LIFE BIBLE MINISTRY

Matthew 5 (Part 10) :21-26

Jesus Teaches on Anger

Pastor Paul LeBoutillier · April 18, 2026

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

You might remember that Jesus made a statement at the end of our study last week. You guys remember? I talked about it and it was really kind of like the last verse we looked at and it was something that is going to shape how we're going to be looking at the verses we're going to be dealing with today. I'll go ahead and put it on the screen for you because this is what we read last week. In the 20th verse it said, for I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

You'll remember that when we brought that out last week that I shared with you that the people who heard Jesus say that must have absolutely been blown away because it's like how in the world do we do better than the Pharisees and the teachers of the law? I mean, these people are hanging out in the Bible all day long. They're studying the scriptures. They're figuring out how they can walk in accordance with them. And Jesus comes along and says, oh, you think the Pharisees are righteous?

You think the teachers of the law got it all together? Oh, let me tell you something. Your righteousness has to far exceed theirs. I imagine a few people might have just felt like throwing their hands up and saying, well, in that case I'm done. I don't think we can do any better.

But he's going to explain what that better is today and in the next few weeks. It begins here in verse 21. If you'll look with me there, Matthew 5, 21, it says, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, do not murder. And anyone who murders will be subject to judgment. But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment.

Again, anyone who says to his brother, Raka, is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, you fool, will be in danger of the fire of hell. Therefore, if you're offering your gift at the altar and there, remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First, go and be reconciled to your brother and then come and offer your gift. Settle matters quickly with your adversary who's taking you to court.

Do it while you are still with him on the way or he may hand you over to the judge. And the judge may hand you over to the officer and you may be thrown into prison. I tell you the truth, you will not get out until you've paid the last penny. Let's stop there and let's pray. Heavenly Father, open our hearts to the ministry of your word and speak to us, Lord, from this passage.

Help us to understand what you're saying here and how we can apply it to our lives. We ask it in Jesus' name, amen. This is a pretty hard-hitting passage of Scripture and it really, the reason I started off with the verse we covered from last week is because we need to understand the impact of what Jesus is saying when he's talking about this righteousness that exceeds the religious leaders of Jesus' day. He begins by just citing one of the Ten Commandments, happens to be the sixth one, the sixth of the Ten Commandments. And it is, you know, you're not to murder.

By the way, it's not kill. The old King James said, you know, thou shalt not kill, which really kind of messed a lot of people over because they didn't know how to interpret that in light of the fact that, you know, we're sent to war. And they didn't know how to interpret that in light of the fact that we have capital punishment in some places and even God instituted a system of capital punishment. And yet he said, at least in the King James, he said, you know, thou shalt not kill. The better translation is thou shalt not murder.

Because murder is not what happens when someone is put to death for a crime that deserves that level of punishment. The reason we know that is because God, again, instituted capital punishment in the Mosaic Law. He's the one who said, hey, it's life for life. If somebody takes the life of someone, you then are to take their life. Whether you have political or moral disagreement with the whole issue of capital punishment, frankly is irrelevant.

What I'm telling you is simply what the Bible says. God instituted a system of capital punishment. Now, if the Bible said, thou shalt not kill, and that was universal, then he was asking people to become obedient, or excuse me, disobedient to his own word. Obviously he wasn't doing that. So the correct translation of that original commandment is thou shalt not murder, which is the taking of another life, not as a part of justice, not as an act of war, but simply because I don't want you to be around anymore.

It's the premeditated act of, you know, taking someone else's life. That is something that we are not to do. And the religious leaders felt like, you know, they had that pretty well dialed in. And they taught the people, don't kill, I mean, don't murder, rather, anybody. And they figured that as long as they didn't take a life in that way, then they were being true to the biblical commandment.

Jesus, however, you'll notice, raises the whole situation in verse 22, and I love how he starts off this thing. He says, but I tell you that anyone who's even angry with his brother, notice his brother, is subject to judgment. Again, he says, anyone who says to his brother, raka, is answerable to the Sanhedrin. Anybody ever said that to you? You raka.

Yeah, probably not. It was an Aramaic word that simply meant you were empty-headed. Really, it's the same thing if you and I look at somebody and call somebody brainless. It really is the exact same thing. It's probably not the worst thing you can think of to actually call someone.

