhead. Saying, "He's stupid," or "He's a blockhead" reduces his esteem in someone else's eyes. This becomes their estimation of him, who had no such thoughts before.

- *Raca* has to do with the mind.
- *Fool* has to do with the heart.

If we can understand this correctly:

- *Raca* requires judgment.
- *Fool* seems like you are judged already.

We must take our Father's word seriously. We must judge ourselves rightly, or there no longer remains a sacrifice for our sins. If we go on sinning in this way, then there is a blockage. It happens like this. You call your brother *raca* and it doesn't bother you, so you don't confess it. Then you do something else, like listen to rock music on the radio, and you confess it. Well, of course our Father can't hear your repentance because you didn't judge yourself on the *primary* sin. Then your sins pile up and you end up quenching, grieving the Holy Spirit. That means He has no fellowship with you in your heart.

Fool is #3474 and is a more serious reproach than *raca*, which scorns the person's mind and calls him stupid. The word *fool* scorns his heart and character. *Fool* is a deeper level of scorn that can destroy a person, going to the heart. Calling a person *fool* destroys the *very fiber* of his being in the heart and character. *Raca*, on the other hand, is not as well thought out, as in the more spontaneous expression, "You empty head," but it still has to be judged because of Mt 5:25.

Raca brings reproach or lowers the estimation of one in the eyes of others. Saying it in front of others is more serious for it puts the thought into others who may never have thought of their brother in that way. It creates alienation.

- *Raca* (#3469) is not so well thought out.
- *Fool* (#3774) is more serious.

This is why one goes to be judged and the other is judged already. (The NAS says one goes to court and the other goes to the Supreme Court. The RSV raises the bar even higher by simply saying the one who *insults* his brother, instead of calling him *raca*.)

The tribunal of Mt 5:22 is the meeting of elders who decide or determine the matter at hand. They preserve the Body by keeping evil from coming in and destroying the whole Body. The leaders know the people who said it and they know those they said it about. They gather in council to judge the motive behind a brother who calls another brother *raca*. This is #4460, meaning an empty head, worthless. It is a term of vilification. These terms are very serious, and calling your brother one of them could be a sin unto death.

Mt 5:22 – *Raca* is a term by which one lowers the estimation of another, or reduces his or her importance in another's (or in other's) eyes. They do this by defaming or maligning them to one degree or another. They thereby lower another brother or sister's estimation in front of others (behind the person's back) – or even to them personally! The effect is to alienate others from them.

I'm sure a lot of people's lives have been almost ruined by what has been said to them when they

were young, how they were stupid or retarded and wouldn't amount to anything. Careless words go so deep into people's souls.

As Pr 6:19 says, sowing seeds of discord is an abomination and makes the one who sows abominable to God. He is the one our Father hates (Pr 6:16-19). The one who sows discord or strife in Mt 5:22 is the destroyer of 1 Cor 3:16-17. When we are dull to these kinds of sins our Father allows us to come to the place where we can't resist temptation in order to see where we are.

If we are not spiritual enough to pray that we would not be led into temptation, our Father will allow us to fall into it. When you sin you have reproach for yourself. I guess you call yourself a blockhead. Dan 12:2 says you have age-lasting reproach.

Soreph Gamaliel – The reason you didn't confess calling your brother *raca*, as Yoneq was saying, was that it wasn't important to you. It just didn't matter. And that is the very dullness that causes your sins to pile up. So, when something you consider more serious comes along, something you recognize as sin, and you try to confess it, our Father can't hear you.

- *Raca* is a colloquial expression of contempt for someone's mental condition or mind.
- *Fool* is contempt for someone's character.

While *raca* is contempt for someone's mind, in both cases the council decides and could excommunicate and send the sinner out of the community and on to (a second) death. Either could be a sin unto death. This is what Jms 5:19-20 is saying about the *sinner* in the community (not out of it)

So the words, "Save a sinner from a multitude of sins" refers to the blocked-up sins, like calling your brother blockhead.

