

Matthew 5:21–26 “Anger Control”

5 Message Sermon on The Mount Sub-series:

- How to be a faithful Christian among others:

1. 5:21-26 “Anger Control”

2. 5:27-30 “Lust Control”

3. 5:31-32 “Marriage Control”

4. 5:33-37 “Contract Control”

5. 5:38-48 “Enemy Control”

Matthew 5:21-27

21 “You have heard that it was said to the [people of old], ‘Do not commit murder,’ and ‘whoever commits murder will be subject to judgment.’

22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry at his brother will be subject to judgment, and whoever says to his brother, ‘Stupid fool!’ will be subject to the council, and whoever says, ‘Obstinate fool!’ will be subject to fiery hell.

23 Therefore if you present your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you,

24 leave your gift there before the altar and first go be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your gift.

25 [Settle the case quickly with your accuser] while you are with him on the way, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison.

26 Truly I say to you, you will never come out of there until you have paid back the last penny! ¹

Jesus had said:

Matthew 5:20 For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

- People were used to just needing to “look” holy.

- They didn’t think it really needed to be something that you really meant or were serious about.
- Hypocrisy was the norm
- You couldn’t trust anything anyone said.
- Husbands couldn’t trust wives

¹ W. Hall Harris III et al., eds., *The Lexham English Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), Mt 5:21–26.

- Wives couldn't trust husbands.
- Everything was just a façade, a costume, everyday was Halloween.

Form of godliness, but denying the power of godliness:

1 Timothy 4:1–2

1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,
2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,

2 Timothy 3:5 having a form of **godliness** but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

2 Peter 3:10–11

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.
11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in **holy conduct and godliness**,

Anger:

- Every day in the United States, 65 people are killed and more than 6,000 are wounded in interpersonal violence.
- **Anger management is also responsible for destroying countless marriages.**
 - Estimates range from **960,000 incidents** of violence against a current or former spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend **per year**
- Studies suggest that between 3 – 10 million children witness some form of domestic violence annually.

Anger can affect the whole family.

- **Maybe it starts at home – perhaps in your marriage**



Then it can creep into business or work:



Then, even to the children:



Then to the rest of the family:



A Study on **anger management at work** conducted by The British Sunday Times in **2006** found:

- 45% of us regularly lose our temper at work
- 64% of Britons working in an office have had office rage.
- 38% of men are unhappy at work.
- 27% of nurses have been attacked at work.
- Up to 60% of all absences from work are caused by stress.
- 33% of Britons are not on speaking terms with their neighbors.
- 1 in 20 of us has had a fight with the person living next door.
- UK airlines reported 1,486 significant or serious acts of air rage in a year, a 59% increase over the previous year.
- The UK has the second-worst road rage in the world, after South Africa.
- More than 80% of drivers say they have been involved in road rage incidents;
 - 25% have committed an act of road rage themselves.
- 71% of internet users admit to having suffered net rage.
- 50% of us have reacted to computer problems by hitting our PC, hurling parts of it, cursing Apple.

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**.”

A perfect example of what Jesus has come to do with the Law and the Prophets:

- **We see Jesus confronting nothing less than the original OT Word of God itself as spoken to the earliest Sinai generation.**
True, Jesus will not *cancel or correct* the OT Commandment;
He already told us that He did not come to do that (C 1, vv. 17–20). But He will fulfill, amplify, deepen, and so transcend that ancient Commandment.
Jesus is certainly not against the OT forbidding of killing! But he wants to go deeper. ²

Matthew 19:16-19

16 And behold, someone came up to him and said,

“Teacher, what good work must I do so that I will have eternal life?”

17 And he said to him, “Why are you asking me about what is good? There is One who is good.

But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments!”

18 He said to him, “Which ones?”

And Jesus said, “Do not commit murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony,

19 honor your father and your mother,
and love your neighbor as yourself.” ³

Anger isn't sin, but I've found that few people can really control their anger.

Psalm 4:3-5

3 But know that the LORD has set apart for Himself **him who is godly**;
The LORD will hear when I call to Him.

4 Be angry, and do not sin.

Meditate within your heart on your bed,
and be still. Selah

5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness,

² Frederick Dale Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary: The Christbook, Matthew 1–12*, Revised and Expanded Edition, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 207.

³ W. Hall Harris III et al., eds., *The Lexham English Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), Mt 19:16–19.

And put your trust in the LORD.

