

**Refuge City Church — April 7, 2024**  
**Gospel of Matthew: “Issues of Life: Anger” (Matthew 5:21-26)**

***Introduction***

- As Jesus carries on in His sermon, He now spends time comparing the law in relation to what he is now declaring.
  - Six sections dealing with issues of life that everyone will struggle with.
  - Anger, lust, divorce, oaths, retaliation, and how to deal with those you may consider “your enemy”.
  - Each of these issues pertaining to *relationship*.
- Jesus begins each statement with, “You have heard that it was said...”
  - He’ll quote the law, and then add “But I say to you...”; not negating the law.
  - **REMINDER: v. 17**, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.”

***Anger = Murder***

**[verses 21-22]**

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire.”

- Jesus introduces this section with a light conversation about murder.
- According to the law, if you murdered someone, and at least two eyewitnesses saw you do it, you would be put to death.
  - He quotes a combination of, the 6th commandment [“thou shall not murder”], and an aspect of judgement from other portions of the law.
- “But I say to you”
  - Who gave Moses the law? = God
    - By who’s authority would Jesus have the power to fulfill the law?
    - This is a very clear deistic claim... the first of many occurrences where Jesus would claim God’s authority as His own.
- The act of murder is an external manifestation of an internal condition.
  - **Genesis 7:17**, “The flood continued forty days on the earth. The waters increased and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth.”
    - waters = God’s wrath against sin [righteous anger]
    - The water burst forth from within the earth, and released from the windows of heaven.
    - Why did God destroy the earth? **Genesis 6:5**, “The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that *every intention of the thoughts of his heart* was only evil continually.”

- **Leviticus 19:17-18**, “You shall not hate your brother *in your heart*, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you *incur sin* because of him. You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.”
  - The word *incur* carries similar meaning to the waters ‘boring up’ the ark.
  - You’re going to lift up and carry the anger until it bursts forth into action.
  - So unless you deal with and destroy the intention of your heart, you will lend yourself to the consequences of your actions; you will be *liable*.
- We need to be careful that we don’t over-inflate our self-righteousness simply because we don’t commit heinous crimes; “*I would never do such a thing!*”
  - Does righteous anger exist? Yes. But all too often we rationalize our anger as, “I’m right, they’re wrong.”
  - To count your anger as righteous, it *must* align with what God considers wrong; which will be geared towards the sin in an individual’s unrepentant heart.
    - Even then, what has God instructed us to do in that situation?
    - Never does God allow us to be ‘righteously angry’ at someone and *not* speak to them about it.
    - God is not okay with you calling your anger righteous, only to sit & stew in it.
- What Jesus is telling us is that we are still liable, prone to judgment before God based on the condition of our heart.
  - If you’re inappropriately angry [*exasperated*] at someone, you’re liable; anger that sits and stews.
  - If you’re insulting to another, you are liable; anger that speaks.
  - If you write someone off as a fool, you’re liable; anger that decides the heart condition of another.
  - Any and all anger can be progressive to the point of murder if left unresolved.
  - [*Cain & Abel brought their offering to the Lord*] **Genesis 4:5-7**, “...but for Cain and his offering [God] had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. The Lord said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it.’”
  - **James 3:10-11**, “From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water?”
    - What is your condition at the source of your heart?! That is the question to consider.

### **[Verses 23-26]**

“So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.”

- A powerful word from Jesus!
  - Forsake your religious offering and deal with your anger! [*don’t be religiously hypocritical*]
  - Your relational purity holds preeminent importance over any religious practice.

- **Romans 12:16-18**, “Live in harmony with one another... Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, *so far as it depends on you*, live peaceably with all.”
  - **Ephesians 4:26-27; 29-32**, “Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil... Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”
- Jesus came to set us free from the bondage of sin, which includes unresolved anger towards or from another.
- Reconsider the Beatitudes: Blessed are the merciful, pure, and peacemakers.
  - Unresolved anger imprisons you. Nothing will release you like forgiveness and reconciliation.
  - **QUOTE:** “The person who refuses to forgive his brother destroys the very bridge over which he himself must walk.” [Warren Wiersbe]