

# THE LAW AND JESUS: BREAKING THE LAW OF GOD MATHEW 05:17–20

## *Introduction*

Jesus Christ was accused of destroying or abolishing the law of God. He has always been accused of minimising God’s law. Every generation has its proponents who feel that Jesus *emphasized* love and de-emphasized the law. Many have felt that the thrust of Jesus is love and forgiveness, and the afterthought is law and justice. As a result, many have felt less obligated to follow God’s law. They have felt freer to live a looser life and to do as they wished. The feeling has been that if they keep the law of God in the back of their minds, they have the Christian liberty to interpret behaviour as they see fit (within some reason). After all, it is argued, the “priesthood and security of the believer” are two of the basic teachings of Scripture. Therefore, the law’s clear restrictions and obligations and its demand for obedience are minimized, and what is called love and forgiveness are emphasized. Christ pulls no punches and comes straight to the point: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law” (v.17), “anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments....” (v.19), “unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law...” (v. 20).

- I A person must know that Christ came to fulfil the law (vv. 17-18).
- II A person must do and teach the law in order to be great in the Kingdom of Heaven (v. 19).
- III A person must have more righteousness than a religionist to enter the Kingdom of Heaven (v. 20).

## MATHEW 05:17–48 JESUS, THE FULFILMENT OF LAW

This Scripture is of critical importance. It is God’s Son explaining the law of God.

1. Christ confirmed God’s law, all the Scripture of the Old Testament. Christ said He was not abolishing the Law or the Prophets. The term “the Law or the Prophets” was a reference to the whole Old Testament. What Christ said was that He, as God’s Son, came to fulfil the law; and His teaching was just as binding as the Old Testament law. (See note, Mt. 5:17-18.)
2. Christ illustrated God’s laws, explaining the broad principles which were and still are to be applied to everyday life. He took a few practical laws and showed how a person was to take the broad principle and apply it to his own daily behaviour.
3. Christ condemned the oral or Scribal Law (condemned it rather strongly.) When Jesus Christ and the other New Testament writers condemned the law, it always referred to the oral or Scribal Law, not to God’s Law (See note, Mt. 5:17-18). □

## **I. *Mathew 05:17–18 Jesus Fulfils the Law***

A person must know that Christ came to fulfil the law. Jesus said He was neither contradicting nor abolishing the Old Testament Scriptures nor standing against them. He was fulfilling them, completing them, bringing out what was implied. He was showing what the real meaning of the Old Testament Scripture is, its full meaning — all that God intended the Scripture to say. As God’s Son, He is the Revelation of the truth. He is to reveal the true and complete meaning of the Scriptures. There are several ways in which Jesus Christ fulfilled the law.

1. Before Christ, the law described how God wanted man to live. The law was the ideal, the words that told man what he was to do. But Christ fulfilled and completed the law; that is, God gave man more than just mere words to describe how He wants man to live. He gave man the Life, the Person who perfectly pictures and demonstrates the law before the world’s very eyes. Jesus Christ is the Picture, the Living Example, the Pattern, the Demonstration of life as it is to be lived. He is the Perfect Picture of God’s will, the Ideal Man, the Representative Man, the Pattern for all men.

*John 1:14* *The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

*John 8:45* *“Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me!”*

*Col 1:15* *He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born over all creation.*

*Heb 1:3* *The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.*

*1 Pet 2:21-23* *To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.” When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.*

2. Before Christ, the law was only words and rules. It could only inject the idea of behaviour into the mind of a person. It had no spirit, no life, no power to enable a person to do the law. But Christ fulfilled and completed the law. He was Spirit and Life, so He was able to put spirit and life to the words and rules of the law. He was able to live the life described by the words and rules. As such, He was able to inject both the idea and the power to behave into a person’s mind and life. It is now His life that sets the standard and the rule for the believer; it is His Spirit and life that gives the believer power to obey.

*Rom 8:1-4* *Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened*

*by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.*

**Gal 2:19-20** *For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

**Gal 5:16-18** *So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.*

**Heb 8:10** *This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.*

3. Before Christ, the law stated only the rule and the principle of behaviour. It did not explain the rule nor the spirit behind the rule. Neither did the law give the full meaning of the rule. The law always had to have an interpreter. But Christ fulfilled and completed the law. He explained the rule and the spirit behind the rule. He interpreted the law. He gave the law its real and full meaning.

