

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT SERIES
“ANGER - THE CANCER WITHIN” or
“ANGER - FROM AN UNFORGIVING HEART”

Text: Matthew 5:21-26

Key Word: Anger

Key Thought: There Is a Right Way as Well as a Wrong Way to Deal with Our Anger

“When anger was in Cain's heart, murder was not far off.”

Philip Henry

“Don't fly into a rage unless you are prepared for a rough landing.”

Joni Eareckson Tada

“Satan's most successful maneuver in churches and Christian organizations is to get people angry at one another; to attack and insult our brothers and sisters, thus splitting the body of Christ.”

Dr. James C. Dobson

Today I want to study one portion of the Lord’s message that we all have to deal with. This area of our lives can bring about a major fall if left to itself. It is anger. Anger is believed to be the most common emotional experience human beings share. It has brought more harm to our society than any other emotion we have. Police are forced to handle the results of anger on a daily basis. Many atrocities have come about at the hands of someone who couldn’t control their anger. It was said of Hitler that he would . . .

“lose all control of himself. His face became mottled and swollen with fury, he screamed at the top of his voice, spitting out a stream of abuse, waving his arms wildly and drumming on the table or the wall with his fists.”

Allan Bullock

“The Fuhrer: Portrait of a Dictator”

p.16

Jesus knew there would always be a multitude of reasons to become angry.

Lets Look at What Jesus Said about Anger and Compare How We Are Maturing in this Important Area of our Lives.

I. ANGER - CONTROLLED OR RESOLVED (Matthew 5:21-22)

II. ANGER - ESCALATED OR ELIMINATED (Matthew 5:23-24)

III. ANGER - REPRESSED OR EXPRESSED (Matthew 5:25-26)

I. ANGER - CONTROLLED OR RESOLVED (Matthew 5:21-22)

To correctly deal with any problem in life, we need to know the truth. Some teach that anger is an action which can be controlled through behavioural science techniques. It is believed that if the action is controlled the problem is solved. I disagree! **Anger can be controlled and yet not be resolved.** We can control angry people through medication or incarceration and yet never get to the source of the problem.

Some believe if we can remove the source of anger, we can overcome it. **Nothing makes people angry. People make themselves angry.** We would have to remove every negative influence from a person's life to stop anger if this was the case.

Some teach that anger can be biologically controlled. Laboratory studies concluded that animals injected with hormones of testosterone and corticosterone became more aggressive. This may account part of the problem, but not the whole.

“There is no evidence to suggest that human aggression is completely controlled by heredity, blood chemistry, or brain disease.”

Dr. Mark Cosgrove
“*Counseling for Anger*”
p. 47

“Anger renders the man insane and the prophet dumb.”

Hebrew Proverb

“Moses' words were shocking, *‘Listen you rebels! (Numbers 20:10).*’ The humblest man who ever lived finally lost his temper. It cost him his dreams. We all sympathize with and even identify with Moses' anger at this miserable pack of complainers. But he let his anger get the best of him and, instead of obeying God's explicit commands, Moses violated the Word of God.

Moses permitted himself the pleasure of venting an unrighteous anger. In so doing he ignored God's instructions, thereby displaying a lack of respect for the Lord. A word hurled in anger or an action motivated by momentary passion can forever change our lives.”

L. E. Brown

I. ANGER - CONTROLLED OR RESOLVED (Matthew 5:21-22) (Contd.)

“My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.

20. For man’s anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.”

James 1:19-20

We find five times in this sermon (Matthew 5:21,27,33,38,43) that Jesus quoted from the Law, only to offer a better way to handle problems in life. There is no doubt that He made a great impact upon the crowd that followed Him (Matthew 7:28,29). He spoke with authority to clarify how uncontrolled anger must be addressed in the Kingdom of God. His message was much different than the people were used of hearing.

“No ordinary person would dare claim to take and overturn that which up to his coming had been regarded as the eternal word of God.”

