



**Date:** October 19-20, 2019  
**Speaker:** Shane Simms, Multi-Site Pastor  
**Scripture:** Matthew 5:21-26--Anger

My name is Shane, and I am the multi-site pastor here at North Park. I am the site lead at our Huron church plant and oversee our newest church plant in Stratford. So, I'm here and there, but this weekend, I am super glad to be here, with you.

The emotion that we are going to talk about today, is an emotion called anger. Maybe you are familiar with it. We kind of think it's cute when kids act out and this anger emotion comes spilling out all over the place, but it isn't cute when it comes from an adult. It's often rather uncomfortable and intimidating and even a little scary!

But of course, I couldn't be speaking about Christians, they don't get angry--that's what other people do, right? And probably, we may not even think that anger is really something that has a hold on Canadians either. I mean, we are known for being some of the most peaceful, easy-going, laid-back, chill people (and not just in chill in terms of Canadian weather), and apologetic people on earth, right?

I mean, a few weeks ago, we saw the epitome of what it means to be Canadian, when one of our up and coming Canadian tennis athletes, defeated Serena Williams at the US open, and she apologizes to the audience for defeating the "fan favorite".

That's who we are known for being, right? We are the easy-going people who never get angry and just want to get along with everyone right? Well, maybe not so much...the world, of which we are a part, is changing...and Canadians are changing along with it.

Gallup has been conducting a poll over the last number of years called the "Global Emotions Poll". And, through this poll, they have been producing a document called the "Global Emotions Report".

This poll, measures "life's intangibles"--feelings and emotions.

In this poll, that surveyed 140 countries and conducted over 151,000 interviews, two groups of questions were asked. The first group of questions was based around,

"Positive Experience Index"

- Did you feel "well rested yesterday?"
- Did you feel you were "treated with respect yesterday?"
- Did you "smile and laugh yesterday?"
- Did you "learn and/or do something new yesterday?"
- Did you have "the feeling of enjoyment yesterday?"

"Negative Experience Index"

- Did you experience "physical pain yesterday?"
- Did you experience "worry, or sadness yesterday?"
- Did you experience "stress yesterday?"
- Did you experience "anger yesterday?"

What this poll discovered about our world was revealing, but probably not surprising. In 2018, while overall stress levels remained unchanged, worry and sadness, which were already at record levels, each increased by one percentage point from the previous year. Experiences of physical pain remained unchanged; but anger, yes, anger, the blood pressure of the world, anger increased by two percentage points—from 20% to 22%, hitting a new global record. Yes, our world is experiencing anger more than it ever has before.

*How does your anger come out....does any of these statements describe you?*

- My anger doesn't come out too often, but when it does....BEWARE

- I often internalize my anger; which causes me physical/emotional/mental stress.

- Sometimes, I display my anger with others on social media/text/email.

- One time, I followed a "bad driver", just to give them a piece of my mind.

Anger is becoming more and more a part of our global culture. So, what do we do with that? It is not that anger on its own is negative, it is an emotion, and we were given emotions by our creator--it's how we handle them, how we deal with them in our thinking and how we project them onto others that is the real issue at hand here. We are becoming angrier. How does that affect us? How do we recognize it and deal with it?

Today, we are going to jump back into this series called, "*On the Way*". These teachings, stories, experiences, Jesus had on the way, as he journeyed with people. Today we are jumping into one of Jesus' most famous teachings and probably what was not one of the most user friendly, people sensitive, soothing sermons of all time. In this sermon Jesus taught about not living like a hypocrite, marital infidelity, making oaths that you have no intent on keeping, revenge, forgiveness, loving people who hate you, and yes, our topic for today--anger.

And actually, some bibles have the topic of this section called, "murder".

In 2017, police reported 660 homicide victims in Canada, 48 more than in 2016. The national homicide rate in 2017 (1.80 victims per 100,000 population) was 7% higher than the previous year reaching the highest rate Canada has seen since 2009. The murder rate is not increasing because more and more people are loving each other. Anger is increasingly showing itself in our culture in telling ways. Tune in for a couple minutes as we take a look at this together.

