

引言 INTRODUCTION

Our thoughts direct our actions. We become the person we think. There is a concept called “self-fulfilling prophecy” that proves it. For instance, some people are convinced by negative comments from their parents or teachers since childhood. They believe that they are incompetent and inferior. Consequently, they lack self-confidence. Some of us grew up in an environment like that. We try to break the cycle when we become parents. We intentionally praise our kids for works done well. Our message today is not about parenting. The point is that our actions begin in our mind. Positive thinking will lead to positive actions, and vice versa. God does not only concern about our behaviors. He also cares about our hearts. Jesus teaches His audience six topics in the rest of Matthew chapter 5 to illustrate that point. His arguments follow the same format. It begins with “you have heard that it was said...” Then Jesus counters: “But I say to you...” Religious leaders in those days taught people the Law. They added their own interpretations as they did so. Their teachings might not be inaccurate, but incomplete. Jesus returned to the original intent of the Law. His first lesson is on murder. The word takes us to some horrific events in the news. Then we confidently say to ourselves: “I will never do those things!” You may never run over a squirrel or smack a bug. But Jesus points out that the triggering factor for murder is anger. No one can deny that he/she was never mad at someone. Anger is not a sin, But anger can lead to hostility, hatred and even murder. Anger hurts our mind and body, and it impacts our relationship with others. Therefore, the core issue is how to neutralize anger. We must control our anger before our anger controls us. God does not only look at our actions. He also pays attention to our attitude. God wants us to be like Jesus inside and out.

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 憤怒的後果 Results of Anger (v. 21-22)

Anger is like a time-bomb. It will lead to serious results if it is not defused in time. An extreme result is murder. Those who commit the crime will be taken to a court. They will be punished if they are proved to be guilty. That is the usual legal procedure in any country. According to the Old Testament Law, the penalty for murder is death. Although not every civil government has the same view about capital punishment, it has Biblical support. “Do not murder” is the 6th Commandment based on Exodus 20. Jesus’ audience knew it and perhaps they had to recite all Ten Commandments since childhood. They might think that they were fine as long as they did not take another person’s life. However, Jesus digs deeper into the matter in verse 22: **“But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire.”** Murder originates from anger. Even if we do not intend to hurt someone, we may become critical of the person. One possible expression of anger is calling names. Some of your Bible translations have two terms *Racca* and *Moros* in the verse. They are transliterations of the original words from Aramaic and Greek, respectively. Both words have similar meanings of “fool,” “empty-head” or “useless.” Jesus centers the focus on belittling one’s own brother, meaning a fellow Christian. Such offensive words will not harm people’s bodies. But they will