In Mt 5:22 the words "hell of fire" is literally *Gehenna*. So the biggest fool is the one who calls his brother a fool. *Gehenna* was the garbage heap outside of Jerusalem, where the worthless things were taken to be burned. The burning was continual there. That's where Derush was for seven years, in that place of continual burning.

You have to send the sinner out of the community – the one who commits a sin unto death – or he leaves because he can't face the shame of his deeds. The council is an investigative body of elders, as in Num 15:34 gathered to determine the repercussions of such expressions about another brother whom Messiah bought with His blood. Ayal was another such brother who was out of the community for five years. He had to go before the elders to determine the seriousness of what he did on the Sabbath, to judge his actions and his motives.

He had planned to make money to do something. He could have done it on Preparation Day. It didn't matter to him that it was the Sabbath. This was a pretty rough sin in light of the story of the man in Numbers 15.

He'd planned it, as gathering sticks was a pretty rough job in the wilderness. Even we should gather our wood and kindling on Preparation Day so that if we have to start a fire on the Sabbath because it is cold we just have to set a match to it.

You put a person in custody to determine his motive. Why? To keep him and his sin from destroying the community. Our Master said that if your hand keeps causing you to sin, cut it off

There are great repercussions to how we talk about another brother or sister whom our Master bought – since He lives inside of him. Sometimes we kid, or ridicule, but if we go on past the boundary, hating that brother, then we make him feel despised, rejected, a nobody, and this is tantamount to murder. 1 Jn 3:14-16, verse 15 – "Whoever hates his brother is a murderer." Making your brother feel that way is treated as murder. Some cannot recover from their abominable sin of tearing others down. We must be circumspect (1 Jn 5:16-17).

Soreph Gamaliel – It's murder because it destroyed the person who was there. They shrank away and died. It is like someone else is there now, someone different than the person who was murdered.

Such expressions make one feel despised and rejected, inferior, and a nobody. The inferiority complexes come from words that reduce their self-esteem and derail their soul. You say those words because you despise them. It

is the murder of his soul, convincing him he is good for nothing.

Mt 5:23-24 – Your brother has something against you. Why? Because you did something to him. You are supposed to go to the person you hurt. You are supposed to know that and go before the minchah. Don't wait until before the Breaking of Bread. That's too late – you had six days in which to do it.

This is not the case where you have something against him. That is Mk 11:25. And it would have been better if he had come to you, but he didn't, so when you remember that at the minchah, you have the power to forgive. Who is the better man then? The one who forgives is (Mt 6:14-15). It takes a spiritual person to do this.

I told ____ just to forgive the brother who doesn't even know he wronged him. I told him if he really did and he is so insensitive he doesn't even see it, then our Father will take care of him. But somehow our Father can't give ____ the grace to forgive. Mt 6:14-15 and Mk 11:25 – If we don't *know* these things then we can't live in the Body, since we don't love Him enough to *know* and *keep* His word (Jn 14:21). We are condemned by 1 Jn 2:4.

I just used rock music as an example earlier. We have to judge ourselves about music. If we love the world, of course the love of the Father is not in us (1 Jn 2:15). We have to judge ourselves rightly on that basis (1 Jn 5:13).

Mt 5:24 – If you do not clear it up in a hurry, then your sin piles up, and the only way it can be cleared up (Mt 5:25-26) is by your death – paying the last cent (Lk 12:57-59). So when it comes to your mind, just go and take that brother aside and repent to him. It doesn't have to take hours. Clear it up as you go and then your sins won't pile up.

The wages of sin, of unforgiven, unconfessed sin, is death. Rom 6:23 – It will be our death or His death. He forgives us on the basis of His death on the cross. We have to confess our present and future sins. We know we have passed out of death and into life because we love one another (1 Jn 3:14). Sin will be paid for one way or the other. Therefore, it talks in the Gospels about those who have to pay the last cent (Lk 12:57-59). Right there is the tribunal judgment.

