

Extra Teaching Points

Chapter 5

INTRO: [Matt. 5:21-26](#)

Anger, calling your brother names, leaving your gift at the altar to reconcile with an angry brother, and reconciling with an adversary before you go to court.

Q: What do these illustrations have in common?

- They are all connected to the 6th commandment ([Ex. 20:13](#)), “You shall not murder.”
 - All of these scenarios are an explanation of what God was getting at when He commanded them not to murder.

[Matt. 5:21](#)

“You have heard that it was said...”

- The Pharisees had put together two true statements in such a way as to give a false impression.
 - They combined “do not murder” and “whoever murders will be subject to judgment.”
- The Pharisees and their contemporaries understood “judgment” differently than we typically do today.
 - The Judgment referred to in this passage is about the magistrate or the legal system.
 - **The Pharisees were teaching that you better not murder or you will be taken to the magistrate and put to death.**
- With this teaching they were giving two false impressions:
 - 1) The only penalty a person would face for murder was a legal penalty, so it was a legalistic approach... ***it did not emphasize that this was a breach of the relationship with God.***
 - 2) While everyone knew murder was an extreme crime worthy of extreme punishment, ***the Pharisees’ teaching failed to identify other things that were equally offensive to God, giving the impression that God was only concerned about people obeying His rules.***

In Jesus’ day, everyone knew God said murder was wrong, but they didn’t really know what was wrong with it... why God was offended by it.

- Jesus was teaching here that there are other things that are bad besides murder, and they are bad for the same reason murder is bad.
 - They may not be as bad as murder, but they are bad for the same reason.
- **If your concern is for your relationship with God, then you will be concerned not only with the outward things that will subject you to judgment, but you will also be concerned about those things that offend God even though you may never be condemned for it by a magistrate.**

God is very concerned with justice.

God is not opposed to killing humans when they deserve it, but God is massively against killing people when they don’t deserve it because that is unjust.

- At times God has commanded the killing of people ([Duet. 20:13](#)) and at other times He killed them Himself ([Acts 5:5](#)).
 - [Gen. 9:6](#) God said when a man commits murder, then people will kill him.
 - Murder is unjust, but killing a murderer is not.
 - Killing a murderer is not justice simply because it upholds a nation’s law; it is justice because it upholds God’s law for justice.

There were many laws in the Old Testament in which God said people deserved to be killed for transgressing.

- Not because they were an offense to society, but because they were an offense to God.
- Capitol punishment is both an Old Testament and New Testament teaching.
 - In [Acts 25:11](#) Paul did not object to being put to death for anything He deserved to be put to death for.
- [Romans 1:28-32](#) Everyone who has sinned deserves to die, from God's perspective; but He is the only one justified in killing all sinners.
 - He is the offended party and He alone has the right to execute sinners.

Each of Jesus' next illustrations are examples of injustice.

Matt. 5:22

Jesus tells us that anger will subject you to judgment just like murder will.

- Jesus seems to be shifting the meaning of "judgment" from what the Pharisees understood it to mean, (judgment from the legal system), to the judgment of God, which results in hell fire.
 - **God will judge not only what you do, but also what you want to do.**
- By using these three examples, Jesus is using "Hebrew parallelism."
 - This is saying the same thing in different, parallel ways to emphasize its importance.
 - Jesus used this parallelism frequently (Matt. 13).
 - In these three examples Jesus changes each example slightly in order to introduce a new angle on the same topic.

Jesus seems to use hyperbole in these examples:

- It seems unlikely that Jesus is forbidding anger for any reason since He was righteously angry at times ([Mark 3:5](#)).
 - If all anger were a sin then Jesus would have been guilty of sin, which He was not ([Heb. 4:15](#); [2Cor. 5:21](#)).
- [Eph. 4:26](#) Paul said you could be angry and not sin, a quote from [Psalm 4:4](#).

Calling someone "Raca" and/or "fool" is like calling them an idiot.

- It is not that these are particularly vulgar words; Jesus, James, and Paul all called people fools ([Matt. 23:17](#); [James 2:20](#); [Gal. 3:1](#)).
- Jesus is using hyperbole to tell us that having angry contempt for your brother is wrong.

Being angry with your brother **unjustly** is a kin to murder.

- People don't always kill out of anger; sometimes it is out of contempt for the value of their life--like a contract killer, who isn't angry, simply has contempt for the victim's right to life.
 - A hit man who kills without anger values the victim's life less than he values the money he's paid to kill the victim... that's contempt.
 - Whether people murder out of anger or contempt, it is unjust.
- **It's hard to overstate God's concern with justice.**
 - **Justice is not the opposite of love; it is a key component of love.**

Q: Is it unjust to be angry with someone for treating me badly?

- ***To be angry with someone for treating me badly is almost always unjust.***
 - If I've ever treated someone else badly, then I have no just cause to expect to never be treated badly myself.
 - [Matt. 7:1-2](#) Jesus teaches that the way I treat others is the way I will be treated.

