



KICK OFF

We live in an angry world? Why is it so angry?



KEY VERSE

Matthew 5:23-24 'so if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you,be reconciled.....'



BIG IDEA

Jesus contrasts false interpretation of the law with the true interpretation given by Jesus himself.



INVESTIGATE

JESUS TACKLES A FALSE INTERPRETATION OF THE 6TH COMMANDMENT

Read Matthew 5:21—22

1. When Jesus says in verse 21 'you have heard that it was said' whose false interpretation is Jesus tackling? And what were they doing to the 6th commandment?
2. How does Jesus broaden and deepen the application of the sixth commandment?
3. Why do you think Jesus includes 'contempt' (insults) as an expression of murder?

A POSITIVE EXPRESSION OF THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT

4. In verses 23—26 Jesus shows the sixth commandment also includes taking positive steps in healing relationships. What are these positive steps? What indication does Jesus give of the importance of these steps? (see also: Luke 16:15, 1 John 3:20, 1 Samuel 15:22-23).

Martyn Lloyd-Jones says 'now this, obviously, is a very important statement. 'does it mean', asks someone, 'that



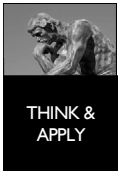
DIG DEEPER

anger is always wrong?' 'Are there not illustrations in the New Testament itself where our Lord spoke of these Pharisees in strong terms (eg Matthew 23)? When our Lord pronounced these woes, He did so in a judicial manner..as one given authority by God. He had offered the gospel to them, every opportunity had been given to them. But had rejected it. In is exactly the same with the so-called imprecatory Psalms which trouble so many people. The Psalmist, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is pronouncing judgement against not only his own enemies but the enemies of God and those who are abusing the church and the kingdom of God as it is represented in him and in the nation. Let me put it like this. Our anger must only be against sin, we must never feel angry with the sinner, but only full of sorrow and compassion for him. That is the way we fulfil the injunction in Ephesians 'be angry and do not sin.' cont'd

5. From verses 25-26 how urgent is this matter of reconciliation?

6. Does the death of Jesus help us in this matter of reconciling with others? How?

Cont'd 'the two things are not incompatible at all. Our Lord's anger was always a righteous indignation. It was a holy anger, an expression of the wrath of God Himself. The holier we become, the more anger we shall feel against sin. But we must never, I repeat, feel anger against the sinner. We must never feel angry with a person as such, we must draw a distinction between the person himself and what he does. We must never be guilty of a feeling of contempt or abhorrence, or of this expression of vilification. Thus I think we are enabled to draw lines of distinction between these things.'



THINK THROUGH FURTHER

7. Does this mean that anger is always wrong? Reconcile this passage with Matthew 23:13, 23, 25, 27, 29; the imprecatory Psalms (Impassioned Psalms) eg Psalm 137; Ephesians 4:26; Romans 1:18?

PRAISE GOD for His character: 'For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness suppress the truth.'

CONFESS to God our sinful anger.

ASK GOD to help you reconcile those relationships that need healing.

PRAY ALSO
That God's people would be agents of reconciliation—to people to know God, and peacemakers in an age of tension and dysfunction.



Praise God for the challenges raised by God's Word through this study.

Praying for others in your group:



How does this passage apply to our daily life?



For next week's study read Matthew 5: 27—30