**Gal 3:23-24** *Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.*

**Rom 3:20-22** *Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference.*

4. Before Christ, the law demanded perfect righteousness; it demanded a perfect life. But man failed at certain points. Man just could not obey the law perfectly; he fell short of perfect righteousness. But Christ fulfilled and completed the law. He kept the law in every detail. He secured the perfect righteousness demanded by the law. He fulfilled all the requirements, all the types, and all the ceremonies of the law — perfectly. As such, He became the Perfect Man, the Ideal Man, the Representative Man for all men. As the Ideal Man, He simply embraced all men; He embodied the righteousness that man must now have.

**Rom 3:20-22** *Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the*

*Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference.*

**2 Cor 5:21** “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

**Heb 4:15** For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin.

**Heb 7:26** Such a high priest meets our need — one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.

**1 Pet 1:18-19** For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

5. Before Christ, the law demanded punishment for disobedience. If a man broke the law, he was to be punished. But Christ fulfilled and completed the law. In fact, He went to the farthest point possible in fulfilling the law. He paid the maximum price, showing the ultimate love. He bore the punishment of the law for every man’s disobedience; He took the punishment of the law upon Himself. As the Ideal Man, He not only embodies the righteousness that must cover all men, He also frees all men from the penalty of the law. And He makes them sons of God. (Rom. 8:15-17; Gal. 3:13-14; 4:1-7.)

**Thought 1.** Several other passages need to be looked at for a complete understanding of Christ and the law and the believer. (Rom.7:4; 7:14-25; 8:2-4; Gal. 3:10.)

**Thought 2.** Christ speaks to two different types of people.

- 1) The strict religionist or legalist. Christ does not abolish or weaken the law. The liberty He preaches fulfils the law as it should be fulfilled. He is not to be rejected because a person thinks His liberty weakens the law. He is to be acknowledged as God’s Son who is to be followed and obeyed. (Rom.14:1-23; Gal. 5:13; 5:16-18.)
- 2) The carnal or loose religionist. Christ does not weaken the law by allowing a person to live as he wishes — by conscience only. He does not release men from the duty and responsibility of the law. He fulfils and strengthens and even enlarges the law. Liberty does not mean license; it means that a person is now free to serve God in the spirit and life of the law, not just in the letter of the law.

**Thought 3.** The Old Testament is the Word of God — according to Christ. (2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Pet. 1:11; 2 Pet. 1:19-21.)

**Thought 4.** Christ considered His coming to be significant — one of the pivotal points of history. The following words show this (see vv. 17-18).

“I have come....”

“I have come...to fulfil.”

*“I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear...”*

*“Until everything is accomplished.”*

He speaks as a person whose entrance into the world held great meaning for the world. This fact says something of extreme importance to man: “Hear Him.” What He says is binding. It is *as* binding, if not *more* binding, than the law itself.

**Rom 10:3-4** *Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness. Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.*

**Mat 20:28** *“Just as the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

**John 3:17** *“For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”*

**John 10:10** *“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”*

**John 12:47-48** *“As for the person who hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it. There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day.”*

## MATHEW 05:17 THE LAW

The law referred to four different writings to the Jews.

1. It referred to the Ten Commandments.
2. It referred to the first five books of the Bible, that is the Pentateuch.
3. It referred to the law and the prophets, that is, all the Scripture of the Old Testament.
4. It referred to the oral or the Scribal Law.

God’s law, given in the Old Testament, was not enough for the Jews. They reasoned that if the law was really God’s Word, then it must include — have embodied within it — every rule and regulation for conduct. Therefore, they took the great principles of the law and reduced them to thousands upon thousands of rules and regulations. These rules and regulations became the oral or Scribal Law. There were two groups who gave their lives to the teaching and keeping of the law.

1. The Scribes: they were the writers and teachers of the law (Lk. 6:2).
2. The Pharisees: they were the strict followers of the law (Act. 23:8). □

## II. **Mathew 05:19** *Consequences of Disobedience of Law*

A person must do and teach the law in order to be great in the Kingdom of Heaven. Breaking and doing the law carries with it the idea of continuous action. No person is

perfectly obedient all of the time. Every person fails sometime (Rom. 3:23; Jas. 3:2; 1 Jn. 1:8, 10). But any person who continues to break a commandment, even if it is the least commandment, shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. And the person who continues to obey the commandments shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. A person cannot break a commandment and ask forgiveness, then go out and break another commandment and ask forgiveness over and over. Such a person cannot expect God to think he is serious about the commandments of God. No man would think he is serious - why should God? The person only deceives himself. Note two significant points.

1. Three persons teach the law to others.
  - a. The *keeper* and the *breaker* of the law. A person teaches by what he does. Others see and observe and learn from what he does. If a person repeatedly breaks a law, no matter how small a law, he teaches that the law is not important — not worth enough to be kept.
  - b. The *instructor* of the law. This refers to the teachers of the law and of religion. Each instructor either adheres to or rejects the law. Each instructor teaches his students the truth or else deceives his students into following human reasoning. The person who breaks and teaches the breaking of the law attempts to *void the law*, that is, to do away with it. (Rom. 3:31; Mt.15:3; Psa. 119:126; see 89:39) It would seem that an attempt to void the law is much more serious crime than to disobey a commandment. It must also be noted that continuing to disobey a commandment is denying the commandment — treating it as though it is unimportant and unnecessary. It treats the commandment as though it is not even existing and has no bearing upon a person's life. Such behaviour is consciously or unconsciously teaching men to **void the law**.
2. Christ warned all who break and teach others break the law, even if they break only the least commandment: they shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. There are four persons who are severely warned.
  - a. The worldly or carnal: person who continues to break the commandments of God.
  - b. The teacher or instructor: the person who teaches that the commandment of God is a farce. The person who says there is no such thing as God's law, there are only the commandments of men.
  - c. The person who teaches and encourages others to sin and to disobey the commandments of God — even if the commandment is one of the least. Nothing is more contemptible and nothing will be judged more severely. This is one of the most serious offenses among men. (Rom. 2:17-29.)

*Luke 17:2* “It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin.”

*Rom 2:23-24* You who brag about the law, do you dishonour God by breaking the law? As it is written: “God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.”

**Rom 14:15** *If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died.*

**Gal 1:8-9** *But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!*

- d. The mocker or persecutor: the person who rebels, mocks, and curses God's law and its strictness (and the God and the followers of it).

**Mat 7:26-27** *"But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."*

**Eph 5:6** *Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient.*

**2 Th 1:7-9** *And give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power.*

**Heb 2:2-3** *For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him.*

**Jude 1:14-15** *Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him."*

**Thought 1.** Four significant facts are seen in this point.

- 1) All the commandments of God are important, but some are less important than others. The man who breaks the least commandment and continues to break it (teaching men such) shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven.
- 2) Breaking a commandment of God and continuing to break it is serious, even if it is one of the least commandments. Such behaviour teaches men that the commandment is not important. The result is that a person shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven.
- 3) When a commandment is broken, a person is to ask forgiveness and repent. He is not to continue breaking the commandment and asking forgiveness over and over. Continuous disobedience teaches that the commandments of God are not

really all that important. It is that person who will be judged severely (1 Cor. 3:10-17; 2 Cor. 5:10.)

- 4) The obedient person can expect great reward.
  - He shall be called great in heaven.
  - He is loved in a special way by both God and Christ (Jn. 14:10, 14).
  - He receives very special manifestations of Christ's presence (Jn. 14:21).

**Thought 2.** Who fails to do the law? Who breaks the law?

- 1) The person who neglects the law just fails to do it.
- 2) The person who disobeys the law — does what it says not to do.
- 3) The person who does not know the law — cannot do it because he just does not know it.
- 4) The person who narrows the law, that is, limits and weakens the law by making it say less than what it really says. Many make the law apply only to what they want because it allows them to do their own thing and to live as they wish.

**Thought 3.** A person may neglect the law for several reasons.

- 1) He is deceived about the law's importance. Someone has misled him about its importance.
- 2) He is too preoccupied with worldly affairs to place much importance in the law.
- 3) He is reacting against some strict teaching in his past; therefore, he now neglects the law.
- 4) He has not been taught the seriousness of keeping God's law.
- 5) He fears the restrictions the law will place upon his life and behaviour. He does not want to live as the law says, so he neglects it.

