

Harris Creek Baptist Church  
John Elmore  
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The Danger with Anger

Matthew 5:17-26

**17 “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. 19 Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.**

**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 will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire. 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.**

Hey, good morning family. Welcome to Harris Creek. Good to be with you all on Sundays. Okay, all right, summer energy. Good to be with you guys. Hey, so three years ago, almost to the day- this is going to feel like a hard turn- my wife was diagnosed with breast cancer. She's okay. She's three years in the clear, so we're in good shape. (Audience claps) Thank you. But when that diagnosis hit, it stopped us on our tracks. We called our life group, we were living in Dallas at the time, and we let everybody know. And JP immediately made a beeline for our house, not even being in Dallas, like straight to the house. And he did one thing right and he did one thing wrong.

You know cancer diagnosis, that's a tenuous situation, so I'm sure he's, you know, kind of lost in his thoughts. But the thing that he did right, like he just busted through the door holding this big bouquet of flowers, which is so right, so kind, so gracious. The thing that he did wrong, is he walked through the wrong door. He walked into the wrong house. Good intentions, right action. So what he was met with, instead of seeing us- JP's a big dude, I mean he's probably not physically intimidated by many. He said this guy stood up from a couch and looked at him like “What are you doing in my house?” Non verbally, of course.

Then, JP said that this dog, and he made sure- I was like, “Hey, can I tell that story?” He is like make sure you say it was a Rhodesian Ridgeback, which is a lion killer of a dog, a Rhodesian Ridgeback, I said it, turned the corner like hair bristled on its back, snarling, and inching towards him. He wanted to make sure it wasn't some teacup poodle that, you know. So he's holding out the flowers and backing up towards the door. This is called breaking and entering. No matter if you have flowers, you can't be there. This guy knew and was looking at him like “Get out of my house.”

He did one thing right, one thing wrong. And regardless of both, he had no right being in that house. No right. No matter what he brought as an offering or flowers, no right to be in that man's presence or in his house.

And so it is, with every single person walking this earth, whether we bring good or whether we've done bad, it doesn't allow us to be in or out of the presence of God. There's one thing that determines if we can be in the presence of God, and that is trust and faith in the forgiveness of sins through Jesus. And otherwise, we have no right to be there. We have no right to be in the presence of God except for Jesus. It doesn't matter if we bring our good works, that won't get us into the presence of God. It doesn't matter if we've done so many things bad to keep us out of the presence of God. There is only entrance into the presence of God, house of God, kingdom of heaven, through Jesus Christ and the forgiveness of sins.

So that's what we're going to be talking about today, and how salvation is not just where you go when you die, but how you live while you live until you die. This is not just a “Well I hope I get to heaven when I die”, but that we would live this kingdom of heaven reality in this life, as we live in Christ, that we'll be united with him forever where he is in the kingdom of heaven.

Today, we're continuing the Sermon on the Mount. This whole summer, we're journeying through the Sermon on the Mount. And last week, we covered adultery and lust because that was a big part of Joshua Broom's story. He went into that world with adult films, pornography, and went down the rabbit trail and found there death, and was saved by Jesus. Because of his unique story, we jumped ahead to where Jesus says “You've heard it said do not commit adultery. I say to you, whoever has looked lustfully along upon a person has committed adultery in his heart.” We let Joshua teach that because he was here in town and that just providentially aligned with that passage.

Now we're going to step backwards to where we were in the Sermon on the Mount, to teach Matthew 5 where Jesus begins to unpack the righteousness of God and the sinfulness of man. And so today we'll be in Matthew 5:17-26. If you want to turn there in your Bibles, you'll see it on the screen.

And by way of preview, here's what you're going to see in the passage today, is that God is perfect and man is not, and therefore cannot be in the presence of God unless we trust in the sinless sacrifice of Jesus, who died on the cross, was buried, and rose again for the forgiveness of sins. And then, in the midst of that, where it's like God's righteousness, man's sinfulness, and what's reconciled through Jesus; Jesus, for the first time in the Sermon on the Mount, is going to point to sin.

Up until this point it's like blessed are the meek, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, blessed, blessed, blessed. And you're a city on a hill, you're a lamp on a stand. Now he's going to unpack God's righteousness, man's sinfulness, and point out sin. So we would do well to listen.

The three points are going to form a sentence. Jesus is the sinless sacrifice for sin from anger, and commands amends for sin. It's one sentence, three points. Jesus is the sinless sacrifice for sin from anger, and commands amends for sin. So let's go.

*1. Jesus is the sinless sacrifice.*

Matthew 5:17-20. **“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. 19 Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.**

Now we're going to unpack this passage verse by verse. And right from the outset, this audience would have been completely confused and struck by his words when he says do not think that I've come to abolish the law. Why would he have said that? Don't think that I've come to abolish it- because they were already thinking that, like who do you think you are? When he says you have heard it said, but I say to you, you've heard it said, but I say to you, you've heard it said, but I say to you, they'd be like, “You've heard it said”, like when it says you shall not commit murder, you shall not commit adultery. The “you've heard it said” is pointing back to the 10 commandments that were written by the finger of God and given to Moses.

So when it says “You've heard it said”, like yeah, we've heard it said, we've heard it said by God. So who are you to say you've heard it said, but I say to you? Do you think you somehow can improve upon that?

It's a statement of deity. Jesus is saying “You've heard it said, but I say to you”, is like God gave you the law, you have diminished and misinterpreted and misunderstood gravely what God's intention for the law was, so now God in flesh on the scene, Jesus being fully man, fully God, is saying, “But I say to you”, let me give you the full and complete teaching of what the law was intended. You see your scribes and Pharisees have misinterpreted it for you. They've lowered the bar, I'm here to raise it and show you the holiness of God, the sinfulness of man, so that not you would be condemned, that you would know your need for a savior.

So he says I didn't come to abolish it, but to fulfill it. This would have blown their minds too. It would have been like, you've heard it said, but I say to you, wait, you're equating yourself with God's, like that your authority is on par with the law. Now he says, and I didn't come to abolish it but to fulfill the law and fulfill the prophets. This again is a statement of deity. Why? Because when he says, “I come to fulfill the law.” No one could fulfill the law. Every single person had sinned since Adam and Eve. Sin had corrupted, with human depravity, through the line. This is

why God set forth the sacrificial system that was in the tabernacle, in the temple, all day, every day. They would have looked at the temple in Jerusalem and been like, yep, sacrifice is still being offered, because everybody's still committing sin.

And for Jesus to say, "I've come to fulfill the law", He was saying I am perfect, which would have been unthinkable. And he couldn't have said that unless, he was again, God in flesh. He said, I came to fulfill the law that every single law that was given, he never broke. That he was with temptation and yet without sin. He is sinless. But it also would have been that he fulfilled the prophets. If that was the fulfilling of the law, now he says, and I also came to fulfill the prophets.

Now, one thing before I unpack this, for him to say law and the prophets, he's saying the entirety, that was an idiom for the entirety of the Hebrew Scriptures, from Genesis to Malachi. When he says I've come to fulfill the law and the prophets, they're like, "What? You're the embodiment and fulfillment that all of it is pointing to you?" And so when he says, "I came to fulfill the prophets", this is to mean that every single prophecy about the Messiah, the one who was to come, the sinless fulfillment of the law- now sacrifice, the one who is to be given for the forgiveness of sins, that he's the fulfillment of it.

He is the embodiment of the Messiah and the Christ. Beginning with the very first prophecy, they call it the Proto-Euangelion. From Genesis 3:15, where it says the seed of the woman will crush the head of the serpent. And in Deuteronomy 18, where it says that God will raise up one from among the people and put his words in his mouth and to listen to him. God's saying there's going to be one who will be human and fully God, listen to him. Or from Leviticus 17, where it says the life of flesh is in the blood, and I have given this on the altar to atone for your souls. Again, pointing to Jesus. The life of the flesh is in the blood, the shed blood of Jesus Christ, given for atonement for our souls.