hurt their feelings. No earthly court can judge people for any unwholesome words or thoughts. A policeman cannot arrest me if I only covet others' new cars or new phones without stealing anything. However, sin is different from crime. God considers any idea, speech and deed that violates His righteous standard as sin. He hears our words and He knows our hearts. He will hold us accountable for our sins even if an earthly court cannot prosecute us. The eternal judgment for sin is hell. The Greek word for "hell" in the verse is "Gehenna." It comes from the Hebrew phrase for the Valley of Hinnom. It is a ravine south of Jerusalem. The place was associated with wicked rituals of idol worship. In 2 Kings 23, king Josiah asked people to smash altars, shrines and statues of pagan gods. They were burned in the Valley of Hinnom. Fast forward six hundred years to Jesus' time. The place might still be used as a trash dump for burning rubbish. The unceasing fire in the pit symbolizes the eternal fire of hell. Let us be clear. Jesus does not mean that we will be condemned forever every time we demean another believer. The point is that God will not let any sin slip away unpunished. He will forgive our sin if we repent. Humiliation of another person is an offense to God because we are created after His image. Very often, we are angry at others when they do not live up to our expectations. For instance, we say: "How come you are so slow or so dumb?" Anger and any sin are results of self-centeredness. We use our standards to judge others. A sinful thought will then lead to a sinful action if we do not stop it in time. The first murder case in the human history is a good example. Cain killed his brother Abel because he was upset that God found favor in Abel's offering but not his. God warns Cain about his boiling emotion in Genesis 4:6-7 – **6 The Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it."** If Cain did not control his anger, his anger would control him. Sin is like a wild beast ready to devour us if we do not tame it. What Cain should have done? He could have repented to God, and begged Abel for forgiveness. Cain could also have asked God why his offering was not accepted. Did he present the wrong items or did he do so with a wrong motive? Of course, Cain took none of those actions. Instead, he dumped his anger on Abel and struck him. Consequently, Cain received a curse from God. Uncontrolled anger led to devastating results. In the New Testament, the apostle John recalls the tragic incident as he encourages us. He says in 1 John 3:11-12 – **11 For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. 12 We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous.** Cain killed his brother out of hatred. John tells us the most effective antidote to hatred is love. When we love others, we will put their interests above ours. Love will shift our focus from self-centered to others-centered. Then we will stop asking: "What can I get from this deal?" Instead, we show grace to others so that it will end in a win-win situation. If you are a follower of Jesus, you can react in love. You cannot say to yourself: "I was born with a bad temper. I can't never change." Yes, you can change. It is because God has changed you when you received Jesus. In the book of Ephesians, Paul uses an analogy of old self versus new self to describe our transition from sinners to believers. He says we have to intentionally remove our old self and put on our new self. It is like changing clothes after a shower. We have to constantly remind ourselves that we are a new person in Jesus Christ. Paul gives us specific instructions about anger in Ephesians 4:31-32 – **31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.** Paul asks us to get rid of all the sinful emotions, thoughts and speech that will damage a relationship. Then we replace all that with attitudes and actions that will edify others.

Very often, we get mad when we are offended. We want to prove that we are right and others are wrong. More than likely, our negative manner will stir up even stronger reactions from others. The result is a never-ending conflict. Paul gives us a better solution: forgive! When we do so, we are imitating God's forgiveness. He forgives us in Jesus Christ first. How many sins did Jesus forgive you? Can you extend Jesus' grace to others? Anger can cause us to act irrationally. We may say and do things that we will regret later. We need to press the "pause" button before our anger boils over. We must leave the scene immediately if possible. Take a deep breath, then ask ourselves the same question God asked Cain: "Why are you angry?" We need God's help to cool down when we are about to explode on the inside. Christians have a powerful Helper in them. The Holy Spirit lives inside us to mold us and shape us to the way that pleases God. Once we straighten our mind with the help of the Holy Spirit, we will be able to think more objectively. Is there a more godly way to deal with the situation? Is there any Bible verse that is helpful to me? How can God get the glory from my response? How can I show grace to others? With God's help, we can choose not to return to our old self. We can stay calm instead of getting mad.

2. 憤怒的平息 Resolution of Anger (v. 23-26)

Anger can lead to serious results. Therefore, we must resolve anger when it starts rising inside us. In the following context, Jesus gives us two hypothetical situations about resolving anger. In both cases, Jesus shifts the focus to the guilty party. The lesson is about how a wrongdoer should make things right quickly. Quite often, we tend to remember how others violated us. But we can easily forget incidents when we mistreated others. We must do our part to resolve the anger that we stir up in others before things escalate. The first example in verses 23-24 is in a worship setting. A person is about to present an offering in the temple. Suddenly, he remembers that he upset a brother recently. Jesus says he should set his offering aside and reconcile with the brother first. God desires a clear conscience in us. A religious service cannot cover our moral failure. Psalm 66:18 puts it this way: **If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.** The Holy Spirit lives inside us cannot tolerate any sin. He will remind us about the sins we committed when we draw near to God. Perhaps the Holy Spirit will play a video in your mind when you pray. God is saying to you: "Remember that unsettled conflict with so and so? Go seek forgiveness from the person." God's purpose is not to shame you. That is the devil's tactic. The Holy Spirit nudges you and leads you to repentance so that nothing will interfere your relationship with God. Tension with a fellow believer will hinder our relationship with God. We cannot pretend to have a good relationship with God when we have a sour relationship with a brother or sister. John puts it this way in 1 John 4:20 – **If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.** Have we been a hypocrite like that before? Sometimes, I held a grudge on someone when I went to worship on Sunday. More than likely, the person was one of my family members! It might be a small friction happened that morning. Perhaps my wife or my son was a little slower. I got impatient. I showed my unhappy emotion toward the person. Then God said to me: "Remember you will preach my Word to your congregation later. You cannot fake your holiness in front of people. Go apologize first!" Even if I can fool you by putting on a smile, I can never fool God. Therefore, I said sorry to my family. Without exception, God teaches me first before I share His truths with you. Jesus' reminder is for you too: reconcile with the person you offended before you come to worship God. Let us approach God with a clean heart.

