

SOTM - Anger - Matthew 5:21-27

The Joy Of the Lord Is Your Strength!

Hardly anything beats a "radiant face"

1. WELCOME TO THE BRIDGE - I'm Jared and here's why we're here.
2. FIRST TIME GUEST
3. ONE OF OUR CORE VALUES IS OUTWARDLY FOCUSED...
 - a. **Vault Back to School Shoe Drive!**
 - b. 350 Shoes for Shoe drive! 175 boys and 175 girls!
 - c. Table in the lobby this Sunday!
 - d. Name brand shoes
 - e. We carry a heavy load - this is such an important part of what The Vault does.
1. I miss watching shows with my kids.
2. Like most parents, we went through seasons.
3. It started with Mickey Mouse Clubhouse, then Paw Patrol, then Lion Guard, and eventually Dude Perfect.
4. *These days it's Kids Baking Championship and MeatEater.*
5. But the Dude Perfect years were a great season of life.
6. If you've ever watched their "Stereotypes" videos, you probably remember Ty's character
 - a. *the Rage Monster.*
7. No matter the situation, he was always one minor inconvenience away from a complete meltdown.
8. A few years ago, I asked my kids, "When you think of anger, what comes to mind?"
9. *Without hesitation, they answered, "The Rage Monster."*
10. And honestly, they're not wrong.
11. Sometimes anger does explode into rage.
12. Sometimes it becomes loud, visible, and destructive.
13. *But we all know that anger is much deeper than simply rage.*
14. When you begin peeling back the layers of our lives, *you discover that anger runs surprisingly deep.*
15. In fact, study after study suggests that we - especially as Americans - aren't merely dealing with occasional frustration.
16. Anger has become part of the atmosphere we breathe.
 - a. Anger keeps CNN and Fox on the air,
 - b. Anger is what simmers in our hearts on i10 and 1604,
 - c. Anger finds it's way into our workplaces, the t-ball fields, the 3 putt on 15, and often our homes.
17. *We're surrounded by it - and often consumed by it.*
18. And today Jesus is going to teach us something important:
19. *Anger is about far more than explosive outbursts.*
20. *It's something we battle in the heart...*
21. Let's jump in...

21 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' **22** But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother^[a] will be liable to judgment; whoever insults^[b] his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell^[c] of fire.

1. So catch the scene and notice what Jesus is doing.
2. The religious leaders of the day had narrowed the sixth commandment down to the physical act of murder.
3. In other words, "As long as you haven't killed anyone, you're good."
4. *And honestly, we still talk this way.*
5. Someone asks how we're doing, *and if life is frustrating*, we might say, "Well, at least I haven't murdered anybody."
6. But Jesus presses deeper.
7. Jesus moves beneath visible behavior (Murder) to the invisible condition of the heart (anger).
8. He is teaching that sinful anger is not a small, harmless category of sin.
9. It belongs to the same family as murder.
10. Anger and murder may not look the same, but they actually are brothers.
11. They share the same last name.
12. *Let's talk about something important - there are multiple TYPES of anger, believe it or not.*

TYPES OF ANGER

When most people think of anger, they think of **rage**.

1. Rage is the most obvious form of anger - explosive, destructive, and impossible to ignore.
2. Like a volcano, it builds beneath the surface until it erupts through yelling, harsh words, aggression, or emotional outbursts.
3. But not all anger is loud. Some of the most damaging forms of anger are much quieter.

One of those forms is **sarcasm**.

1. Sarcasm is anger disguised as humor.
2. It uses wit, irony, and mockery to express frustration or contempt while hiding behind the claim, "I was just joking."
3. Though subtle, its words still wound.

Another form is a **critical spirit**.

1. Rather than exploding, this anger constantly finds fault.
2. It magnifies flaws, highlights mistakes, and rarely offers solutions.
3. Criticism becomes the default response, often fueled by pride, perfectionism, or resentment.
4. *Helpful - there is a difference between a critical eye and a critical *spirit*.

Then there is **pessimism**, a form of anger many people fail to recognize.

1. It expresses itself through cynicism, negativity, and hopelessness.
2. Beneath the constant expectation of disappointment is often unresolved anger toward circumstances, people, or unmet expectations.

1. The truth is that *anger wears many faces*.
2. Whether loud or quiet, *anger reveals a heart that needs healing*.

3. We need surrender, and the transforming grace of God.

1. Now, Jesus does something interesting - he shows us HOW ANGER ESCALATES.

2. First, He says, "Everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment."

a. Which is just good old anger.