William Barclay
“The Gospel of Matthew”
Vol. 1, p. 135

Plato likened the human soul to a charioteer whose task was to drive two horses. One horse was gentle and obedient while the other was untamed and rebellious. He named the one horse “**reason**” and the other “**passion.**” He concluded that life continued to be a conflict between reason and passion. Reason kept passion in line. Jesus warned us that the only way to live safely is to learn how to resolve the things in our life that bring our emotion of anger to life.

“But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgement. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.”

Matthew 5:22

The word “**Raca**” is a very difficult word to translate because it is a tone of voice more than a word spoken. It emphasizes just how much contempt we have for someone. It would be like calling someone “**a brainless idiot, a silly fool, an empty-headed blunderer.**”

I. ANGER - CONTROLLED OR RESOLVED (Matthew 5:21-22) (Contd.)

** “A young boy was squirming in his seat during a Sunday service when his mother turned to him and told him to behave. He looked up at her and explained to her that he had pains in his stomach and it was growling. She told him that it was just empty because he hadn’t eaten enough breakfast.

After the service as the pastor was shaking hands with his parishioners as they left, he commented to the young boy’s mother that he had a terrible headache. She was offering words of encouragement to the pastor for a sermon well preached in spite of the pain. The little boy thought he had better say something as well. He turned to the pastor and said, “you’ll be okay. You just have a pain in your head because its empty.” **

There are two words used to describe anger in the Greek N.T. The first word is “thumos.” This word describes the flame which comes from a dried straw that catches fire. It quickly blazes but also dies away just as quick. It also is used to describe a “spirited horse or spirited debate.”

The other word is “orge” which describes an anger that is long-lived; it is nursed; it is not allowed to die. It is this kind of anger that Jesus was addressing here.

Jesus goes on to condemn the use of the word “fool.” He uses a word that means a “moral fool.” If we attempt to destroy a person’s name and reputation by our unjust words, we are liable to receive the severest judgement that God gives. The “fire of hell” is really the “fire of Gehenna.” Every Jew knew that it meant the “Valley of Hinnom” which was known for its heathen worship of Molech to whom little children were mercilessly sacrificed alive in a fire worship. Even king Ahaz offered his son to this idol (II Chronicles 28:3).

Jesus summed up what He was saying by making a strong statement that long-lasting anger, contemptible speaking, and careless malicious talk is equal or worse than becoming a murderer. People who act in this way are murderers at heart. It is not something that just needs to be controlled – it must be resolved for the sake of both parties.

“Anger is as a stone cast into a wasp's nest.”

Malabar Proverb

II. ANGER - ESCALATED OR ELIMINATED (Matthew 5:23-24)

Anger has a vivid memory. It seems like events which fuel anger become engraved into our minds. I'm told that tragic events often remain embedded into our long term memory while special moments easily fade away with the passing of time.

Our worship of God can be disturbed, disrupted and even destroyed by thoughts of anger. Memories can bring pain that we would prefer to forget. Have you ever asked God to remove a certain tragedy from your thought patterns? Did He??

Anger can become a clear sign that we need to take the proper steps toward reconciliation. If we deal with anger as a warning, we can use it as a means of protection from further damage. God is often trying to tell us something through the use of our emotion of anger.

“The breach between God and man could not be healed until the breach between man and man was healed . . . The Jews were quite clear that a man had to do his utmost to put things right himself before he could be right with God . . . **we cannot be right with God until we are right with men; we cannot hope for forgiveness until we have confessed our sin, not only to God, but also to men, and until we have done our best to remove the consequences of it.**”

William Barclay
“The Gospel of Matthew”
Vol. 1, p. 135

There is little good accomplished in our worship of God if we hold bitterness in our heart toward someone. It doesn't matter whether they were at fault or not. **Two “wrongs” will never make a “right.”**

As we look closely at what Jesus was teaching we find that He requires even a greater willingness on every disciple to go the second mile **to eliminate instead of escalating a problem.**

*“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember **that your brother has something against you,** 24. leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.”*

Matthew 5:23,24

II. ANGER - ESCALATED OR ELIMINATED (Matthew 5:23-24) Contd.)

There should never be an escalation of anger in the heart and mind of God's people. We all face situations that will try our patience. We will never score 100% on controlling our anger. **Yet we should try to perfect the skill of eliminating instead of escalating the problem.**

** It seems that this college student needed a small two-hour course to fill out his schedule. The only one that fit was in Wildlife Zoology. He had some reservations as he heard the course was tough and the teacher a bit different. But, it seemed like the only choice so he signed up.

