

**Prayer:**

**Slide # 1**

**Theme:** *Christ the King*

**Outline:**

Chps. 1-2 The Advent of the King. (Proving His LEGAL right to the throne by His genealogy.)

Chp. 3 The Forerunner of the King and the King’s baptism.

Chp. 4 The Test of the King. (Proving His MORAL right to the throne by not yielding to temptation; and exhibiting His kingdom resume.)

**Chps. 5-7 The Pronouncements of the King. (Proving His JUDICIAL right to the throne as seen in the wisdom of His kingdom teaching.)**

Chps. 8-10 The Power of the King. (Proving His PROPHETICAL right to the throne by fulfilling prophecy.)

Chps. 11-12 The Rejection of the King.

Chp. 13 The Parables of the King.

Chps. 14-16 The Revelations of the King.

Chps. 17-20 The Instructions of the King.

Chps. 21-23 Formal Rejection of the King.

Chps. 24-25 The Predictions of the King.

Chps. 26-27 The Passion of the King.

Chp. 28 The Resurrection of the King.

Matthew presents Jesus as the Messianic King.

Prophetic “history” could be summarized in this way: The King is coming; the King has come; The King is coming!

**Slide # 2**

The KING is coming! (To be presented)

The KING has come!! (Rejected)

The KING is coming!!! (To RULE)

**Slide # 3*****The Flow of Thought in Matt. 4-5***

**Repentance** (Necessary to enter the Kingdom) – Mt. 4:17

**Beatitudes** (Descriptive of Kingdom Citizens) – Mt. 5:3-12

**Salt & Light** (Disciple's Influence/Testimony) – Mt. 5:13-16

**Christ Fulfills** the Law/Prophets (Makes Kingdom Living Possible) – Mt. 5:17-20

**Slide # 4****Matthew 5:17 (NKJV)**

17 “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but **to fulfill**.”

**Matthew 5:20 (NKJV)**

20 For I say to you, that unless your **righteousness** exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

Kingdom people are defined by true repentance (an internal reality) which then demonstrates itself in righteousness (an external reality).

The remainder of the Sermon on the Mount in Matt. 5-7 is essentially a further unpacking of the truth in Matthew 5:20. Everything builds on the righteousness Christ came to fulfill in the lives of His people as seen in 5:20. The theme of the remainder of the Sermon in essence answers the question: ***“How shall we then live as kingdom people?”***

As believers living in the Church Age, we note the prominent NT emphasis on the Spirit Who now lives inside of us. And we note that the fruit of the Spirit is really a ***“kingdom emphasis”*** because the New Covenant and the kingdom go together. Really, the fruit of the Spirit could in a sense be called the fruit of the kingdom. Kingdom living is Spirit-filled living based on our New Covenant relationship with God through Christ.

Matthew 5:21-48 is often called “The Six Antitheses” because all six sections begin with some variation of Christ saying, ***“But I say to you...”***. (cf. Mt. 5:21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43).

**Slide # 5****Six Sections – Six Topics**

- 1) Murder/Anger – Mt. 5:21-26
- 2) Adultery – Mt. 5:27-30
- 3) Divorce – Mt. 5:31-32
- 4) Oaths – Mt. 5:33-37
- 5) Vengeance – Mt. 5:38-42
- 6) Love for Enemies – Mt. 5:43-48

What was the point? Didn't Israel already know about murder, adultery, divorce, etc.? Well, yes they did. But the DEEPER teaching of Christ shows that the Law has an internal dimension. The Law is not merely to be externalized but also internalized. It's not merely about our actions, but also about our thoughts that lead to actions.

By the way this is New Covenant stuff. The New Covenant is all about the ministry of the Spirit of changing people from the inside out. It relates inherently to our inward thoughts and disposition.

**Slide # 6****Jeremiah 31:33 (NKJV)**

**33** But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: **I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts**; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

This is the aspect of the Law that Jesus came to fulfill in a deeper sense – in the lives of His people.

In applying this internal aspect of the Law Jesus presents this DEEPER understanding based upon His prophetic authority. All the way through the Sermon on the Mount there is a special emphasis on the fact that Jesus taught with unique authority and not as the scribes.

