

Uprooting Anger — Delivery Transcript

Matthew 5:21–26 (CSB) • Wes Terry • Sunday, April 12, 2026 • Healing The Heart

⚠ AUTO-GENERATED TRANSCRIPT — verify against the audio before quoting publicly. Produced from a Descript transcription of the Broadview Church sermon recording and lightly cleaned (filler words removed, obvious mis-hears of names and Scripture references corrected). No timestamps. This is not a publication-ready manuscript and it is not Wes's exact words for print. Check any line against the recording before it goes on a graphic, in an email, or in a book.

Amen. Thank you so much to our team for leading us and thank you for singing. If you have your Bible, we're going to be in Matthew chapter five. And as you're turning there, if you're new to Broadview, we're big we're working through the Gospel of Matthew looking at the life of Jesus here in 2026. And we're right to the middle of a big sermon Jesus preached called the Sermon on the Mount. And this morning is going to be one section of that sermon. I have three kids now. I've had three kids for five years.

Some of my kids are older, like eleven year old, my oldest and Addy I think somewhere around eight years old and I'm pretty sure Briggs is five. He might be four, he's close to five. But having kids is one of my greatest joys and honors. Every one of my kids is unique. It's crazy that they can come from the same people and be so different. In so many different ways. Each has their unique personality. And the coolest part of being a dad, I feel like, is watching them go from little hump lumps of humanity to fully flourishing personality types and each have their opinions and views and there's a lot of stuff as a dad I try to like influence and add value and shape them and raise them up and fear and character, fear of the Lord and character, not fear of dad, but fear of the Lord and character as a human.

But there's other things as a dad I just haven't had to do much influencing on. It just naturally gravitate towards these types of behaviors and if anything I've had to kind of reel it back in just a little bit and it seems like with one issue they get better at it with every passing year. It's almost just like breathing. It's so natural to them. And the one thing I've never had to teach my children in that respect is how to fight each other. They are great at fighting, they are great at conflict, they know how to press each other's buttons and how to get each other riled up and how to say just the right thing at just the right th right time to just the right person and just the right way to just pho send them over the edge.

It's a real gift. And sometimes they can do it with their mama. They even know how to say what they need to say to their mom and even their father. And I've always wondered why is it that kids are so good at fighting why are humans just kind of born with this inclination to be

centered on the self and when we meet another self-centered human being to kind of like bam, I'm going to win this battle about self-interest. I've never quite understood it. All I can say is human beings are natural.

Naturally prone to conflict, that conflict in a sinful broken world is inevitable. Can we agree on that? It's inevitable. And we've seen that play out at a global scale, certainly over the last couple of years and even months, with the war going on in Iraq and then the conflict between Israel and many other surrounding regions in the middle East. And it's not just war though. It's not just, you know, dropping bombs from the sky. It's also You know, the cold treatment or the icy shoulder in your bedroom or the silent treatment in your living room or the kind of you know weird tension that you experience in the workplace and we could go on and on all the different environments where conflict is experienced and how it's experienced in different ways.

In different places. And it's true even in a local church. There are no such thing as perfect churches. There's certainly no such thing as perfect Christians. And so we experience conflict all across the board and all of these different domains. And so it isn't surprising that Jesus would address this issue. That he would address it head on and that he would address it first in a series of moral issues in this thing we call the sermon on the Mount. And so that's what I want us to look at this morning.

If you're new to the Sermon on the Mount, it's like I said, a sermon Jesus gave that is an invitation of sorts to a life of flourishing. Jesus is like every great philosopher and that he cast a vision for the good life. And the vision that Jesus cast, like Plato and Aristotle and Seneca and many others before him required people to live a certain way. What's shocking about Jesus' vision for a life of flourishing is that he said it is for the poor in the spirit. It is for those who mourn and those who are humble.

Those are the ones who inherit the kingdom of God. For Jesus, a life of flourishing was wrapped up in the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of God was only given to a certain type of person and that when the kingdom of God is received it creates a certain kind of culture and we talked about this in the Beatitudes about mercy giving. And spiritual hunger and being sincere and pure in heart and having an undivided allegiance to the Lord and how kingdom people are oriented towards peacemaking in the world and that they seek to make peace in every situation despite the hostility and persecution.

