

- **Intro:**
  - **NOT CLICHE—GOSPEL PRODUCES CHANGED LIVES!**
  - Ch. 5-7 = the pathway to being FULLY human—as God intended. To subvert these principles and walk in disobedience is to become LESS HUMAN step by step, belittling ourselves!
- **DO NOT MURDER (V.21)**
  - “you’ve heard that it was said to those of old, ‘you shall not murder’—Jesus isn’t contradicting the Law but he is affirming and deepening it!
    - 6th commandment—murder ENDS relationships in the most comprehensive, irreversible way possible because of contempt, hatred, indifference, etc.
  - All agree here! This is a good law. Flows from God’s goodness. Imago Dei. Life Giver.
  - Typically the dividing line we use for who is bad and who is good
- **DO NOT MURDER IN YOUR HEART (V.22A)**
  - “but I say to you...” —Jesus’ startling standard—the men of his day, like ours, were most often content with external conformity and behavior modification! Jesus, on the other hand, teaches that the only righteousness that is of any benefit is a divine righteousness that, in time, brings about the full transformation of a person!
  - **6th Commandment—thou shalt not murder is the one that makes us feel safe!**
    - Really bad people murder; I don’t murder...so I’m good...That’s what makes Jesus’ words here devastating for all of us!
    - **“Because I haven’t murdered, I am basically good”—NOT THE BIBLE!**
      - Jesus is applying the same judgement of homicidal murder to ANGER!
  - **Scribes and Pharisees—took Exodus 20:13 (thou shalt not murder) and attached it to Numbers 35:30 (the demand for death of anyone who took innocent life) and took it to mean the commandment stopped at literally not murdering.**
  - We may never SAY that we depend on our outward LIVING to please God but we PROVE we believe that by the way that we FOCUS on our behavior and NEGLECT the state and realities of our hearts and souls!
  - **Maybe you suffer ANGER or maybe you have suffered greatly from the ANGRY**
    - **Reminds us—God takes this VERY SERIOUSLY!**
    - **2 Common Approaches to Anger (Keller)**
      - **Ventilate it**—give in to it; blow up!
      - **Control it**—put a cap on it
        - Leads us to deny it when it is there. We must always be aware of anger in our lives and how much is there! If we aren’t aware of it, it will rise up to ruin us.
        - Leads us to call it upset, depressed, anxious, short fuse, short temper, way I’m wired
        - Blame others
      - **You just adopt a mentality, “you are dead to me”**—this = passive approach to murder!
    - Neither are the Christian view—there are no emotions that are intrinsically wrong; our sin distorts them and turns them wrong.
  - Smoldering anger = you becoming “less human”
    - **Threat** = the heat from your smoldering anger OVERTAKES you and your entire being becomes like Gehenna (the smoldering garbage dump of Jerusalem).
    - Boss angrily yells at you; you angrily yell at secretary; she angrily yells at her husband; he angrily yells at the kids; son angrily kicks the cat!
- **DO NOT MURDER WITH YOUR MOUTH (V.22B)**
  - Insult—emptiness—ultimately carries notion of indifference—look at someone and say, i couldn’t care less about you
  - You fool—moral judgement—thinking of someone as stupid, idiot—standing over them in moral superiority!
  - **Matthew 12:34—out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.**
- **Put a Priority On Seeking Reconciliation (v.23-26)**
  - Requires us to get off our high self-focused pedestals and abandoning our sense of superiority over someone we are angry with.

- Pursue Reconciliation, Even Over Religious Observance (v.23-24)
  - Reconciliation takes precedence over worship—leave the offering and GET RIGHT!
    - Jesus is imaging a person who has traveled all the way to Jerusalem; gotten all the way to the Temple and purchased the sacrifice and getting all the way to point of sacrificing it when he remembers he has an issue with a brother/sister. He then LEAVES to reconcile FIRST! Think 1 Corinthians 13—if we have not love, we are useless!
    - What is more important than your “worship” is the condition of your heart!
  - Priority and urgency—as soon as you are aware, TAKE INITIATIVE to reconcile!
    - Don’t Wait—the longer you wait, the more comfy you get with the brokenness, the more it subtly decays your insides! (LESS HUMAN)
  - It is a false and empty profession of worship to God for those who attempt that worship while at the same time, themselves having caused harm to a brother/sister, refuse reconciliation and maintain the disdain.—Calvin
    - We always prefer the ceremonial aspects of religion to the clear demands of how we pursue a clear conscience.
- Pursue Reconciliation, Even With Your Enemies (v.25-26)
  - Idea was a courtroom and Jesus says, settle this before you even get there.
    - Literal Courtroom—settle it before you get there or you may pay every penny you have
    - Spiritual Courtroom—don’t harbor anger and enemies until God’s final judgment courtroom...reconcile NOW!
  - James 2:13—judgement without mercy will be sown to him who has no mercy.
  - Jesus is creating a new humanity who seek, insofar as possible, lives free of quarrel and controversy and, where our differences/sin bring brokenness to bear, that we would, in meekness (5:7) be quick and proactive in reconciliation!
- Righteous Anger/Indignation
  - Contemplation/Deliberation—this is the step we often miss in our anger. We may be righteous in the anger but UNRIGHTEOUS in the response.
    - Nehemiah 5:6-7—Nehemiah is ANGRY. He ponders/contemplates before responding.
    - James 1:9—quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger—get before the Word of God, get humbled there, consider the issues in light of Scripture and grace, then respond!
  - Problem—typically NOT angry at sin/injustice but rather when we are offended
    - Jesus’ Pattern—the moments we see him expressing righteous anger/indignation, his PERSONAL EGO is never wrapped up...he is responding to sin/injustice!
    - We are typically QUICK to anger/indignation when we are personally offended and SLOW to anger when we see sin/injustice multiplying in other areas!
  - Sometimes anger is required! Sometimes, if you aren’t angry, you are wrong!
- Jesus
  - Took the anger of Israel themselves as well as Israel’s enemies (Rome) on himself at the cross. He refused the way of anger and, in so doing, made friends with the deepest of his enemies!
  - In Christ, reconciliation isn’t even so much an ideal we strive for but an ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED REALITY that we seek to embody and expand in all of life!
  - think about Jesus—in his last moments, he was forsaken by his friends and Peter betrays him
    - He shows back up and who does he show up to—those same friends.
      - He doesn’t say, man my last few days were AWFUL and you LEFT, you abandoned me!
- Close
  - We cannot live up to Christ’s standard—WE’RE GUILTY! WE ARE LIABLE TO JUDGMENT!
  - Jesus came to save us from sin and has come to absorb our due judgment! Jesus had to die to bear the punishment of our sickness! We cry same tears of gratefulness as murderers
  - Rather than take life and break relationships, we give life and reconcile relationships!
  - REPENT OF YOUR ANGER...REPENT OF THE TINY ACTS OF MURDER IN YOUR HEART!