The second situation Jesus gives in verses 25-26 looks more urgent. We can suppress our guilty feeling on the inside. It will be harder to stop a person who is going to sue his adversary. The situation here is about a dispute over debt. A man and his debtor are on their way to the court because the latter person cannot repay the money he owes. Just like today, people at that time could present their grievances in the court. The judge would decide who was at fault, then he would determine the appropriate punishment. In the case of a debt, the offender would be locked up until the money was paid off. The prison condition in those days was far worse than today's standard in the western world. Inmates were put in a dungeon. There was no air-conditioning, and no food was provided. Prisoners must rely on help from family or friends, otherwise they would be starve to death and frozen to death in winter. To avoid ending up in a prison cell, this fellow must act quickly. He should plead for mercy. Hopefully, the lender is willing to extend the deadline for the payment. Someone may ask: what if the creditor refuses to show kindness? That is not the key element in this example. Jesus' focus is on what the debtor should do. Hopefully none of us will face a lawsuit. But we must ask for forgiveness when we offend someone. We cannot control how the other party may react. But at least we try to resolve the anger. Proverbs 15:1 has some good wisdom for us: **A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.** We should humbly admit our fault. We cannot excuse ourselves by saying: "I did that because you wronged me first." Be gentle and sincere. Conclude with: "Will you forgive me?" The key is not to analyze whether you are 30% right and the other person is 30% wrong. The most important thing is to restore harmony as if no harm has been done.

結論 CONCLUSION

Jesus clarifies God's requirement for us. Not killing another person is not good enough. The root issue is how to deal with our anger. We must control our anger before our anger controls us. We should strive to maintain harmony with others. We need to reflect God's character of peace in our inter-personal relationship. If anyone has the right to get mad, it is God. He could have poured down His anger on us due to our sins. Instead, He provides a compensation that we can never afford. God put the sins of the whole mankind on His Son. Jesus resolved the wrath of God on the cross. Those who accept Jesus' saving grace are thus reconciled with God. Jesus' forgiveness is always available. Come to Him, confess your sins and receive His gift of salvation by faith.

引言 INTRODUCTION

我們的思想引導我們的行為。我們成為我們所想像的人。心理學有一個用詞叫作「自我實現」就證明這一點。例如，有些人從小被父母或老師的批論所說服。他們認為自己一無是處、低人一等。因此，他們缺乏自信。我們中間有些人可能是在這樣的環境中成長的。當我們成為父母之後，我們試圖打破這個困局。我們特意讚賞小孩出色的表現。我們今天的信息不是關於教養子女。重點是我們的行動是從我們的意念開始的。積極的思想會導致積極的行為，反之亦然。神不只關心我們的行為，祂也關心我們的心靈。耶穌在馬太福音第 5 章餘下的部分用六個課題來說明這一點。祂用相同的格式提出祂的論點。耶穌以「你們聽見有話說...」開始，然後祂反駁道：「只是我告訴你們...」當時的宗教領袖教導人們律法，他們在過程中加上自己的解釋。他們的教導不一定是不準確，只是不完整。耶穌回到了律法的原來意思。祂的第一個題目是關於殺人。聽到這個字會使我們想到新聞中的一些可怕事件。然後我們自信地對說：「我絕對不會幹那些事！」你也許從來沒有開車壓過松鼠或打死蟲子。但耶穌指出，殺人的觸發因素是怒氣。沒有人能否認他從未生過別人的氣。憤怒不是罪，但憤怒會導致敵意、仇恨甚至謀殺。憤怒會傷害我們的身心，也會影響我們與別人的關係。因此，核心問題是如何化解怒氣。在憤怒控制我們之前，我們必須先控制自己的憤怒。神不僅僅看我們的行動，祂也注意我們的態度。神希望我們從裡到外都像耶穌。