Atonement is a biblical word that means the removal of sin, expiation, to take sin out. Or some of the other prophecies, Isaiah, when he says, I came to fulfill the prophets, they would have heard, wait, so like Isaiah 7, behold, the virgin will be with child, and he should be called Emmanuel, which means God with us. Again, virgin with child, fully human, and he will be called Emmanuel, God with us, fully human, fully God. Or Isaiah 11, Mighty God, Wonderful Counselor, Prince of Peace. Or Isaiah 53, he was pierced for our transgressions, and by his soul people will be saved. Or Psalm 22 where it says they have pierced my hands and my feet. They have cast lots for my garments, which begins and says, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? They would have heard all of these prophecies and thought, "Are you saying that you've come to fulfill them?" Because when he says, I came to fulfill the law and the prophets, he was pointing them to his life that would be given upon the cross.

This is the intersection of their life and his. And the reason why I'm going to spend so much time on point one is because this is the point of this message. It's the point of the Sermon on the Mount. It is the point of this entire scripture that is all pointing to us, holiness of God, sinfulness of man, and our reconciliation through Jesus, the sinless sacrifice.

As I was wrestling with the first point and what to say and how to phrase it, I changed it many times. But where I landed last night, it was Jesus, our sinless sacrifice, because for those who

have trusted in Christ, he is our sinless sacrifice. And I was like, no, that's incomplete. It's Jesus, THE sinless sacrifice. Because Jesus said "I am the way, the truth, and the life, and no one comes to the father except through the son." And so Islam offers no way to the Father. Hinduism offers no way to the Father. Jehovah's Witness, Mormonism, every cult, every religion that's false, offers no way to the Father except through the Son.

So Jesus is THE sinless sacrifice. It says there's one mediator between man and God, Jesus Christ our Lord. He is THE, a definite article, sinless sacrifice, fulfillment of the law and prophets. And then in verse 18 he says, "**Not a dot or an iota will pass away from the law until heaven and earth pass away.**" What he's saying there, the daughter of the iota, those would've been like the smallest marks that could be made by the scribes in the Hebrew scripture. He's like not the smallest part will go away until heaven and earth go away, and heaven and earth will go away, there's going to be a time. The first flood was by water, the next one will be by fire. There'll be a new heaven, a new earth where we will reign forever, and there'll be no sin. We'll be in the presence of God.

And for right now, he's like none of this will pass away until heaven and earth pass away. He's like you think I came to abolish it? This is unabolishable, it's unbreakable. And what Christ is doing right now is, he's saying regarding the word, in case you think anybody could ever abolish it, any other false religion could ever come up against it, that anyone by scrutiny could ever prove that it's false; it's unbreakable, it's infallible, meaning unfailing. It's inerrant, meaning without error. And it is inspired, meaning these and these alone, is the only holy book, the only words from God that we have.

Christ there is speaking to the sufficiency of scripture. And when I say it's unbreakable, it's said sometimes, I know I've said it, like oh, well here's what it is. It's been said you can break God's laws. The reality is you can't break God's laws. When you do something contrary to God's law, you don't break God's law, God's law breaks you. You're the one that realizes the sinfulness of sin and the holiness of God in his word. It is unbreakable and it will not be abolished, not any dot or iota.

And then in verse 19, this is relevant, especially in this day and age. Think about where we are socially, culturally, in our media. He says anyone who relaxes one of the least of these commands, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. He there is upholding the holiness of the scripture and he is like, if you take this and you relax it, even the smallest part of it, and then you teach others to do the same, either by your words or your life, you'll be called least.

