

Flipped: The Upside Down Kingdom (I'm So Angry I Could...)

Andy Deane · 9/17/2023 · Matthew 5:21-26

“God’s law is meant to address and expose the heart because sin is always a matter of the heart before it is an action of the body. It’s hatred within my heart that causes me to use the members of my body to harm another.”
— Paul Tripp in New Morning Mercies: A Daily Gospel Devotional

We see three options with how we can let anger affect us in this passage:

OPTION #1: LET ANGER CONTROL US?

Matthew 5:21-22, 21 “You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ 22 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.

- It’s a dangerous option to let anger (or any emotion) control our actions. We won’t like where that leads!
- Jesus is not saying that anger is as bad as murder. He tells us that anger is the seed that grows into murder.
- Jesus clarifies this commandment to include that a murderous heart will be judged by God too.
- Jesus is talking about sinful anger.
 - Good anger is born of wrongdoing and is valid, temporarily.
 - Bad anger is triggered by something that is not really a moral transgression, and needs to be repented of.
- Jesus says that our words express our heart’s condition. Matthew 12:34, ...*mouth speaks what the heart is full of*
- We should allow our words and feelings assess our spiritual maturity.

OPTION #2: LET ANGER GROW US?

Matthew 5:23-35a, 23 “Therefore, 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 in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift. 25a “Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still together on the way...”

- It’s a better option to let anger be a trigger for you that this is an important moment you need to handle right.
- Jesus considers it far more important to be reconciled to someone than to perform a religious duty. Wow!
- Our refusal to reconcile with someone is a big deal because it shows a heart that forgot it was forgiven by God.
- How do we reconcile when we are so angry? By marinating in “how much grace we’ve received” on a daily bases, that makes us people who are willing to reconcile with those who hurt us.
- Visit go2cornerstone.com/anger to see steps to dealing with: good anger, bad anger, & long-term anger.

OPTION #3: LET ANGER MOTIVATE US?

Matthew 5:25b-26, 25b *or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. 26 Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.*

- It’s also not a bad option to let persistent anger scare us a bit, and motivate us to push towards reconciliation.
- Why is Jesus again shocking us with such an extreme possible outcome for our anger?
- Because it’s the reality for those whose hearts are truly filled with hate and not love.
- Jesus is reminding us of our sin not to condemn us, but to drive us into His saving arms.

HOW DO WE LIVE THIS OUT?

- Next week we are taking communion during all of our services.
- In light of what Jesus says in Matthew 5:23-24, is there someone you need to reconcile with this week before you take communion. Jesus is saying that reconciliation is more important to him than outward acts of worship.