

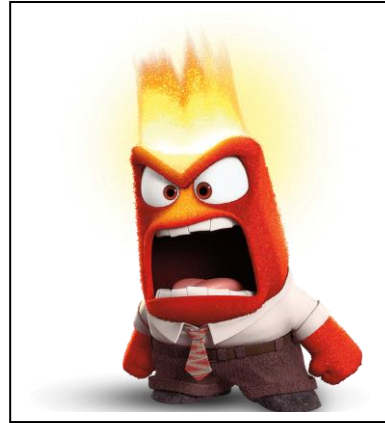
**SUNDAY FEB 12<sup>TH</sup> 2023.**

**The Lord and Anger**

**Scripture: Psalm 119:1-8**

**Matthew 5:21-26**

Have you ever been angry with someone?



Perhaps you were so angry with someone that you felt like you could just kill them. Then, you catch yourself and you say to yourself, “I can’t kill that person! That’s a sin to murder!”

Well, that’s a good thought to have, you shouldn’t kill anyone out of anger. However, Jesus challenges us not only on the sinfulness of murder but also on the sinfulness of anger itself.

Let’s look at today’s passage as we discover the many sides of anger.

Jesus has just finished His sermon on the Beatitudes. Helping us learn how to live an ultra-righteous life to get into the kingdom of heaven, which points us to our great need for Him and for His righteousness.

Now, Jesus begins a series of statements that follow this format: “You have heard it said . . . but I say.”

In these statements, Jesus is acknowledging the teaching of the Jewish law on a matter, and then He is adding to that commandment, or clarifying it, or explaining what was really at the heart of it.

So, again, Jesus is not doing away with the law. He is fulfilling it Himself and explaining it for His followers! He's saying that it needs to be obeyed in a fuller way. So, in this passage, Jesus speaks to us about anger.

**First Slide 1 Unrighteous Anger and our thoughts will be judged by God.**

*Jesus says – you have heard that it was said do not murder...but I tell you everyone who is angry with his brother or sister will be subject to judgement.*

Jesus introduces this new concept – anger can also be evil. We may find this surprising, just as the hearers of Jesus did. We would all agree that murder should be punished, but may wonder why Jesus is saying anger is on the same level.

Jesus is also stating that if we call someone a fool or idiot we will be judged and subject to hellfire! Wow, scary hey. The word hellfire or Gehenna came from a trash dump outside of Jerusalem that was continually burning. So, if we insult others, we will be judged, placed in a continual fire.

Murder is a physical violation of someone created in the image of God. Insulting is also sinful because it is a verbal violation of someone created in the image of God.

Jesus didn't say that murder and anger were the same. He said that they were both worthy of judgment. Jesus' point is that anger should not be overlooked as innocent. Anger is evil, particularly when we see that Jesus was angry at points in His ministry. You might say, "Jesus had righteous anger." But we must remember –

none of us are Jesus! So, we should be very careful to say that our anger is righteous anger.

Righteous anger results from seeing injustice done towards people and this dishonours God. Jesus' anger was at the sin of others, and He wanted to turn their hearts toward repentance.

Unrighteous anger is concerned only with personal injustice when people hurt or offend us. When we allow ourselves to be angry, we open the door to allow sin to enter our heart. This is extremely significant to God.

Anger leads to judgement and can be seen as an example that we are not truly followers of God and His ways. We must truly follow Jesus, including His commands to flee anger and insult. We must pursue holiness not only in our actions but also in our hearts.

Second, we must see that . . .

**To keep ourselves from anger, we must view things from God's perspective. Slide 2**

*Jesus says to reconcile an issue with our brothers or sisters, that anger can be reconciled between others. Jesus believes so highly in this reconciliation that He instructs us to pause our worship of God for us to make things right between us and someone else.*

Think about the implications of that. God is worthy of worship more than anyone in all the universe! Yet, we are to put that on hold to resolve anger with another human being. "Brother or sister" includes all people with whom we interact.

If we have anger, or if we are aware of someone having anger towards us, we are to seek to make that right and fix it. This

would solve so many issues in the world if we just sought to work things out. Reconciliation and the resolution of anger between two people made in the image of God are utterly important to God.

This is something that we should not only intentionally seek to do, but we should work at it very hard. It's not always easy to make things right with someone, but we should keep trying because it is so important to God.

