

Anger is as bad as murder! – Dave Rogers 28/11/10

Has anybody here ever play Cluedo? What is the premise of Cluedo, it is Murder, and finding out whether colonel mustard did it with the drain pipe in the library.

Now Cluedo almost makes light of murder, but as we have seen over the past weeks here in Ascot, Murder happens even on our doorstep. Sunningdale high-street closed down, a wife murdered by her husband in Ascot. Murder is a terrible thing and in his sermon on the mount Jesus talks about murder in response the 6th commandment, You shall not Murder!

If you have your bible, let's turn to Matt 5:21-26

Murder

21 "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' 22 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,' (empty head) is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

23 "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, 24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

25 "Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still together on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. 26 Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.

So why does Jesus speak about murder in this way?

As we saw last week Jesus came as the fulfilment of the law, and that the law shows us how imperfect we are, because we simply cannot live up to it!

Now the parts of the law that Jesus fulfilled have become obsolete and we live in the new covenant, a covenant of Grace. But Jesus didn't say that the moral law was obsolete, and here in Matthew, Jesus picks up some of the themes of the 10 commandments and elaborates on them including murder.

Before we get into it, I thought it would be interesting to find out why people commit murder. In the game cluedo, all we know is a murder is committed, we never find out a motive for murder. But there are always reasons for committing a murder.

These are usually:

Murder for Gain – Greed, money, wealth.

Self-protection – elimination of a threat

Emotional Satisfaction – revenge, envy, jealousy & love (Possess or protect someone else)

Ambition – to get rid of someone standing in your way.

Insanity – just plain nuts!

So what can we learn from Jesus?

Jesus isn't really talking about actual murder, he takes it a step on, Jesus is addressing the issue of relationships with others. Particularly the area of anger or resentment to another person.

Jesus takes an old testament law and ramps it up.

We have already seen that trying to keep the law by our own strength is impossible, so why does Jesus make it even harder?

I think firstly we need to realise Jesus is making the point that we are a people of grace not law, the problem with the law is it often become about outward appearance. Jesus takes us into the heart, he says, it is certainly not about the outward appearance, but I look to the heart of the matter to see the truth.

Ouch. Where is our heart at? What motives go through our minds when we do things? Why do we do what we do?

Jesus raises this issue, not because anger is always a sin in its own right, but because anger can and often will lead to us mucking up and sinning, and in this instance, having bad feelings towards other people.

Unresolved Anger is a sin, and need to be dealt with.

Now quite rightly, anyone who murders is subject to judgement.

But so too, anyone who is angry, is also subject to judgement

If you call a brother or sister Raca (empty head – insult), you deserve to be brought before the court.

If you call someone a fool you are in danger of the fires of hell.

Wow, pretty strong stuff!!

Just as motives for Murder there are different things that can lead us down this path, the truth is that we are human, and we do make mistakes. People may offend us, or say something hurtful, or make a joke at our expense that we react to. We may become frustrated with people because they “don’t do it how I’d do it” or we get annoyed for many reasons. Often nothing can become something.

How we react to any of these situations will probably affect multiple relationships.

It is a matter of the heart and how we deal with these situations.

If we react in anger, we bring judgement upon ourselves, as far as what Jesus is saying.

There are many warnings in the bible about anger:

Ephesians 4:26-27 In your anger do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.

Ephesians 4:31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.

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

1 Timothy 2:8 I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing.

James 1:19-20 My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.

Anger is something that can cause great division and disunity. It can decimate families, communities and churches. Having negative thoughts to each other has the devil rubbing his hands together with Joy.

So how do we deal with this stuff? How do we respond to Jesus teaching? What does the bible say?

Well in this passage Jesus says:

23 “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, 24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

Jesus is the bringer of reconciliation! It was Jesus death and resurrection that enable us to know God and be reconciled to him.

Reconciliation means: the ending of conflict or renewing of a friendly relationship between disputing people or groups

Jesus want's his people to be together, this is a big deal, Jesus even says, sort it out before offering your worship to me!! Don't come to me if you are not right with someone else. This is picked up in Paul letter to the Corinthians about the Lord 's Supper, ensuring fellowship with other before taking it so as not to sin against God.

Jesus, the son, the father and the spirit are in complete unity and this is God's will for his people,

Jesus says in [Matthew 18:15-17](#) "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over.[16] But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, ... [17] If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church...

It is blindingly clear from our passage today, that reconciliation is a huge deal to God. And he does not want it to be a stumbling block to us and our relationships with other brothers and sisters.

Where the people dwell together in Unity God commands the blessing.

If we are at odds with others, we are expected by Jesus to forgive them! Otherwise we bring judgement upon ourselves.

You might be here thinking, I can't forgive that person? Friends, sometimes it is hard! But God forgave us for all the things we did, and we now walk in the freedom of that forgiveness. To be honest we're not in the place not to forgive, if we follow him.

[Colossians 3:13](#)

[Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.](#)

As important reconciliation is, it is also Urgent, this is clear in Jesus message.

[25 "Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court.](#)

Do it quickly, do it before it goes further, If there is anyone we have any bad thoughts or feelings toward, whether caused by ourselves or not we must sort it out ASAP.

Now if we don't sort things out we're not going to go to court, and God is not going to send us to hell for it, but there are consequences, and God will capture our attention to bring us to repent of our attitude, and help us reconcile with the person or people we have an issue with. Let's be a people that do it first time, not waiting for God to have to shout at us to do so.

So friends, from a heading of Murder, we have come back to God's great plan of reconciliation and forgiveness.

Let us guard our hearts from anger, as Jesus classes this like same as murder, and if we need to let's pursue reconciliation with others, so we have complete unity and that God can truly command the blessing!!