

Matthew 5:21–26

- ²¹ “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.
- ²³ Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you,
- ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.
- 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.

Murder and Anger
Matthew 5:21-26

INTRO:

Our Lord will now begin describing how the Law was meant to be taken. He knows this because He was there when the Law was originally given to Moses. When we read this, we may experience the epiphany the Apostle Paul experienced. In **Romans 7:7**, Paul told us how he realized that the Law involved the internal sin of coveting. ***“What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, “You shall not covet.”*** The Lord was demonstrating how we could not ever be righteous through the law. The Lord must save us by grace through faith.

I. You Have Heard It Said (v. 21)

II. Dealing with Anger (22-26)

I. You Have Heard It Said (v. 21)

“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.’ But I say to you ...” (Matthew 5:21-22a).

A. Jesus had just said that He was not there to change the Law and Prophets. He also said that our righteousness must exceed the external righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees if we are to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. We might say to this, “I am pretty good, even better than average. Therefore, I must be fine.” To make us realize we need the righteousness we receive by faith, the Lord Jesus Christ showed us what the Law really meant. He cites six examples all introduced by the words, ***“You have heard that it was said to those of old.” “But I say to you...”***

B. Remember who is saying this. This is the eternal Son of God. In the mystery of the Trinity, He was there when the Law was given to Moses. He knew what the original intent of these laws were. So, He began with the Law against Murder.

1. The scribes and the Pharisees believed the prohibition was just against the act of murder. So, if they had never killed anyone, they had nothing to fear. They could put a check mark against this commandment and feel good about it.

2. However, the divine intent of this command was more than the external act. God aimed at anger. You might never kill someone, but your anger makes you guilty before a holy God.

II. Dealing with Anger (22-26)

“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 5:22-23).

A. Our Lord Jesus states carefully how dangerous anger is. He gives three statements. **(1)** ***“But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment.”*** **(2)** ***“And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council.”*** **(3)** ***“But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire.”*** Do these statements scare you? They do me. I have spent most of my life fighting anger. The overarching point is that God Himself will judge those who violate this command by being angry with their brothers and sisters.

B. The New Testament has an enormous amount of material about anger. Here is a short survey.

Anger arises from who we were before the Lord saved us.

“For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.” (Titus 3:3).

Galatians 5:19-21 this is the other list in contrast to the fruit of the Spirit.

“Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

James reminds us, *“So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God” (James 1:19-20).*

C. It seems that when we give in to human anger we are in a very difficult place. God judges anger.

“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. 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. Truly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny.” (Matthew 5:23-26).

D. Jesus did not give us a complete discussion of how to overcome our anger here. However He did give two examples of how to deal with this in our lives. First, He talks about our remembering our sin against our brother when we are in the midst of sacrificing to God. It is not enough to make things right with God and avoid making them right with our brother. I am convinced that fear of others is why cannot handle our anger. We need to go and talk issues out with our brothers and sisters before we can make it right with God.

E. The second illustration is of one who has a dispute with us. We need to make things right between us and our brothers and sisters. If we wait until the Lord does it, we may not like the result.

How do we apply this?

Do we recognize how important it is to overcome anger before it dominates us? The ultimate answer to anger is forgiveness. **Ephesians 4:31-32, “Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.**

And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”

We were under the wrath of God until Jesus saved us. If He forgave us, the least we can do is forgive others for His sake.

Hymn #210 *Jesus Paid It all*