Who would have the audacity to come along after the Jews had the Law for 1500 years and say, *“Oh, by the way let me tweak this a little bit for you. Let me enlighten you on the DEEPER reality of the Law; Let me tell you that I have come to FULFILL it in a DEEPER sense.”* Who in the world could possibly have this kind of authority? Well, only the Messiah Who is God in a human body which is exactly Who Jesus was.

Moses was considered the GREATEST prophet in the history of Israel. At the end of the book of Deuteronomy it says in Deut. 34:10, “***But since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses...***”.

Moses, the GREATEST prophet, said that God would in the future raise up another unique prophet Who would speak the Word of God with power and authority.

### **Slide # 7**

#### **Deuteronomy 18:15 (NKJV)**

**15** “The LORD your God will raise up for you **a Prophet like me** from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear,

#### **Deuteronomy 18:18–19 (NKJV)**

**18** I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put **My words in His mouth**, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.

**19** And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, **I will require it of him.**

The Jews rightly considered this prophecy in Deut. 18 a Messianic prophecy. In Acts 3:22-23 Peter plainly said this was fulfilled in the Person of Jesus Christ. Jesus as the Messiah ultimately fulfills perfectly the office of Prophet, Priest, and King, all in ONE person. Jesus was MORE than just a Prophet, but He was a Prophet par excellent on a level higher than any other. He not only spoke for God – He was God!

This is the level of authority seen in Him as He explains and brings to fulfillment a DEEPER dimension of the Law than anything ever realized before.

In this sixfold emphasis in Matt. 5:21-48 the very first thing that Christ dealt with was the issue of murder, which Jesus shows involves deeper heart issues as revealed in anger, contempt, and cursing. These at root are heart issues related to the issue of murder.

#### **Matthew 5:21–26 (NKJV)**

**21** “**You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.’**”

The reference here is to the sixth commandment as stated in Exodus 20:13 and Deut. 5:17. The Jews correctly understood that murder was forbidden by God and was liable to punishment.

Following the Fall of mankind, the very first recorded crime was a homicide in which Cain killed his brother Abel in Genesis 4. Ever since that time the reality of murder has plagued the human race.

After the worldwide flood, even before the Law of Moses was given, God laid down the rule of capital punishment for the sin of murder in relationship to the institution of human government.

### **Slide # 8**

#### **Genesis 9:6 (NKJV)**

**6** “Whoever sheds man’s blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man.

Later God incorporated the law of capital punishment for murder into the Mosaic Law.

Note the emphasis here is specifically in relationship to MURDER. This is not about capital punishment legally carried out by a governmental agency, just warfare, accidental homicide, or self-defense. The Law of Moses specifically forbade the case of premeditated murder.

And note that someone committing murder was in danger of judgment – meaning they were then headed towards and facing judgment for what they had done (cf. Num. 35:31). This language of “in danger of” is used throughout this context to show the party is guilty and is now facing judgment.

**22 But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire.**

The “**you**” referenced here in this context refers back to Jesus “disciples” as seen in 5:1. Therefore this is essentially addressed to professing believers. Note throughout as seen in verse 22, 23, 24 that person being sinned against is called a “**brother**”.

Some think that the practice of Christians calling each other “**brother**” and “**sister**” goes back to Jesus’ instruction and His training that His disciples address God as “**Father**”. God is our spiritual Father and we as His children are brothers and sisters. In view here are “family” issues.

“**You have heard...But I say to you**” is the formula throughout this whole section. Jesus was not saying what they had been told was wrong in and of itself, rather that the external emphasis was merely incomplete.

### **Slide # 9**

The contrast that Jesus sets up (vv. 21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43) is not between the OT and His teaching (He has just established the validity of the OT Law). Rather, it is between externalistic interpretation of rabbinic tradition on the one hand, and Jesus’ correct interpretation of the Law on the other. – ***NIV Study Bible***

As the voice of authority Christ now applies a DEEPER fulfillment of the law in relation to an internal application which is the DEEPER intention of the Law. Thus, He came to “**fulfill**” the Law (5:17). And thus, in Christ we actually have presented a HIGHER standard than was found in the mere external emphasis of the Law. Christ didn’t merely deal with outward externals as did the scribes and Pharisees, but He took it DEEPER into the realm of dealing with heart issues behind the outward actions.

[Christ] could do this because of His prophetic authority as the law’s fulfiller. – ***The Moody Bible Commentary***

Christ here shows that at the root of murder are the issues of anger, contempt, and hatred. Murder is merely the outworking of these issues which are all reflective of a deeper HEART issue.

To be human is to know anger. Some struggle with this more than others but who in this life has never been angry with someone. I submit to you that is a rare find, and indeed, if someone claims this you might check references to see how often they lie.

Anger by itself is dangerous. When we get angry with someone we are in dangerous territory. We may even have grounds for anger where sin is involved. There is such a thing as “**righteous indignation**” and yet there is danger here.

### **Slide # 10**

**Ephesians 4:26–27 (NKJV)**

**26 “Be angry**, and do not sin”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath,

**27** nor give place to the devil.

I often jest that the first part is easy – “**Be angry**” but the second part is not so easy, “**and do not sin**”. Even when anger is justified (as in the case of sin being involved - and sin should anger us in a controlled way), even so, we need to realize that anger can very quickly give way to sin. This is our weakness as fallen human beings.

Sin is never far removed from anger. There is constant danger here. And because of this Paul under inspiration counsels us to not let the sun go down on your wrath. Keep short accounts. Resolve it quickly. Don't let anger simmer because to do so is to give the devil an opportunity to blow it wide open. And when that happens the devil has a field day.

**I remember years ago** a brother got up one Sunday and said it had been a bad morning. He said it was like the devil knocked at the door and they all got up and answered it. The devil wants you to give him an opportunity by not dealing with it immediately. He wants you to just sit on it “**over night**” and let it fester until he knocks on the door in the morning and it gets the best of you. We are weak here. There is ever danger here!

### **Slide # 11**

**Proverbs 17:14 (NKJV)**

**14** The beginning of strife is like releasing water; Therefore **stop** contention before a quarrel starts.

Don't let it even get started. Nip it in the bud! The danger of anger is seen in many admonitions given to us in the NT.

### **Slide # 12**

**Ephesians 4:31 (NKJV)**

**31** Let all **bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor**, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.

**James 1:20 (NKJV)**

**20** for **the wrath of man** does not produce the righteousness of God.

There is also danger here because in our humanness we tend to very readily justify our anger.

Note Christ's words, “**whoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of judgment.**” The words “**without a cause**” are not in the older manuscripts.

The language here of “*in danger of judgment*” assumes the anger in view is wrong which is why the person is in danger of judgment. And the judgment in context for anger would seem to be accountability to the lower local court for acting out in a sinful way. The point is this anger isn’t technically murder, but it is still sinful for which one is accountable.

One doesn’t have to actually MURDER someone physically to be guilty of sin. This lesser “sin” is still in the same sin family of “murder”. It’s just in embryo form.

What Christ is illustrating is that there are degrees of sin related to the issue of MURDER. Don’t think that just because you haven’t murdered someone you are innocent. There are levels of related sin with corresponding consequences.

Just being sinfully angry with someone puts one in danger of one level of judgment, but on the next more serious level is calling a brother “*Raca!*”

“*Raca*” was an Aramaic term that was a contemptuous insult. It was a term of abuse communicating scorn, disdain, or contempt. The rabbis often mentioned it in their writings as a common term of abuse. Most believe it was equivalent to calling someone “brainless”, “emptyheaded”, “a blockhead”, “stupid”, a “numbskull”, or an “idiot”.

Such an action is so serious that it puts one in danger of being brought up on slander or libel charges before “*the council*” referring to the supreme court in Israel called the Sanhedrin. Thus, Christ illustrates just how serious this sin is. It’s not a little thing – it deserves SUPREME court attention!

A Jewish legend tells of a young rabbi named Simon Ben Eleazar who had just come from a session with his famous teacher. The young man felt especially proud about how he handled himself before the teacher. As he basked in his feelings of erudition, wisdom, and holiness, he passed a man who was especially unattractive. When the man greeted Simon, the rabbi responded, “You Raca! How ugly you are. Are all men of your town as ugly as you?” “That I do not know,” the man answered, “but go and tell the Maker who created me how ugly is the creature He has made.” – **Quoted by John MacArthur**

To slander with disdain anyone made in the image of God is really a slander against God Himself their Maker. That is a most serious offense – worthy of being brought up on charges before the supreme court.

It is noteworthy that the name “devil” means “slanderer”. Note this connection: Jesus said the devil “was a murderer from the beginning” – “a liar and the father of it.” (Jn. 8:44) Treacherous slander of disdain and murder are in the same “sin family”.

And then Jesus says, “***But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire.***” Wow! Now that is most serious indeed!

How should we understand this? We surely don’t want to water it down or just kind of skip over it like so many tend to do. There is an emphasis here for a reason.

The word “***fool***” here is the Greek word “***moros***” from which we get our English word “***moron***”. In Matthew 7:26 Jesus applied this very word to those who hear His words and yet do not apply them. Thus, it denotes being foolish albeit with a moral bent of rebellion that doesn’t listen.

Many commentators note that this Greek word is similar to Hebrew word “***moreh***” which has connotations of apostasy, rebellion, and wickedness. In fact, some think what we have in the Greek may be a transliteration of this Hebrew word or that when the Jews heard it they would have generally thought of the related Hebrew word.

### **Slide # 13**

***Moreh*** – Hebrew (Damned Rebel)

***Moros*** – Greek (Fool)

### **Slide # 14**

To a Greek, ***moros*** would suggest foolishness, senselessness; but to a speaker of Hebrew, the Greek word might call to mind the Hebrew ***moreh***, which has overtones of moral apostasy, rebellion, and wickedness (cf. Ps. 78:8; Jer. 5:23). – ***D.A. Carson***

It seems something like this is in view because Christ is building from the lesser to the greater offense. To merely call someone “***foolish***” in a soft sense would seem to be almost equivalent, or perhaps an even lesser insult than Raca. But indeed, it seems to be more serious – so serious that it puts one in danger of hell fire.

Therefore, I tend to take it that the idea here is that of calling the person a “damned fool” – a wicked fool that is on his way to hell.

It has the sense of wishing them dead and that they would go straight to hell. It is the essence of when some says, “God damn you”. Such a person is calling on God to consign the person to hell. That is the sentiment. And few things are more serious than this! This is “hellfire” serious!

Jesus said, “***out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks***” (Mt. 12:34). Therefore, this is the heart equivalent of being a murderer as seen in verse 21. 1 Jn. 3:15 says “***no murderer has eternal life***” unless of course he knows repentance. Equivalent to this is calling a brother a “***fool***” which places one in danger of hell fire.

In other words, both actual “murder” (v. 21) and calling someone a “fool” (v. 22) are both deserving of the punishment of hell. Rev. 21:8 says “***murderers...shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone***”. Here Christ says those who call some one a “***fool***” are in danger of this same hell fire.

Anyone making damning statements with reference to hell toward their fellow man, is actually in danger of hell himself. The sense is that such an action is indicative of those who don’t really know God.

The word translated here as “***hell***” is the Greek word “***Gehenna***”. Gehenna literally means “***Valley of Hinnom***” (also called Tophet or Topheth) which was south of Jerusalem. Back in the OT Israel practiced disgusting idolatrous rites there including child sacrifice (cf. 2 Kg. 23:10; 2 Chron. 28:3; 33:6; Isa. 30:33; Jer. 7:31; 19:13; Ezek. 16:20; 23:37). Later when king Josiah abolished these practices, he turned it into the city dump where the fires burned continually and where the corpses of criminals were disposed of (cf. 2 Kings 23:10).

As such its smoldering fires became a fitting place to symbolize the punishment of an eternal hell. Jesus in effect said those who wish people dead and in hell as expressed in malicious language are in danger of going there themselves.

There is no mistaking the severity of the Savior’s words. He teaches that anger contains the seeds of murder, that abusive language contains the spirit of murder, and that cursing language implies the very desire to murder. The progressive heightening of the crimes demand three degrees of punishment: the judgment, the council, and hell fire. – ***William MacDonald***

**Slide # 15****1 John 3:14–15 (NKJV)****14** We know that we have passed from death to life, **because we love the brethren**. He who does not love his brother abides in death.**15** Whoever **hates his brother is a murderer**, and you know that **no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.**

I think Jesus was saying that HATEFUL speech that seeks to damn people is indicative of not really knowing God, just as HATE is not indicative of those who truly know God. This is not characteristic of a true kingdom citizens.

However, that is not to say that a true believer, to a degree, couldn't fall into the very serious sin of hatred or murder. It's not indicative of the believer's new nature or of his ongoing practice, but we still all have the flesh and we can fall into any of the flesh sins mentioned in Gal. 5 which is why we are warned against committing them.

**Slide # 16****Galatians 5:19–21 (NKJV)****19** Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,**20** idolatry, sorcery, **hatred**, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,**21** envy, **murders**, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that **those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.**

It is true this will not HABITUALLY define the believer's practice, but it is also true that just a few verses before this in verse 16 Paul said, ***“Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh”*** implying that if you don't walk in the Spirit you may well fulfill the lust of the flesh. Here is the problem! As a believer we still have the flesh and can still commit the works of the flesh.

**Slide # 17****1 Peter 4:15 (NKJV)****15** But **let none of you suffer as a murderer**, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters.

Why did Peter exhort the believers not to be guilty of murder and thereby suffer the consequences? Answer, because it is potentially possible that a believer could do so. Therefore, Peter exhorts them not to do this!

Note Christ's words very carefully, "**whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire.**" To be "**in danger of**" indicates this is the required penalty the guilty party would normally be facing unless there was some kind of intervention.

When I consider the whole counsel of God, I take Jesus to be saying this is indicative of unbelievers who are headed to hell if they don't repent. However, if a believer should fall into such a sin, they should realize this is so serious that it normally places one in danger of hell fire, but of course as believers, we know that Christ died for this sin also. Apart from the intervening blood of Jesus we should go to hell for such a sin. Thus, Jesus is emphasizing the GRAVITY of murderous sin in the heart which even has application for those that are disciples.

The point is we need to realize just how very serious HATED in the heart really is. In HATRED are the seeds of murder which is indicative of those who are not saved. This is NOT to define Christ's kingdom people. Love, not hatred, is the defining reality for Christ's people.

Remember Moses! He was one of the most godly leaders in the history of Israel. As I said earlier, prior to Christ, he was considered to be their greatest prophet. Moses at one point did let his flesh temper (the "seed of murder" – in effect) get the best of him.

### **Slide # 18**

#### **Numbers 20:10 (NKJV)**

**10** And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, "Hear now, you **rebels!** Must we bring water for you out of this rock?"

"**Rebels**" is the Hebrew word **moreh** which many think may correspond to the word "**fool**" in Matt. 5:22. It is the idea of perverse rebels worthy of damnation. Moses contrary to what God told him to do called the people "**rebels**" and struck the rock twice instead of talking to it as instructed by God. This was so serious that Moses was not allowed to go into the Promised Land.

Self-control over our physical actions is good but the Lord wants us to control our thoughts and attitudes as well. Behind our actions is the inward thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Murder starts with hatred and hatred is often expressed in “killer words” which then can lead to “killer actions”.

### **Slide # 19**

#### **Proverbs 4:23 (NKJV)**

**23** Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.

**23 Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you,**

To show you all the more that Christ has “*disciples*” in view the thought from verse 22 continues on. The “*Therefore*” of verse 23 denotes a continuation of thought. Verses 21-22 denote a HATE problem in the heart that expresses itself in various ways. Verses 23-24 address how to get right after such sin has been committed.

Perhaps this person has a guilty conscience knowing they have wronged their brother by way of sinful anger, contemptuous insult, or malicious cursing, and therefore has brought a little “conscience money” (or in this case a “conscience offering” to try and sooth their conscience.

Christ’s audience was Jewish and pre-cross while the Temple was still standing, and so He speaks to them on that level. A person has come to the Temple with an offering seeking divine forgiveness. As he stands there waiting for his turn when the priests can attend to him, he then remembers that he has wronged someone in the sense of the sins mentioned in verse 22.

Christ says...

**24 leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.**

Is not this a challenging verse? Christ is saying before you can really worship God in an acceptable manner you first have to get right with your brother. First priority is to get right with your brother – even a higher priority than the offering.

Worship of God is not accepted until reconciliation has been achieved with brothers with whom some offense has broken a relationship.

– **Ed Glasscock**

People would generally much rather bring some ritualistic offering than get right with an offended brother. This is really humbling! This shows true repentance in which ego bites the dust. Making a quiet offering is no big deal, but eating humble pie and crawling back to a wronged brother in repentance – now that is challenging.

Note it is the offender here who is to take the initiative. They are to obey their conscience. They know they have done wrong. They know this person has this against them. There is a rift in the relationship. They are to make the first move. And this action of going back to first be reconciled could have involved some real effort. Here they were in Jerusalem at the Temple, but if the brother lived up in Galilee that would involve a real commitment involving trekking a hundred miles up and then back down again to the Temple.

Christ says “**Leave the Temple and your offering**” and **do whatever it takes to reconcile with your brother.**” This is TOP priority. The first step in getting right with God is getting right with your brother!

By the way, if you have been wronged, sometimes you just have to wait for God to work in the other person’s heart until they are humbled enough to come to you and seek reconciliation. We should always have a spirit of forgiveness, but reconciliation in this case depends on the offender taking the initiative.

First, we get right with our brother or sister – then we can worship in spirit and in truth. If we won’t get right, there is going to be an ongoing WALL between us and God.

### **Slide # 20**

The moral is simple: We are to get right with those we have wronged, those who have something against us, those with whom we have been angry. Reconciliation is so important that Jesus said it must even take precedence over our worship of God. – **John Phillips**

We see this principle emphasized every time we have communion. The Lord says we are to regularly be remembering Him and what He did to make us a forever family as we partake of communion.

In 1 Cor. 11 Paul makes it very clear that before we can partake of communion in a worthy manner we must FIRST be right with our brothers and sisters.

**Slide # 21**

**1 Corinthians 11:28–30 (NKJV)**

**28** But let a man **examine himself**, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

**29** For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, **not discerning the Lord's body**.

**30** For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.

In effect, many at Corinth were violating the Lord's principle here in Matt. 5:23-24. They were not right with each other and yet insisting on approaching the Lord's table in worship. Therefore, God disciplined them with sickness and even death. It is a serious matter before God!

God receives no worship from a believer who is not on speaking terms with another. – ***William MacDonald***

**Someone once told** me that for years they had a problem with another person in the church. They said they had learned to just stay on one side of the church while the other person was on the other. In dismay I expressed that I just could not understand how that was possible. Well, as time went along some serious discipline ensued and it wasn't pretty.

If you are a kingdom citizen, you can't live this way without disciplinary consequences (see Heb. 12). True God honoring worship starts with being right with the family of God!

**I know of a case** where a brother seriously wronged another believer. To this day the errant brother defends himself and has not gotten right. I have often said that in this case "***repentance runs through the offended party***". Evidence of true repentance is when the guilty party humbles them self and first and foremost seeks to get right with the person they have sinned against. Then God can bless. Then restored worship of God can take place.

Believers guilty of the “family sins” of murder as seen in verse 22 need to deal with it by FIRST being reconciled to their brother. Only then can God bless.

**25 Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison.**

**26 Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny.**

In parabolic form Christ is laying down yet another related principle. And that is when you have done something wrong as illustrated in verse 22, then deal with it quickly and preemptively instead of just sitting on it. The picture here is that a person has wronged someone (here called an adversary). By the way the quickest way to make an adversary is to wrong someone.

In Christ’s day, under Roman law, if someone didn’t pay a debt they owed they could be brought before a judge. And the judge would then order them to be thrown into prison until the debt was paid. This was called “**debtors’ prison**”.

People, even God’s people, are often very reluctant to admit guilt! Again, our ego always seems to be in the mix. In the form of this parable Christ is saying if you are wrong be quick to admit it and make things right. If you remain unrepentant things are only going to get worse. You cannot just wait this out and think the consequences will eventually just go away.

We sometimes tend to think, “***If I just wait long enough it will go away.***” It won’t – not in the case where you have a clear adversary that you clearly should get right with.

Now realize there are all kinds of situations in life where you can’t do anything about the situation because it really isn’t your problem.

### **Slide # 22**

#### **Romans 12:18 (NKJV)**

**18** If it is possible, **as much as depends on you**, live peaceably with all men.

You can't help what other people do, but you are responsible for your own actions. In this illustration that Christ is giving the person clearly knows they have wronged a brother, they clearly know what they should do to get right. The onus is on them! In this case the offending person needs to move on it. They need to take the initiative to get right and not put it off.

**Footnote:** Roman Catholic theology bases the concept of purgatory (in part) on these verses here in Matt. 5:25-26. They believe that in the after-life people can finish paying for their sins through a suffering experience in purgatory. The problem is the Bible does not teach this. In death Christ said, ***"It is finished!"*** Jesus paid it all! It is FINISHED! To say otherwise amounts to a works salvation and not salvation purely by GRACE (What Christ did on the cross) through FAITH.