I mean, I'm sure there's worse things. The point is, it was kind of, you know, calling their intellect into question. But he says, you know, hey, listen, you call somebody empty-headed, and you're going to be in danger of answering to the Sanhedrin for it, but let me tell you something else. If you go as far as to call somebody you fool, which is to call their character into question, he says, now you're in danger of the fire of hell. And we're kind of like, whoa, this is pretty heavy stuff.

Because you know, up to this point, we have a tendency to kind of comfort ourselves when we're comparing our lives with others, and we start thinking about what kind of a person we are. We can kind of comfort ourselves by saying, well, never killed anybody, if that's what you're asking, you know, sort of a thing. Like there are worse people to be met, you know, at least I've never murdered, so there you go. And Jesus comes along, and he kind of blows that all out of the water, and he says, well, you have to understand that I'm coming to you now, and I'm interpreting this for you. You've heard the interpretation by the teachers of the law, you know, and that's what the people had heard.

The Pharisees, the teachers of the law, and so forth, they had interpreted the sixth commandment and limited that commandment and the interpretation of it to the physical taking of a life in a premeditated fashion, apart from justice, apart from warfare, that's murder, and that's how they defined it. Jesus said, you guys need to understand something, and I'm coming here to reinterpret, not reinterpret, that's actually, forget I said that. It's actually a correct interpretation of the sixth commandment. I want you to know how deep it really goes. Because if someone does commit murder, I mean physically commit murder, what has to happen first?

They have to conceive of the idea, they have to carry it around in their heart, and then they have to carry it out. That's what we refer to as premeditated murder. Well, it's that premeditated part where it comes into the heart, comes into the mind. Jesus says this to you and I, if you have even had a bitter and angry thought towards someone, which is really the root or the source of where murder comes from, as far as I'm concerned, as far as God is concerned, you've committed the deed. So now if I were to take a poll

among you today and say how many of you have committed murder, we'd probably, I dare say we probably wouldn't see any hands come up if we're all being honest with ourselves and honest before God.

And don't you see here how God has raised the bar, the standard of what it means to be righteous? We thought being righteous had something to do with the deeds that we do. Jesus brings it to the level of the thoughts that you think. Now this is crazy. I mean, obviously, there's no court of law who's going to prosecute you for your thoughts.

You couldn't do that. Imagine if that was the case. I think I remember... Star Trek episode one time where they they were actually Prosecuting people for their thoughts, but you know, that's science fiction You know, how would we be able to do that in our culture we can't do that so we tend to kind of give ourselves A free pass on that one You see if I if I haven't committed the act of physical murder, then I'm not a murderer and Jesus says no Actually, you can't give yourself a pass if you've had it in your heart if you've had that kind of Anger and so forth in your heart, then there you go Please understand something or should I say don't misunderstand Jesus is not saying that anger leads to murder He's saying anger is murder. Okay, that's hard-hitting because the word Murder to you and I I mean, it's a repulsive word.

It just kind of sets you back, doesn't it? You know you hear about somebody who was murdered or somebody who committed murder and we're just instantly just kind of like boom It just hits us, you know Well now it's hitting you personally and that's the that's the point of what Jesus wants to do here. He wants this to hit you personally you and I Okay, I'll start with just I They say confession is good for the soul We'll try it out here. I Guess I'm guilty of murder according to the standard That Jesus has laid down here because I've had an angry thought man. I remember I You know, I was a kid I sometimes my brother would torment me to the place where I mean I I just I Don't know what I wanted I didn't want him around anymore.

I'll tell you that much And I'm not sure I would have what I ever would have done took to bring that about but I remember being so Angry just Blinded by my anger and just oh, you know But I couldn't do anything about it really because he was always bigger than me And he was always stronger than me. He's two years older and he was always he was the athletic one in the family and And you know if I ever stood up to him, you know, he could beat me to a pulp and he often did Wasn't a whole lot of fun sometimes, but I remember getting so Frustrated and so angry at my brother that I just wanted to be rid of him. I Mean I say that today, you know, my brother is one of my best friends. I love him to death He's a wonderful friend today It's wonder it's crazy what happens by just growing up and leaving home, you know The kid that you wanted to kill, you know when you're growing up now, they're like your buds, you know It's just so I

say that for you parents that still have small kids at home. They're tearing each other's hair out Here's here's the essence of what Jesus is saying to us.

I it's it's caught up in a wonderful quotation that I found by the late William Barclay It goes like this. He's saying here as a summary that Jesus now forbids Forever the anger which which broods The anger which will not forget The anger which refuses to be pacified The anger which seeks revenge That's just it's off the radar now for you and I That's not something that you and I Ought to be involved in at all No longer. Can we comfort ourselves saying I haven't committed the physical act if I have been angry With my with anyone I am guilty of the of the thing and That is where I need to live. God sees my heart and so forth John the Apostle actually talks about this too in 1st John chapter 3 verse 11 Look at this. He says this is the message you heard from the beginning That we should love one another Do not be like Cain who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother and why why did he murder him?

It was because his own actions were evil and his brothers were righteous So he says, you know, don't be surprised my brothers if the world hates you for that same sort of a reason But listen on our part for our part now, we know that we've passed from death to life because we love our brothers Anyone here it is who does not love? Remains in death and anyone who hates his brother is Already a murderer John says and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him That's just not the kind of thing that comes from the heart of God so John Speaks in this way in this hard-hitting way that agrees with what Jesus is telling us here But and what's really amazing to me is that we can read these verses I I'm not probably sharing any verses here today that are new to anybody, you know I mean probably just about everybody here is like I remember first John I remember reading that and I I remember going through Matthew chapter 5 Talking about this whole thing about you know, if you've been angry in your heart you you know, I Yeah read that done that been there. Yeah It's amazing to me how we can know that the Bible says this kind of stuff and we can still give ourselves freedom to be angry And we can still give ourselves freedom to be bitter Give ourselves freedom. I mean permission To have a brother or sister in the Lord or whatever and put them at arm's distance no longer talk to them and And just never ever think a kind thought about them and really not be all that concerned about it and Jesus has made us aware today that the consequences of that sort of thing are damaging dangerous to our our hearts literally making us guilty of something as serious as murder and yet we think we can still get away with it and Then we really don't have to do anything about it now toward the end of keeping away from these sorts of things Jesus is going to give us two illustrations But interestingly enough these illustrations don't refer to your own feelings of anger They refer to people who may be angry at you and this is the interesting next step We've already talked about how you and I need to keep ourselves free from anger and bitterness But what about if somebody feels that way toward

you well you and I know there's only so much you can do But you should do something Because if you and I really understand How much anger can corrupt a heart how damaging it can be to someone's heart We should at least be praying for somebody and whatever else the Lord might direct us to do He noticed what he says in verse 23 He says therefore if you're offering your gift at the altar and There you remember your brother has something against you. Let's put this in modern sort of language.

You're on your way to church And while you're driving along you're just kind of thinking and the Lord brings someone to your mind Who's been hurt by you something you've done and you've never ever talked to that person about it Never addressed it with them In any way, but they are dealing with angry and hurtful thoughts about you and whether or not you Think you're guilty and by the way. We always do that we always We justify Sometimes somebody else being angry because they're like we say things like to ourselves Well, I I really didn't do it so if they want to sit around and be angry. That's their problem I mean we usually think other people's problems are just that their problems. You know that's your problem You ever heard somebody say that like about a billion times. That's your problem.

You have a problem with me. That's your problem You have problem with something I do or say that's your problem Jesus says no, it's it's actually your problem, too Because if you don't understand The gravity of what these things can do to a human heart and you allow a brother or a sister in the Lord To just kind of go on with those sorts of things in their heart and you knew it and you didn't even try to resolve Or reconcile the situation then you're basically just kind of ignoring the reality of what's really going on here So Jesus says and this is again. He's using an illustration that was Common, you know to their culture We don't give sacrifices in that sort of way anymore So you're just on your way to church and God brings it to your attention that there's somebody who you know You've got this unresolved issue with basically the idea is pull over Pull your car over on the side of the road find a place to park pull into a parking lot or something pull out your Cell phone and call that person Hey, I'm on my way to church. And you know, the Lord just kind of reminded me about This issue that's been between us and I'm not exactly sure what I did Or what I didn't do, but I just I need to ask you to forgive me Whatever it may be and I apologize because I mean I'm painfully aware that I'm an idiot And I can I can hurt people I do it all the time if I hurt you I'm sorry And obviously I did because there's been this distance between us So I need to ask you to forgive me. You're my brother.

