



### **Part 31: Jesus & Anger**

Matthew 5:21-26

*Jesus warns us of the danger of nursing anger into resentment and contempt. His disciples are to seek reconciliation quickly.*

#### **I. Jesus our Teacher**

“The disappearance of Jesus as teacher explains why today in Christian churches – of whatever learning – little effort is made to teach people to do what he did and taught.” – Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*

*A disciple learns to live joyfully with Jesus in God’s beautiful Kingdom.*

The way of Jesus is the way into human flourishing.

The way of Jesus is not easy. It takes a lifetime of practice.

Two common mistakes are made in relation to Jesus’ teaching in the Sermon:

1. Dismiss it.
2. Naively embrace it.

We need to think like training for a triathlon: need knowledge, wisdom, and small steps of practice.

## II. Jesus and Anger

### A. Jesus Diagnosis

“You have heard it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders is subject to judgment.’” Matthew 5:21

Jesus is referring to the 6<sup>th</sup> Commandment – “You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17). The second part, “subject to judgment,” is a reference to several OT passages that dealt with murder and other kinds of deaths.

“But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.” Matthew 5:22

“But I tell you ...” Jesus is going to teach us the right way to read the sixth commandment. He is “filling full” the deeper meaning behind the commandment (Matthew 5:17). Jesus tells us that the root cause behind murder is anger.

“Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer.” 1 John 3:15

Two Greek words for anger:

1. *Thumos* = anger easily ignited but quickly extinguished.
  2. *Orge* = long-lived anger that is nursed into resentment and contempt.
- Note: Jesus uses the present participle of *orge* = “is being angry” = carrying the anger; nursing the anger; remaining angry.

Jesus is NOT telling us we should never be angry. There is a place for righteous anger (*thumos*). The prophets and the psalmists speak of God’s anger at sin (Isaiah 30:27; Jeremiah 23:20; Ezekiel 8:8). Jesus exemplified righteous anger (Matthew 18:34; 21:12-17; 22:7; 23:17).

“Not all anger is evil, as is evident from the wrath of God, which is always holy and pure. And even fallen human beings may sometimes feel righteous anger, although, being fallen, we should ensure that even this is slow to rise and quick to die down.” – John Stott

It is possible to be angry and not sin, but it is difficult (Ephesians 4:26). Hence the warnings to deal with our anger (Psalm 37:8; Ecclesiastes 7:9; Ephesians 4:26, 31-32; Colossians 3:8; James 1:19-21).

“Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.” Ephesians 4:31-32

“My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man’s anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.” James 1:19-20

Jesus’ diagnosis: anger is the root cause behind murder as well as the disintegration of human relationships.

## B. Jesus’ Warning

“But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.” Matthew 5:22

There is a progression that takes place in our hearts that moves from questioning another’s intelligence to shaming their entire character.

*Raca* = quasi-expletive calling another stupid ... to *fool* = calling into question their entire character. Jesus is warning us that we can allow anger to fester into bitterness and contempt.

“The deliberate paradox of Jesus’ pronouncement is thus that ordinary insults may betray an attitude of contempt which God takes extremely seriously.” – R. T. France

## C. Jesus’ Solution

Jesus uses two illustrations from their common life to make the same point: deal with your anger by seeking reconciliation quickly.

“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.” Matthew 5:23-24

Jesus is teaching us that our relationship with God is tied up with our relationship with other people especially our brothers and sisters in the church (Matthew 6:12, 14-15; 18:21-35; 1 Peter 3:7; 1 John 3:15).

Authentic worship includes our attempt to reconcile wounded or ruptured relationships.

“The Lord does not want to talk with a disciple, who does not want to talk with a brother or sister.” – Dietrich Bonhoeffer

“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.” Romans 12:18

“In your anger do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.” Ephesians 4:26-27

Jesus warns us of the danger of nursing anger into resentment and contempt. His disciples are to seek reconciliation quickly.

### III. The Grace of the King

Practicing the way of Jesus...receiving from him the grace we need to be transformed from the inside out to be a people of selfless love.

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with one another and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”  
Colossians 3:12-14

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What has been your experience with teaching on the sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7)?
2. Doug offered his opinion that we typically make one of two mistakes when it comes to the challenging teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. We either dismiss it as irrelevant or unrealistic or we naively think we can “just do it.” Have you been influenced towards either mistake?
3. Jesus uses *orge* for anger which is anger that is nursed into resentment rather than *thumos* which is anger that is easily ignited but quickly extinguished. Why do you think it matters that he is addressing *orge* anger?
4. What do you notice about Jesus’ warning? What questions does this raise for you?
5. Jesus uses two illustrations from first century Jewish life. What is the common principle he is teaching in both?
6. Is there anyone Jesus is calling you to pursue reconciliation with? Would you like your group to pray for you? How?