The wages of sin is death. A sin unto death is not forgiven by Messiah's death but by our own death. So, we keep on confessing our sin of listening to rock music until we die, right? No, we prosper when we renounce our sin (Pr 28:13). We can't keep confessing when we are not renouncing it. This grieves Him. His Holy Spirit can't be upon us if we grieve Him. Just going on in a light way can grieve Him, not taking anything seriously.

Raca is a colloquialism, a curse word, concerning a brother. It reduces him in the eyes of others lower than he merits or is worth. And *this* cursing reduces the one who curses to *his* merited level. Even though he does this or that thing, we don't have to bring it out before others. We do so because we don't know what is working in us.

Soreph Gamaliel – In that example earlier about calling your brother *raca* we don't confess it because we don't understand what is working in us to tear our brother down. And if we can't name our sin – see the motives at work in us to say such things – we can't take dominion over our sin. The first step in doing that is confession.

Remember, if we have not received the Holy Spirit we could go to the Lake of Fire for these kinds of sins. If we have, we can't, but if we go on sinning in this way, then our conscience becomes dull. Saying these things gives people an inferiority complex, which is a term used to describe an unconscious, intensified feeling of being insignificant, insecure, unable to cope with life. It gives a conscious excuse or rationalization for failure.

Slow learner/fast learner – we are all equal in the Body. The one talent person is just as important as the ten-talent person. We need to encourage our children!

An inferiority complex is unconscious feelings of inferiority, of being insignificant, helpless, incomplete and unable to deal with life. We don't want anyone to feel that way. There is no such thing in the Body as anyone being inferior or superior. There is only the thought of such.

Jephthah – Pr 18:21 spoke to me. You can think something about your brother and you are accountable for your own self. If you speak it, you are accountable for how you affect him as well.

Jeremiah – I saw that I wanted to have my helmet on all the time (Eph 6:17). I don't want to let the evil one into my mind. It can be as little as something that happens on the volleyball court. Someone makes a mistake and you say something hurtful. It is from within that come the defilements of man. I don't want to let anything come in. I want to cut my sin off.

ha-êmeq – When we hear about this I always think about a certain young person I know, because when he was a youth a seed was planted in his mind. One day I looked at him across the gathering and he was different. He looked so worthless. It took so long to get at the thought that he was stupid and mentally retarded. It was really hard for Yoneq to convince him that those thoughts were lies. We gave him some vocabulary books and then this other area of his life shot up. He was a builder and a super-intelligent person. It seems like you are stupid if you are unmotivated.

ha-êmeq – He could remember the very day and words that planted those seeds in him. The person who said them wasn't malicious, but he was unthinking. Those words did a lot of harm.

Shemaiah – It's amazing to me how quickly we can go from being a builder to being a destroyer.

Soreph Gamaliel – Yoneq told us our words can do so much harm, affect, and even ruin people for life.

Recently I was talking to my sister and I almost wept as I realized that she had been the one always unfavorably compared to me, and even though I saw how those words hurt her, I was so insecure I just took it as praise. All my life because of this I have thought she wasn't very intelligent, yet I was amazed to hear the things she was saying about culture and immigration and the lack of assimilation in America, how it is wreaking havoc. It stunned me. Somehow she recovered her self-esteem and believed she could make something of herself. How many don't?

It is like what we were saying about beards the other day – our Father is trying to teach us something by having this hair grow on our face every day. Somewhere it says about men's hair, "Does not even nature teach you?" But don't our eyes tell us when our words have hurt someone? Isn't nature trying to teach us something? Can't we see the pain on their faces? And if we can't see it, if we're too dull to see it, then we can receive our brothers when they tell us and we can become more sensitive.

Our children are amazing. They sit and pay attention so well. They can hear something and run with it. Do you know what that means?