

The Sermon on the Mount (Part 2)

The New People of God

Study 2 – The Angry Heart

Introduction

From time to time we are confronted in the media by reports of uncontrolled rage, rage that boils over in hate-filled words and even in acts of violence. Road rage, hate speech, domestic violence, Xenophobic aggression, these are just some examples of the problem of uncontrolled anger in our society. Of course when we read about such public displays of aggression, it is very easy for us to become self-righteous and to forget that Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount forces us to think not only of the action but also of the attitude of heart. And if the truth be told it is there, in the attitude of our hearts, that we are shown to be sinners in need of grace.

We may not be guilty of some shameful, public display of rage and yet our hearts may be filled with hateful and malicious thoughts. We may not indulge in angry outburst, yet we may seethe within, a cold rage that expresses itself in cutting dismissal of the other or a calculating disdain. We may pay lip service to another's success and yet be filled with envy, taking secret delight when those of whom we are jealous stumble and fall. We may declare that people are made in the image of God and yet curse people behind their backs. We may deplore racism or classism in theory and yet snigger at racist humour or look down upon those we consider to be less intelligent or less sophisticated than ourselves. Like the Pharisees of old we may pay lip service to God's Law concerning the value of the other, and yet have hearts which are deceitful and wicked, hearts which not only turn away from God's good Law but which also turn away from our fellow human beings. It is for the healing of such hearts, jealous hearts, proud hearts, angry hearts that Jesus speaks His word in Matthew 5:21-26



Investigate and Think



Read Matthew 5:21-26

1. What did God's Law say about murder? (see Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17)