- Who am I to object to not being treated perfectly, when I've never been able to treat others perfectly?
 - When someone cuts me off on the road, I should ask, "Have I ever cut someone else off?"
 - If someone talks badly about me, I should ask, "Have I ever talked badly about someone else?"
- If I had always been able to "do unto others as I would have them do unto me" then maybe I might be justified in being upset.
 - But if I'm as guilty of offending as the one who is offending me, who am I to complain?
- In [Luke 17:1-2](#) Jesus makes it clear that when I give offense to someone else, it is Jesus that is really offended.
 - Jesus said that when I offend others and trip them up, it's millstone time!
- **Since Jesus deals with offenders, who am I to be angry with someone who offers to offend me?**
 - **I need to keep my eyes on me, and make double sure I'm not the one doing the offending!**

Q: Is anger ever righteous or just?

- Anger is righteous when you are angry on behalf of another, about a situation that makes them angry.
 - Being angry when someone angers your friend or family member is not a good example of righteous anger, since it would likely be selfish rather than just.
 - We should have an unselfish concern for justice.
- When innocent people are violated, whether we know them or like them or not, we should be angered by the injustice they are suffering.
 - There are not many people who are really innocent, but children usually are.
 - Children being treated badly should always offend us because they don't deserve to be wronged.
 - Jesus rebuked His disciples when they didn't want to let the children come near Him ([Matt. 19:13-14](#)).

Anger is righteous when God is insulted, because God is an innocent party.

Jesus' anger is always righteous. Notice He was always angry on behalf of some innocent party... usually God.

- Jesus was angry at God's temple being profaned. ([Matt. 21:12](#))
- Jesus was angry at God's work being maligned ([Mark 3:5](#)).

When God is insulted, it is a righteous cause for anger because God is an innocent party, and insulting Him is unjustified.

- If God is the one being insulted and victimized by the action, there is grounds for anger, and that anger is a righteous anger.
 - But this is so seldom the anger that people have.
 - Some people are never angered at an irreverent joke or a sacrilegious statement, or to hear God's Name used in vain.
 - But they get angry at the slightest little perceived slight to themselves.
 - That kind of anger is self-centered and unjust.

- The only righteous anger is when you are angry on behalf of another who is an innocent victim.

Jesus was never angry at those who hurt Him.

- When they mistreated Him and nailed Him to the cross, His reaction was to ask God to forgive them ([Luke 23:34](#)).
 - He showed no anger toward Pilot, the Sanhedrin, or even Judas who betrayed Him.

[2Tim. 4:16](#) Paul wasn't angry with those who deserted him when he stood trial before Nero. There is no anger toward those who hurt "me."

- [2Tim. 4:14](#) Paul was angry with Alexander the coppersmith.
- Q: Why was Paul angry with Alexander and not the deserters?
 - Because Alexander was an enemy of the gospel ([2Tim 4:15](#)).

[Matt. 5:23-24](#)

God is not concerned only with the injustice of murder and anger; there are other injustices He wants us to take seriously. He gives two examples: One in [Matt. 5:23-24](#), and the other in [Matt. 5:25-26](#)

In this first example Jesus is teaching us that God is not interested in our worship if we are not reconciled with our brothers.

- ***Jesus is addressing what we should do when others are offended with us... whether they have a right to be offended or not!***
 - Usually if people are offended at us, it is because of something we have done.
 - We need to go and make that right as quick as we can.
 - If we don't or won't, our worship is an abomination to God ([Prov. 15:8](#)).
- ***We need to care more about those injustices than we do about our religious appearance!***

[Matt. 5:25-26](#)

If you've done something wrong to your brother and you've not made it right, don't think God is going to bail you out of the trouble that comes your way!

- If you make that kind of bed for yourself, God will let you lay in it.
 - If you act unjustly toward others, not only does that offend God to the point that He won't want your worship, but in many cases you will be offensive to people too.
- God wants us to be more concerned about doing what is right than winning a court case.
 - There are some offenses that are punishable by a court of law.
 - If you get thrown in jail for an offense you wouldn't make right, don't expect God to get you out of jail.

[Luke 12:57-59](#) is the parallel of Jesus' teaching here in Matthew.

- Jesus is even clearer here that God wants us to do the right thing rather than go to court and hope for a favorable verdict.
- Sometimes we know that justice would demand we make certain reparations, even if a court would not likely rule against us.
 - Jesus wants us to be the kind of people who do the right thing willingly, rather than trying to take advantage in a court of law.
- Sometimes a court case can go against us in an unpredictable way.
 - Jesus is saying, if we value justice so little as to leave it in the hands of a court of law to enforce justice, then He won't help us deal with the outcome.
 - If we go to jail or get hit with an outrageous fine, don't expect God's help!

- [1Peter 4:14-16](#) Peter says, if we are punished for being a Christian, we are blessed. But we should never do wrong things that deserve punishment.
 - Christians who commit crimes deserve to suffer for those crimes, and there is no glory or honor for God in that.

Chapter 5 Follow Up Assignment

Q: How concerned with Justice are you?

- Do you look for unjust attitudes and/or actions in your life, and try to make them right; or do you wait for someone to point them out and confront you before you will do the right thing?
- What does your answer tell you about how loving you really are?

Q: Do you feel entitled to things God says you don't have a right to?

- Do you feel you have a right to be angry with people who don't treat you the way you think you deserve to be treated?
- Do you feel you have a right to continue calling yourself a Christian when you know someone is angry with you, and you haven't tried to make things right?
- Do you feel you have a right to not pay off a debt until you are forced?

Q: Are you claiming a right to anything right now that God would say you don't have a right to?

- This could be an attitude, a relationship, a debt, a material possession, etc.