The Bible is clear that we are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone! All glory to God alone!

Let's make some application of the principle laid out by Christ here in Matt. 5:25-26. The unbeliever is guilty and on the way to judgment day to face the Judge – Who happens to be the HOLY God of the universe. The most sensible thing to do is to "settle out of court" (so to speak) and get right with God through repentance and faith. God invites the sinner saying...

### **Slide # 23**

#### **Isaiah 1:18 (NKJV)**

**18** "Come now, and **let us reason together**," Says the LORD,  
"Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow;  
Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.

#### **Isaiah 55:1 (NKJV)**

**1** "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, **Come** to the waters; And you who have no money, **Come**, buy and eat. Yes, **come**, buy wine and milk  
**Without money and without price.**

The time to repent is NOW. If you wait until death it will be do late. Then you will be paying for it for all eternity (cf. Heb. 9:27).

Now let me make application in relationship to a believers who are the real target of Christ's teaching in this context. As believers when we get off track and things are not right between us and a fellow believer what should we do? Well, we should realize that we to are headed for judgment – disciplinary judgment and beyond that the judgment seat of Christ.

We too should “settle out of court” (so to speak) and get right with each other and thereby with God.

Paul mentioned the “judgment seat of Christ” in the same breath as the “terror of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:10-11). – **John Phillips**

### **Slide # 24**

#### **1 Corinthians 11:31–32 (NKJV)**

**31** For if we **would judge ourselves**, we would **not be judged**.

**32** But when we are judged, we are **chastened** by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

#### **James 5:16 (NKJV)**

**16** **Confess your trespasses to one another**, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

How serious is this teaching of Christ? Let me illustrate.

One of the worst atrocities in world history was in the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi people in the small central country of Rwanda. At least 800,000 or more people were massacred by thousands of Hutus in 100 days. Rwanda was approximately 90 percent “Christian” at the time, and the notion that such mass violence would ever occur was unthinkable.

The contributing factor to the genocide was rampant tribalism. Rwanda has two primary ethnic groups: Hutu (they were the farmers) and Tutsi (they were cattle farmers). Trouble began with these groups referring to themselves ethnically and tribally rather than as Rwandans. The country became divided, with each group dehumanizing the other. Hatred toward one another became acceptable, and that animosity eventually manifested itself brutally.

- **Dr. Ron J. Bigalke**

This is most serious. Kingdom citizens are to take Christ’s teaching to heart. Be very careful of any hateful thing going on your heart. Not only is murder wrong so also is hate! Hatred is murder in seed form.

And when we have done wrong as followers of Christ, we should seek reconciliation as quickly as possible.

Our relationship with each other is intertwined with our relationship with God. To be right with God we have to be right with each other. This is God-honoring and in keeping with “kingdom ethics”.

In this matter of kingdom living the issue of anger and hatred is the first thing dealt with at length by Christ in terms of unpacking kingdom righteousness. In the Bible the very first sin specifically identified as sin is found in Genesis 4:6-7 where God said to Cain:

### **Slide # 25**

#### **Genesis 4:6–7 (NKJV)**

**6** So the LORD said to Cain, **“Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?”**

**7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door.** And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.”

God seems to be offering a choice to Cain, in striking terms: “Sin is crouching at the door.” Not knocking like an honest man. Not picking the lock, not peeking through the keyhole. The image is that of a wild beast ready to spring. “It wants to eat you alive, Cain; swallow you whole.”

But where is the beast? Outside or inside? Outside, we usually think; sin is trying to get in, to devour us. But knowing what we do about ourselves and human history since the fall, the metaphor works better the other way: Sin is trying to get out, panting for the chance to wreak havoc. ... Will you allow this inner beast to overpower you, or will you exercise some control over your words and actions? Sin resides in our hearts and won't be eradicated in this life. But will we be its master, or its meat? – **Janie B. Cheaney**

Christ came to fulfill the Law so that by the power of the Spirit we might live out the spirit of it. The key is dependence upon God. As Paul said, **“Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”** (Gal. 5:16) The fruit of the Spirit is **“self-control”** including “thought-control” and “attitude control” (cf. Gal. 5:22-23).

This truly is **“kingdom living!”** God help us as His children to live accordingly!