

SERMON PASSAGE GUIDE

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This Week's Passage

²¹ "You have heard that the ancients were told, 'You shall not commit murder' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' ²² But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'You good-for-nothing,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell. ²³ Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering. ²⁵ Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, so that your opponent may not hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. ²⁶ Truly I say to you, you will not come out of there until you have paid up the last cent.



Prepare Your Heart & Mind

Begin this time in prayer, confessing any sins you can recall, thanking the Lord for the gift of His Word, and asking for His Spirit to guide you in your time.

Reflect/Connect

Use these questions to reflect privately in prayer, or journal, or to start a meaningful conversation in your Life Group.

- Think of a recent moment when anger surfaced in your life, even if it seemed minor or justified. What triggered it?
- When you feel wronged or angry, what is your instinctive response: avoidance, defensiveness, justification, or reconciliation? Why do you think that is?

Grow in the Word

These questions are designed to guide your personal study, or spark spiritual conversation in your Life Group.

Jesus begins by quoting a commandment and a common teaching against murder. He then explains that whoever harbors anger or uses demeaning and abusive language towards a brother has guilt just as someone who commits the act of murder itself (v. 21-22).

- How does Jesus' teaching about anger and insults help explain a righteousness that goes beyond a simple rule-following approach? See 1 Samuel 16:7; Psalm 51:6.
- Why do you think Jesus connects anger and contempt with such severe consequences? Consider also Genesis 4:3-8.
- What kinds of anger or speech does our culture often excuse that Jesus does not?

Jesus says that if a follower is about to offer a gift to God at the altar and remembers that a brother or sister has something against them, that follower should leave the gift there. He tells them to go and make peace with that person first, then come back to offer the gift. He also warns that a person should settle matters quickly with an opponent while on the way to court; otherwise, they may be handed over to a judge and thrown into prison until the debt is paid in full (v. 23-26).

- What surprises you about Jesus' instruction to pause worship in order to seek reconciliation? How does it expand your understanding of righteousness?
- Why do you think Jesus places such a high priority on reconciliation, even suggesting that it is more urgent than an act of worship? Take a look at 1 John 4:20; Hosea 6:6.
- What might it look like for you to take Jesus' call to reconciliation seriously this week? Are there any relationships where God may be prompting you to take the first step toward peace?

Practice Together

This section provides an easy way to live out the truths of the passage in daily life, whether you're with your Life Group, family & friends, or on your own. These practices help turn reflection into relationship & action.

- This week, ask God to reveal any unresolved anger, bitterness, or contempt in your heart. Pray, "Lord, search my heart and lead me toward peace and reconciliation."
- As a group, family, or on your own, identify one relationship where tension or distance exists. Take one intentional step this week toward reconciliation, whether through prayer, a conversation, an apology, or a gesture of humility and peace.