**Thought 4.** The law of God is often broken for two tragic reasons.

- 1) Some have never heard about God's law. Believers have failed to take the message of the law to the world.
- 2) Some do not have the law impressed upon their minds enough to worry about keeping it. Believers have not stressed the message with enough conviction and power to show its importance.

### III. *Mathew 05:20 The Value of Righteousness*

A person must have more righteousness than a religionist to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Note three facts.

1. Righteousness is necessary to enter heaven (Mt. 5:6; Rom. 3:21; 4:5; 4:22; 5:1; 10:6; Gal. 2:16).

**Mat 5:20** *“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.”*

**Rom 1:18** *The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness.*

**Rom 3:10, 23** *As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one;”.... “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*

2. The religionists, the Pharisees and the Scribes, had some righteousness. They just did not have enough. They were, in fact, strict religionists. They worked at obeying thousands and thousands of rules and regulations, governing everything ranging from dress and social behaviour to ministry and work. However, they lacked the one essential: loving God so much that they would deny themselves and seek their righteousness in His Son, Jesus Christ.

**Rom 3:20-22** *Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference.*

**Rom 10:3-4** *Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness. Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.*

3. The point is worth thinking: a person must have more righteousness than a strict religionist to enter heaven. Many are religious, but few are strict religionists. What did Christ mean? Who can enter heaven if a strict religionist cannot?

**Rom 4:5** *However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.*

**Eph 2:8-9** *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast.*

**Titus 3:4-5** *But when the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.*

**Thought 1.** There are four facts in this verse that must be heeded. They should stir everyone of us, stir us to search our hearts and make sure we are approaching God as we should.

- 1) Many religionists make the same fatal mistake that the Pharisees and Scribes made. They seek acceptance with God...

- by giving God a formal worship instead of giving God a confession of unworthiness and of their need for Him in a personal way.

- by giving God good works instead of giving God their hearts.
  - by giving God a clean and moral body instead of giving God a confession of needing help spiritually.
  - by giving God only a part of their lives, instead of giving God the total abandonment of themselves. (Lk. 9:23.)
- 2) Many make the fatal mistake the religionists made, but to a lesser degree. They worship and do good...
- to be respectable in the community
  - to seek the acceptance of God
  - to have the fellowship of others
  - because they were forced by their parents to do good
  - to feel comfortable within their own consciences
  - to secure the approval of family and friends
  - because they were taught to do good
- 3) Some feel they must do good to be acceptable to God. Their motive in life is to work and work at doing good in order to secure God's acceptance. They have never learned the truth: they cannot do enough good to be perfectly acceptable to God. They must trust His love — that He loves them so much that He will take their trust and count it as righteousness (Mt. 5:6; Rom. 4:5; 4:22; 5:1).
- 4) Many worship and do just enough good to satisfy their consciences. They do just enough good to make them feel comfortable and acceptable to God. But they miss the whole point. What God is after the only thing that makes a person acceptable to God — is the giving of his total being over to God (day and night).
- in unworthiness and confession: that he has need for God in his life now and forever.
  - in trust and love: that he trusts and loves God because God has given His own Son and promised to accept him in His righteousness.
  - in thankfulness and appreciation: because God has accepted and assured abundant life now and eternally.
  - in adoration and praise: because God is God (Elohim) and has revealed His glorious love in Christ who has redeemed him eternally.
  - in worship and service: because the love of Christ compels him (2 Cor. 5:14). ■

# THE REAL MEANING OF MURDER

## MATHEW 05:21–26

### *Introduction: Murder, Anger, Contempt, Cursing*

Civilized societies have always considered murder to be a serious crime worthy of judgment. But anger is a different matter. Few have ever thought of anger as being on the same level as murder and worthy of serious judgment. However, Christ says that unjustified anger is the same as murder and will be subject to the same Judgment from God.

Note the words *brother* and *anyone* (vv. 22, 23, 24). Christ is saying that every human being is a brother under God's creation. Therefore, His words apply universally to every human being.

- I. The law: do not kill (v.21).
- II. The real meaning: anger in the heart (v.22).
- III. The growth of anger (v.22).
- IV. The judgment of anger: hell (v. 22).
- V. The answer to anger: reconciliation with a brother or sister (vv. 23-24).
- VI. The danger or damage of holding anger (v. 25).
- VII. The terrible end of anger: judgment and its surety (v. 26).

### MATHEW 05:21–48 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WORDS: “YOU HAVE HEARD,” “IT HAS BEEN SAID”

These words are found in every paragraph or subject of these verses. It is important to understand this: Christ is referring not only to the Ten Commandments, but also to the Scribal Law of the Jewish teachers (See Lk. 6:2; 6:7.) He is directing the listeners' attention to what they had heard from their teachers, that is, to their interpretation of the law. Very simply put, Christ is giving the real meaning of certain laws, just what God originally intended the law to say. □

### **I. *Mathew 05:21 The Law: Do Not Kill***

The law against murder is the sixth commandment (Exo. 20: 13; Dt. 5:17). God's law is given to protect life. Life is to be respected and cherished. No life is to be taken, neither one's own life nor the life of anyone else.

*Exo. 20:13 You shall not murder.*

*Rom 13:9 The commandments, “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbour as yourself.”*

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*1 Pet 4:15 If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler.*

## **II. *Mathew 05:22 After Effects of Anger***

The real meaning of this law is anger. Note what Christ is saying: He is saying that man has a problem. Man misreads God's law. Man interprets God's law to say what he wishes it to say. He applies it only to the outward act, in this case to the act of murder. He fails to look inward — within himself — to the cause (See Mt. 5:17-18; Mk. 7:14-23).

Murder is deeper than just an outward act. It is an inward act: anger, bitterness, enmity. Murder is born from within, from an uncontrolled spirit, from an unregulated urge, from an inner anger. Anger itself is the real sin, the sin that breaks the law of God. Anger is...

- bitterness and enmity
- striking out against a person
- slandering and destroying a person's image (who is created in God's image)
- rage and fury
- desiring a person's hurt
- indignation and wrath
- a hatred of oneself
- an uncontrolled spirit
- envying and killing a person's happiness

**Thought 1.** Note three facts.

- 1) Jesus speaks to those who know the law. The person who knows the law (the Word) needs this message more than anyone else.
- 2) God's law (Word) existed from the beginning ("long ago"). It will never be annulled or done away with. It is always to govern man. Man is always to heed it.
- 3) Striking out at a person is clearly forbidden, but so are the bad feelings against a person. Anger any bad feelings whatsoever against a person — is sin, serious sin.

## **III. *Mathew 05:22 After Effects of Anger***

The growth of anger is dangerous. Unresolved anger will fester. It can become uncontrollable and give birth to murder. There are three steps in the growth of anger.

1. The anger that broods, that is selfish. It harbours malice; it will not forget; it lingers; it broods; it wills revenge and sometimes seeks revenge.
2. The anger that holds contempt (raca). It despises; it ridicules; it arrogantly exalts self and calls another person empty and useless. This is an anger that is full of malice. It despises and scorns (raca). It arises from pride — a proud wrath (Pro. 21:24). Such feelings or anger walk over and trample a person. It says that whatever ill comes upon a person is deserved.
3. The anger that curses. It seeks to destroy a man and his reputation morally, intellectually, and spiritually.

There is a justified anger. In fact, the believer must be an angry person — angry with those who sin and do wrong, and are unjust and selfish in their behaviour. However, a justified anger is always disciplined and controlled; it is always limited to those who do wrong either against God or against others. The distinguishing mark between justified and unjustified anger is that a justified anger is never selfish; it is never shown because of what has happened to oneself. It is an anger that is purposeful. The believer knows that he is angry for a legitimate reason, and he seeks to correct the situation in the most peaceful way possible.

**Eph 4:26** *“In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.”*

**Rom 12:18** *If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.*

**John 2:13-16** *When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said, “Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father’s house into a market!”*

**Thought 1.** Anger is cast against many. Too often hurt feelings exist between those who are supposed to be the closest: husband and wife, parent and child, neighbour and friend, employer and employee. The Lord is clear about the matter: we must never allow anger to take hold of us without just cause.

**Col 3:8** *But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.*

**James 1:19** *My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.*

**1 John 3:15** *Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.*

**Psa 37:8** *Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret - it leads only to evil.*

**Prov 14:17** *A quick-tempered man does foolish things, and a crafty man is hated.*

**Prov 16:32** *Better a patient man than a warrior; a man who controls his temper, than one who takes a city.*

**Prov 19:11** *A man’s wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense.*

**Eccl 7:9** *Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools.*

**Thought 2.** There are reasons why people get angry and develop feelings against others:

- To seek revenge and to hurt.
- To show ego or authority..
- To reveal passion or secure some end.

- To show hurt, resentment, and bitterness.
- To express disagreement and displeasure.
- To correct a wrong (a justified anger).
- To give warning.

#### **IV. *Mathew 05:22 Consequences of Anger***

The judgment of anger. It is a serious matter to hold feelings against another person — a very, very serious matter. There is (1) the danger of judgment (2) the danger of having to come before earthly courts, and (3) the danger of hell fire.

*Thought 1* Violence is to be judged — not only before the councils of the world, but before the councils of God.

#### **MATHEW 05:22 HELL FIRE OR GEHENNA (GEENNA)**

The word is used eleven or twelve times in the New Testament, and in every case it is spoken by Jesus except in the Epistle of James. It illustrates the terrible truth of the second death, of man's final separation from God. Jesus pointed to the burning, repulsive rubbish dump outside the city limits of Jerusalem and said that it was exactly what hell was like. The dump was called Gehenna. It was in the Valley of Hinnom which served as a public incinerator. Hanging over it was a layer of thick, smouldering smoke arising from what seemed to be an eternal flame. The smell and filth became a breeding cesspool for a loathsome worm that was difficult to kill (Mk. 9:44). Thus, Jesus found in Gehenna a description of just what it means to be separated from God eternally and to die the second death. Several facts are said about hell or Gehenna:

- It is the same as the lake of fire, a place of torture (Rev. 19:20; 20:10, 14-15).
- It has to do with the second death (Rev. 21:8; Jn. 8:24).
- It is Hell (5:29-30; 10:28; 23:15, 33; Lk. 12:5).
- It is eternal fire (Mt. 18:8).
- It is the fire of Hell (Mt. 18:9; Jas. 3:6).
- It is unquenchable fire (Mk. 9:43-49).

The teaching of Jesus should always be remembered. Remembrance is critical in determining a person's fate. Hell is a definite place, a real place that is specifically located. It was originally prepared for the devil and his angels. But all men who choose to follow self and evil and to reject God shall also be sent to hell eternally.

*Mat 3:10* "The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."

**Mat 5:29-30** *“If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.”*

**Mat 7:19** *“Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”*

**Mat 10:28** *“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”*

**Mat 11:23** *“And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day.”*

**Mat 13:42, 50** *“They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”... “And throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

**Mat 16:18** *“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”*

**Mat 18:8-9** *“If your hand or your foot causes you to sin cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.”*

**Mat 23:33** *“You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?”*

**Mat 23:15** *“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites: You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are.”*

**Mat 25:41** *“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’”*

**Mark 9:43-48** *“If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.”*

**Luke 3:9** “The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”

**Luke 10:15** “And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths.”

**Luke 12:5** “But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.”

**Luke 16:23-24** “In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’ ” □

## V. **Mathew 05:23–24 The Power of Reconciliation**

The answer to anger is reconciliation. Christ had two surprising things to say about this point.

1. The urgency of reconciliation. Reconciliation is always to precede worship. Even when we are entering the church to worship, if there is a problem with a brother, we are to turn around from worship and go to our brother seeking reconciliation. There are four reasons why reconciliation is more important than worship.
  - a. Reconciliation with God is one of the major purposes for worship. A person worships in order to seek reconciliation and fellowship with God and His people. Therefore, God does not accept the worship of a person who holds malice against Him or against any of His people. Statements of the fact make the point perfectly clear.
    - A break with another person means a break with God.
    - Unforgiveness toward another person means unforgiveness by God.
    - Not being right with another person means not being right with God.
    - Broken fellowship with another person means broken fellowship with God.
    - Bad feelings toward another person mean unacceptance by God.
    - Anger against another person means rejection by God.

