

THE SERIES: I'M NOT ANGRY
PART 3: FLIRTING WITH ANGER
Matthew 5:21-26

Ever since prayer, the Bible and The 10 Commandments have been taken out of our schools and out of the public square, a real vacuum has been created concerning what is going to be our authority on which we base our morals, ethics, government, and social life. Our early founding fathers warned us what would happen if we allowed the Bible, The 10 Commandments, prayer and religious training to be disallowed in our public schools.

The passage we're studying together this morning has unbelievable implications to our own lives personally and to our lives as citizens of the United States of America. This morning we're looking at the issue of murder and anger.

Did you know that just in 2018 there have been over 17 shootings in our campuses across the U.S.? This generation is being called the LOCKDOWN generation. If there is ever a chance that the moral and ethical tide can change in our country and in our culture it will be because each one of us commit to taking our relationship with Jesus Christ seriously, and we become obedient to His teaching, values and rulership in our lives, and that we commit to teaching them to our children.

Please read out loud with me this morning (afternoon) Matthew 5:21-26. Let's begin, **“You have heard that the Law of Moses says, ‘Do not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.’²² But I say, if you are angry with someone, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the high council. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell.²³ So if you are standing before the altar in the Temple, offering a sacrifice to God, and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you,²⁴ leave your sacrifice there beside the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.²⁵ Come to terms quickly with your enemy before it is too late, and you are dragged into court, handed over to an officer, and thrown in jail.²⁶ I assure you that you won't be free again until you have paid the last penny.”**

Don't murder, very simple, I think we can all pretty much agree to that. But then Jesus does something pretty amazing. He says, **“You have heard the law say... but I say to you...”**. Davies and Allison write, **“Jesus is in effect relocating all religious and ethical authority—and here is the real contrast in all the antitheses—from the Torah to Himself.”** It's not that He is redefining what the law is, instead He dives deeper into what this means by **“murder.”**

Dale Brunner puts it this way, Jesus **“...intensifies or deepens what was said in the law. To the thesis of not killing, Jesus adds the epithesis of not resenting. Jesus had**

not canceled the Commandment, He has full-filled it, filled it full of meaning, deepened it, and clarified its meaning at the roots. *For at the core of the Commandment against killing is divine displeasure with contempt for human beings.*”

Basically, Jesus is filling in the picture of what “do not murder” really is. The core of it is anger and contempt for other humans—for His creations.

Jesus now illustrates for His disciples and for us what He means in verse 20 when He says, “**But I warn you—unless your righteousness is better than the righteousness of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven!**”

If you only remember one thing from today’s message it is what Jesus teaches here: **Do everything you can to stay in right relationship with each other, and do not let anger ruin your relationships.**

It’s clear here that Jesus is saying, in order to strive to maintain right relationships with each other we must:

STOP ALL ANGER AND HATRED TOWARD EACH OTHER.

In Matthew 5:21-22, Jesus cuts to the core of what it means to murder another person. I know you all have heard the term **CHARACTER ASSASSINATION**. What Jesus is dealing

with in our text this morning is that it is possible to murder another person without laying a hand on that person. There are three issues that Jesus deals with that we're going to look at. Jesus says you're not to get angry with each other, you're not to call each other idiots, and you're not to curse each other by calling each other names like "fool."

Brunner writes, **"The meaning of Jesus' command in its innermost core is, 'DON'T STAY ANGRY, DON'T NURSE HATRED AGAINST ANY BROTHER OR SISTER.'" Jesus gives us three ways how to STOP ALL ANGER AND HATRED TOWARD EACH OTHER.**

Dr. Wilkins writes, **"Jesus' declarative statement, 'But I tell you,' introduces three ways that a person's life is removed besides the physical act of murder."**

I. Refuse to let your anger simmer or to nurse a grudge.
Matthew 5:21-22

The Greek word Jesus uses for anger is the word orgizomenos. This is the root of our word orgy. Orgy means a revel involving unrestrained indulgence. It means uncontrolled or immoderate indulgence in any activity.

I love hot wings, the hotter the better. My friends and I used to have contests to see how hot we could stand them. The things we do that we think are cool, haha.

But once we were all together, we didn't stop at just a couple of wings, or when we thought we reached our hot point. We would push each other and try to out do the other until we were overly stuffed and panting from the mouth. We just kept indulging in the activity almost to uncontrollable points. And a swelled up tongue and grumbling insides is pretty far.