Ephesians 4:26-27

26 Be angry and do not sin;

do not let the sun set on your anger,

27 nor give place to the devil. ⁴

- **“RACA!”**

- Derogatory expression used by Jews of the first century AD to show open contempt for another.
- **Raca is derived from an Aramaic and Hebrew term meaning “empty” or “worthless.”** Literally meaning “empty-headed,” *raca* probably insinuates an intellectual stupidity or inferiority rather than a moral deficiency.
- In the OT it is comparable to the worthless lot that Abimelech hired to follow him (Jgs 9:4), the idle men who gathered around Jephthah (11:3), and the scoundrels who joined up with Jeroboam (2 Chr 13:7).
- Michal accused David of acting like one of the vulgar fellows [*raca*] who shamelessly uncovered himself (2 Sam 6:20).
- Rabbinic literature used this term to describe an immoral, untrained person. ⁵

- **RACA:** Ρακα [*Raka*] expresses contempt for a man’s head = **“you stupid head!”**

- **FOOL:** Μωρε [*Mōre*] expresses contempt for his heart and character = **“you scoundrel”** (Bruce). ⁶

1 Timothy 6:11 But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, **love, patience, gentleness.**

Gehenna – “Hell fire”

James 3:6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity.

The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body,

and sets on fire the course of nature;

⁴ W. Hall Harris III et al., eds., *The Lexham English Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), Eph 4:26–27.

⁵ Elwell, W. A., & Comfort, P. W. (2001). *Tyndale Bible dictionary*. Tyndale reference library (1108). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

⁶ Robertson, A. (1997). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Mt 5:22). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems.

and it is set on fire by **hell**.

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.

NOTE please :

- **Offended goes to the Offender!**
 - Matt 18:15-20

Does this mean that we should track down everyone and anyone that has bugged us in the recent past?

- Certainly not!
- Listen to the Holy Spirit – He will guide you to a **clean conscience**

A Clear Conscience: **Peacemakers, not Peacekeepers (Matt.5:9)**

Common rationalizations:

1. It happened too long ago
2. The one I wronged has moved away
3. It was such a small offense
4. Things have gotten better
5. I'm just being too sensitive
6. Hey, no one's perfect!
7. They won't understand
8. Making it right will cost me money I don't have right now.
9. I'll do it later, I promise Lord.
10. I'll only repeat it again later
11. The other person was mostly wrong
12. If I go back and confess I'll get my friend in trouble.

Some basic rules in seeking forgiveness:

1. Confess only to those offended
2. Clear the greatest offenses first (instead of the easiest ones first)
3. Avoid giving any sensual details of the sin – don't even discuss them.

Best method of asking forgiveness?

1. Phone call
2. Personal visit

3. Email or letter

Choose the right wording:

1. Identify the basic offense – ungratefulness, disrespect, dishonesty, pride, laziness, etc.
2. Speak your full repentance with sincere humility

3. Here's the wrong wording:

- a. "I was wrong, but so were you."
 - b. "I'm sorry, but it wasn't my fault."
 - c. "I'm sorry."
 - d. "IF I've been wrong, please forgive me."
- **"First be reconciled"** (πρωτον διαλλαγηθι [prōton diallagēthi]). Second aorist passive imperative. **Get reconciled** (ingressive aorist, take the initiative). Only example of this compound in the New Testament where usually καταλασσω [katallassō] occurs. ⁷
 - **"The verb denotes mutual concession after mutual hostility,** an idea absent from καταλασσω [katallassō]" (Lightfoot). This because of δια [dia] (two, between two). ⁸

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.

- **Agree with** (ἴσθι εὐνοῶν). Lit., *be well-minded towards*; inclined to satisfy by paying or compromising. Wyc., *Be thou consenting to*. ⁹
 - Compromise is better than prison where no principle is involved, but only personal interest. It is so easy to see principle where pride is involved. ¹⁰
- **The officer** (τῷ ὑπηρετῇ [tōi hypēretēi]). **This word means "under rower"** on the ship with several ranks of rowers, **the bottom rower** (ὑπο [hupo] under and ἤρεσσω [ēressō], to row), the galley-slave, then any servant, the attendant in the synagogue (Luke 4:20).

⁷ Robertson, A. (1997). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Mt 5:24). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems.

⁸ Robertson, A. (1997). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Mt 5:24). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems.

⁹ Vincent, M. R. (2002). *Word studies in the New Testament* (Mt 5:25). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

¹⁰ Robertson, A. (1997). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Mt 5:25). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems.

- Luke so describes John Mark in his relation to Barnabas and Saul (Acts 13:5).
 - **Then it is applied to the “ministers of the word” (Luke 1:2).**
- 11

26 Assuredly, I say to you,
you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny.

- **The last farthing** (τον ἔσχατον κοδραντην [*ton eschaton kodrantēn*]). A Latin word, *quadrans*, **1/4 of a penny**, (ἀσσαριον [*assarion*]) or **two mites** (Mark 12:42), a vivid picture of inevitable punishment for debt. This is emphasized by the strong double negative οὐ μη [*ou mē*] with the aorist subjunctive. 12

ANGER always leads to debt

- Debt to God the Father
- Debt to man
- Debt to yourself

¹¹ Robertson, A. (1997). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Mt 5:25). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems.

¹² Robertson, A. (1997). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Mt 5:26). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems.