

Hello everyone,

PERCENT OF BIBLE COMPLETED: 73.2%

Weekly Readings will cover:

Sunday: Matthew 5:14 – 16

Monday: Matthew 5:17 – 19

Tuesday: Matthew 5:20 – 22

Wednesday: Matthew 5:23 – 24

Thursday: Matthew 5:25 – 26

Friday: Preparation Day

Saturday: Sabbath

Current # of email addresses in the group: 726

This week we remain in the incredible deep lessons contained in the Sermon on the Mount. We only cover about 12 verses, but I hope you will appreciate that we are moving rather slowly through this section of scripture to ensure we capture the magnitude of what Jesus Christ is teaching us.

As I look ahead to next week, my wife and I leave to serve at Camp Pinecrest. The camp program is one of the most amazing things we get to be a part of in the Church of God. The world is very hard today on our young people. Not only are they facing Satan's various agenda's in a powerful way, many of them do not have many their age that they get to see on a regular basis. This can be very lonely while they are trying to build their relationship with God. Perhaps you would say an extra prayer specifically for our young people in the Church of God. I hope to finish next week's reading program before I leave, and I think that's possible. However, I know already that while I'm at camp for a bit over a week I will not be able to put together a reading program for the week after next. I appreciate in advance your understanding.

Current and archive of this reading program is available at:

<https://www.ucg.org/congregations/san-francisco-bay-area-ca/announcements/audio-links-re-three-year-chronological-deep>

The audio archive information is also available on our UCG Bay Area YouTube page here:

https://youtube.com/@ucgbayarea5792?si=EA_tacLBfv1XR3jH

You may actually prefer accessing it directly from this Playlist tab:

<https://www.youtube.com/@ucgbayarea5792/playlists>

3-YEAR CHRONOLOGICAL STUDY: Week 117

Read the following passages & the Daily Deep Dive on the daily reading.

Day 792 – SUNDAY: June 21st

Matthew 5:14–16

Daily Deep Dive:

Verse 14 – Jesus now describes His faithful disciples as the “light of the world”. He begins with an emphatic statement in “you are”. He isn’t saying, “someday you will become the light of the world.” This is the identity of a true Christian. We already are the light of the world. This should give us pause and make us consider how seriously we take this identity and role in the world today. We must keep remembering the progression of this sermon from Jesus Christ. We are to be humble, mourn over sin, be meek, starve for righteousness, be merciful, have pure motives and hearts, be peacemakers --- and even endure persecution. Those who develop these qualities become visible representatives of God’s Kingdom to the world. The Greek for “light” contains the meaning of “illumination”. Light dispels darkness and reveals what’s hidden or can’t be seen clearly. Scripture often uses light to symbolize truth, God’s instructions, holiness, righteous conduct and divine revelation (compare Psalm 119:105; Proverbs 6:23; Isaiah 60:1). I think this is something all of us understand. But to make sure we are all on the same page, it’s important for us always to remember that Jesus Christ said in John 8:12 **"I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."** We as Christians do not generate light independently. Any good and light that shines from our lives is from us imitating Jesus Christ, much like the moon reflects the sun. Christians reflect the light of God the Father and Jesus His Son. This is clearly shown in Matthew 5:16.

The mission, to shine as lights, was not limited to Judea and Galilee --- but to the entire world (all nations). Imagine for a moment, what if all who “claim” to be Christians around the world truly reflected Jesus Christ in their lives. What a different world it would be!

Jesus then compares us Christians to a city set on a hill. A city meant more than just buildings and houses. A city stood for a community, with a culture, a government and an identity. Ancient cities were often built on hills or elevated terrain. A hilltop city at night could be seen from a great distance due to the light emanating from it. A city on a hill was visible and influential. The disciples weren't called simply to be an individual, but also a part of a collective (i.e. Body of Christ/Church of God). They were to form a visible community that influenced and impacted those around them.

Jesus Christ's point is clear. Just like a hill top city, visibility is unavoidable and clearly noticed. So, Christianity is meant to shine and be visible to those around it. In fact, you can't hide that city on a hill. Its light is clearly seen. Christianity should not be able to be hidden either. We were never meant to "blend in" and not be noticed. Due to persecution, many Christians compromised their beliefs to not stand out. Even today, some don't want their true Christian beliefs to make them look and feel different from those around them, so they speak about their identity or beliefs in a way that doesn't seem that different from those around them. We were made to shine light into a dark world. Light --- by its very nature in a dark world --- can't help but stand out and illuminate. Authentic right living naturally becomes visible. People notice integrity, kindness, mercy, honesty, faithfulness and courage in the face of persecution.

While the beatitude reflects the inner character that is formed in Christians, salt and light reflect the impact Christians should have on the world around them. While doing all things in love, we as Christians must shine as a reflection of Jesus Christ!

This was largely my point in this my June 13, 2026 sermon entitled "Nothing New Under the Sun?" --- for anyone who would like to consider this more.

<https://www.ucg.org/sermons/nothing-new-under-sun-0>

Was this idea of shining God's way to those around new? No, not really. God's people were always intended to shine as an example to the nations around them (Compare Isaiah 42:6 and 49:6). Sadly, Israel largely failed to live in a way that shined God's way. Through the Holy Spirit, we've been empowered to shine God's way now!

The main point Jesus is making is not that we must try harder to make people notice us. His point is that IF we live the values of God's Kingdom now, your light will inevitably be noticed. That's what happens with light in the midst of darkness.

Verse 15 – While the metaphor is similar in this verse, we must notice that Jesus doesn't waste words. He moves from the impact of a city on a hill, to the impact of a lamp inside a house. This verse contains the impact within a household and among a tighter circle of influence. This word for "lamp" refers to small clay oil lamps that illuminated a room. Its impact was much more personal and closer. Additionally, Jesus shows how absurd it would be to light a lamp, only to cover it in a way that no one could see the light. Why would you do that? It makes no sense and serves no point. In a similar way, why would God call you, give you the gift of His spirit, only to have you hide, blend in and go unnoticed. How sad if the people under your very roof, didn't see the reflection of Jesus Christ shining in your life for all in the house to see. Our faith and Christian life should impact those near us ("in the house").

Verse 16 – Here we come to the key purpose of our shining light --- that God the Father will be glorified. Our shining is not for self-glorification. Our shining is about refusing to hide/cover what God has done and is doing in our lives. Our light in this verse is shown to be through our "good works". What we do and how we live! People should be seeing how God worked in our lives and transformed us into people who lived,

spoke, thought and acted differently. That transformation should lead people who have experienced and seen our reflection of Jesus Christ to glorify God. Some do works to glorify themselves, but here it's about lives that can't help to be noticed, and by living the beatitudes, so that God is glorified (honored/praised).

If God's character is truly being formed within you, it will become visible in your conduct. And when people see that conduct, they should be led to praise the Father whose character they are witnessing in you.

Day 793 – MONDAY: June 22nd

Matthew 5:17-20

Daily Deep Dive:

Verse 17 – We now come to an interesting section of Scripture. Many see that this serves as a bridge between the beatitudes and our Christian impact on the world --- and the six “you have heard...but I say to you...” examples that will follow. Many scholars see these verses (17 through 20) as a thesis statement before the rest of chapter 5.

For context, it's important that we remember at this point in the narrative, there is no such thing as a "Christian". We can't help to read these passages through the qualities Christians must have to be followers of Jesus Christ.

As Jesus described the characteristics of those who are “blessed” and their impact on the world --- it would be natural for those who were listening to see His teachings as radically different than the teachings of the Jewish leaders. At some point, it may have been reasonable for the listeners to ask, “is this teacher introducing a completely new religion”? Is He rejecting the prophets like Moses? Is He replacing Scripture? I of course don't know what they were thinking, but I think these types of questions may have been going through their heads, based on the next words of Jesus Christ. Jesus seems to catch early any of these thoughts by saying “do not think” --- which in Greek (Μὴ νομίσητε - Μὴ νομίσητε) can also mean, “do not suppose” or “do not assume”. The

Greek implies this misunderstanding is already present. Why might some already assume He's changing things?

We've already clearly seen Jesus Christ's teaching at odds with the religious leaders of the day --- and their traditional interpretations. Jesus has already healed on the Sabbath, associated with sinners, and ignored some oral Jewish traditions that had been passed down. The religious leaders already had confused Jesus' challenging their traditions with rejecting Scripture. The Pharisee's often treated the traditions as equal in authority and importance to that of Scripture. It's fair to assume this confusion existed with the common people as well. As we've already discussed, many of His teachings had already challenged normal assumptions on who God typically blessed. His beatitudes turned many normal expectations upside down. Jesus was teaching a Kingdom centered on transformed hearts and lives which in the politically charged climate at that time may have seemed like a departure from the focus of traditional Judaism.

The "Law and the Prophets" was a common Jewish expression to refer to what we call the "Old Testament". This was the entire revealed Word of God at the time. Jesus is clear that He did not come to destroy, demolish or dismantle any part of any Scripture. Through His teachings, Scripture would remain completely intact. He would not do anything against Scripture. He did however come to "fulfill" Scripture. This Greek word, plērōsai (πληρῶσαι), means "to fill up", "bring to fulness", to complete" or "bring to its intended goal". Through completing prophecies about the Messiah, through demonstrating God's intended meaning of His laws, through bringing to its full typology, and to revealing God's always intended meaning behind Scripture and God's plan, Jesus "fulfilled" Scripture. His life was the living embodiment of the Scripture. In that way, those who observed His life --- and for us as we read the accounts of His life --- we more fully understand what God intended all along, and we more fully understand how we can live a life in this world in a way that pleases God.

Verse 18 – What does “one jot or one tittle” mean? The word “jot” is a word of Hebrew origin (yod). The tenth letter in the Hebrew alphabet and the smallest of all their letters, it represented the smallest letter that could be written in Scripture. On the word “tittle” Thayer’s states, “Jesus used it of the little lines or projections, by which the Hebrew letters in other respects similar differ from one another; the meaning is, “not even the minutest part of the law shall perish.” In other words, it was a tiny stroke or projection that distinguished one Hebrew letter from another. Jesus is emphasizing the smallest details imaginable. The point is easily understood. Not only did Jesus not come to take apart the Old Testament Scripture, not even the smallest letter or pen stroke recorded in it would go away (perish) until all of it had been brought to its completed purpose. This is an incredible endorsement of all the Old Testament. Jesus is clearly stating that all of the Old Testament was more stable than even all physical creation (the heavens and the earth).

Verse 19 – Jesus not only reinforces all of Scripture, He now emphasizes the outcome of someone who breaks and teaches others to break what they consider to be the “least” important of God’s Word.

At this time in the first century, rabbis commonly discussed “weightier” (heavy) commandments versus “lighter” (least) commandments. This was not usually a debate about whether some commandments should be ignored --- but rather an attempt to understand the priorities of some commandments over other commandments when they seemed to compete (consider Matthew 23:23 and Matthew 22:36).

Here Jesus is actually emphasizing that while some commandments are weightier than others (Matthew 23:23), none are disposable. Some could be inclined to think that a lesser/lighter command is not important at all --- and neglect it all together. To think and do so, and to teach others to do so, would have a great impact on one’s reward in the Kingdom of God. All of God’s Scripture should be treated with the upmost respect!

Day 794 – TUESDAY: June 23rd

Matthew 5:20-22

Daily Deep Dive:

Verse 20 – What a shocking statement! That unless their (and by extension our) righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, they would not enter God’s Kingdom. To the average Jew, the Pharisees appeared to be the most righteous people alive on the planet. They likely thought, “Who could possibly enter the Kingdom of God if that is true”? So, the key question becomes, how should our righteousness exceed that of the Pharisees? Thankfully, Jesus does not leave them (or us) wondering, but instead gives a series of instructions (through a pattern repeated six times) that contains key ways our righteousness should exceed that of the Pharisees.

We’ve already seen that the Pharisees excelled at fasting, tithing, and praying. But Jesus would later criticize these very things when done for appearance’s sake (for show). We will come to see that the Pharisees often focused on external behavior instead of internal transformation. Jesus will now give many examples of how we must internally transform to become what God intended. God never wanted an outward show of obedience only. God wanted people who loved Him -- and loved His way from their hearts and minds (compare Jeremiah 31:31, 33 and Ezekiel 36:24-27). God does not simply want compliance and regulated conduct, but is after transformed hearts and character. We are about to see that the righteousness God desires was never about merely avoiding murder, adultery, or falsehood. It was always about becoming the kind of person whose heart is trained to reflect God's character. That is why the righteousness of those who will be part of the Kingdom of God must exceed that of the Pharisees—not by adding more rules, but by allowing God's law and way to penetrate beyond outward behavior into motives, desires, attitudes, and the inner life.

Verse 21 – Jesus begins with “You have heard that it was said...”. Most people “heard” scripture through public readings and synagogue teaching. They would have not only heard the scripture read, but the interpretation attached to that scripture. Jesus addresses both. Jesus also is clear not to be specifically addressing one particular leader or synagogue by framing this as what has been said and passed down historically. He is about to bring this historical teaching “to the full” (to “fulfill” from verse 17).

“You shall not murder” – Using the Septuagint (LXX), the Greek, *Ou phoneuseis* (Οὐ φονεύσεις), comes directly from the Sixth Commandment of Exodus 20:13 and Deuteronomy 5:17. The verb this comes from, *phoneuō* (φονεύω), is more specific than simply “to kill”, it means “to murder” or “to unlawfully kill”. The focus is on the intentional, wrongful taking of a life. This distinction exists in both the Hebrew (*ratsach* – רצח) and the Greek. Then Jesus adds, “**and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.**”.

This is not a direct quotation of the Ten Commandments. The word for “judgment” is a word we’ve explored before in this reading program, dealing with a jury and judge weighing out evidence to determine a sentence. Whoever commits murder is going to be in danger of the determination of a judge/court. While not a direct quote from the commandments, scripture contains direction for murder proceedings (Numbers 35:30-31) and sentencing (Exodus 21:12). To the Jewish ear, they would understand that murder equaled court which equaled judgment.

Like most, if not all of you, those listening may think “Well I’ve never murdered anyone, therefore I’ve kept the Sixth Commandment.” Jesus goes beyond just visible actions to the inward root. Before “murder” springs forth, something else is growing unseen “underground”. The inward root may be anger, hatred, contempt, envy, etc.” Instead of

focusing on whether or not they had ever murdered someone, Jesus focuses on “what kind of heart produces the fruit of murder.” This is how Jesus is showing that our righteousness cannot stop at mere outward actions or behavior. We must be in a constant state of examining our underlying hearts. I don’t think I’ve already referenced this sermon, but forgive me if I have. Recently I dove into how cynicism develops within a Christian’s life. It’s a similar root growth and development process that is being exposed here by Jesus. For anyone wanting to listen to that idea explored, you can find the sermon here: <https://www.ucg.org/sermons/bitterness-cynicism>

We often think that Jesus taught “new” things, but outside of the personal example He left us, Jesus taught from the clear principles of Scripture. For example, the Old Testament, already taught in Leviticus 19:17 that “You shall not hate your brother in your heart”. Jesus is not inventing a new level of morality, He’s simply emphasizing the original depth of God’s law. The righteousness of God’s Kingdom is not just that of outward actions, but addresses the heart from which the actions flow.

Verse 22 – In a previous lesson, I spent a good amount of time talking about old manuscripts versus the majority texts. This scripture is another example where the earliest manuscripts we have are different from the majority/Byzantine texts. In the earliest manuscripts “without a cause” is missing. If we read it without this phrase, Jesus is simply replacing “murder” leads to “court” and “judgment” with “anger at a brother” leads to “court” and “judgement”. Jesus is not claiming anger and murder are the same, but instead that both come from the same heart and therefore both are concerning to God --- and will be judged. It is clear from the context that Jesus is intentionally trying to get us to go from the outward action of murder to examine the inner thoughts and feelings that develop and ultimately produce murder. It’s these inward thoughts and feelings that Jesus is wanting us to examine and give focus to. The Greek word for the anger here is in the “present

tense” in form. This tense describes an ongoing attitude --- not a momentary flash of emotion that we quickly deal with, and it goes away. This is rather sustained anger, holding onto resentment and continually nourishing a grievance.

Now what do we do with the section “without a cause”? From what I’ve studied, most textual scholars think the addition is understandable. Most believe it was a scribal note, that eventually worked into the copies and was passed down and retained. They imagine a scribe reading “everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgement” and that the scribe would have thought “but Jesus got angry”, “God gets angry”, “Paul said be angry and do not sin” and therefore concluded that a note belonged to resolve the tension. This is actually common where scribes sought to expand difficult readings to make them easier to understand. The reason I dove into this section of scripture is because when I first read “without a cause”, I imagined every one of us who has ever had anger set up and grow in our hearts would say, “well see, my anger is righteous anger, because my anger isn’t without a cause”. I believe this makes us miss the whole point of the inward examination Jesus is wanting us to focus on --- and instead might lead us to justify our anger. In humans, anger is rarely righteous. While we often convince ourselves that our anger is justified, it is usually mixed with pride, selfishness, hurt feelings, impatience, or a desire for personal vindication, making truly righteous anger exceedingly rare.

