

Be Reconciled to Your Brother

Matthew 5:21-26

INTRODUCTION

- A. “Your temper is one of your most valuable possessions. Don’t lose it.”
- B. However, we occasionally lose our temper and say and do things we later regret.
- C. Christians cannot be an angry people.
 - 1. “Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret—it only causes harm” (Ps. 37:8).
 - 2. “But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth” (Col. 3:8).

GET RID OF ANGER, vv. 21-22

- A. It was said to “those of old:” “You shall not murder.”
 - 1. “Those of old” obviously stands for those living in the time of Moses when he received the Ten Commandments.
 - 2. Both Ex. 20:7 and Deut. 5:17 record this commandment.
 - 3. This command illustrates the sanctity of life.
 - a. Man is made in God’s image (Gen. 1:26).
 - b. Because man is made in God’s image, man has real value.
 - c. “God breathed into Adam the breath of life, and he became a living being” (Gen. 2:7)—The taking of human life is taking what no man has the right to take.
 - 4. “Murder” is a much better translation than “kill.”
 - a. All killing was not banned under the Mosaic Code.
 - 1) God told the Israelites to kill in battle.
 - 2) Certain crimes were met with the death penalty.
 - b. All killing is not banned today.
 - 1) There are times this nation must go to war against another nation.
 - 2) The state has the right to take the life of criminals.
- B. The one who murdered would be in danger of the judgment.
 - 1. The scribes and Pharisees added much to God’s Word; the words “in danger of the judgment” are more than likely tradition the Pharisees added.
 - 2. To be in danger of judgment meant to be in danger of lower Jewish courts.
- C. Jesus established his authority over the Law of Moses as well as the traditions of the Pharisees—Jesus said, “But I say to you,” v. 22.
- D. The one who is angry with his brother will be in danger of the judgment.
 - 1. Some older translations read “whoever is angry with his brother without a cause”
 - a. These words, however, are not in the original Greek.
 - b. However, these words express the sentiment of Jesus—Jesus seems to have been talking about getting angry for just any reason.
 - 2. Anger is not necessarily wrong.
 - a. Jesus became angry at times.
 - 1) When the Pharisees watched Jesus to see if he would heal on the Sabbath, he “looked around at them with anger” (Mk. 3:5).
 - 2) Upon finding individuals in the temple doing business, he made a whip and drove them from the temple (Jn. 2:14-15).

- b. We are going to be angry at times--"Be angry, and do not sin': do not let the sun go down on your wrath" (Eph. 4:26).
- 3. Those angry at their brother would be in danger of the judgment—danger of coming before lower Jewish courts.
- E. Whoever says to his brother, "Raca" shall be in danger of the council.
 - 1. "Raca" probably comes from an Aramaic word meaning "empty." "Raca" seems to be an insult on a person's intelligence.
 - 2. The one who thus insults a brother will be liable to the council, the Sanhedrin.
- F. Whoever says, "You fool" shall be in danger of hell fire"
 - 1. As "Raca" is an insult on one's intelligence, "fool" is an insult to one's character.
 - a. "Fool" means "stupid fool," "vile apostate," or "impious wretch."
 - b. The term was often used in the Old Testament to signify a sinner.
 - c. Therefore, to call one "fool" is to commit the person to hell.
 - 2. The one who thus insults his brother will be in danger of hell.
- G. Jesus expands the meaning of "You shall not murder."
 - 1. Murder is not just an overt act; it is a matter of the heart.
 - 2. Since anger leads to murder, one must guard himself against anger.
- H. Scripture warns us of the dangers of anger.
 - 1. "Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret--it only causes harm" (Ps. 37:8).
 - 2. "Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry, For anger rests in the bosom of fools" (Eccl. 7:9).

GET RID OF ENEMIES, vv. 23-26

- A. If you bring your gift to the altar and you remember that someone has something against you, leave your gift and be reconciled to your brother, vv. 23-24.
 - 1. Notice that Jesus does not say if your brother has wronged you—The emphasis is on what you have done, not on what others may have done to you.
 - 2. If we have wronged anyone, we have the responsibility of making things right.
 - 3. Worship should be halted if you have wronged someone.
 - a. Worship to God is important.
 - 1) "Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name; Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness" (Ps. 29:2].
 - 2) "Exalt the LORD our God, And worship at His footstool--He is holy" (Ps. 99:5).
 - b. Yet, we cannot properly worship if we have wronged someone.
 - 4. Before we can worship, we need to be reconciled to our brother-We need to make things right with him before we make things right with God.
 - 5. Only after we have made things right with our brother can we bring our gift to God.
 - 6. Before we enter into worship each week, we need to ask ourselves, "Does anyone have anything against me?" If so, we must make thin right before we worship.
- B. We need to agree with our adversary while we are on the way with him, vv. 25-26.
 - 1. "Agree" carries a much deeper meaning than can accurately be displayed by an English term.
 - a. "Agree" literally means to "be in good mind" or to "be well-inclined toward."
 - b. Jesus is not telling us to be afraid to go to court—He is telling us to conquer our adversary with love.
 - 2. We are to agree with our adversary quickly-If we quickly deal with anger, the roots of bitterness and hatred will not have time to grow in our hearts.
 - 3. We are to agree with our adversary while we are on the way with him.
 - a. In antiquity, it was the practice of the courts to cause the plaintiff and defendant to walk to court together.

- b. The courts did this so the two could work out a solution without tying up the court.
- c. Jesus is telling us to go to those who have something against us and work things out.
- 4. If one doesn't work out things with his adversary, he may be handed over to the judge, the officer, and be thrown in prison.
 - a. The judge had the duty to hear the case.
 - b. If the judge believed the case was worthy, he could hand the defendant over to the office.
 - 1) The officer is about like our sheriff
 - 2) He had the authority to throw one into prison.
- 5. Jesus is telling us to be quick to work out problems with others.
- 6. Jesus said that we would not get out of prison until we had paid the last penny, v. 26.
 - a. Jesus point is that when punishment comes, it is too late for reconciliation.
 - b. When Judgment Day comes, it will be too late for reconciliation.

CONCLUSION

- A. Do you harbor anger or resentment in your heart?
- B. Get rid of such feelings with God's help.