After one week and one chapter the professor had a test for the class. He passed it out and it was a sheet of paper divided into squares and in each square was a carefully drawn picture of some bird legs. Not bodies, not feet--just different birds' legs. The test simply asked them to identify the birds from the pictures of their legs.

Well, he was absolutely floored. He didn't have a clue. The student sat and stared at the test and got madder and madder. Finally, reaching the boiling point, he stomped up to the front of the classroom and threw the test on the teacher's desk and exclaimed, *"This is the worst test I have ever seen and this is the dumbest course I have ever taken."*

The teacher looked up at him and said, *"Young man, you just flunked the test."* Then the teacher picked up the paper, saw that the student hadn't even put his name on the paper, and said, *"By the way, young man, what's your name?"* At this the student bent over, pulled up his pants, revealed his legs and said, *"You identify me."*

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James S. Hewett
"Illustrations Unlimited"
p. 299

Jesus will accept our gifts of confession and forgiveness when we surrender to Him our "right" to get even and escalate our anger.

III. ANGER - REPRESSED OR EXPRESSED (Matthew 5:25-26)

There are many matters that should be settled outside of our judicial system. Uncontrolled anger brings many cases to our courtroom where unjust sentences are often applied. Jesus knew the Greeks were allowed to perform what was called a “**summary arrest.**” We would call it a “**citizen’s arrest.**” The law allowed the plaintiff to arrest the defendant. He would catch him by his robe at the throat in such a way that if the defendant struggled to get away he could strangle himself. It could be used for thieving, clothes stealing (at public baths), pick pocketing, housebreaking and kidnapping (especially of slaves).

If we let garbage pile up in our lives, we will soon create a dump. There are all kinds of rivalries which have been carried out for generations. There are cases when people don’t honestly know why they do things. They simply repeat what they’ve been taught to do.

**

Mickey Mantle had a friend who would let him hunt on his ranch. One day, along with teammate Billy Martin they went to the ranch to hunt. Billy stayed in the car while Mickey checked with his friend. Mickey was given permission to hunt, but the rancher asked him for a favour. His old mule was going blind and had become crippled, but the rancher just didn't have the heart to put him out of his misery -- so he asked Mickey if he would shoot the old mule as a favour.

When Mickey came back to the car, he decided to play a trick on Billy and pretended to be angry. *"What's wrong?"* asked Billy. *"My friend told me NO HUNTING!!!"* Mickey pounded his fist on the dashboard feigning **anger** and said, *"Why, that guy got me so mad I'm going into the barn and shoot one of his mules."* With that, Mickey jumped out of the car and headed for the barn. In quick order he took care of the mule and started back to the car to tell his friend it was just a joke.

At that moment Mickey heard two shots fired and found Billy Martin standing over two dead cows. *"What are you doing?"* asked Mickey. Martin answered, *"Why I saw how mad you were and so I wanted to let the rancher know he couldn't fool with me either."* **

<http://bible.crosswalk.com/SermonHelps/AutoIllustrator/index.cgi>

Submitted by Rev. Don Maddox, Santa Paula, California

Our example can go a long way in getting anger under control. If anger is not dealt with properly, we can repeat past actions which will appear very foolish when we get all the facts. Some people have given so many others a “piece of their mind” that they’ve left themselves little to use.

By Taking this Time to Study the Words of Jesus about Anger We Can See That it Can Either Be . . .

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Date: Feb 9/25

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Pm

Song: Canvas & Clay - A

“A man who can't control his temper is like a city without defenses.”

Jewish Proverb

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The other word is “*orge (or-gay)*” which describes an anger that is long-lived; it is nursed; it is not allowed to die. It is this kind of anger, wrath, vengeance that Jesus was addressing here.

II. ANGER - ESCALATED OR ELIMINATED (Matthew 5:23-24)

III. ANGER - REPRESSED OR EXPRESSED (Matthew 5:25-26)