A person just cannot hope or expect to be right with God if he is not right with his brother (1 Jn. 4:20-21). He must forgive and be reconciled if he expects to be forgiven and reconciled to God.

**Mat 6:12** “Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.” (see Luke 11:4)

**Mat 6:14-15** “For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”

**1 John 4:20-21** If anyone says, “I love God,” yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he

*has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.*

- b. A person is to worship, for worship is essential to life and eternity. But worship is unacceptable to God unless a person is reconciled with all his brothers.
- c. Bad feelings between believers hinder worship. Worship is meaningless unless a person is right with his brother. Reconciliation must always precede worship.
- d. Worship is a time for a person to reflect and to examine his heart and life to see if there is “any offensive way” within him (Psa.139:24). It is essential that he search his heart. Worship is not acceptable if bad or offensive feelings against others are within the human heart.

**Thought 1** How deceitful the human heart is!

- 1) Some persons try to worship while there are bad feelings between themselves and other persons
- 2) Some persons try to pray with wrath in their heart (1 Tim. 2:8; Isa.1:15).
- 3) Some persons say, “I love God” while they hate their brother (1 Jn. 4:20). And each person thinks he is acceptable to God!

**Thought 2** Some persons say they stay away from worship because they have something against a brother. The point of Christ is clear: get right with your brother and get *in worship*. One sin heaped upon another is twice as dangerous and shall bring forth double judgment.

2. The time for reconciliation is while some openness still exists between the two parties. Reconciliation should be attempted immediately.
  - while a person is still in a brother’s presence: “While you are still with him” (v. 25).
  - before the sun goes down on a person’s wrath.

**Eph 4:26** *“In your anger do not sin”*: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.

- because a person cannot truly worship with barriers existing in the heart.
- because a person cannot offer acceptable prayers with barriers existing in his heart.
- because a person could die before reconciliation takes place and be forced to face judgment with some unconfessed sin.

**Mark 11:25** *“And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”*

**Eph 4:31-32** *Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, just as in Christ God forgave you.*

*Luke 17:4* “If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, ‘I repent,’ forgive him.”

*Col 3:13* Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

## **VI. Mathew 05:25 The Damage of Anger**

The danger or damage of holding anger. The danger is twofold.

1. There is an earthly danger. Barriers can lead to serious action ranging from legal suits to imprisonment. Such action is tragic to God and among God’s people. It is even forbidden among true Christian brothers (1 Cor. 6:1-8). The damage of anger is many-fold:
  - It leads to increased barriers and bitterness.
  - It hurts families.
  - It is costly.
  - It damages the name of Christ and one’s own testimony.
  - It says to unbelievers that Christianity is a sham — no better than any other belief.
  - It takes advantage of another person — always.
  - It can cause an injustice to be done. The law is not always right.
  - It can cause a weak brother to turn away — forever.
  - It can cause fights, wars, suffering, and death.
2. There is an eternal danger. Life does not last, and the day of final judgment is coming. A person’s judgment for holding a grudge against a brother will be severe (Mt. 5:22; 5:25).

## **VII. Mathew 05:26 The Terrible End of Anger**

The terrible end of anger is sure judgment. Christ made three strong points.

1. Judgment is sure. “The last penny,” the last cent must be paid.
2. There will be no escape. “You will not get out.” There will be nothing and no one to deliver a person from the judgment (2 Cor. 5:10).

*Mat 23:33* “You snakes: You brood of wipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?”

*Rom 2:3* So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God’s judgment?

*Heb 2:3* How shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him.

*Jer 11:11* Therefore this is what the Lord says: ‘I will bring on them a disaster they cannot escape. Although they cry out to me, I will not listen to them.’

***Amos 5:18-19** Woe to you who long for the day of the Lord! Why do you long for the day of the Lord? That day will be darkness, not light. It will be as though a man fled from a lion only to meet a bear, as though he entered his house and rested his hand on the wall only to have a snake bite him.*

3. Reconciliation should be sought quickly: right now — before judgment, for Christ has borne all punishment for every believer (v. 25).

***Eph 2:13-14,16** But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility,....and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.*

***Col 1:20** And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*

***Heb 2:17** For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. (see 2 Cor 5:1, 21)*

***1 Pet 2:24** He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. ■*