Persecution and as Jesus said those people would be salt and light and they would influence their world in that way. When we got to last week's message we saw Jesus give an answer to a charge that people had thrown about him. Saying you don't really believe the Bible. And it's kind of funny to think of Jesus not believing in the Old Testament Bible, but that's what they accused him of because of the things that he was saying about the blessed life. And

Jesus responds in Matthew 5, verse 17 with a statement about, I didn't come to abolish the law and the prophets.

I didn't come to abolish the Old Testament scripture, but rather I came to fulfill it. And we said last week that what Jesus means by that is a very radical claim. He's essentially saying that the Old Testament prophets and stories are pointing to him that he's the point of the Old Testament, that every pattern and prophecy is about him, and that his life mission was to bring that story to completion. That God has a special people, that He's going to save that people from their sin, that He's going to establish a kingdom for those people, and the king would reign over that kingdom forevermore.

Jesus says, I'm that king, I'm going to usher in that kingdom, that I'm the Savior I'm the one to whom the law and the prophets point. And so then he turns around and says, those who accuse me of twisting the Bible, they're actually the ones projecting the very thing they're doing themselves. And he turns to the scribes and the Pharisees, who were the elite religious people of that day, and he says, you guys are actually using the Bible to get away from doing the Bible, and as a result, you're not going to get the kingdom.

He concludes, and we looked at this last week in chapter 5, verse 20, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and the Pharisees. Then you cannot get into the kingdom of heaven. And when Jesus said that, it would have been radical. Everybody would have been, what are you saying? Because the scribes and the Pharisees were the super holy righteous people. Externally, they were as pious as they came. And Jesus is saying their problem is their righteousness is at the surface. It is only about external behavior. It's not about the heart.

And until and unless your righteousness is under the surface and above the average, then you will never understand or receive the kingdom of God. And that's again a bold radical claim, which is why Jesus goes on to explain six different illustrations of what surpassing righteousness looks like. And that's where we're at today, and that's where our text is in chapter 5, verse 21. And the first of the six different illustrations is the issue of anger and contempt. And essentially Jesus deals with this issue first because all the other issues hang on this one thing.

If you cannot deal with your anger issues, then you'll never have hope of a flourishing life. You will never be able to stay married. You will never be able to love your enemies. You will never be able to go the second mile or all the other number of things Jesus has to do in the Sermon on the Mount. Christian maturity is measured by you overcoming this anger problem. And as a person who is inclined to kind of love debate and conflict, I say that kind of condemning myself and it was interesting when I would tell people this week I'm preaching on anger, some of them responded, I'll see you next week.

Because they didn't want to necessarily talk about it. And yeah, it's kind of funny you can say that, but at the end of the day, we could all probably agree that several of us are inclined temperamentally to kind of be more angry than we otherwise than other people normally would be. And so it's hard for us to accept that Jesus would make something like this, make a statement like this in the Sermon on the Mount that for us to become truly flourishing, we've got to master our anger problem. I would say, I would go so far as to say, you cannot be a mature Christian.

And continually struggle with anger issues in your heart. That part of becoming a Christian is nailing this to the ground, becoming a person not prone to anger. But rather someone who displays the virtues of the kingdom. And so that's what we're going to be. Let's pick it up in Matthew chapter 5 verse 21. And we'll look at what Jesus says and how we can experience this life of flourishing free from anger. So Matthew chapter 5, verse 21, Jesus says, you've heard that it was said to our ancestors, do not murder.

And whoever murders will be subject to judgment, but I tell you everyone who's angry with his brother or sister will be subject to judgment whoever insults his brother or sister will be subject to the court, and whoever says you fool will be subject to hellfire. So if you're offering your gift on the altar, and there you remember your brother or sister has something against you leave your gift there in front of the altar, first go and be reconciled with your brother or sister, and then come back and offer your gift.

Reach a settlement quickly with your adversary while you're on the way with him to the court. Or your adversary will hand you over to the judge, and then the judge will hand you over to the officer. And then you're going to be thrown into prison. And truly I tell you will never get out. And so Jesus gives two parables and a kind of moral lesson on the front end and basically He quotes number six of the top ten commandments, which is thou shalt not murder. And Jesus opens his prohibition against murder with this phrase, you've heard it said, but I say to you.

This is something he's going to do six different times. Each of the six moral illustrations are prefaced by that phrase. You've heard it said, but I say to you. And people will debate what Jesus means by that phrase, but I say to you. There are people who assume that Jesus is giving us a new law and that Jesus is taking the Old Testament law. And he's saying that's no longer relevant. I've always struggled with that interpretation because of what Jesus says in verse 17. He literally says, I did not come to abolish the law and the prophets.