Jesus is saying I am not to binge or have a fling, or flirt with my anger. Brunner points out that the grammatical construction in this verse is more extensive than the usual translation "is angry." He writes, "**Orgizomenos is a present-tense participle and so literally means 'is being angry,' 'is carrying anger,' 'is remaining angry,' or, the nicely descriptive idiom, 'is nursing a grudge.' This participle represents a carried anger, a continued anger, a kind of portable anger. Resenting might be the best translation, since resentment is continuing anger.**"

I mean, who has been there before? We were treated wrong; and while some may move on, I know I have sat there and gone over the injustice in my head. Argued the points, and everytime I see that person who wronged me it brings back all those upset feeling or anger. It is resentment.

Loved ones, this is where our Lord, our Savior, our God comes to us personally; He comes to me today and He says, "Josh, it is this area of carried anger, nursing a grudge, or resentment that I confront with judgment." Jesus says it is this kind of simmering, stewing and nursing of grudges that leads to hatred, indifference and disconnection in

relationships, and Jesus says, “I stand in judgment of you when you allow yourself to have this kind of anger.” Jesus says, “Josh, CVCHURCH, this behavior must go.”

O.L. Flash paper

The Greek word for anger is made up of two words. Thymos and Orge. The Greeks said that Thymos is “like the flame which comes from dried straw”—it quickly blows up and just as quickly dies down.

Tea kettle

Orge on the other hand was described “as a habit that has been held for a long time, a long-lived anger... the anger of the person who nurses their wrath to keep it warm.”

See the flash paper burns bright and quick and it’s gone. But the tea kettle needs a constant flame that raises the temperature. It will soon boil off the water, because it’s a simmering flame.

Jesus forbids His true followers this everyday kind of anger with our brothers and sisters. The Bible says in Ephesians 4:26-27, “**And don’t sin by letting anger control you. Don’t let the sun go down while you are still angry,²⁷ for anger gives a foothold to the devil.**” Paul says, do not dare let your anger simmer so that you begin to nurse a grudge and you become resentful. This is how the heart attitude of murder sets in.

The remedy to stopping anger, hatred, bitterness, resentment, and nursing a grudge, Jesus says is in Matthew 18:15 where He tells us, **“If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back.”** Wow. This is real Christianity, my dear friends. Jesus says, if I am angry with someone because of what they have said or how they have treated me, there are only two ways to deal with. Either drop and let it go, or if I can't, I must go to the one in private that hurt me and get it dealt with. If not, Jesus says this kind of anger He will judge. It is self-centered anger that Jesus condemns.

Here is one of the leading problems with anger. Dr. Wilkins writes, **“When we are inappropriately angry with people, we attempt to take their identity and value as God’s creature away from them, the ultimate form of which is the physical act of murder.”**

I mean think about that. It’s more than revenge, or anger at a person. If we are all eternal beings who God created and loves, what is my anger I have been nursing doing to His creations? I can tell our teens on a weekly basis they were created by God with a plan and purpose... and yet the same is true for those that are the wrath of my contempt and resentment.

We need to stop all anger and hatred, secondly, Point II.

II. Refrain from flippantly dismissing another person

Jesus says, **“If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the high council.”** Jesus just penetrated into the heart of the Old Covenant. He now gives us two fresh examples of what usually springs from the wounded rebellious heart that won't deal with their anger issue that usually comes from being hurt, wounded or treated unfairly or unjustly.

We call ourselves or each other names. The first one Jesus identifies is the word idiot. It is the word RHAKA, and it means stupid, and according to Brunner it, **“...questions especially the mental competence of the other person.”** Barclay writes, **“Rhaka is an almost untranslatable word, because it describes a tone of voice more than anything else. Its whole accent is the accent of contempt.”**

I mean, who here is a parent and have heard your kid call mom or dad? When they want help, have a question, are upset. They call out mom or dad, but the tone tells a different story even if it is the same word.

“To call a person Rhaka was to call them a brainless idiot, a silly fool, an empty headed blunderer. It is the word of one who despises another with an arrogant contempt.”

Dr. Wilkins writes, **“This term of contempt was a personal public affront. Name-calling was highly insulting in Jewish culture because a person's identity was stripped**

away and an offensive identity substituted. The significance attached to one's real name is removed from the person."

How many stories of people have you heard that they were called names by their parents, siblings, relatives, and friends that have stuck with them for life? The names of ridicule they were called were used by satan to shape their inner picture of how they became to see themselves.

We all have heard the phrase, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." Jesus says this just isn't so.

