

THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN LIFE

Studies in the Sermon on the Mount

Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L8-BI89mb9A>

Part 20

“Expelling Anger”

I. We Are Living in an Angry World!

- Have you ever seen so much anger and name-calling?
- Our nation is very divided: these days: there is a lot of anger in our politics, and the culture in general
- On top of that, we have people killing people all over the world in the name of religion

It may surprise you to know that Jesus said there is a connection between anger and the sin of murder. Before we look at that, let us look at the context...

A. Overview of Matthew 5:17-48: How the God’s Law Relates to Believers

Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Matthew 5:20

1. The Pharisees' righteousness was rooted in their good works; but Christian righteousness is the gift of God to those who have faith in the work of Jesus Christ.

a. The Pharisees knew the letter of the Law but not the spirit behind the Law.

“The fundamental error of the Jewish teachers was that the divine law prohibited only the sinful act, not the sinful thought; they were disposed to rest in the letter of the law, and they never enquired into the spiritual meaning of it.”

Matthew Henry

2. No one who trusts they are right with God because of their good works can be saved; but everyone who trusts in the good work of Christ will be made right with God.

3. Once we are saved, we can begin to appreciate the spiritual nature of God's Law and His commandments; we can see that the righteousness God gives us goes beyond what we do or don't do; it goes to the heart, the motives and intentions.

4. In the rest of Chapter 5, Jesus will take up 6 Old Testament commandments and show the spiritual nature of each one, using the formula...

You have heard it said...but I say to you...

5. His first example is the 6th Commandment, “Thou shalt not kill.”

"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder', and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' 22 But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause* shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire.

Matthew 5:21-22

6. The Pharisees thought they had kept the commandment because they had never committed murder; but Jesus goes beyond the letter of the Law to show us the Spirit of the Law; He connects the sin of anger to the sin of murder!

“The Jews considered but one crime a violation of the sixth commandment, namely, actual murder. Jesus says that the commandment is much broader. It relates not only to the external act, but to our feelings and our words.”

Albert Barnes

7. The letter of the Law says “Thou shalt not kill”; but the born-again believer has the spirit of the Law; a revelation that *anger is a form of murder* in the same way that lusting after a woman in our hearts is a form of adultery. (Which is next week’s message).

“It does not mean that the action does not matter; but it does mean very definitely that it is not the action only that is important.”

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones

8. Let’s be clear: to commit a murder is a greater sin than to be angry; to commit adultery is a greater sin than inner lust; but Jesus is teaching us that these lesser “inner” sins are the seeds that bring forth the actual “outer” act...

- Lust leads to adultery
- Anger leads to murder
- Lust is a spiritual form of physical adultery, in the same way that...

II. Anger is a Form of Murder

A. Consider the First Murder

1. The 1st murder in human history happened when Cain killed his brother Abel.

2. The 2 brothers brought an offering to God, who accepted Abel's offering but rejected Cain's.

So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast...and while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

Genesis 4:5, 8

3. This 1st murder is a prototype all murders; every murder is an echo of the first; the *physical* sin of murder begins with the *spiritual* sin of anger.

B. A Litmus Test for Our Spiritual Condition

1. How does one know if he is a Christian or not? The little epistle of 1st John has at least 17 proof tests about how one can know that they are truly saved. Here is one...

We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love *his* brother* abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

1 John 3:14-15 NKJV

2. Look closely just at V.15:

Whoever hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

1 John 3:15

a. Hating our brother is a form of murder
b. No one who hates continues hating his brother has eternal life
c. Hate always includes anger; something we cannot allow to linger in our hearts.

3. Notice also that Jesus says one of the signs of sinful anger is name-calling:

"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder', and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' 22 But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause* shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire.

Matthew 5:21-22

4. I know God says, "Thou shalt not kill"; but Jesus says being angry without cause is a form of murder,

5. One of the most common expressions of anger is name-calling; when we pronounce judgment on a person. Jesus says this puts us in danger:

- a. Danger #1: name-calling that can get you in trouble with the court.
- b. Danger #2: name-calling that can get you in trouble with God!