*Matthew 5:21*

*You have heard that our ancestors were told, "You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment."*

No lesson or teaching needed there. That was law in Jesus' culture, its law in our culture. Here are these three words to let us know something new, "something Jesus", is coming at them, and us,

*"But I say, if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to judgment."*

OK, this is a little new, let me continue the thought:

*"If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell".*

The vocab here is intense. Jesus is trying to undo something in the thinking of these people. They were tempted to think that their righteousness in this area, was defined by the absence of "actual murder". But Jesus is asking them to consider the truth, that the seeds of murder begin far earlier than the final act. Murder is born, the seeds of hatred begin, the breeding ground for murder starts, Jesus is saying, way back in the "angry word" or the "thoughtless insult."

Throwing a mindless insult like "idiot", "moron", even though we often do it carefree in our culture, is shown by Jesus as representative of the tiny seeds that go from thoughtless insults, to anger, to hatred, and sometimes, into hurting someone emotionally, psychologically, and even physically.

Jesus then moves a step further, from a "mindless insult on someone's intellect"--"you idiot", to anger that arises in us that moves us to "assault someone's character". "And, if you curse someone, call someone a fool, you are in dangers of the fires of hell..."

Jesus raises the anger piece that moves from careless words about someone's intellect, now to careless, angry words about someone's character. Words like "idiot", and "fool" come from a dark place, the angry place, the place that leads to things like, you guessed it...murder.

All throughout this sermon, Jesus wanted people to see that the sin was not just in the action, but the

things that were going on in the heart, before acting out on the sin, was pretty dangerous stuff as well. Jesus does the same thing in the very next section of this chapter, on adultery...oh yes, all the wonderful topics here today...

*“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery. **But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.**”*

See what Jesus does here...**they** said adultery is the problem, **I** say, “lust is the problem”. Right back to what he said previously, “**they** say, murder is the problem, **I** say, “anger is the problem...” Do you see where he is going here? Anger is a deep seeded rage that can lead to all kinds of “bigger problems”. **We must deal with anger.**

I had a moment a while back with someone I trust and respect, and the conversation went something like this, “*Shane, in some of my interactions with you, I sense that you can be negative.*” Those are the conversations that we love to be on the receiving end of, right? Thankfully my friend, who was not simply interested in identifying this thing and leaving me hanging with it, but wanted to help me, led me to a “tool of self-discovery”, that helped move me past the “things I do” (I know the things I do- I’m 44), but this helped move me to the “why I do some of the things I do”.

This summer, I dove into this exercise of determining the “why behind the way I am”. And I discovered something disconcerting. I discovered that at the core of my personality type (which is a perfectionist kind of type), there is an emotion through which I see the world, a filter through which much of my information, a core emotion through which much of my relationships, through which my opinions are formed and through which I often view other people--that emotion, that serves as the set of lenses through which I see the world---if you’ve been listening so far, you may guess what my emotional filter is---anger. Yes, this is my emoji ☺

But I never gauged myself as an angry person, nor have the people who know me best. I don’t blow up at people or seethe in my own wrath until Mt Vesuvius actually blows. No, my anger manifests in

a different way, and because of what Jesus is saying, I need to watch myself.

The people on this spectrum who see the world through anger, often experience it in at least three ways:

1. Some **externalize it**- their anger comes to the forefront, for everyone to see. Sometimes, their anger leads them to fix a wrong in the world, which is a good way to use anger. Other times it just comes out uncontrolled, and targeted at others, which is a danger zone.

2. Some **bury it deep**- Some people seem calm and relaxed, but they bury their anger really deep down because they are afraid venting it will break relational connections and destroy unity they have with others. Their anger usually comes forward in delayed responses, sometimes volcanic, and other times in a “biting remark” here and there. Their anger is really deep down, but it escalates over time.