To flippantly dismiss someone is a sin. Jesus says if you are selfishly angry with someone, you will stand in judgment. If you flippantly dismiss another person, it is even worse.

In verse 22 we find three levels of consequences. For anger, Jesus says, is judgment.

1. For flippantly dismissing someone, you will be brought to the high council which was the Sanhedrin, the supreme court of the Jews.
2. If you curse someone or
3. Call them a fool...

...you are in danger of the fires of hell. These three figures of speech are pictures of final reality. Jesus really does take seriously how we think about each other and how we talk and

treat each other. If I carry anger, bitterness, simmering resentment, contempt, and disregard for a person in my heart, God sees it and will not let it go unpunished. This is just how seriously Jesus takes our relationships with each other. Loved ones, as we read this scripture, we stand on Holy Ground.

The phrase, “The fires of hell,” comes from the Greek Word Gehenna. Dr. Wilkins writes, **“It is a transliteration of the Aramaic form of the Hebrew ge ben-hinnom (‘Valley of the son of Hinnom’), a valley west and southwest of Jerusalem. Here Ahaz and Manasseh sacrificed their sons to Molech, which caused Josiah to defile the place (2 Kings 23:10).”**

The worship of Molech was an awful, awful practice that involved burning your child in molech’s hands.

“Later the valley was used to burn refuse from Jerusalem, so the constant burning made the valley an appropriate reference to fires of punishment. Jewish apocalyptic writers began to call the Valley of Hinnom the entrance to hell, later hell itself (4 Ezra 7:36). By the time of Jesus the term was used to indicate the state of final punishment (Matthew 18:9).”

I do like what Brunner says about Jesus’ use of the Valley of Hinnom as a picture for eternal judgment in hell. **“We do not know the topography, temperature, or very much else of hell. One is wise to be skeptical of even those who claim to know that hell ‘is not a place but a condition.’ How do**

they know? One thing we do know is that behind Jesus' picturesque words there is some kind of awful judgment for people who, without repentance, hurt other people."

There is much to be said about the topic of judgment and hell, but what I do want to say is that the N.T references to hell are not antithetical (or they don't contradict) the NT references to love. It is love that warns of hell. Pastor Scott has said this for years: God does not "send" us to hell; we go there on our own volition; so God warns of hell throughout Scripture, and He sent His Son in order to deter us from going there.

The third way we can STOP ALL ANGER AND HATRED TOWARD EACH OTHER is to:

III. Resist all verbal contempt (Hebrews 5:22c)

The NLT says, "if you curse;" the Greek puts it, "if you call someone a fool." The Greek word is MORE. This is where we get our English Word MORON. Brunner writes, "**MORE questions the moral competence of the other person. This act of bottled up anger is a word that tells a person whom we dislike exactly what we think of him or her; 'jerk' or 'rat' are comparably degrading words that capture the sense of Jesus' second word, and it says that a brother or sister lacks not only mental strength but moral substance. Jesus confronts these words with hell itself.**"

Jesus says to treat one another this way with such contempt was to strip away his or her personal identity and wrongly make the person into something he or she was not.

This is very powerful for us this morning (afternoon). Jesus says, “This is what it means to be My true follower.” This is what it means to be a FULLY DEVOTED FOLLOWER OF JESUS CHRIST—that we truly commit ourselves to love each other and we will not allow ourselves to get away with simmering bitterness and resentment.

1. We will not tolerate the nursing of a grudge.
2. We will refrain from flippantly dismissing each other by stripping each other of our God-given identities by calling each other or ourselves idiots, jerks and stupid. We will not mock the mental competence of each other. But we will respect, value and honor each other.
3. We will avoid all verbal contempt. We will be done with words that question another’s intelligence, or moral competence and that hurt each other’s character.

Jesus said this is where the physical act of murder comes from—the seething rage, the sour bitterness, and the ruinous power of resentment. It this kind of inner environment that sets the stage for character assassination.

Paul speaks powerfully to this issue in Ephesians 5:30-31. Please read it out loud with me as we close this morning

(afternoon). **“And do not bring sorrow to God’s Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, He has identified you as His own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption. ³¹Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. ³²Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.”**

So what does this mean for your life? Are there people that you have been nursing anger towards? Not a fleeting feeling but one that is continually revisiting you and simmering. Have we been quick to name call, tear down others’ identity by our words being used against them?

We are all loved by and created by God. We have to remind ourselves that this anger isn’t something to sit on, or even flirt with as it can become contempt, and bitterness, to others He created in His image as well.

Are you flirting with the anger?