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 憤怒的後果 Results of Anger (v. 21-22)

憤怒就像一顆定時炸彈。如果不及時處理，將會導致嚴重的後果。一個極端的後果就是殺人。犯案的人將被帶上法庭。如果他被證實有罪，就會受到懲罰。這是任何國家的一般法律程序。根據舊約律法，謀殺的刑罰是死刑。儘管每個政府對死刑都有不同的看法，但死刑有聖經的根據。「不可殺人」是十誡中的第六條誡命，經文記載在出埃及記第 20 章。耶穌的聽眾都知道這一條誡命，也許他們從小就背誦所有十誡。他們可能認為只要不奪走別人的生命就沒問題了。然而，耶穌在第 22 節中指出問題的核心：「**只是我告訴你們：凡向弟兄動怒的，難免受審判；凡罵弟兄是拉加的，難免公會的審斷；凡罵弟兄是魔利的，難免地獄的火。**」殺人的起因是憤怒。就算我們無意傷害別人，我們也可能會批評對方。憤怒的一種表達方式是罵人。中文聖經有「拉加」和「魔利」兩個用字。它們分別是亞蘭文和希臘文原文的音譯。兩個字都有「傻瓜」、「腦袋空空」或「沒有用」的含義。耶穌提到貶低自己

的弟兄，意思是另一位信徒。這種攻擊性的言語不會傷害人的身體，但是會傷害別人的感受。世上的法庭不能審判人不合宜的言語或思想。如果我只是貪心別人的新車或新手機，但沒有去偷東西，警察就不能逮捕我。然而，社會上的罪案與聖經所指出的罪不一樣。任何違反神公義標準的意念、言論和行為都是罪。神知道我們口所講的話，和心裡所想的一切。縱然地上的法庭無法起訴我們，但是神一定會追究我們犯罪的責任。對罪的永恆審判就是下地獄。這節經文中「地獄」的希臘文是「Gehenna」。它來自希伯來文的欣嫩子谷。那是在耶路撒冷以南的一個峽谷。那個地方與拜偶像的邪惡儀式有關。在列王紀下 23 章中，約西亞王要求人們打碎異教神明的祭壇、廟宇和雕像，然後在欣嫩子谷燒掉。六百年後到了耶穌的時代，那個地方可能仍被用作焚燒垃圾的場地。坑裡面不熄滅的火象徵著地獄永恆的火。讓我們搞清楚一點。耶穌並不是說，每當我們貶低另一個信徒時，我們就會永遠被定罪。重點是神會懲罰所有的罪。但只要我們認罪，神願意饒恕。羞辱別人是對神的冒犯，因為人是按照祂的形象被創造的。很多時候，當別人沒有達到我們的期望時，我們就會感到憤怒。例如，我們會說：「你怎麼這麼慢或這麼笨？」憤怒和任何罪總是自我中心的產生的。我們用自己的標準來批判別人。如果我們不馬上停止，罪惡的思想就會導致罪惡的行為。人類歷史上第一宗謀殺案就是一個很好的例子。該隱殺死了他的兄弟亞伯，因為神喜悅亞伯的祭物而不喜悅他的祭物。神在創世記 4:6-7 中警告該隱：6 耶和華對該隱說：「你為什麼發怒呢？你為什麼變了臉色呢？7 你若行得好，豈不蒙悅納？你若行得不好，罪就伏在門前。他必戀慕你，你却要制伏他。」如果該隱不控制他的憤怒，他的憤怒就會控制他。罪就像一頭猛獸，如果我們不馴服它，它就會把我們吃掉。該隱應該怎麼做？他本可以向神悔改，並請求亞伯的原諒。該隱也可以問神為什麼他的祭物沒有被接納。他到底是獻上錯誤的物品或是出於錯誤的動機？當然，該隱通通都沒有做。他卻把憤怒傾倒在亞伯身上並把他打死。結果，該隱被神咒詛。不受控制的憤怒導致了毀滅性的結果。在新約中，使徒約翰回憶這個悲劇，並用以鼓勵我們。他在約翰一書 3:11-12 中說 – 11 我們應當彼此相愛。這就是你們從起初所聽見的命令。12 不可像該隱；他是屬那惡者，殺了他的兄弟。為什麼殺了他呢？因自己的行為是惡的，兄弟的行為是善的。該隱出於仇恨殺死他的兄弟。約翰告訴我們，消除仇恨最有效的解藥就是愛。當我們愛別人時，我們便會把對方的利益放在自己的利益之上。愛把我們的注意力從以自我為中心轉移到以他人為中心。然後我們就不會再問：「我能從這件事情中得到什麼好處？」相反，我們願意向別人施恩。如果你是耶穌的跟隨者，你就能夠以愛來回應。你不能對自己說：「我生來脾氣就不好。我永遠無法改變。」你是可以改變的，因為當你接受耶穌之時，神已經改變了你。在以弗所書中，保羅用舊人與新人的對比來描述我們從罪人到信徒的轉變。他說我們必須特地除掉舊人並穿上新人，那就像洗完澡更換乾淨衣服一樣。我們必須不斷提醒自己，我們是耶穌基督裡的新人。保羅在以弗所書 4:31-32 中給了我們關於憤怒的具體指示：31 一切苦毒、惱恨、忿怒、嚷鬧、毀謗，並一切的惡毒，都當從你們中間除掉；32 並要以恩慈相待，存憐憫的心，彼此饒恕，正如神在基督裡饒恕了你們一樣。保羅