And so how can Jesus be Ditching the Old Testament law and saying I'm going to give you something new, I don't think that's what Jesus is doing. I think nothing could be further from the truth others would say that Jesus is intensifying the Old Testament law. Others would say that Jesus is correcting a wrong interpretation of the Old Testament law. That he's rebuking the scribes and the Pharisees and their misapplication of God's law, or that he's

somehow increasing or intensifying what the law originally said. I think that's possible that he's correcting the scribes and the Pharisees.

But I don't necessarily believe he's intensifying the Old Testament law. The Old Testament law has always been concerned with the heart. Even the ten Commandments and their focus on external behavior, by no means does it suggest by that that God doesn't care about the inner motivations. Throughout the Old Testament prophets, you see them condemn a surface religion that worships God with their lips but has hearts that are far from him. And so the Old Testament law was not, you know, behavior-based, and Jesus has a new law that's heart-based. The Old Testament law was always concerned with the heart, and Jesus is just saying that's what it's always been.

And my job, my ministry is to help you see what the Allah and the prophets originally said that they've been talking about me and they've been talking about a righteousness that looks like this and doesn't look like that. It doesn't look like the scribes and the Pharisees and their focus on external piety only. There is a deeper piety that God your heavenly father is concerned about, and it's a righteousness of the heart. And so he talks number one about murder, which was six in the ten Commandments. And the focus of Jesus is do not murder or you'll be subject to judgment.

And there's nothing, if you go back in the Old Testament and you look in the ten Commandments, there's nothing in the Sixth Commandment that says you'll be subject to judgment. It just says don't murder. And that's it. So this idea about being subject to judgment was something that was being brought in from outside the ten Commandments. There is Old Testament passages that talk about the punishment for murder, and essentially the punishment for murder was the death penalty. It's in Genesis 9. 6. If you shed innocent blood, then your blood will be shed.

Because humans are created in the image of God, so eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth. That's kind of the idea. And so the Pharisees had essentially made it so that so long as you don't murder anyone and you're not judged in that way, then you're good with the Lord. And you could imagine many people looking at that command and saying, well I've never murdered anybody, therefore I must be good. And Jesus is essentially saying you may think that you are good with God. But you are good only in the court of public opinion.

You are not good in the court of heaven. That your heavenly father cares about something much deeper than not murdering people. And if you go to the next slide in verse 22, Jesus explains what that is everyone who's angry with his brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Notice the repetition of the phrase judgment. Whoever insults his brother or sister will be subject to the court. It's a word translated Sanhedrin. It's a religious court of types that when you were guilty of some sin or moral crime that you would have to Present yourself to the Sanhedrin.

And then whoever says you fool will be subject to hellfire. Notice what Jesus is doing. He's kind of doing something tongue-in-cheek the grievance or the crimes are decreasing in severity from murder to anger to insult to contempt, but the severity of the judgment is increasing even as the crimes decrease. I think that's kind of funny and intentional by Jesus. He's essentially saying You think that you're good because all you got was angry. You think you're in the clear because all you did was think they were an idiot. But actually the most severe judgment, the kind of thing that God is most concerned with.

Is not the external things of murder, but the invisible root of murder in the heart. And according to Jesus, that invisible root looks like anger. And contempt. And hellfire, which was a symbol for divine punishment, comes from God for those reasons. That the only difference between murder and contempt is one of degree. It isn't a difference in nature or what ultimately matters when it comes to God. And so when you think about your life and you think about what it means to be a person of character. What does it mean to be a person of virtue?

Jesus would essentially say, every visible sin that you're trying to restrain from materializing in your life. Every one of those visible sins has an invisible root that matters to God. And that unless and until you address that invisible root, you will not be ready to inherit that flourishing life. That the flourishing life that God blesses is a life that addresses sin at that level. And until and unless you address sin there the flourishing life will be elusive. And so what are these invisible roots? What is what are these sins of anger and contempt?

The word translated anger isn't like slight anger, it is a aggressive irritation. And these words translated raka and moros. This word raka came from like if you've ever had to hawkalooie, which hopefully you haven't, but my granddad was an expert Loogie Hawker. He would I'm not going to make the sound because it'll gross you out, but you know the sound I'm talking about. It's like that hock. That is the sound raka that that it would make. And so it sounds like what it's supposed to convey. It's this idea of you are good for nothing.