Notice that Jesus doesn't say anything about who's in the right and who's in the wrong. When it comes to imperfection and sinfulness, we're all in the wrong! We're completely unrighteous without Jesus!

We need His forgiveness and His righteousness, which should lead us to pursue forgiveness and righteousness in our relationships with others.

This is not easy but who said following Christ would be an easy life? It's not easy because although we've been set free from sin and set free to live a righteous life, we are still cocooned by the sinfulness and unrighteousness of the world and those around us, and we personally still carry with us the residue of sin.

However, we have been reconciled to God through the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross – where He said – Father forgive them for they don't know what they are doing. If we claim to love God, but we don't love other people, we are deceiving ourselves.

Part of God's vision for our church is to love the church and love others, not be angry with the church and angry with others. We

are to love, and forgive, and seek to make things right with others.

**Slide 3 To keep ourselves from anger we must constantly repent of it – anger has consequences.**

*Jesus tells us that it is always better to work things out with someone without going before a judge, whether a human judge or God, the Holy Judge.*

*Again, this is true both on a practical level and on a spiritual level. Notice how severe the punishment will be. Jesus says, “you will never get out of there until you have paid the last penny.”*

Heart sins are more difficult to stop than outward sins. We forgive somebody but when we see them, all those negative emotions come back. And judgemental thoughts and words flood from our hearts and mouth. We need to confess, repent, and ask God to change our hearts.

Let’s think of an earthly example. Let’s say that you are a part of a team – it could be anything – sports; committee; friendship group and you have a disagreement with another member of the team. If you take care of it yourselves and work it out, how much better is that for the rest of the team than if you don’t work it out and things get bad and the rest of the team are affected or you or both of you have to leave because of the conflict. What happens to the team then? How long would it take to move forward after the pain of the situation.

The same can be true in family relationships, the workplace, and certainly in the church. It’s always easier for people to work

things out in humility and love, rather than to take it to the next level.

The longer you wait to make things right the worse the situation can become. Avoid anger, seek to make things right, and seek to do so as soon as possible so things don't get worse.

**Slide 4: To keep ourselves from anger we must resist the devil and his accusations.**

*Satan shoots arrows into our hearts – arrows of suspicion, bitterness, jealousy, and anger at us. In response we repeat the bad experiences and evil words repeatedly in our minds. We must resist the devil through prayers and God's word.*

**Slide 5: We must overcome anger with acts of love.**

*We need to ensure that our negative emotions do not lead us, but we lead them. As we act in love our emotions change to one of softness and acceptance.*

**Concluding Thoughts:**

Ultimately, the issue of anger comes down to our relationship with God. Remember, Jesus classifies anger as sin deserving of judgment. Furthermore, Jesus tells us that it's very important to heal our anger towards other humans.

God is serious about anger, and He is serious about His follower's pursuing godliness.

You have heard it said, "do not murder," but Jesus tells us, He is also serious about the sinfulness that anger can cause.

**Slide 6 – Bottom Line**

*We should deal with **our** anger before **God** deals with it.*

*Anger is a sin that separates us from other humans and can also separate us from God. If we have sin in our hearts, be it from anger or murder, God is not pleased with us.*

Challenge yourself this week in the following ways. **Slide 7 & 8 Weekly Challenge.**

*Describe any anger that you have in your heart at this moment.*

*Write it down or tell it to a trusted friend.*

*Do you get angry with certain people? Maybe you even label them an idiot, moron, fool.*

*Be completely honest, admit your sin before God and before others, if necessary. **But don't leave it there.***

*Deal with any anger in your heart now.*

*Ask God to guide you with His Holy Spirit.*

*Ask someone to forgive you.*

*Offer forgiveness towards someone else.*

*Sin is serious and we must deal with it.*

*You can do this by the power of God.*

*You don't have to be afraid.*

*Unresolved anger is like spiritual cancer in your heart, so don't let it stay there.*

### **Closing:**

As we close, I want to remind us that Jesus lays out the law of God and many of us feel, rightly so, that we cannot possibly fulfill

what Jesus requires. That's the point, on our own we cannot please God. That's why we need Jesus.

Turn to Jesus and live for Him now. Live for Him in all aspects of your life. He wants all of you. Give yourself to Him and be made new.

He wants you devoted to Him in your actions and your heart.

**Song** – Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus