

Anger Management - You Shall Not Murder

Jeff Rogers / Lamplighter Bible Study

Matthew 5:21-26

The Introduction (Front Porch) of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount

- The Character of the Believer (Matthew 5:3-12)
- The Function of the Believer (Matthew 5:13-16) (The focus is on “being”)
- The Foundation of the Believer (Matthew 5:17-20)

The Exposition of the Introduction

- The passage (Matthew 5:21-48) is, in a sense, an interpretation and exposition of Matthew 5:20. **Matthew 5:20, *For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.***
 - It is not a contrast between the teaching of Christ and the teaching of Moses.
 - It is a contrast between the false interpretation of the Mosaic law by the religious elite and the true presentation of Jesus.
 - *“You have heard it said.”*
 - *“I say unto you”*
- Matthew 5:21-48 comprises six examples of our Lord interpreting the law.
- Paul in Romans 7, makes the same distinction. (**Romans 7:7–8, *What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, “You shall not covet.” 8 But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead.***)
 - He believed he kept the law until he understood covetousness as a heart issue. He was convicted and said, “I died.”
 - The spirit of the law matters; coveting is as reprehensible as the act itself. That is the message.
- This analysis is revealing of the dangers in handling the Word of God.
 - We minimize the meaning of “*you shall surely die.*” Or, “*the wages of sin is death.*”
 - We discount the demands either by addition or subtraction.
 - We confine punishment to this life (in this case, civil authorities) (Matthew 5:26b). The Pharisees made this pronouncement with no mention of God’s punishment.
 - We reduce the consequences.
- The following is the first of six examples.

I. The Penetrating Magnitude of the Commandment (Matthew 5:21-22)

- A. The Letter of the Law made clear.
 1. The letter of the law was a prohibition against the killing of an individual (murder)
 2. The punishment was clear and originated from:
 - a) **Genesis 9:6, *Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.***
 - b) Exodus...
- B. The Spirit of the Law made known.
 1. Unseen and causeless anger “without cause”
 - a) Hatred; bitterness; resentment, etc.
 2. Expressions of contempt
 - a) “*Raca*” – worthless fellow
 - b) Jesus said in **Matthew 15:18–20, *But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. 19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. 20 These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone.***
 - c) “*Killing does not only mean destroying life physically, it means still more trying to destroy the spirit and the soul, destroying the person in any shape or form.*” (MLJ, page 197)

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3. Expressions of judgement
 - a) “*Thou fool*” -expressions of judgment attempt to elevate the speaker and denigrate the recipient. *We forget that we stand on equal footing before God as sinners condemned to death.*
 4. The Purpose of the Law explicated.
 - a) The commandment strikes at the heart of how we treat one another.
 - C. The Question of the Law made known. Is anger always wrong? Is anger prohibited?
 1. The example of Jesus
 - a) Referred to the Pharisees as “*blind*” and as “*hypocrites*.”
 - b) Used the phrase, “*O, fools, slow of heart to believe*.”
 - c) In Matthew 23, He pronounces “*Woe*,” on the Pharisees
 - d) What is Jesus saying? Is He in violation of His own words?
 - (1) Pronouncements of final judgment by the sovereign judge.
 - (2) Against false religions and hypocrisy (sin).
 - (3) He is denouncing self-righteousness.
 2. The Imprecatory Psalms speak to judgment calamity or curses on one’s enemy.
 - a) Pronounce judgment on the Psalmist’s enemies as the enemies of God.
 - b) They serve as examples that our anger must always be directed at sin and not the individual.
 - (1) Ask the question, “What is the object of our anger?”
 - (2) Ephesians, “Be angry, and sin not.”
 - (3) We must understand as we mature in holiness, our anger towards sin will intensify.
 - (4) We must know the state of heart!

II. The Positive Meaning of the Commandment (Matthew 5:23-24)

- A. The Extent. *See the layers*:
 1. It is a direct command not to kill. (Does not stop here)
 2. It is a command to not harm with words. (Does not stop here)
 3. It is a command to make relationships right. (It necessitates our action!)
- B. The Warning
 1. Evil cannot be balanced with our “good” actions.
 2. Ceremonial works & sacrifices do not atone for broken relationships.
 - a) Pharisees were experts at worship.
 - b) Horrendously bad at heart matters.
 3. Worship is not to be used as a salve for the conscious. (**Luke 16:15**, *And he said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.”*)
- C. The Importance
 1. Leave your worship and go, make things right with your brother.
 2. The Psalmist, “*If I regard [cherish] iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.*” (Psalm 66:18)
 3. **1 John 3:20**, *For whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything.*
- D. The Illustration
 1. **1 Samuel 15:22–23** *And Samuel said, “Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has also rejected you from being king.”*

III. The Pressing Matter of the Commandment (Matthew 5:25-26)

- A. Always bear in mind your relationship to God as most important
- B. The picture
 1. Settle with God and His law quickly.
 2. Settle with an adversary quickly.
 3. Don’t delay, time is short.

Take Aways

1. **Practice Patience - Proverbs 16:32 (ESV) — 32** Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.
2. **Practice Self Control - Proverbs 16:32 (ESV) — 32** Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.
3. **Abandon Pride - Philippians 2:3 (ESV) — 3** Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.
4. **Practice Humility - Philippians 2:3 (ESV) — 3** Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.
5. **Practice Forgiveness** (Gal 5 and Eph 4)