You are an empty-headed buffoon. You're denigrating their character. You're saying you're nothing, you're a nobody. It is a severe form of insult. Less severe is this word moros. It's where we get our English word moron. You don't want to call someone a moron, but all you're basically saying is you're a fool, you're not wise, you're ignorant. And so Jesus would say, both anger and contempt are issues of the heart that you need to understand. And cultivate out of your heart. And so Jesus doesn't define anger. He doesn't define what it is.

And so I want to do a little bit of work of helping you get handles on that issue. There's a passage in the book of James that talks about the source of wars and fights among us. And I've always gone to this passage in my own thinking. For how anger works. If you've ever been angry, you know just how powerful that it can be. It is intoxicating. It kind of blinds you

to what you need to really see about yourself and about the world. The way that anger works in the human heart is it's a natural defense mechanism.

It's not C. S. Lewis. Tim Keller says of anger that it is just love in motion. Anger is love in motion in that it is seeking to defend what you love from a perceived threat against that beloved. And so when something you love is under some kind of threat, then anger naturally comes from your heart to try to defend against that threat. And we can love all sorts of things for all sorts of reasons. And you may even have a good desire or a good love that becomes disordered in your heart.

And that's essentially what James describes when he talks about anger. He says, what's the source of sinful anger? What's the source of wars and fights among you? Does it not come from your passions? In other words, does it not come from your desires that are waging war within you? You desire and you don't have, and so you covet and you murder. He says, You don't have because you don't ask. In other words, God would be happy to give. And even if you do ask God, you're not asking with the right motives.

And so James is talking about some kind of desires that we might have. That are not themselves sinful, but they become inordinate in our hearts. In other words, we care more about that thing than we do honoring the Lord. Which is why we will sin against the Lord in order to get that which we desire. And then because that which we desire matters more than the Lord, when that thing is under threat, then we will sin in order to defend it. And at the heart of all sinful anger, is your attempt to defend what you love.

The problem isn't the thing that you love, it's the degree to which you love it. You love that thing more than you love the Lord, and as a result, when it gets threatened, you'll sin against God in order to preserve it. And I know that's theoretical and academic, so let me give you an illustration. Let's take any desire, a good desire that that you know any of us could have. Let's say that you're a parent and you have a desire for your kids to listen. You're the mom, you're the dad.

There's even a Bible verse that says, children obey your parents, right? It is a good thing. God wants your kids to listen to you. And so it's a good thing for you to want your kids to obey. But what's interesting is that on Monday morning or Tuesday morning when you're going to school and your kids are not listening to you become sinfully angry and you yell and you scream and you are intimidating your children and you're doing so why because you want them to mind maybe but there's probably another desire at play.

That desire might be for control or that desire may be for convenience. And in your desire for convenience and control, it's become more important to you than honoring the Lord with your mouth. And so you sinned against God, you sinned against your children by screaming and yelling in a sinful way, all because this good desire became an ultimate or God desire in

your heart. There's a little illustration that works well to kind of capture this in the next slide. You have these desires here on the bottom. They represent any number of things.

And these desires are rightly ordered under a heart that has Jesus as Lord. So Jesus is enthroned on your heart. He is rightly ordering desires beneath you, desires for comfort, control, convenience. Reputation, respect, being understood, you know, tenderness, all the things that we naturally want in our marriages and in our relationships. But if we're not careful, these desires can grow legs and start walking up the stairs. And what happens is a good desire shifts from a desire to a demand. And when it stops being a desire and becomes a demand, you're dangerously close to sinning against the Lord.

And when that person doesn't meet your demand, then you put yourself in the seat of the judge. And you through contempt begin to denigrate the other person and say, you're not worthy of my respect. You're not worthy of my tenderness. You're not worthy of my patience because you're just a selfish little kid. And you're not listening to what I have to say. And so you become judge and jury and executioner and you sinfully respond with anger in order to, you would never say you want to harm your children, no one ever does, but what you're doing with your sinful response is harming your children.

You're intimidating them. You're causing them to cower in fear. And you're doing that because they threatened a little bit of convenience on Tuesday morning. And you can take it out of the realm of parenting. You can put it in the realm of marriage. It's a good thing to want your husband to treat you with tenderness and to understand you. There's even a Bible verse in 1 Peter 3 that says, husbands. Live in an understanding way with your wives. Do not be harsh with them, lest your prayers be hindered. That's a good one, husbands.