Now you may be saved. He says you're going to be in the kingdom of heaven. If you trust in Jesus, nothing can take away your salvation, but there are eternal rewards that are coming to us. Every crown cast before God, yes, but there are eternal rewards. And he says, in a 1 Corinthians 3 sense, if you relax these and teach others to do the same, you're going to be as though one passing through fire. Everything else is going to burn off, and you're going to show up with very little to show when you arrive at eternity's door. And the reason why I said I think this is important culturally and socially in this day and age, is because you have churches on their sign that says church, meaning called ones, who are relaxing the commands of God. And you think

about sexuality, gender, issues of abortion and life, where there is a permissibility of sin or an endorsement of sin when God condemns it. And we're not here to throw stones at other churches, but it does say in 1 Corinthians 13:6, a quintessential passage on love, which is not a marriage passage, it's a church passage, it says love does not delight in wrongdoing- meaning we can't applaud or endorse someone's sin if God says it's sin. We can't relax and teach others to do the same when God calls it this.

But I think what we need to focus on is not so much what other churches are doing or relaxing, I think we need to consider our own lives. As James says, that the Word is a mirror. It's a mirror to us. That when we look at this Word, it's to be for us, and we should, be like mirror to the world so that we can evaluate culture, but firstly, that it should be a mirror to us. And that rather than focusing on other churches and what commands they may be relaxing and teaching others to do the same, that we would look at and be like where am I relaxing and teaching others to do the same? Perhaps by sins of gluttony or self-starvation for body image, or leading my boyfriend and girlfriend into sexual sin, or maybe it's my control and anger. Maybe it's this fear of other things. Instead of just fearing God, I become fearful. Where really it's fear God and then fear nothing else. Maybe it's people pleasing. Maybe it's flattery. Maybe it's pride and self-exaltation instead of exalting God. But that's where this should begin, is that we would look inward. Especially today as Christ says, "Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you'll never enter the kingdom of God."

That we wouldn't look at others right now, but that we'd be like, Lord, where's there been drift in my life? And this is why I love JP's exegetical teaching, exegetical- just meaning to take out what is already there in the Word, not to read into it, but to take out and share it. And I don't say that as flattery because I'm up here and he's not today. I tell him he's my favorite preacher, and the reason why is because he does not relax this, he unpacks it. And he doesn't apologize for any of it, but rather offers an apologetic for it, a defense for it. And so I love sitting under his preaching for that reason.

And I want you to hear this too, when it says but whoever teaches these, whoever does them and teaches others to do the same, will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. I don't want you to think like, well good for you and Nate and JP, cause you guys get to teach it and so great, you'll be great in the kingdom. Okay, great, because you're not relaxing them, you're doing them and teaching them. Every single Christian is under the yoke of the great commission, and the great commission instructs every single believer to do and teach others to do the same. This promise is for every single believer, where he says whoever does them and teaches others to do the same will be called great in the kingdom."

It says in Matthew 28, go therefore, like walk out these doors- **"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Teaching them to do all that I have commanded you. And behold, I'll be with you to the end of the age."** So this doing and teaching for every believer, great in the kingdom of heaven. And if that's not enough, he's the fulfillment of the law and the prophets.

Now he's about to blow their minds. He's about to drop this theological bomb that would have been like, then what do we do? He says "Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes

and the pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” When he says that, they would have been thinking like, unless your righteousness exceeds that of Billy Graham and Mother Teresa, you have no chance. They would have been like, what? And they would have probably responded, whether verbally or in their hearts, with Matthew 19, where the disciples say, “Then who can be saved?” The scribes were the ones that, before the printing press, they were hand copying all the scriptures all day, every day. They were experts in the law. They were called to be expert witnesses in a court of law because they had the law on lock. The scribes, they wrote it so many times that it was committed to memory. They knew the law that well. The Pharisees were those who tried to live the law that well. So learned and lived. They would both, and Jesus says, “Unless it exceeds theirs”, meaning, they're not getting in. It's like well then who is? And Jesus' response in Matthew 19, he says “With man it's impossible.” Like on your own effort, you carry flowers, try to walk through this door, it's impossible. He says “But with God, all things are possible.” And the “with God”, Jesus is like “With me, it's possible.” Salvation. He's showing us his holiness, our sinfulness, in order that we might draw unto Him.