3. But then He says, "Whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council."

a. This is the NEXT step... it goes from the heart to the mouth...

b. *The word there is "Raca," a term of contempt meaning something like "empty-headed fool."*

4. Then He says, "Whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire."

a. This is not just frustration. This small anger just turned into a deeper attack on a person's worth, character, and dignity.

b. Basically you're saying "You're not even worthy to be alive"...

5. Jesus is describing the downward progression of sinful anger.

a. *It begins with resentment.*

b. *Then it grows into contempt.*

c. *Then contempt becomes condemnation.*

6. *Anger never stays neutral...*

1. But Jesus is also doing something important...

2. *He is removing every place we hide.*

3. Most of us can say, "I've never murdered anyone."

4. But I mean who can say we've never been angry,

a. never harbored resentment,

b. never spoken words meant to wound,

c. never dismissed someone as worthless?

5. Jesus is not lowering the standard of God's law; He is revealing its true depth.

6. The 6th commandment was never just about taking a life physically.

7. It was always about keeping hatred out of your heart.

8. The reason anger is so serious is because every person bears the image of God.

9. When we nurture bitterness, contempt, and hostility toward another person, we are attacking someone whom God Himself has made.

10. That's why Jesus doesn't simply say, "Don't murder."

11. Jesus is saying, *"Examine your heart."*

12. *Because long before sin reaches the hands, it usually begins in the heart.*

13. *And if we're honest, this teaching leaves every one of us guilty.*

a. We need more than behavior modification.

b. We need heart transformation.

c. We need the grace of God to do in us what we cannot do for ourselves.

14. And that leads directly into Jesus' next point.

15. Because if anger and resentment are that serious before God, then reconciliation cannot be optional for God's people.

16. In fact, Jesus is about to say that restoring broken relationships is so important that it even affects our worship.

23 So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, **24** leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. **25** 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. **26** Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny. [d]

1. Jesus immediately moves from anger to reconciliation.
2. That is not accidental.
3. Because unreconciled relationships become breeding grounds for sinful anger.
4. ***What we refuse to reconcile today will rule us tomorrow...***
5. Jesus gives us a great illustration...
6. A worshiper has made the long journey to Jerusalem.
7. After traveling for days, he finally stands before the altar with his offering in hand, prepared to present his gift to God in worship.
8. Everything is in place. The ceremony is ready to begin.
9. *Then, in that moment, he remembers that a brother has something against him.*
10. Jesus gives an unexpected command:
11. "Leave your gift there before the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."
12. To Jesus' original audience, this would have been shocking.
13. The altar represented the very center of worship and devotion to God.
14. Yet Jesus teaches that reconciliation takes priority *over continuing the religious ceremony*.
15. Why?
16. *Because God is not impressed by acts of worship that ignore broken relationships.*
17. He desires more than *outward expressions* of devotion;
18. He desires hearts that *pursue peace and restoration*. (Blessed are the PEACE MAKERS...)
19. It is impossible to genuinely claim love for God while refusing to seek reconciliation with people made in His image.
20. It's why Jesus' illustration is wild... Notice...
21. He does not say, "If you have something against your brother."
22. Instead, He says, "If your brother has something against you."
23. That distinction matters.
 - a. Even if you are not the offended party.
 - b. Even if the conflict was not entirely your fault.
 - c. Even if you believe the other person has misunderstood you.
 - d. Even if you feel justified in your position.
24. *Jesus still places responsibility on His followers to pursue peace.*
25. The mindset of a kingdom citizen is not, "Why haven't they called me?" or "Why should I make the first move?"
26. Instead, the disciple of Christ asks, "What step can I take toward reconciliation?"
27. The world often waits for the other person to act first.
28. Jesus calls His people to take initiative.