See there, he says you got to listen to me. Yes, God wants you to be understood and heard. But when that desire becomes a demand, and then your husband doesn't understand you sufficiently, well, I get to judge him. And all you ever do is speak harsh to me, and you're so impatient, you're such a whatever. That's what we call contempt. And they're always close to each other. Anger and contempt are two sides of the same coin. Anger is an attempt to defend what you love from injury. Contempt is justification to cause it.

Justification to cause injury to another person and essentially you denigrate the other person to make them feel inferior. And so you're just a crummy husband. You just don't even love me. You I can't stay married to you. I feel like I'm trapped. I want a divorce. What is that meant to do? Is that meant to just share your feelings? No, it's meant to tear them down. It's meant to make them feel less than you. And you're doing that because you're angry, because there's contempt in your heart, but really you're doing that because a good desire became a God desire and you didn't get it.

And when you didn't get what you thought you deserved, you thought it gave you the right to be sinful in the way you defended it. You thought it gave you the right to sit in the seat of God, and I get to punish you because you're not doing what you're supposed to do. And Jesus says that tendency that is in every human heart will rob you of righteousness and keep you from a flourishing life. And we know you all know exactly what I'm talking about, and I know exactly what I'm describing, and it shows up much more often than many of us are willing to admit.

And it can happen for any reason, any number of these desires. They can grow legs and walk up the stairs, and it justifies your sinful response. And so the only fitting response when you sinfully express anger is for you after committing that sin to try and make it right. And that's why Jesus gives these two parables after he talks about this moral issue. He gives a parable about a brother and a sister who have a relational infraction and then about a person and an adversary. So let's read those two parables and then we're going to wrap it up.

He says in verse 23, if you're offering your gift at the altar, and there you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go be reconciled with your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. And then the second parable is not a brother and a sister, it's rather an adversary. And Jesus says to reach a settlement quickly with your adversary. While you're on the way to court. While you're on the way with him to court, otherwise your adversary will hand you over to the judge.

And then the judge will hand you over to the officer, and then the officer hands you over to the prison. And truly I tell you're never going to get out of there until you've paid the last penny. So there are differences between the two parables that are significant. The first parable is between a brother and a sister, there's some kind of kinship at play. We don't know if it's like a biological brother or whether it's a spiritual kinship like in a local church. But the point is, the person you offended is someone you know and love.

And someone who knows and loves you, there is a brotherhood and sisterhood at play. And then in the other one, it's an adversary, and it seems more like a courtroom setting. Either you're getting sued because of something you did wrong, or you're getting prosecuted for some kind of grievance. And the idea is that you would try to make amends before the judge issues a verdict because if you wait that long, your inaction and delay may increase your moral culpability. But in either parable, the basic point is very obvious and it's the same, which is according to Jesus, righteousness includes right relationships.

And this was a contradiction to what the scribes and the Pharisees were pushing. The scribes and the Pharisees were pushing a form of religion that was focused on religious ritual. In other words, so long as you went to church and you said your prayers and read your Bible, and so long as you gave your tithe and made your sacrifices, then you and God were good.

You check your little religious church box and God is cool with you, and Jesus is essentially saying they're wrong. What happens here also matters to God That your vertical relationship with God and worship has everything to do with horizontal.

And that when the horizontal is messed up and broken, it's going to undermine your relationship with God. That you cannot, you literally cannot be right with God and wrong with others. That when you are wrong with others, you're no longer right with God. Which is why the most important thing when that happens in your life is for you, the offender, to seek reconciliation so that relationships can be restored. Now, a lot of people point to this text for promoting reconciliation. What isn't as often recognized is the context that's underneath it.

The context for pursuing relationships is the problem of anger and contempt. And you notice that Jesus says, you go after You become aware. In other words, you're worshiping God at the altar, and as God often does during church, the Holy Spirit convicts your heart about something you did to your brethren. In other words, you become aware, man, I was a total jerk. And I let my anger and contempt cause me to say something and do something that was not right. And when that conviction hits your heart, Jesus says, you need to go.

You need to leave your gift at the altar and go be reconciled to your brother. A lot of people point to this text and say, even if you know someone's mad at you, that you need to go to them, even if you did nothing wrong, that is not. The instructions behind this verse. There are other verses for that. We'll talk about them later. But this one it's focused on the offender and to me that is brilliant. What Jesus is doing because it is the offender's responsibility to initiate reconciliation. And I know that Jesus knows.