We should remember this section of scripture is built on the foundation of the beatitudes. The righteousness of God’s Kingdom exceeds that of the Pharisees because it deals with motives, thoughts, and attitudes. This builds on the humility, mercy, reconciliation and love that Jesus has already shown to be what God is looking for in those who He blesses. Jesus is clearly showing that anger that is self-centered (“I didn’t get my way”), is prideful (“how dare they treat me like that”),

vindictive (wanting someone else to suffer), etc. will bring us under judgment.

Jesus doesn't stop here, He then adds, "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." Let's take this apart. "Raca" is an Aramaic term carried into Greek (Rhaka - ῥακά). It's a term filled with contempt that means someone is "worthless" or "has no value as a human". As all humans are made in the image of God --- and Jesus died for all of mankind to eventually give all people an opportunity to repent, learn, grow, and become a part of His Family, this attitude is incredibly offensive to God. Jesus says this person is not just endanger of "judgment/court" but of the council. The Greek, synedrion (συνέδριον), could refer to a local council, but most often referred to the Sanhedrin. The word literally means "a sitting together", but it's likely that someone at that time hearing these words would think of a "higher Jewish court". The Sanhedrin was the highest Jewish judicial body. It was composed of chief priests, elders and scribes. They were responsible for major legal and religious matters. Many scholars believe Jesus is intentionally escalating here to show an increasing seriousness. It seems as if Jesus is trying to get people to understand the seriousness of what someone might think was a "small" sin. Jesus shows that God takes these attitudes very seriously.

"You fool" in Greek is "more" (μωρέ). This is where we get our English word "moron". The Bible has a lot to say about "fools" and "foolishness". God reveals what is foolishness and therefore who would fall into that category. The fact of the matter is, we all have acted foolishly. For us, as fellow fools to attack the character and standing of another person, is to place ourselves into the place of God in many ways. The Bible often makes distinctions between noticing foolish behavior and condemning someone. The Bible allows for identifying foolish behavior --- and even in the right context correcting

such behavior for the benefit of the person, but not contemptuously dismissing a person as someone who is beyond hope. The Pharisees often are shown in the Bible to no longer see people and their value, but instead to dehumanize and be dismissive of someone. How does a person get to the point of murdering someone? Does it first begin by seeing a person as less valuable? Dehumanizing them? Jesus is showing that even these feelings in our heart, even if never acted out, are very serious before God! This person is not in danger of only judgment and the council, but here what the NKJV calls “hell fire”. In the Greek this is “tēn geennan tou pyros” (τὴν γέενναν τοῦ πυρός), which is literally “the Gehenna of fire”. Gehenna comes from the Hebrew “Ge Hinnom” meaning “valley of Hinnom”. This valley lies just south and southwest of Jerusalem. In the Old Testament, this valley became infamous because of idolatry and child sacrifice (2 Chronicles 28:3 and 33:6). Because of these abominations God changes the name of this valley to the “Valley of Slaughter” (read Jeremiah 7:30-34). This made this valley have a strong association with divine judgment and death --- and became not just a location, but a symbol of destruction and God’s wrath. You have likely heard that this location was also an ever-burning garbage dump. This may be true, but we don’t have a lot of evidence of this. Perhaps the clearest statement is from Jewish commentator David Kimhi (Radak) writing around 1200 A.D. (more than a thousand years later). What we do know is that it was associated with dead bodies, uncleanness, destruction and God’s judgment. That alone is enough to make it powerful symbolically.

Isaiah 66:24 includes “For their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched.” This is echoed or quoted in Mark 9:48. In Scripture, an “unquenchable fire” is not necessarily a fire that burns forever. It can refer to a fire that does not stop UNTIL it has completely consumed what it was burning (compare Jeremiah 17:27).

What is the great point Jesus is making? When considering the Sixth Commandment, don’t stop at the fact you have murdered anyone. What about your anger? What about your contempt? What about the

way you value and condemn people? A heart full of anger and contempt is far more spiritually dangerous than people realize. The Church of God realizes that this imagery ultimately points to the fate of mankind in the lake of fire, where death is permanent for those who refuse to repent, grow, overcome and have their hearts transformed to reflect the heart of God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Day 795 – WEDNESDAY: June 24th

Matthew 5:23-24

Daily Deep Dive:

Verses 23-24 – This verse makes another powerful shift for those listening. It moves from anger in the heart to worship at the altar. The amazing point Jesus is making is that a right relationship with God cannot be separated from having right relationships with people. This verse begins with “therefore”, which shows that it’s directly building off the previous information. Because anger, contempt and broken relationships matter to God (verses 21 through 22), they have a direct impact on our worship of God. The audience Jesus was speaking to would immediately connect His words with Temple worship and offerings. Imagine travelling days to Jerusalem, purchasing or bringing a sacrifice, you’ve made it into the Temple courts, and your approaching the altar (a very special act of worship). And then you remember someone is holding something against you. Jesus didn’t say, “Well that’s their problem, you focus on your relationship with Me”. Instead, He reveals there is something even more pressing in that moment that must be dealt with before you worship God. Using human reasoning, we might think: “Well that’s their problem, they have the obligation to come talk to me about whatever they are upset about.” That’s not what the Scripture says. Why is this significant? One, it shows that we are always responsible for right relationships regardless of which side of a conflict we find ourselves on. However, second, this is a pivot that shows that even if we aren’t the one with the anger in our heart, we still are responsible. We might feel

like we are okay if we aren't the one who is upset or angry. Jesus takes this even further to show that right living (righteousness) is proactive. It's right to seek reconciliation even when we are not the offended party. Why? Because we are showing we care about relationships with people who have great value to God.

Notice that Jesus doesn't focus on whether their complaint/grievance is right or wrong. The focus is simply on the knowledge that a breach exists. Again, is this concept new? No, Jesus is "fulfilling" God's Word. Hosea 6:6 states "I desire mercy and not sacrifice". Psalm 51:17 teaches "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit". Isaiah 1 and Amos 5 clearly show that God rejects worship while injustice exists or people are mistreating others. Right relationships have always clearly been important to God. When right relationships aren't in place, God rejects worship.

This theme is clearly revealed in 1 John 4:20-21 where it states "If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God *must* love his brother also." Loving God and loving others go hand-in-hand. Worship of God and human relationships cannot be compartmentalized. Even though we don't come to a physical altar in Jerusalem today, the principle remains in approaching God in worship, prayer, fellowship, or at services. We cannot knowingly ignore relational damage while pretending everything is fine spiritually. They are connected!

Day 796 – THURSDAY: June 25th

Matthew 5:25-26

Daily Deep Dive:

Verses 25-26 – As this builds off the previous section, we see that unresolved conflict has a way of escalating and growing into an even bigger problem. Therefore, reconcile quickly before it grows and spirals out of control. The Greek for “agree” that this verse begins with is the only time this word appears in the New Testament. In Greek, *isthi eunoōn* (ἴσθι εὐνοῶν), means “be favorably minded toward”. It’s that your mind is in a good place toward someone else. Therefore, this isn’t about faking a relationship to end a conflict or problem, but it carries the idea of a reconciled relationship where there is now peace, the matter is settled and the relationship is in a good place.

The term “adversary” was a legal term in Greek --- where it literally meant “one who is against you in a lawsuit”. Those hearing this would immediately picture a legal dispute. Jesus emphasizes the urgency (quickly/promptly) of resolving these matters in a way where both feel good about the relationship. The longer a matter remains unresolved, the more likely bitterness and anger can grow.

The phrase “while you are on your way” would have brought to mind two people heading for court where a judge is going to settle the matter. The image is of a narrowing window of opportunity to fix this situation before others get involved and the matter becomes out of your hands. Every step of the process makes the matter harder to resolve. Jesus is clearly presenting what happens when reconciliation is put off or neglected. Once judgment comes down from the authority, that’s the decision --- and the consequences are now in full effect, which could have potentially been avoided if you had sought reconciliation in a timely manner. Jesus’ point is clear --- that right living before God requires being proactive and seeking peace quickly. We keep asking? Was this new? No! Proverbs 15:1 emphasizes that “a soft answer turns away wrath” and Proverbs 17:14 teaches “stop contention before a quarrel starts” before it gets out of control.

There is another layer. The previous verses show that our broken relationships impact our relationship with God. In a similar way, if reconciliation matters even in how it involves human counts, how much more before God's court? As we end this week's study, let's reflect on how Jesus took us from the Sixth Commandment of "Don't murder!" to not only "Don't let hate set up in your hearts!" --- but also to instruction on proactively and quickly working to keep relationships reconciled. That's the Sixth Commandment brought to its fulness!

Day 797 – FRIDAY: June 26th

Preparation Day

Daily Deep Dive:

Day 798 – SATURDAY: June 27th

Sabbath

Daily Deep Dive:

