GROUP DISCUSSION

May 19, 2024

SUMMER ON THE MOUNT Anger Matthew 5:21-26 Pastor James Johnson James.Johnson@crossroadsabc.com



NOTES	Pastor James talked about what Jesus had to say about anger in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus simply invites us to handle anger His way. By doing this, the Holy Spirit will lead us to address the root of our anger and learn to address it in ways that are honoring to God and others. When we follow Jesus' instructions in this regard, we will become peacemakers, or "shalom-spreaders," to those around us.
	MY STORY Talk about a time in your life when you impulsively acted out of anger and what the unintended consequences were as a result.
	WHAT DOES GOD WANT US TO HEAR? "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgement.' But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgement; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire. So if you are offering your gift at the alter and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the alter and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny." (Matthew 5:21-26)
	These verses are not about Jesus disregarding what God previously said about murder in the Old Testament or about upping the ante by implying that a "true Christian" would never murder or get unusually angry with someone. Rather, Jesus gets to the heart of the issue by stressing that the real problem underneath murder is not the act of

Looking back at your notes from this week's message, was there anything you heard for the first time, stuck with you, challenged or confused you?

What is the one important thing you will take away from this weekend's message or our community group discussion? Is there any challenge, difficulty or praise that you would like to share with the group for prayer?



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t God previously ping the ante by or get unusually of the issue by s not the act of murder itself (as wrong as that is) but the core issue is the raging heart of the person who is acting out of sinful anger.

Does the Old Testament focus on outward acts alone, or has God always wanted His followers to have pure inward motives as well-even from the time when He gave Moses the Ten Commandments and all the laws in the Old Testament? Explain. What stories in the Old Testament support your argument?

In verse 22, Jesus makes a series of statements regarding the consequences of being extraordinarily angry at another person and insulting them: first was judgement for being sinfully angry at someone, second was accountability to those in authority for insulting someone, and third was the dangers of hell for calling someone a vulgar name.

Is Jesus saying that if you call someone a fool you are going straight to hell? What is the spirit behind this verse? What's it saying about heart condition of the person who makes this statement?

The whole point of these verses on anger, according to author Jonathan Pennington, is that "...Being angry and insulting another person made in God's image, not just the outward physical act of murder, is wrong and worthy of judgement." (Excerpt from The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing.)

Why would an insult toward another individual be something Jesus says is out of bounds and dishonoring to God?

In verse 23 Jesus says, "remember that your brother has something against you..."

In what sense does God even want to interrupt our worship in order to take care of a serious issue with another human being?

What could be a modern-day example of "leave your gift at the altar and go (be reconciled to your brother)"?

What does God want us to hear? Based on the passage and the questions above, what "takeaways" do you think God has revealed to you?

WHAT DOES GOD WANT US TO DO?

Pastor James said, "The truth is, we all deal with anger. Some of us run hotter or colder than others but, let's be honest, we're all capable of a flare up that can ruin our day, strain relationships, or just leave a dark cloud of funk over our lives. Anger is just a part of our painful human experience."

What comes closest to your anger style: Suppressor, Detonator, Passive-Aggressive, or Assertive?

Are these verses about anger in the Sermon on the Mount saying that getting angry at someone is always wrong? Give examples from the Bible supporting your argument (e.g., Jesus flipped the money-changers tables, David was angry at Saul and his army for not standing up against Goliath, etc.)

Where do you draw the line between healthy and unhealthy anger? Justified or sinful anger?

Ephesians 4:26-27 says "Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil."

How does the anger mentioned in the Beatitudes in Matthew differ from the righteous anger that is often necessary when confronting an injustice?

What should be the first step toward reconciliation when dealing with someone in your life with whom you are angry?

Is forgiving someone of something the same as letting that person hurt you again with the same thing? Does forgiveness automatically mean you need to trust that person, or even be reconciled with him or her? Why or why not?

What does God want us to do? Flowing out of our reading and interpretation, what action does this passage or the Spirit's leading, call us to?

WHAT DOES GOD WANT ME TO DO?

CROSSROADS

Identify people in your life toward whom you harbor anger. Take the first step in asking God to soften your heart towards them, and to open up your eyes/heart to forgiving them, and perhaps being reconciled with them (if that is possible to do safely and wisely).

Please remember that forgiving someone involves YOUR heart alone – it is possible to forgive someone without the person who hurt you ever acknowledging that they hurt you or apologizing to you, as galling as that can be. Pray about God changing your heart and allowing you to forgive the people who hurt you, so that you don't harbor any bitterness or let chronic anger poison your mind and spirit.

Talk with your accountability partner, community group, friend, or mentor about what reaching out and being reconciled to the person or people who hurt you might look like. Seek the wisdom of godly peers and mentors.

Remind yourself that everyone is made in God's image, and everyone has flaws. If outright forgiveness and reconciliation is too hard at the moment, take time to journal what forgiving them would look like for you.

What does God want ME to do? What is the personal application and action step God is calling you, personally, toward?