What I know and all of you know, when you offend someone in a relationship because of sinful anger, almost always, without fail, they did something too. Can I get an amen? Yes. And you may think to yourself, I'm not going first because I'm only 10% responsible. And they are 90% responsible. And Jesus doesn't care. He really doesn't. He doesn't say, so long as you're only less than 50% culpable, you're in the clear. He says if you're worshiping God and God convicts you even if it's your 10%. Stop worshiping, leave your gift at the altar, and go seek reconciliation.

It doesn't matter what they did to you. It does matter, but it doesn't matter so much that it precludes you from your responsibility for your part. If possible, so far as it depends on you need to attempt to live at peace with all people, which means to the degree that you know you caused offense even if you were just reacting to their anger and their contempt, then you take your reaction and your responsibility and you go and you own it. And you seek reconciliation because that's what Christians do. Now I know that's an inconvenient truth and an uncomfortable truth in a lot of ways, and I know that especially in dysfunctional relationships there's way more nuance and complexity.

But at the end of the day, there's some things very simple. That require you to act. And that thing on this issue with Jesus is you need to go and own your side of the street. You need to clean your side of the street. And there are some ways that you should do it and ways you shouldn't do it. And I want to talk about those and then we're going to be done. There's a book written by Ken Sandy called the Peacemaker, where he talks about the Sermon on the Mount and all of these issues.

And he talks about how desires become demands that cause us to judge and punish. And then he talks about how when you seek reconciliation, how you should go about extending the apology. And he has these seven A's of an apology. Maybe maybe you've seen them before. I think Taylor, when he talked about this issue, he addressed these seven A's. To me, they're so helpful because they illustrate a truly repentant heart. And if your apology doesn't come like this, it's likely you haven't done the work. The seven A's begin with address everyone involved.

When you become sinfully angry, your grievance doesn't just hurt you. Your children heard how you spoke to your spouse. Your friends got caught up in y'all's a tug of war that y'all had. So you need to bring everyone in that was offended by your anger. And then you need to number two avoid if, buts, and maybes. This is so important but so tempting when you're responding to their wrong. You would say something like, I'm sorry, but if you would be so dumb, I'd be I wouldn't have yelled or I'm Sorry, but maybe next time you'll learn to be respectful when you when you talk to me.

I'm sorry, but if this would have happened, those are terrible apologies. Because what you're doing ultimately is you're shifting responsibility. And Jesus doesn't care about their responsibility. He's talking to you right now about your responsibility. And so when you say I'm sorry, don't say if mutts are babies. If mutts or babies, don't say if, buts, or maybes. Just own it. And then admit specifically, this is so important, when my kids have to say I'm sorry, they almost always start with, I'm sorry. No, that's not enough. Why are you sorry? What did you do?

Say it out loud all the way, like it's like torture. They hate it. Why? Because it requires humility for you to be specific. Because for you to be specific, you have to actually say out loud the very things that you're wanting them to say out loud to you but you're going first. You're modeling the mercy of Jesus Christ. And you're admitting specifically what you did. And then you're going to acknowledge the hurt that it caused. Because this helps them not just to know that you know what they know, but it helps you it helps them to know that you see what your actions caused.

I know that made you feel like you can't trust me. I know that made you feel afraid. I hope you would never think that I would physically harm you, but I know that it caused you to second guess. That that might be true. Or maybe I did physically harm you, and I know that I

can't recover from that. I can't ever change. That our relationship will be forever marked. Own it. Say it out loud. And then accept the consequences. This is the difference between godly sorrow and fake repentance. Fake repentance is sorry and will cry and say I'm sorry.

But it will be very mad and unwilling to accept the consequences. Well, I said I was sorry. Why won't you forgive me? That's not a sincere apology. A sincere apology will accept the consequences. And if that means if that means it takes a couple of years for us to be good, if that if that means you need some time for me to prove I'm different. Then then I'm willing to accept the consequences of my actions. And then number six, alter your behavior. True repentance isn't just tears in your eyes. It's a transformed life that goes and Lives differently.

And then finally, number seven, you may need to ask for forgiveness. If you do these first six things, most people will just forgive you. But you may actually need to say, would you please forgive me? I am so sorry. And then give them some time. And again, this is not something you can microwave, it's not something you can control. And nor should you want to do that if it's coming from a place of conviction. If you in worshiping God became aware of a true sin that you committed against that other person because you got angry, and if Jesus looks at you and says, I don't care why you did it doesn't justify being sinful in your response, then you should be able to go to that other person and say, I'm sorry.