3. **Then there are those like me who internalize all anger**--these people rarely ever explode, but their anger comes forward, leaks out slowly, in resentment. They don’t think others work as hard as them, they get upset internally when others don’t “play by the rules”, they will often times internally judge others, and never really say it, but it’s there, and it slips out here and there, and it’s dangerous, and...it’s me...

Jesus’ words, are particularly striking for a person like me. And I know in a room this size, there may be more people like me. Jesus moves on through this text,

*“if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, <sup>24</sup> leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.”*

### **Anger in Relationships**

Now Jesus moves from internal anger, the things we say and think about others, things they may never know about, towards an external anger, an anger that damages relationships between people. Now, this is more common territory for many.

## I. Anger in the Church

A. The first anger in relationship piece he talks about has a common setting that we would be familiar with “the church”. If you are coming to the church to worship, and anger has divided you and another, then fixing the relationship with the other is of the highest priority. But this is the flip of what you may be thinking. Jesus says, don’t let anger get a hold when “*you remember a person has something against you...*” Many times we approach this as, “*well, if they have something against me, then that is not my problem, that is their problem...*” That may be true in the world’s Kingdom, it is not always true in Jesus’ kingdom. In the church, in the place where his order reigns, “*you never let anger come between you and another, even if that anger, is not coming from you...*” Anger is so deadly, and can lead to so much disaster, as the seed of all kinds of evils, that you shouldn’t let someone else harbor it against you, ***if you can help it at all...*** Let me finish this up and let us all off the hook...Jesus deals with the anger that starts as “careless words”, then he deals with anger as it effects “church relationships”.

## II. Anger in the Courts

*“Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still together on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. <sup>26</sup> Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.”*

In Jesus’ world, if two people were walking together, “on the way” to the court, they could still work it out, if there was a thing between them. But once the court proceeding began, they were “locked in”, and often times, one would be locked up”, and it would cost them “everything”, relationship and resources--gone.

In our world, nothing has changed. When full blown anger takes root between people, and takes us the whole way, most often, people lose everything. We know legal litigation between friends, neighbors, co-workers, spouses, often costs everything, financial, and relational. When anger gets to that place where the judge needs to decide, it costs someone everything.

Anger has taken some of you further than you intended to go and cost you more relationally than you were willing to spend. Our pride, stubbornness, and anger has cost us almost every bit of relational currency with some people, and maybe you are about to spend your last penny. If you don’t deal with this, you won’t get out until you have spent the last penny--anger will cost you everything.

Some of you are about to cash in your last penny. The last angry word is about to be spoken or the last angry text is about to be exchanged or the last angry dig on Facebook is about to happen or the last shouting match in your marriage is about to take place and you are going to cash in your last penny in that relationship and you are going to be left...broke. If you have one penny of currency left in your relationship, don’t spend it in anger...fix things, reconcile before anger gets full blown and you’re “on the way” stops “dead in its tracks”.

God wants you to acknowledge, deal with your anger, and be reconciled in your relationships. For truly, I say unto you, “you will not get out, until you have paid the last penny”.

Let’s pray.

## Points to Ponder

### **On The Way ~ Healing of the Paralyzed Man**

#### **Mark 2**

**With a friend, your family or in your small group, discuss the following questions.**

1. It seems that the anger of the world is “ramping up” year, after year. As you examine your own life, how does your anger “spill out”? Has your anger ever come out in a way that has alarmed you or others around you?
2. Jesus teaches that anger that turns to hatred, that can turn to violence, starts with “careless words.” Have you ever considered how dangerous some of your “careless words” could be?
3. Is there a person in your immediate orbit who is angry with you and “has something against you?” How have you chosen to handle that situation?
4. Jesus states that when anger takes us “the whole way,” we won’t get out until we pay the “very last penny.” Is there someone in your life whose unresolved anger is about to cost you the whole relationship with them.