You're my sister in Christ And you know, I I've read the Bible and I know what anger can do to a heart and I don't I don't want to make You responsible for that kind of anger just because I wasn't willing to come and say I'm sorry You know In this crazy this kind of this idea of taking responsibility for somebody else's emotions When you may be involved at some level, I mean that's real caring isn't I mean that's real

love where I'm I'm actually Caring enough about what's going on in your heart, and maybe maybe you really did get mad over nothing Maybe you did get hurt over nothing from this from from my perspective fact the matter is you're hurt You're angry you're you're frustrated at me That's you know Jesus is saying that should be reason enough to try to resolve the thing To try to get it taken care of And then he uses this other Example now this this doesn't this isn't about a brother or sister. This is an adversary now This is where we really give ourselves permission to be mad at people and stay mad because you know enemies They're enemies. They're jerks. They've done all kinds of rotten things the guy is constantly threatening just a lawsuit against me and you know and I just And I'm willing to do and say things Against him because you know he deserves it after all and this and anything Verse 25 Jesus says settle matters quickly with your enemy Your adversary who is taking you to court he's taking you to the small claims court, maybe worse He says hey Settle out of court Go to them quickly get the thing squared away, or it may go to a Court may go to a jury may go to the judge whatever and then you know you're bound by whatever they say you're always better Resolving these things quickly But do you see that is the emphasis of what Jesus is saying here to you? And I when there are these issues between people Did you notice that in both cases?

Both examples that he gave it was take care of it now Don't let the thing linger don't let the thing fester if you're if you're if you're going to church, and you remember oh, yeah You know man take care of it pull overs take call the person get it squared away if it's your adversary Don't let the thing just Languish go take care of it Resolve the issue Get your heart free from that situation It's kind of funny here Jesus is exposing some of the things that we've given ourselves freedom to just Enjoy and yeah, I used enjoy purposefully Because I understand it can be kind of fun to be mad at somebody Especially when you feel like you're justified. I mean somebody's done something against you or whatever and it just there's something that just kind of feels good about being ticked at somebody and Hanging on to it, and it's kind of like you know and their name comes up in the conversation. Yeah roll your eyes. Yeah Great example of a Christian wonderful It feels kind of good makes me feel a little superior as a matter of fact You know kind of strokes my pride Just a little bit And God knows that He says listen I want you to care more About what's really going on at the heart level than caring about just how you feel about a situation How it might make you feel I want you to care about what I see I want you to understand that I look at these things at a heart level Whatever you've heard in the word up to this point that sounded like it only addressed this this outside of things remember I see the inside. I see what's going on inside your heart.

You can't hide your heart from me. I see it I look into your heart like I'm looking into a through a window. There's nothing hidden. It's all exposed So how many of us have committed murder all of us all

of us now some of you May be sitting here today thinking well If God is gonna look at our hearts, and he's gonna judge us at the heart level How in the world can I measure up? I mean why don't we just throw our hands up and give up?

You know I mean good grief. He knows my thoughts You know That means that I can I can walk by somebody at church that I have a problem with and I can say hi I can even smile. How you doing? How's the family good fine, and then we walk by each other's And you know and And people around me they think oh, they're doing great those guys they whatever issues they had going on They've got them resolved, but God knows different. He knows what's in the heart.

He knows what's happening right here How in the world can I live up to that Well there is an answer first of all we need to remember that There's forgiveness when we mess up I Hope you know that I? Hope we all know and understand that when we mess up The blood of Christ the Bible says keeps on cleansing us from sin. I hope we're square on that But the hope of being able to live in a way that is pleasing to God even at the heart level That too is given to us in the Word of God. Let me show you a passage from 2nd Peter Here's what it says His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness Through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises so that through them you may participate in the divine nature look at that and Escape the corruption in the world caused by what? Evil desires did you notice that Peter said that the corruption of this world is not just caused by Actions, but that's what you and I see we go to the news do we do you ever read the news and say?