And not demand all the other concessions and all the other things that you think you're owed. Go be reconciled the offender initiates. This is what it looks like. And then Jesus essentially says at both parables, you need to do it right now. There is no wait until the time is right. There's no wait until the other person goes first. Jesus doesn't do that because he knows how anger works. He knows that once people are in their silos and in their defense mode, that unless and until somebody lays down their sword, the relationship has no hope of any reconciliation.

Somebody has to go first, which means if it's you, go now. And you see it in the parable a couple of different ways. On the first parable it says if you're offering your gift at the altar first. Leave your gift, first go be reconciled and then come back. In the second parable he actually says explicitly, make reconciliation quickly. Seek reconciliation with your adversary quickly before it's too late. And so in both cases, you see Jesus emphasizing the urgency of being right relationally if you're going to be right vertically. And there's a couple of reasons for that in your notes.

I'm going to give you three. You could say more, you could say less. It's whatever you want to do. On the one hand, it's important because it interrupts your worship with God. You may not believe that it is, but it is having an impact on your soul. It reminds me of the story in Genesis 4 between Cain and Abel. And both Cain and Abel brought a sacrifice to God, and Abel's sacrifice was accepted. But when Cain offered up his sacrifice, God said, I will not accept it. And the idea is not that there was anything wrong with the sacrifice.

Rather, what was wrong was the heart of Cain and offering the sacrifice. Cain had hate harbored up in his heart towards his brother, and as a result of that broken relationship with his brother, it was jeopardizing his relationship with God. And the Lord actually pleads with Cain, please repent. Repent. Sin is crouching at your door. Its desire is to control you. You must overcome it or it's going to overcome you. And Cain didn't listen to the Lord, and Cain ends up killing his brother. And Cain killed his brother, a grievous sin against God.

Because he didn't fully appreciate how vertical damage impacts the how horizontal damage impacts your relationship with God It doesn't just need to stop worship in that you need to go be reconciled. No, it undermines worship. It interrupts your growth in godliness. And you may not think that you have relationship problems with God, but God is saying, Jesus is saying you do have issues here if there's issues here. Especially when you're in the wrong and you're unwilling to admit it. You think I'm good with unrepentant sin and self-righteous justifications that it's fine?

He's not. He never has been, he never will be. You can't persist in unrepentant sin and think God is cool with it. He doesn't care how much money you give, he doesn't care how good your record is at church. He doesn't care how much theology you can spout off.

Righteousness requires right relationships. And so it interrupts worship, number two, it increases grievance. This is interesting to me that the difference between the two parables is the first parable is between a brother and a sister or a brother and a brother, but the second parable describes a person and an adversary.

And Jesus doesn't say this out loud, but I think it's implied. If you delay, your brother can become your adversary. And you may think we would never have an oppositional relationship. It's fine. I don't need to act. They'll get over it. And Jesus, I think, is warning you may not want to presume that that your delay will have no impact on the status of your relationship. That the devil has a heyday with resentment in the human heart. That's why the scriptures are constantly saying don't let the sun go down on your anger.

Be angry, but do not sin. Do not let a root of bitterness spring up and defile many, because your delay in an action intensifies the grievance. Because what you're doing by your delay is you're giving that other person permission to replay the tapes in their minds about how big a jerk that you were. And the problem is if Jesus is right, then they're not wrong. You really did sinfully do something for which you need to give an account. And then they're using that to justify their own contempt and anger. And so the devil is winning on both sides of the fence, and neither one of you are willing to fight against him.

So somebody has to lay down their sword and own their part of the problem so that the enemy and his schemes can finally be undermined. It intensifies the grievance, it interrupts worship, and then the last thing is it increases your culpability. Culpability means that you're responsible morally for what happens next. And you may not think that you're culpable, but

that's essentially what Jesus is explaining. You notice in the last parable how it increases in intensity. It goes from the adversary to the court I'm sorry, from the adversary to the court, from the court to the judge, from the judge to the officer, from the officer to the prison, and then from the prison you pay it until your last penny.

There's this increasing severity of judgment because of delay and I think by that Jesus is saying that your inaction has consequences for you. It doesn't just damage the relationship that you have with the other person. It's actually storing up judgment for when the judgment day finally comes. And that's true at two levels at least. One at the relational level. Again, this happens in marriage all the time. You have a marriage issue and you think to yourself, I don't want to make a big thing of it. I'm not going to go to them.

