

Matthew 5

Dealing with Anger

Outline

The Messiah defines the true nature of Kingdom life: The Sermon on the Mount (5:1-7:29)

- a. The character of Kingdom people (5:1-12)
 1. Attitude toward self: hunger for holiness (5:1-6)
 2. Attitude toward others: passion for peace (5:7-9)
 3. Attitude toward enemies: posture for persecution (5:10-12)
- b. The calling of Kingdom people (5:13-16)
 1. Salt: (5:13)
 2. Light: (5:14-16)
- c. The conduct of Kingdom people (5:17-7:27)
 1. In respect to moral purity (5:17-48)
 - a. The letter of the law. (5:17-20)
 - b. The spirit of the law. (5:21-48)

1. with respect to how we manage anger (5:21-26)

“²¹ You have heard that the ancients were told, '*You shall not commit murder*' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' ²² But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, 'You fool,' shall be guilty {enough to go} into the fiery hell. ²³ If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering. ²⁵ Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, in order that your opponent may not deliver you to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. ²⁶ Truly I say to you, you shall not come out of there, until you have paid up the last cent.”

A. Introduction

1. Is it really true?
 - a. We have little interest in relating to those with whom we are at odds.
 - b. We do not know how to relate to those with whom we are at odds.
 - c. We do not know how to speak the truth in love.
2. Evangelicals and American culture.
 - a. American evangelicals have been deeply influenced by early American social values.

- b. Examples:
 - Idealism
 - A deep sense of personal rights
 - Individuality and competition
- c. We are easily angered, prone to hostility, and suspicious of anything that violates our rights.

B. Jesus challenges us to treat anger seriously.

1. The religious establishment of Jesus' day recognized that the Law of Moses addressed murder as sin.
2. The culture did not see anger as a form of murder.
3. Jesus pointed out that calling a person "a fool" or going through the motions of worship without being reconciled to one's brother in the faith is just as serious as murder.
4. The King James Version includes the phrase "without a cause." While this phrase is not in the best manuscripts (and therefore not included in other translations) it does convey the spirit of the text. In other words, there are just causes for anger. Not all anger is murder.

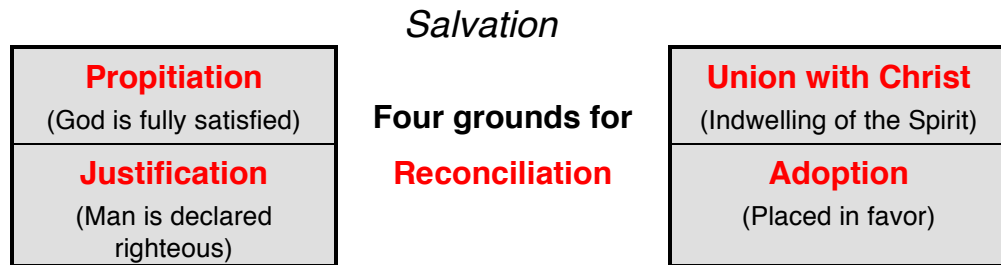
C. What does Jesus suggest?

1. Hell awaits all who have unresolved anger.
2. It must be assumed (by some) that true believers do not have such anger. (This assumption is necessary if we are to harmonize Jesus' teaching with the gospel of grace.)
3. **OR** We can assume that Jesus' intent is not to comfort the righteous so much as convict all of their need for Christ. This suggests that we are all in deep trouble without the righteousness of faith (in the righteousness of Christ for us).

D. Reconciliation

1. Key texts.
 - **Rom.5:10-11** "For if when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation."
 - **2 Cor.5:18-19** "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them"
 - **2 Cor.5:21** "We implore you on Christ's behalf; Be reconciled to God."
 - **Col.1:21-22** "Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation."

2. Reconciliation is pictured as a completed work by God through Christ that must be accepted by faith before it's blessings can be applied to our lives.
 - a. We are not reconciled through our moral discipline or repentance from moral failure.
 - b. Our experience of reconciliation comes through faith. II Cor.5:21
3. The relationship of various aspects of salvation can be seen in the chart below.



4. Note that the Greek word translated “reconciled” in Matt. 5:24 is a unique term in the N.T. Unlike the term used by Paul in the references above, it has the idea of mutual concession after mutual hostility. In other words, it implies that both parties bear some responsibility for the conflict and therefore must bear responsibility for the reconciliation.

E. What does this mean for us?

1. Should I love those who do, believe, or say things that are evil, false, and abusive? And if so, how can I love them?
2. God loves, accepts, and affirms us without agreeing with all that we do, believe, or say. This is our model for love.
3. Our ability to forgive and forebear with others is directly related to our sense of standing in the need of grace ourselves. This is a point implied in the Sermon on the Mount.
4. Love does not mean that we agree or endorse evil or things that are untrue. It does mean that we challenge, correct, resist, and even discipline (if this is in our sphere of responsibility) in love (not self-serving anger).
5. We are called to address unresolved personal conflict between Christians.
6. We are not to harbor inner hostility toward other believers.
7. We are to be quick to make peace with those who have something against us.
 - **1 Corinthians 11** “²⁷ Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in **an unworthy manner**, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. ²⁸ But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹ For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself, if he does not **judge the body rightly**.”
 - **Ephesians 4** “¹⁵ but **speaking the truth in love**, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, being fitted and

held together by that which every joint supplies, according to **the proper working of each individual part**, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.”