14,000 people today committed murder in their mind you don't care besides they wouldn't be able to report on that anyway You know 15,000 people just in the area of the Western Treasure Valley You know had murderous thoughts in their heart You know what we do when we read the news is we read about the act that's on the outside somebody committed murder Or somebody attempted murder or something like that and so we read about the act. What did they do and We and we're just horrified we're like and that is awful Where did all that come from It's caused by evil desires the Bible says Wickedness is caused by a wicked heart and Guess what the Bible says about your heart. It is deceitfully wicked your human heart and Beyond cure ain't that good news Yeah That day goes for all of us But we've come to Christ haven't we? We've bowed the knee to Jesus and when we did We invited the Holy Spirit into our lives and now his power is working in our lives and this verse Comes into play for you and I that divine power that's now living in you through his Holy Spirit You know the one who came to take up residence in your heart. He has given you Everything you need not just for a life, but look at what it says for godliness Everything you

and I need it is all there Not one of us can say but God you didn't give me what I needed to really love and forgive that person I don't have what it takes.

You didn't give it to me Well, God says, you know what you don't have it in yourself, but I gave you my spirit. I Gave you the power of my Holy Spirit living within you dynamically Empowering you to do everything that I have asked of you even Righteousness down to the heart level. That's not something you and I can relate to I can't say to you Well, I can do that myself. I I can't I come before God all the time and just say, you know I got I can't but you can That needs to be our attitude God when you this this heart righteousness that you ask of us I can't do that you can and you're living in me. So now I can through you See that's the point I can actually forgive people I can actually put away those kinds of angry thoughts Through you and not harbor them in such a way that I defile the place of my heart By nurturing those those kind of thoughts and that sort of thing his divine power has given us everything we need for godliness please understand people that It's him it's him working in you and I that's going to make the thing happen, you know, it's amazing though about the power of God the very power that created the universe Now resides inside of every single born-again believer You with me the power that created the universe resides within you and me, but you know what?

It's not automatic It's one thing we learn when we first come to Christ all that power. It's not automatic. I have to surrender to it All right, you have to surrender to it. And here's the thing craziest thing in the world I'll never fully understand this except for just understanding the free will that God gave me. God who obviously there's no one greater than him, and he's now in my life, he's in your life if you're in Christ, and he says to you and I, I have given you everything you need for godliness, but I will let you resist me if you want to.

What that means is I've given you the power to overcome that kind of thing. But if you want to, you can still lay hold of it. I mean that anger, I'll let you do that. I'll let you. You'll be miserable, but I'll let you.

You can resist me. That's why Paul writes to the Ephesians and says, do not grieve the Holy Spirit. Don't grieve, don't create a foothold for the enemy and grieve what the Spirit wants to do in you. The Spirit wants to bring about the character of God in you and I. But you and I can say, no, no, not today, not in that area.

We can do that if we want to. Do you know I'm learning as a Christian just like you that my walk with Jesus is more about surrendering myself than it is about anything else. I mean, I'm learning that surrender is the key to victory. I'm learning that surrender is the key to loving my wife and my children. Surrender is the key to letting God use my life.

Surrender is the key. I'm learning to just about everything. The power is there. We just have to surrender to it, you know? Here's why we don't.

You ready for this big, incredible, psychologically deep answer? We don't want to. You make me mad and I want to be mad at you. That's why I do, because I want to. There needs to come a point in our lives where we want the righteousness of Christ, the godliness of Christ, more than we want our little pity party.

And we begin this simple act of saying, I mean simple, it's profound, don't make, I don't want you to think that it's easy when I say simple. It's simple in steps. It's not necessarily simple or easy in terms of the surrendering process, but we come to God and we say, Lord, I really want to be mad at this person. I really do. And I think I've proven that.

But I'm going to surrender this thing to you. And I'm going to let you express your heart through me. And I'm going to let you even take this from my heart. All the prickles and poison and venom, I'm going to let you take that because I've come to a place in my life where I want you more than I want that. And I want you to be glorified in my life more than I want to enjoy the wickedness of my own heart.

And I ask you, Lord, to forgive me for not coming sooner. Because you know, I've been reading these passages in the Bible for years and years and years. And you've been telling me all along how dangerous this stuff can be in my heart and in the hearts of those around me. And I haven't heeded it. I just, I haven't taken you seriously.

I go around telling people that I believe in the Bible, but boy, sometimes you can't tell it by the way I live. But I'm going to start changing that. And I'm going to do it by the changing of my will. Lord, I let you do that. I give you permission to change my heart.

Your spirit's already in me. I'm going to stop grieving your spirit and start cooperating with your spirit. That's the key, isn't it?