***Testimony: How God convicted me about name-calling**

III. So What Do We Do With Our Anger? (2 Things)

A. Be Proactive: Go Seek Peace With Those Who Are Angry With You

Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Matthew 5:23-24 NKJV

1. It is very surprising that Jesus seems to skip our anger with others and moves immediately to the issue of those who are angry with us!

2. He says, "Before you do your 'church thing', go make things right with your brother.

a. Reconciliation is the heart of God; He sent His Son to reconcile us to Himself; now He expects us to seek reconciliation with one another.

b. There is a serious lesson here: unresolved anger in our personal relationships affects our ability to properly worship God!

“We cannot be right with God if we aren’t right with others.”

Chuck Swindoll

3. My personal testimony is that I have always made it a habit to try to be right with others. I’m proactive. I don’t put it off.

a. Unfortunately, there have been times I have gone to a brother to make peace and have not been received. They remain angry at me. But God does not hold me accountable for what others do; He expects me to do my part. .

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Romans 12:18

B. Agree With Your Adversary Quickly

1. The 2nd thing we can do to expel anger is here...

25 Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. 26 Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny.

Matthew 5:25-26 NKJV

a. Notice the urgency of these 2 commandments on dealing with anger: if you remember someone is angry with you, don’t try to worship, go try to fix it. And here, “agree with your adversary *quickly*”.

2. The first reaction of our flesh is to fight to prove we are right. But a born again spirit puts the relationship first.

a. So many times it comes down to this: **“Would you rather be right or would you rather save the relationship?”**

b. My personal way of dealing with people.

- When I know someone is angry with me, I go to them and truly seek to understand why. If they have a cause, I humble myself and ask forgiveness. But even if they really have no reason to be angry with me, I try to make peace anyway! It doesn't always work, but...
- It is amazing what can happen if we're willing to utter the most difficult 9 words to come out of the mouth of man: “I am sorry. I was wrong. Please forgive me.”

c. The Apostle Paul had to correct the Christians in the Church at Corinth who were suing each other in the courts of law.

Now therefore is a utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated?

1 Corinthians 6:7-8

3. Anger actually has the potential to sow the seeds of murder. We have to expel it: Go make it right. Agree with adversaries. Then go worship God.

Everyone who is angry with his brother (without cause) will be liable to judgment.

Matthew 5:22

B. An Important Exception! There Is Such a Thing as Righteous Anger!

1. Not all anger is sinful.

“Anger against sin is lawful. God is angry with the wicked, (Psalm 7:11). Jesus looked on the hypocritical Pharisees with anger, (Mark 3:5). Paul said, ‘Be ye angry, and sin not’.” (Ephesians 4:26).

Albert Barnes

2. There is such a thing as holy anger; not against people, but against sin.

“Righteous anger or being offended at sin is not what our Saviour speaks of here. What he condemns here is anger without a cause.

Albert Barnes

3. I’m including this teaching on “righteous” anger because so many of God’s people seem to think it un-Christian to feel anger about anything. They turn the Lion of Judah into a house cat!

THE LION OF JUDAH IS NOT A HOUSE CAT!

4. Bad anger is toward the sinner; good anger toward the sin.

Our anger must only be against sin; we must never feel angry with the sinner, but only full of sorrow and compassion for him. The two things are not incompatible.

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones

5. As I go deeper the Lord, I find myself more angry toward sin but more compassionate toward sinners.

“The holier we become, the more anger we shall feel against sin. But we must never, I repeat, feel anger against the sinner. We must draw a distinction between the person himself and what he does.”

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones

ALTAR CALL AND PRAYER

Summary

Sermon on the Mount

A Greater Righteousness

■ **Murder and Anger (5:21-26)**

- Jesus condemns not only murder, but the anger seething in the heart that can lead to murder
- He also condemns acts that can incite anger in another, such as insults and name-calling.
- The underlying ethic is love of the other person. The approach to God is through our neighbor, and a sacrifice to God is meaningless if we are not first reconciled with our neighbor.

Matthew 5:21-26