

The Sermon on the Mount: The Angry Heart

Matthew 5:21-26

The Heart of the Problem (v. 21-22)

- “You have heard it said...but I say to you”: Not a reputation of Torah, but a correction of how it was taught
- “You shall not murder”
 - One of the 10 commandments (Ex 20:13)
 - The punishment for murder was death (Ex 21:12-14, Lev 24:17)
- However, Jesus gets to the heart of the issue: Anger
- Jesus does not change the command; He clarifies it:
 - Being angry toward someone can lead to judgment
 - Even calling someone names is a damnable offense
- Since anger is an emotion, it is not in and of itself that is a sin (Eph 4:26-27)
 - Our emotions tell us our inner state
 - They are not to drive our actions
 - That is the Holy Spirit’s role
- Left unchecked, anger can lead to other sins (Ps 37:8; Jas 1:19-20; 4:1-3)
- Since anger is what leads to murder, the heart that is bent toward anger is bent away from God

The Call to Reconciliation (v. 23-26)

- Jesus calls us to something better: Reconciliation
 - διαλλάσσομαι: To be restored to normal relations; be brought into harmony; to be changed thoroughly
- This reconciliation is possible because we have experienced reconciliation with God (Rom 5:10)
- In fact, the root of our calling in Christ is reconciliation (Rom 5:16-21)
 - We cannot be good ambassadors of Jesus if we do not seek reconciliation in our relationships
 - This starts with offering forgiveness when we are wronged & asking for forgiveness when we have wronged others (Eph 4:32)
- Jesus tells us to even prioritize reconciliation over worship (Mt 5:23-24)
 - If our hearts are wrong towards others, God is displeased with our worship (Amos 5:21-24; Isa 1:11-17)
 - We should work towards making relationships right, even when it costs us something (Rom 12:18; Heb 12:14)

Righteous Anger

- God/Jesus gets angry when others suffer injustice (Pro 17:15; Isa 59:15-18; Zech 10:3; Mt 21:12-13; Mk 3:25): Righteous anger
 - But God knows hearts and motives perfectly and therefore can judge rightly; humans cannot
 - Therefore, we are to leave judgment to God (Rom 12:1; 1 Cor 4:5)
- God’s desire is for repentance & reconciliation

So What?

- Do we let anger linger in our hearts? Or do we let the Holy Spirit deal with its root causes?

- Have we experienced the reconciliation with God that Jesus offers? Do we work toward reconciliation with others?

Meditation Verse: *Matthew 5:23-24*