Leave Your Gift

Every Sunday, there's a moment in this room when it gets very quiet. Heads are bowed. Communion is served. And sometimes, right in the middle of that quiet, a face comes to mind. It might be a brother you haven't really spoken to since spring. Or a sister who finds a reason to be across the room when you come in. Or, somebody in your own family. What do we do with that moment? This morning Jesus is going to tell us that moment isn't a distraction. It's a summons.

I. The Anger Under the Act

A. Matthew 5:21: *"**You have heard** that it was said to our ancestors, **Do not murder**, and whoever murders will be subject to judgment.*

1. Jesus isn't loosening the Law. Notice what kind of anger He means.
2. Paul says: ***Be angry and do not sin.*** *Don't let the sun go down on your anger,* (Ephesians 4:26)
3. Anger that's kept. Brooded over. Fanned like a coal you don't want to go out.

B. Matthew 5:22: *Whoever **insults** his brother or sister, will be subject to the court. Whoever says, '**You fool!**' will be subject to hellfire.*

1. *Insults* — the word underneath is *Raca*. Empty-head. Nobody.
2. *You fool* — writes a person off.

II. The Interrupted Offering

A. Matthew 5:23: *So if you are offering your gift on the altar, and there **you remember**…*

B. Matthew 5:23: *…and there you remember that your brother or sister has **something against you**,*

1. Matthew 18:15: *If your brother sins against you, **go tell him** his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won your brother.*
2. Galatians 6:1: when somebody's caught in a sin, the spiritual ones go and restore him gently.

C. Matthew 5:24: ***leave** your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled with your brother or sister,* … The order is brother, then altar.

D. Matthew 5:24: ***and then come** and offer your gift.*

1. 1 Corinthians 11:28-29: *Let a person examine himself; in this way let him eat the bread and drink from the cup. For whoever eats and drinks without recognizing the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself.*

III. While You're Still on the Road

A. Matthew 5:25: ***Reach** a settlement quickly with your adversary.* (Make friends with him.)

B. Matthew 5:25: ***Quickly**… while you're on the way*.

C. Matthew 5:26: *Truly I tell you, you will never get out of there until you have paid the last **penny***. Unresolved conflict collects interest.

IV. Looking to Jesus: The One Who Was Wronged Came First

A. Romans 5:8, 10: *But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. For if, while we were enemies, we were **reconciled** to God through the death of his Son, then how much more, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life.*

B. Jesus became the gift on the altar.

1. Ephesians 5:1-2: *Therefore, be imitators of God, as dearly loved children, and walk in love, as Christ also loved us and gave himself for us, a sacrificial and fragrant offering to God.*
2. 2 Corinthians 5:19: *That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, **not counting** their trespasses against them, and he has committed the message of reconciliation to us.*

C. People who've been reconciled to God at that price don't get to stay home from the walk across the room.

V. As We Close…

A. Romans 12:18: *If possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.*

B. If you've never been reconciled to God, that's the first trip to make.