要求我們除掉所有會損害人際關係的情緒、思想和言語，並以能夠造就別人的態度和行動來取代。很多時候，當我們被冒犯時，我們就會生氣。我們要證明我們是對的，對方是錯的。我們的消極態度很可能會引起別人更強烈的反應。結果是一場永無休止的衝突。保羅給了我們一個更好的解決辦法：饒恕！當我們這樣做時，我們就是效法神的饒恕。祂在耶穌基督裡先饒恕了我們。耶穌饒恕了你多少的罪？你能將耶穌的恩典轉給別人嗎？憤怒會使我們失去理性。我們可能會說或做一些事後會後悔的事情。在我們的憤怒爆發之前，我們必須停下來。如果可能的話我們必須立即離開現場。深呼吸一口氣，然後問自己，就像神問該隱一樣：「你為什麼發怒呢？」當我們裡面快要爆炸時，我們需要神的幫助來冷靜下來。基督徒的心中有一位有能力的幫手。聖靈住在我們裡面，塑造我們，使我們能討神喜悅。當聖靈幫助我們糾正思想時，我們才能更客觀地思考。我們問自己：有沒有更合神心意的方法來解決？有哪些經文可以給我幫助？神怎樣才能從我的回應中得到榮耀？我如何向別人顯出恩慈？在神的幫助下，我們可以選擇不回到原來的老我。我們可以保持冷靜，而不是生氣。

2. 憤怒的平息 Resolution of Anger (v. 23-26)

憤怒會導致嚴重的後果。因此，當憤怒開始在我們內心升起時，我們必須平息它。在下面的經文中，耶穌舉出兩種關於憤怒的例子。在兩個假設情況下，耶穌都把焦點放在犯錯的一方。耶穌說犯錯的人應該趕快改正錯誤。很多時候，我們都會記得別人如何得罪我們。但我們很容易忘記自己冒犯別人的經歷。我們必須儘力在事情升級之前平息別人的憤怒。第 23-24 節中的第一個例子是在敬拜場合。一個人正準備去聖殿獻祭。忽然，他想起最近激怒了一位弟兄。耶穌建議那個人應該把祭物放在一邊，先與弟兄和好。神希望我們有無虧的良心。宗教儀式不能掩蓋我們的過失。詩篇 66:18 這樣說：**我若心裡注重罪孽，主必不聽。**住在我們裡面的聖靈不能容忍任何罪。當我們親近神之時，祂會提醒我們所犯的罪。也許當你禱告時，聖靈會在你的腦海中播放一段錄影。神對你說：「還記得你和某人未解決的衝突嗎？現在就去尋求那個人的原諒。」神的目的不是要羞辱你，那是魔鬼的詭計。聖靈會鼓勵你並引導你悔改，這樣就清除你與神之關的干擾。與信徒的緊張關係會阻礙我們與神的關係。當我們與弟兄或姐妹不和時，我們就不能假裝與神有良好的關係。約翰在約翰一書 4:20 中這樣說：**人若說「我愛神」，卻恨他的弟兄，就是說謊話的；不愛他所看見的弟兄，就不能愛沒有看見的神。**我們是否也曾經這樣假冒偽善過嗎？有時候，當我周日來聚會時，我會跟人發生衝突。那個人很可能是我的家人！也許那天早上發生了一些小磨擦。可能我的太太或是兒子動作有點慢，使我覺得不耐煩。於是我向那個人表現出不高興的情緒。然後神就對我說：「記得嗎？你等一會要向你的會眾傳講我的話語。你不能在人們面前假裝聖潔。你先去道歉吧！」就算我可以擠出微笑來騙你，但我無法欺騙神。我只好乖乖地向家人道歉。

毫無例外，在我與你分享神的真理之前，神會先教導我。耶穌的提醒也適用於你：在敬拜神之前，你要先與你冒犯的人和好。讓我們以一顆清潔的心來親近神。

耶穌在第 25-26 節中給出的第二種情況比較緊急。我們可以壓抑自己內心的罪疚感。但要阻止一個人起訴他的對頭會更加困難。這裡的情況是關於債務糾紛。一個人和欠他的錢的人正在前往法庭的路上，因為後者無法償還債務。就像今天一樣，當時的人可以向法庭申訴。法官將判斷誰有過錯，然後決定適當的懲罰。欠債的人會被關起來，直到他把錢還清為止。那時的監獄條件比今天西方國家牢房的標準要差得多。囚犯被關進一個地洞。那裡沒有空調，也不提供食物。囚犯必須依靠家人或朋友的幫助，否則他們會被餓死，冬天也會被凍死。為了避免被關進監獄，那個仁兄必須馬上採取行動。他要向債主求饒，希望他願意延長還債的期限。有人會問：如果債主不肯施憐憫怎麼辦？這不是這個例子的重點。耶穌關注的是欠債人應該怎麼做。希望我們不會面臨訴訟。但當我們冒犯別人時，我們必須請求原諒。我們無法控制對方如何回應，但至少我們應該努力平息他的憤怒。箴言 15:1 給予我們一些寶貴的智慧：**回答柔和，使怒消退；言語暴戾，觸動怒氣。**我們必須謙卑地承認自己的錯誤。我們不能為自己辯護說：「我這樣做是因為你先得罪我。」要保持溫和並真誠。最後說：「你會原諒我嗎？」關鍵不是去分析你是百分之三十正確，對方是百分之三十做錯了。最重要的是恢復和諧，就好像事情從來沒有發生過一樣。

結論 CONCLUSION

耶穌澄清神對我們的要求。不殺人還是不夠好。根本問題是如何處理我們的憤怒。在憤怒控制我們之前，我們必須先控制我們的憤怒。我們應該努力與他人保持和諧。我們需要在人際關係中反映出神和平的品格。如果有任何人有權生氣，那就是神。由於我們的罪，祂本可以將祂的憤怒傾倒在我們身上。但是祂提供了我們永遠無法承擔的補償。神將全人類的罪都歸在祂的兒子身上。耶穌在十字架上化解了神的憤怒。那些接受耶穌救贖恩典的人因此與神和好。耶穌的饒恕是一直可靠的。你只要來到祂面前，承認你的罪，並憑信心接受祂救恩的禮物。