I want to tell you a story that I think may help connect the dots. We have three kids, and our in-laws have some land with a big fire pit. It's like a six- or seven-foot diameter fire pit, kind of built up walls. Well our kids love it. They'll get up on it and like walk circles on it, and all this. And we're like, “Hey, stay off the fire pit.” They're like, “Yeah, but we can walk around.” “No, you're going to fall in. Don't get on the fire pit. Don't touch the fire pit. Because when there's a fire in the fire pit, we'll roast marshmallows, have a good time, but stay off the fire pit because somebody's going to fall in, and when you do, it's going to be bad.” Well when we're around, they don't. But we had roasted marshmallows and the next morning I'm sitting having coffee, relaxing, enjoying myself, and all of a sudden, our oldest like bust through the door from outside. He's like “Judd's in the fire pit, Judd's in the fire pit!” He was not telling on his brother, he was urgently pleading for me to go get his brother, because there's Judd, our youngest, in his like footy pajamas and he's frozen and crying. He's not moving, and crying. He can't move because there was ash, but once his body weight had pushed down, he was hitting hot coals. So he's frozen, and I'm just in a dead sprint to the fire pit, and once I got to the fire pit, here's what I didn't do. I didn't stop and be like run, run, run, stop “Judd? You know that I've told you to never get in the fire pit. You shouldn't be in there. I don't know why you're in your footie pajamas. It's against the rules to be in the fire pit. We had a fire last night. You should have known better. You saw the heat. You cooked the marshmallow. This is all your fault. You figure it out.” Instead, as a father, I'm like jump into it, onto the coals, pull him out, I'm dusting his feet off.

And that's what Jesus does for us. He enters into our mess and pulls us out of our mess. He enters into our pain to pull us out of our pain. He goes into the sin, without sin, to pull us out of our own sin. He doesn't lecture us. He's looking at us in it. Eternally begotten son of God and enters into it to rescue us from it, not to lecture, to rescue. And so it says in Romans 3:26, the second part of the verse, this is the gospel. It says “...so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”

Now, for him to be the just means that he is the holy, righteous judge. That he's the one that calls balls and strikes with sin. He is just, there's no one like him, entirely set apart because of his holiness. But then it says something different. That's an adjective about God. He is the just. But

then, same word, now converted to a verb, it says he is also the justifier. He's the just, he's the Holy one, and he's also the one that enters into the sin, rescues us, and becomes the justifier. He is righteous, and he makes us righteous. The adjective and also the verb, entering into it on our behalf. And so he says, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, that's impossible, unless you receive Christ's righteousness, the righteousness through faith in him. Your good works won't get you there. Your bad works won't keep you out. It's only the complete work of Jesus in which you can enter into the presence of God, enter into the kingdom of heaven.

This is the crux of the sermon on the mount, where he's like God is holy, you have sin, enter in by the name of Jesus and my righteousness that he gives to us, imputed righteousness, not ours, given to us from the Father through the Son, now indwelt by the spirit.

And so for application; some of us think that we're good enough. Good people don't go to heaven, forgiven people go to heaven. It says in Romans 3, there is no one good, no, not one. And some think that they're too bad. You've done too many bad things to go to heaven. There's nothing so bad you could do to keep you from the love of the Father through the Son. But there's a third category of people, and it's those that have trusted in Jesus and aren't telling others. You've trusted in Jesus, you're saved, but you're not telling others.

We had a worker in our house this past week, and he was coughing incessantly, just this cough on repeat, to where we're having a hard time even communicating because of his cough. And I'm like, how terrible if I had just been like "Well, I hope you feel better." Well my hope for him will do nothing. Like "Okay, thanks, that's borderline worthless. This nice gesture does nothing for my cough, still have a cough." Instead, I'm like, "Bro, I have medicine, here come with me, come into the bathroom, I open up the cabinet. We've got this, it's daytime. We've got this, it's nighttime." He has a sickness and I have the remedy, and how cold hearted if I hear his sickness, see his sickness, and give him nothing for it. And we're going to walk out to these doors to a sin-sick world. And I'm in Your presence here, you're like "I know it, I know what the remedy is." They're dying of sickness, the cancer of sin. You have the antidote, will you give it to them?