29. Kingdom people are peacemakers, not scorekeepers.
30. They are willing to humble themselves, take the first step, and pursue restoration whenever possible.
- 31.
32. In verses 25–26, Jesus uses the imagery of two people settling a dispute before it reaches the courtroom.
33. The primary emphasis is urgency. His message is simple: *deal with conflict quickly.*
34. Why?
- 35. Because unresolved conflict never remains neutral.**
36. What we refuse to reconcile today often gains power over us tomorrow.
 - a. Guys, bitterness has a way of maturing and growing over time..
 - b. Resentment has a tendency to deepen if unaddressed..
 - c. Pride simply hardens our hearts to where eventually we're unrecognizable.
37. Don't let tiny cracks become massive canyons in your life
38. Many people believe, including myself, that time automatically heals.
39. The problem is that buried anger rarely stays buried.
 - a. It finds its way into marriages and effects our parenting.
 - b. It damages friendships and weakens Churches.
40. Eventually, the issue is no longer the original offense.
41. The issue becomes the bitterness, resentment, and pride that have grown around it.
42. What began as a wound becomes a stronghold.
43. That is why Jesus urges us to address conflict before it has the opportunity to take root in our hearts and shape our character.
 1. Now, I'm not naive. I've been hurt in some very profound ways in my life.
 2. I know that this is not easy and I know that we can even twist what Jesus is saying into something that isn't true.
 3. Let me explain...
- 4. It is important to understand what forgiveness is - and what it is not.**
 - a. Forgiveness does not mean pretending the wound never happened.
 - b. It does not erase consequences or eliminate the need for wisdom in future relationships.
 - c. It does not require us to call evil good or ignore genuine hurt.
5. Rather, ***Forgiveness releases the offense to God and leaves justice in His hands.***
6. (Listen) A forgiven person may still remember the offense, but they are no longer controlled by it.
7. The memory might remain, *but the bitterness loses its grip.*
8. Someone once said that forgiveness breaks the chains that keep us tied to yesterday's wounds.
9. It frees us from the prison of resentment, bitterness, and the endless replaying of past offenses.
10. We do not forgive because the other person necessarily deserves it.
11. *We forgive because Christ has forgiven us.*
12. Having received such undeserved grace, we can extend grace to others.
13. And in doing so, we refuse to allow our hearts to remain in bondage to the sins committed against us.

14. The gospel calls us not only to receive reconciliation from God, but also to become people who pursue reconciliation with others.
15. That pursuit may be difficult, but it reflects the very heart of the One who reconciled us to Himself.

Some thoughts on how to address our anger:

1. Turn it off.
 - a. Starve those things that feed our anger.
 - b. It might be a really good idea for you to stop watching the news.
 - c. Stop mindlessly scrolling on social media - knowing that it's what sparks your anger.
 - d. Did you know - studies show we were not made to know what's going on like we do now?
 - e. Our minds were not created to have this constant flow of information.
 - f. It might be wise to put our phones down, have a conversation with your family members and neighbor, have a good meal, and enjoy the weather.
2. Take some time.
 - a. It's incredibly helpful to go back in your mind and remember your own failures. (I know how uncomfortable it is to do this)
 - b. It's amazing how patient we become when we take a honest look at our own failures.
3. Assume the best.
 - a. One of the reasons we get so angry is because we imagine the worst about someone's motives.
 - b. When someone cuts you off in traffic, we don't think "goodness, they must have some type of emergency going that fast, I should pray for them right now..."
 - c. James 1:19-20 advises us to be "quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry."
4. Ask for, and extend, forgiveness.
 - a. God really is in control.
 - b. He really did forgive us of our sins in Christ.
 - c. Forgiveness really is the key to putting unrighteous anger to death.

CONCLUSION

1. Jesus teaches that our problem is deeper than murder - it is anger, contempt, and hostility in the heart.
2. Before God, *every one of us stands guilty*.
3. But the gospel is not "try harder to control your anger."
4. The gospel is that while we were God's enemies, Christ pursued reconciliation with us.
5. He took the judgment our sin deserved so that we could be forgiven and restored to God.
6. The cross shows both the seriousness of our sin and the greatness of God's grace.
7. When we see how much mercy we have received, we become people who extend mercy to others.
8. Those reconciled to God become reconcilers.
9. The call of this passage is not merely to stop being angry, but to come to Christ and be transformed by His grace.
10. Only the gospel can produce hearts that pursue reconciliation instead of resentment.
11. This is what I want so desperately for all of us...

THE GOSPEL: Jesus Christ is the ultimate hope for every person. Though we are all sinful and our sin separates us from God, God made a way for us to be in right relationship with him again. That

way is Jesus. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus was the perfect sacrifice for our sins. God promises that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ will be saved. This is the good news of the Bible.

COMMUNION: 1 Corinthians 11

²³ For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, broke it, and said, ^[b] "This is my body, which is ^[c] for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

"May the Lord bless you and protect you;
may the Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
may the Lord look with favor on you ^[b]
and give you peace."