

The Sermon on the Mount: Murder & Contempt

Lesson 5: October 13 & 14

Read Matthew 5:21–26



Sermon Reflection Question: What captured your attention from Sunday's sermon?

Observation & Interpretation Questions:

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches right ways of relating to one another. Within this next section, in Matthew 5:21-48, Jesus offers six case studies on right relationships. In each case study, he quotes a command from the Torah and then expands on its common interpretation. This week, we will learn from Jesus' first (of six) case studies on murder and anger.

1. Jesus introduces each new case study with the words "you have heard that it was said" or "it was said" followed by, "But I tell you." Why would this be shocking for the people listening to Jesus and maybe hearing Jesus' words for the first time?

As Jesus quotes the sixth of the Ten Commandments, affirming its validity while also increasing the intensity of the command.

2. What are the 3 actions listed and their consequences from v. 21-22?

Notice how the progression decreases in intensity of the action, but increases in the intensity of the consequences.

3. Why are the consequences of murder and anger the same? We likely have not committed murder, but we may tend to get angry. How is Jesus inviting us to meditate on the deeper source of both murder and anger?
4. Let's consider the third action of name-calling. Why is name-calling a common, attractive, and unfortunate way of dealing with our frustration towards others?

Jesus wants us to see that murder is the most extreme form of a much deeper reality that also expresses itself through name-calling: contempt for another that results in devaluing their life and dignity.

5. How do murder, anger, and contempt reveal the same core mindset? How are we taking up the role of God with these actions?
6. What is the Holy Spirit revealing about the condition of your heart as you meditate on the severity of your actions and words to others? Take time today to pray and ask the Lord. See Matthew 12:34; 15:19.

Now that Jesus has explained the severity of our expression toward others, Jesus begins the next section with “therefore.” This section explains the urgency of reconciliation and forgiveness through two parables in vv. 23–24 and vv. 25–26.

7. How does Jesus describe the urgency of reconciliation in both parables 1 and 2?

Parable 1, v. 23–24, is designed to parallel the story of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4: Brothers are offering gifts on the altar. One brother gets angry and “wrongs” (murders) his brother.

8. How does a strained relationship with others affect your relationship with God?
9. *Parable 2, vv. 25–26, is about settling a legal dispute and uses the court/judge imagery from v. 22.* Why is it important to settle disputes with others quickly? When have you let a dispute sit and what has been the consequence?

10. Read Colossians 3:12–14. How, as God’s chosen people, are we called to live?

11. How does Jesus’ teaching shift your mindset regarding difficult relationships in your life? As an image bearer of God, what would it look like to respond to another image bearer even amongst disagreements and differences?

12. What is the next step that the Holy Spirit is nudging you to take in order to restore a broken relationship?

13. Jesus' teaching on anger serves not just as an urgent ethical standard but also as a hopeful glimpse of the world to come. Jesus brings an upside-down kingdom of hope and fullness that anticipates a new creation. A new creation without murder, anger, and strife.

How will you praise God today for His kingdom that we can experience today by the power of the Holy Spirit?