## *2. For sin from anger.*

Jesus is not a sinless sacrifice. He's not our sinless sacrifice. He is the sinless sacrifice for all sin, including sin from anger, Matthew 5:21-22. **"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 will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' (You jerk, you idiot) will be liable to the hell of fire.** We diminish our sin within anger and other places, and we diminish the holiness of God.

Now hear me say, anger is an emotion. So anger in and of itself is not sin, anger is an emotion. God himself experiences- he records in his word that he has anger. So it's what we do with that anger that decides whether or not we're in sin. Anger is just an emotion reflecting something going on. It's often our response in anger, either righteous or unrighteous anger, that determines if it's sin. So it isn't sin, but it may be an expression of it. They thought that it was just if you murdered, he's like no, you've misunderstood. Even if you have anger in your heart towards your



brother and sister, you harbor that, have that resentment, then you're in sin. All pointing to the need of Jesus.

Now there's righteous anger, and there's unrighteous anger. Derek Davidson just sent me this quote after the first service. It's incredible. It's by C. S. Lewis. He said, "I sat with my anger long enough to learn that her real name was grief." That's incredible. That would be like a righteous anger. To realize that there's sorrow over brokenness, and it's feeling like anger, but down below that, the anger is the fruit. Below it is the root of grief, like we're sorrowed.

And then there can be unrighteous anger that's just fueled by insecurity, fear of man, people pleasing. You didn't get what you wanted that you thought you deserved, and that would be unrighteous anger. But again, our response can be the sin within anger. Sin from anger. And this is important for our life groups. It's important for your work relationships. It's important for roommates, if you're a student in the classroom with your peers or with your teacher.

There are two biblical options for anger. When you feel anger, there are two options given in the scripture, to overlook it or talk it over. There are your two options. You overlook it, or you talk it over. To overlook it, that's Proverbs 19:11. It says it's to man's glory to overlook an offense. To be like, man, that hurt, that was sin, but I sinned too, I forgive you, pardon you, grace, mercy. I overlook the offense. You either overlook it, or you talk it over.

For talk it over, it's Leviticus 19:17. So in Leviticus 19, this is the same passage that says love your neighbor as yourself. Before that it says, you shall not hate your brother in your heart. So he's speaking to resentment and grudges, where, because of anger, you're hating them in your heart. Maybe there's nothing outward that you're doing this incredibly sinful, but there is an inward sin of hating them in your heart. You're ghosting them, you've written them off, you treat them as though they're dead. You walk in a room, they're there, you walk out of the room. Do not hate your brother in your heart, but rather reason frankly with them, meaning go and talk with them. Talk it out. Either overlook it or talk it over.

Then it says, unless you incur sin on behalf of them. It's like wait, hold up, like they sinned against me, now I'm in sin because I'm hating them in my heart, I've got some bitterness and resentment. Now God, you're saying I'm in sin? He's like yes, if they sin against you and you can't overlook it and you don't talk it over, which is to peace fake, I'm just going to be passive aggressive, which by the way, is still being aggressive. Then it says, you now are incurring sin on behalf of them because God's like "Hey, I gave you the option, overlook it or talk it over, but if you're just hating them, and resenting them, and holding a grudge against them, and ghosting them, and treating them as though they're dead, now you're actually in sin. Because you're not forgiving in the way that I forgave you." And so he says, overlook it, or talk it over.

Anger is like a check engine light on a car. We've all had the check engine light. So many times I have not yielded to the check engine light, I just keep barreling down the road. I've blown two engines as a result. The check engine light is not the issue. The check engine light is telling you hey, something's wrong under the hood. It could be a cylinder, it could be a header, it could be the fuel injection, it could be the throttle body, you don't know. You have got to pull over, go to an auto parts store, they plug in the computer, they pull the code, and they're like, "Oh, it's cylinder number five. It's your blocked fuel injector. It's the throttle body. It's the air filter." They

can tell you any number of the 30,000 parts on a car when you pull over. That little light doesn't tell you what's wrong. That light is telling you something's wrong, pop the hood, pull over.

