

Have we managed to think about how you interact with others, listen to them, prepare and care for them? Have we paid more attention to the people we love and found a way of including somebody new into our hospitality circle? Any stories to share?

After teaching *The Beatitudes*, Jesus goes on to explain how living a 'beautiful' life should work out in practice. His first message is about anger. **Read Matthew 5: 21 - 22.** **Q: What has made you angry recently and why?**

1. Anger is not always bad.

- Jesus was angry at injustice, hypocrisy, false teaching and the dishonouring of His Father. He was angry enough to overturn the tables of the fraudulent money-changers in the temple Matt. 21:12-13 and that is Holy anger, which wasn't out of control and didn't hurt anyone.
- Similarly, we can be angry with Godly anger at the marginalisation of the helpless, about poverty, abuse, inequality or the destruction of the environment. But these verses are about the wrong kind of anger.

2. The Shocking Truth about the Kingdom of God.

- Last week we saw how Jesus refuted the teaching of the legalists and assured the poor, the diseased and the marginalised that they were welcome into the Kingdom of Heaven. But he wasn't abolishing the Law.
- The Scribes and Pharisees had 'managed' the Law of Moses and 'managed' morality so the favoured few were OK as long as they kept the rules. (Matt. 5:20). Jesus says 'No' to both Pharisee and pauper: 'You have heard it said "do not murder" but **I tell you anyone who is angry will be subject to judgement**'.
- The holiness required to be part of Jesus' Kingdom is not simple rule-keeping (Matt. 19: 16-30). Jesus traces murder to our thoughts and feelings: it is not just a crime of the hands, it's a crime of the heart.
- Angry feelings result in angry words. Insults both strong like *Raca = brainless/moron* and mild like *fool or silly* are deadly serious in God's eyes: **Matt 5:22 and James 3:6**. Once out of our mouths they can't be put back so we: blame the other person, excuse ourselves or deny it happened and dismiss it as unimportant.
- **Q: Do we have anger issues, or know someone who does?** The Gk. word for anger is *orgizō* – an anger that broods and grows and eventually swells into full-blown fury with reddened face and fast-beating heart. In that state real damage can be done: if there is anyone, or anyone you know, with issues of domestic violence, as victim or perpetrator, please speak to a friend and get help.

3. Jesus' uncomfortable Remedy. Matthew 5: 23 – 24.

- Jesus tells us to drop everything and go and sort out our issues, but look at the order carefully. If someone is angry with **me**: I have to go and sort it out; if it's my fault I also have to sort it out, urgently.
- It's hard to do this if you are a normal buttoned up reserved English person whose stages of anger rise from being miffed to disgruntled, on to being a bit cross, through tutting to a deafening silence!
- The Christlike person makes the first move to sort out a broken relationship and in doing so is imitating Jesus who sacrificed His life to restore relationship with mankind. **Romans 12 verse 18**
- Making the first move requires: **Courage; Humility; Love; Letting go** – even if it doesn't work.
- Our angry hearts matter to God. We are not left to feel guilty and try to work harder at being nice. When we say 'Yes' to Christ's offer of life in Him He gives us His Spirit and power to change. **Ezekiel 36: 26 – 28.**
- **Q: Have we ever tried reconciliation with someone, or had someone come to you for reconciliation?**

Soul Training Exercise: Keeping the Sabbath.

1. JBS tells us a lot of our anger is due to believing in the false narrative that nothing will go well for us in life unless we are in control. This means we are in a state of fear with our own impotence instead of trusting in Jesus, 'who never loses sight of us, even when we lose sight of Him'. Page 77.
2. He suggests we start to train ourselves into trusting Jesus by 'Keeping the Sabbath'. This can be on a Sunday but it is a day for more than just going to church and then fitting in everything else you need to do before Monday. Sabbath forces us out of the 'rôle of God' in our own lives.
3. There are lots of ideas for making our Sundays into a proper Sabbath Rest on pages 82-3 of 'The Good and beautiful Life' by James Bryan Smith & more questions in Chapter 4 and on pages 230-232.