She'll get over it. He'll get over it. It's fine. And they don't, or you don't, and it isn't fine, but you pretend like it's fine for months, maybe even years. And now six years, five years, twelve years go by, and you don't have any feelings for your spouse. You are emotionally divorced and have been and don't know how to get back. And the consequences of losing your children and losing your family and losing what you've built together is will not be fully appreciated until the judgment day has come and gone.

And so don't wait. Jesus is saying make peace while peace can be made. Because there's a little small window of opportunity, which is why you have to act right now. You cannot wait until the time is right. Nor can you force the other person to forgive you, but you can own your part, you can clean your side of the street, and you can do it with humility and sincerity because the Lord Jesus gives you everything you need to do so because ultimately Jesus doesn't just command reconciliation. Jesus displays this dynamic with his own life.

The Bible says, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly. That he didn't wait for us to clean up our act. He entered into our mess and met us there. He pursued us. Even though we were unworthy, he took the initiative. And because he took the initiative, the salvation we didn't earn or deserve is granted to us freely. And when you begin to ground your identity in that person and work of Jesus, then his power becomes your power. His mercy becomes your mercy. And you find within yourself a unique ability to humble yourself before the Lord and own you're part of the problem.

You don't have to defend, you don't have to justify yourself, you don't have to go into anger and contempt. You can show forgiveness, you can show tenderness and mercy, and you can pursue reconciliation. And someone's got to do that work, and it might as well be you. And the way that you have the power to do so is by grounding your identity in Jesus. And so if you're here today and you don't have a relationship with Jesus as Lord, the invitation for you this morning before you go and be reconciled is to be reconciled with God through Christ.

That you can experience forgiveness in Christ that will more than supply you with the mercy and grace that is required to forgive your brother or sister. That you can find a humility and confessing Jesus as Lord that is more than sufficient to give you the resources to humble yourself. Before your brother or sister. And so if you don't have that relationship with Jesus, or if you would say that relationship is artificial, I prayed a prayer when I was young, but I haven't been really living as a Christian I've been so blinded by my self-righteousness and my anger and contempt that I've made it all about the other person instead of taking responsibility myself.

Maybe this morning the Holy Spirit is inviting you into that place. And I want to lead us through a time of prayer to help allow the Holy Spirit to do that work. And so would you bow your heads with me and I'm just going to give you a couple of questions. This is something I do in my own life that I want to share with you as well. Would you just take a few moments to let the Holy Spirit bring to your mind any relational grievance? That you've caused because of anger or contempt.

Just ask the Lord, would you search me? Would you see if there's any unclean way? Wherein I allowed anger and contempt to cause me to sin against a brother or a sister. And give the Holy Spirit some time to speak to you. As you asked that question, it's easy to argue with God. It's easy to defend yourself. Try to resist that urge. And ask the Lord to give you specificity on how you can own that sin before the other person. Specifically how and why. Do you need to say, I'm sorry?

And let the Spirit of God do that work of revealing what's in your heart. And if the Holy Spirit has given you a name. Name and he has given you a sin, a relational grievance for which you are responsible and need to seek reconciliation. Then even before I pray, maybe even right now, would you get up? Pull out your phone, send that text message, go make that phone call, go set that appointment, to act on what the Holy Spirit is leading you to do. And then if there's a sense in which you would need someone to pray with you or for you because it's messy and it's complicated and you don't know how to make the first move.

After I pray, if there's a way I can pray with you or for you, or maybe you just want to spend some time praying to the Lord, God help me. God help me. Help me to demonstrate Christ-likeness in my relationships with these people. After I pray you do that. Father in heaven. We do thank you for your word, and we thank you even for these difficult passages, which can be received sometimes as a rebuke. From our Heavenly Father a warning from a holy God, but it is a warning given in love.

It is a discipline we receive as children who are loved by our Heavenly Father, not as children marked by indifference because you don't care about us. Father, we thank you that you use your word to not just make it right in our relationships, but to make us right, to make us people of virtue, to make us people who are fitting for the kingdom, people who

are marked by humility and mercy and spiritual sincerity and hunger for righteousness. And so help us not to reject this work of sanctification, but to press in joyfully, excitedly, even though it requires a demonstration of humility and grace.

Because we know that though it's painful in the moment that discipline from the Lord produces a peaceful crop of righteousness. And so would you do that now as we respond and we pray it in Jesus' name. Amen