

UPPER ROOM SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY

Living the Life of the Beloved/Belonging: Matthew 5-7

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Spring-Summer, 2018

Lesson 7 – (May 6, 2018) Matthew 5:21-26

Matthew 5:21-26

“You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘You shall not murder,^[a] and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’²² But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister^{[b][c]} will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, ‘Raca,’^[d] is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.

- a. “it was said...” – Jesus moves His teaching into the areas of everyday life, which the Law (of love) addresses, beginning with interpersonal relationships.
- b. “but I tell you...” – Jesus now broadens their understanding of the Law (of love); that it extends beyond the letter of the law to include attitudes of the hearts.
- c. “anyone who is angry with” – this attitude of anger (orge) is a long-lived, simmering anger, which is nurtured over time. It refuses to be pacified, it doesn’t seek reconciliation, and it plans revenge.
 1. **James 1:20.** *because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.*
 2. **Ephesians 4:25-27.** *Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body.*
²⁶ *“In your anger do not sin”^[a]: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ and do not give the devil a foothold.*
 - i. Anger, in the short term, empowers you to take action in a situation needing a response.
 - ii. The “Fight” response (as opposed to “Flight” or “Fix).
 - iii. Holding on to anger, in the long term, builds a wall between you and the other person. The purpose of the wall is to protect you from being hurt again. The unforeseen consequence of the wall is that it prevents intimacy and social interactions.
- d. “Raca” – insulting with a contemptuous tone, which despises someone arrogantly
- e. “You fool!” – “moros” – to be judgmental of another person’s heart & character; to destroy someone’s good, public reputation.
- f. **The Beloved Life Principle #18:** Anger definitely gets people’s attention. The problem is: Your anger is all they will remember.

²³ “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

a. “Therefore...”

1. Sinning against your brother/sister disrupts your relationship with God. Being forgiven by God, gives you the power to move to be reconciled to him/her.
2. The giving of sacrificial gifts was the starting point of reconciliation – if the sin was one of weakness, i.e. occurring within the ‘heat of the moment.’
3. The sacrifice always included a confession of the sin(s) and making an attempt to rectify any consequences the sin might have had.
4. If the sin was intentional or deliberate (*“the sin of a high hand”* – Barclay), then the sacrifice did not atone, until reconciliation was complete.
5. Sacrifices to God were never allowed to be a way to avoid or refuse to reconcile with the fellow believer.
 - i. ***Hosea 6:6*** *For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.*
6. Refusing the offer mercy or to initiate reconciliation is sinful because it insists on receiving God’s gift of forgiveness on its own terms, rather than on God’s terms.
 - i. ***Matthew 9:13***. *But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”*
 - ii. ***Matthew 23:23***. *“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.*

b. “if you are offering your gift...and there remember”

1. The believer brought his sacrifice to the temple, where the priest would deliver it to be offered, unless...
2. “**something against you**” – you are/may be the offender, so you take the initiative, rather than wait for the other person to come to you.

c. “**leave your gift there**” – the gift would be in the safe-keeping of the priest.

d. “**First go...be reconciled...then come...offer**” –

1. The value of the gift was negated if it was offered without an attempt to reconcile; that’s how important reconciliation was/is.

2. The reconciliation sequence:
 - i. **Graciously, not arrogantly, go** (don't wait for him/her to come to you).
 - ii. **Make the attempt wholeheartedly.**
 1. Invite the other person to tell you of your offense.
 2. Listen without justifying yourself (excuses, blaming, etc.) or suggesting that the other person is making "a big deal out of nothing."
 3. Thank him/her for telling you.
 4. Admit your fault, or the hurt/frustration you caused.
 5. Ask for forgiveness
 6. Ask if there is a way to handle it differently next time..
 7. Leave.
 - iii. **Come back to church.**
 - iv. **Give the gift.**
 - v. **Treat the other person as one whose "debt" is paid off.**
- e. **The Beloved Life Principle #18:** How you feel about the other person is not the primary motive to reconcile. It is rather how **God** treats you!
 1. What about situations where...
 - i. The other person won't meet with you?
 - ii. The other person refuses to grant the forgiveness you've asked for?
 - iii. You didn't know that you had offended/hurt someone, because they didn't tell you? Someone else told you.

²⁵ **"Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still together on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. ²⁶ Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.**

a. **"Settle matters quickly" –**

1. Practical advice from Jesus – how offenses can spiral into greater consequences.
2. Don't procrastinate; time does not heal wounds.
 - i. **Ephesians 4:25-27.** *Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. ²⁶ "In your anger do not sin"^[a]: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ and do not give the devil a foothold.*

b. “while you are still together on the way” –

1. In Greek life, catching someone ‘red-handed’ allowed the victim to grab the offender and drag him to the magistrate.
2. In Jewish life, debtors and creditors often walked together to the courts

c. “or...may hand you over...thrown into prison.”

1. Jesus’ advice: take care of the matter sooner, not later, or it will get worse
2. What causes people to ‘avoid’ rather than ‘face’ their adversaries?

d. “until you have paid the last penny.”

1. Notice that the debt owed, still, had to be paid.