So it is with anger. Anger is that light that's saying something's wrong. Something's wrong. Pop the hood of your soul, allow God to pull the codes and be like, this is why you're angry, and slow down. If you keep going in your anger, something's going to blow, the relationship, your temper. You've got to slow down. And so when we talk about anger, I want to give you something, a little handhold, S. T. O. P. When you feel angry, stop. The first one, the S, is slow down. Then you're going to get your two choices. The T is talk it over or overlook it. And then the P is pardon the sin, forgive them, Ephesians 4:28 through 5:1, forgive them as you've been forgiven in Christ Jesus. Imitate God. Don't hate them in your heart.

Slow down, quick to listen, slow to speak. Anger of man doesn't bring about the righteousness of God. Talk it over, overlook it, pardon the sin. I want you to look at the word danger. Danger will be on the screen. Embedded in the word (d)anger is anger. If that's not enough of a check engine light and realization of like, all right, when I feel anger, I need to know that anger is within danger. If I keep pursuing this and go on how I feel so indignant, so hurt, so affected by this, I'm just going to keep going. There's danger, there's anger within that danger, so we've got to stop, to slow down, talk it over, overlook it, pardon the sin. Jesus is the sinless sacrifice for sin from anger.

### *3. Commands amends for sin.*

And now Jesus, he's like, all right, everybody's got sin of anger, like every single person. If you're alive, I mean even little babies, before they can even communicate in English, they get angry, they're like screaming at you. Everyone experiences anger, and likely everyone has sinned in their anger, or has someone angry with them because of their sins.

So now Jesus turns to pastoring them. He's like God's holy, unless your righteousness succeeds, you're never going to enter the kingdom of heaven. You know you've got sin of anger, and it's affecting and breaking your relationships within your life. And so he says this in verse 23 as he pastors them, **“So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother (or sister) has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother (or sister), 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.”**

He says be humble now, or you will be humbled later. And the response is to go immediately to the one that you have offended, and seek to be reconciled to them. And so Jesus here commands the amends for sin. He commands amends for sin.

In Regeneration, our 12-step, biblically-based, Christ-centered recovery meeting that meets every Monday night, there's a whole step devoted towards amends. Why? Because it's not a recovery thing, it's a Christian thing. This is Jesus' words. He's like before you worship, if someone comes to mind, leave your worship, go be reconciled, then come worship.

It's not a recovery thing, though step nine is amends. That's so that we live this out in our life. And so Jesus says, if you sin in anger or someone's angry with you, go be reconciled. Go seek- and amends is just a restitution, a restoration of a relationship to make things right. Financially, if it's been theft or a break or stealing, or if it's just like sinning against someone, to seek their forgiveness, to make amends.

And it says, if you're leaving your gift at the altar, and there remember someone has something against you, that's the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Some of you right now may already be thinking of someone like, oh my goodness, is God really asking me to go and make things right with that person, that roommate, my dad, this cousin, my sibling that I haven't spoken to in years, my ex. God, really, are you asking me to make things right with them? I know they have something against me. Yes he is. I'm not, although I am, but through Christ's words, he is. Jesus is saying to have spiritual authenticity, don't act like things are good with God when they're bad with the body. And he's also saying like hey, vertically, we're good, Romans 8- nothing can separate you from the love of the Father, but horizontally, things can separate us. And so he's like if you're there worshiping, leave it, go get that right, then come back. Because we're going to be good, that's not good, so go get that right. And what he's also saying here, in that brokenness, is to do it with immediacy.

In Proverbs 6, it says, if you've been ensnared by the words of your mouth, to go to your neighbor, humbly plead with them before you go to sleep. So if you realize that that day, before you go to bed that night, to go to your neighbor with that immediacy. Because we want vertical forgiveness. And he's like hey, you want vertical, but you're not asking for it horizontally, that's a problem. Why do you want my forgiveness, but you're not even willing to seek it from those that you've wronged or offended? And so to settle things quickly or pay fully, to not put your head in the sand, but put your hat in your hand; to go humbly, go quickly.

I want to teach you the hardest phrase in the English language to say, total twister, so difficult to say. You ready for it? "Will you please forgive me?" Hardest phrase to say in the English language. Not a tongue twister. It is a heart and mind twister, because you have to check your pride and to say "Will you please forgive me?" I want all of us to practice it today, so at least you've got one rep under your belt. On the count of three. One, two, three: "Will you please forgive me?" Yes, I forgive you. Of course, grace. Y'all, that phrase, you just said it once in church, it needs to be said outside. It needs to be said to somebody else that you're in a broken relationship with. Will you please forgive me? Those words will change your marriage, your work, your relationships, your distance with others. It will change everything.

Jesus commands it. It's not a suggestion. It's not a life hack. In fact, reality, like this room should be somewhat empty if we took this teaching seriously, we'd be like, leave your gift at the altar, are you serious? He's like yeah, I'm serious, go be reconciled, then come offer your gift.

I'm not asking you to leave right now, but we should leave and we should ask someone for forgiveness that we've sinned against, that we have a relational separation with. This is the second most used phrase in our house, "I love you" being the first, and "Will you please forgive me?" second most.

It's just a reality. And so, before lunch, I would encourage you send a text, make a phone call, set up a meeting. Will you please forgive me?

And here's another thing that'll help you, as you're having the conversation, is "You're right," stops the fight. Saying "You're right," stops the fight. That's going to help you so much in life. Like when there's a back and forth, and you're kind of having this quarrel, when you realize- and it's going to be a check of your pride to say "You're right." The next time you're in a quarrel, just watch for it. It doesn't mean that you have to own all of it, but you own 100 percent of your 2%. "You're right." And it'll deescalate everything and be like, ah, we have nothing left to argue about. "You're right, will you please forgive me?" You're right, stops the fight. Jesus is the sinless sacrifice for sin from anger and commands amends from sin.

So you remember JP walking into our old house. He walked in, it was our old house, we had sold it and moved, he forgot, that's why he walked in with those flowers. But you remember him walking in and the dog and the guy and all that. He's holding the flowers, he said he got as low as he could and he's like backing towards the door. And then as the dogs, he's like I'm not even going to make it to the door. He says one thing, he says one single word and everything changes. He said he was holding those flowers, backing up, dog snarling, man encroaching upon him, and he goes, "Elmore's! Elmore's! I know the Elmore's!" And the guy's total demeanor changes from foe to friend, from I'm going to kill you, to you're welcome here. Because he said I know, I know someone. And that man knew that's who the house belonged to before we knew them. They were friends, other believers. It's like "Oh, you know them? Then we're friends. If you're a friend of them, you're a friend of mine. No more trouble. I'm not your foe, I'm your friend." Everything changed through the mention of one name.

So it is with God. That we don't enter in with flowers, like I hope this'll get me in, or that we keep away from His presence thinking I've been too bad, I could never get in. But that we confidently go before the throne of grace by the name of Jesus. We utter one name to enter into the presence of God now and forevermore, Jesus! Jesus! It's all Jesus! I don't come in by my good works and my bad works won't keep me out. It's all by the name, the blood, the life, the resurrection of Jesus, period and amen. He is our sinless sacrifice for sin from anger and commands us to make amends. Let's pray.

Father, we thank you and praise you for the words of Jesus that were recorded in the scriptures. And that the only way that our righteousness can exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees is if it's your righteousness, Jesus, because you fulfilled the law that we never could, and you fulfilled the prophets, showing that you were the one who was to come. And so we enter into your presence and remain in your presence through the name of Jesus. Thank you for saving us from our sins. We love you. Amen.