

# Mad as Hell (and Happy as Heaven)

Matthew 5:21-26

*The Living Law (no. 6 in the series)*

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*Video and audio versions available online:*

<https://relentless-love.org/sermons/mad-as-hell-and-happy-as-heaven/>

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*This document was prepared by Heather Eades using Peter's notes and the video version of this sermon. If you encounter any significant discrepancies or errors in this document, please let Heather know. Thank you!*

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## Prayer

Pray this after me:

Our Father in Heaven, I know that Peter didn't write the Bible. I know that Peter does not know how to apply it to the details of my life, but you do. Now help us all to preach your Word. Amen.

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## Message

In Matthew 4, Jesus comes preaching, "Repent the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." In Matthew 5, he climbs a little mountain and teaches the law like Moses. In Matthew 5:17, he says, "I have not come to abolish [the law] but to fulfill it."

Now in 5:21, he begins to expound upon the law saying:

**"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to ['subject to,' or 'guilty in'] judgment.'"**

The law against murder is the sixth of the Ten Commandments; however, you could argue that it's the first law in the Bible. Actually, the very first commandment in the Bible comes before The Fall: God says, "*Be fruitful and multiply.*" I don't know if you're aware of how that works, but that command probably didn't come across as what we would think of as "a law."

When your mom says, "*Have fun this weekend,*" you don't turn around and scream, "*You're not the boss of me! Stop telling me what to do!*"

"*Be fruitful and multiply...*" That's the first commandment. That happens when you give your life to another in a vulnerable, intimate, free communion of mutual surrender.

That was the first command *before* The Fall: "*Give your life to another.*"

The first command *after* The Fall was basically: "*Don't take life from another.*"

This is how it reads:

Genesis 9:4 · “[Noah,] ...you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. <sup>5</sup> And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man [*ha adam*: “the man”]. From his fellow man [*ish*] I will require a reckoning for the life of man [*ha adam*].

<sup>6</sup> “Whoever sheds the blood of man [*ha adam*],  
by man [*adam*] shall his blood be shed,  
for God made man [*ha adam*] in his own image.”

That’s weird, but it tells us quite a bit:

- The penalty for taking the Adam’s life is losing your life.
- Strangely, God already requires a reckoning for your life, as if you’ve already taken *the* life of the Adam and called it your own...but it’s actually his.
- And, the Life is in the Blood.

That’s why some argue that human life begins with the circulation of blood. That happens in a fetus about 17 days after conception.

Solomon wrote that we don’t know how “the spirit comes to the bones in the womb of a woman with child.” We don’t know, but if “spirit” means “breath,” perhaps it’s 17 days after conception, or earlier. We don’t know, but we know that *it does* in the womb. And so, of course, people get worked up over abortion. The number has been going down in our country, but still there are about 800,000 reported abortions a year.<sup>i</sup>

I used to be a one-issue voter, not so much because I was worried about babies getting murdered—I think Jesus once showed me that he has all the babies—not because of the babies, but because I was worried about what that act did to young women, young men, and the *psyche* of our nation. I used to be a one-issue voter until I studied my Bible, and the history of the Middle East, and how many people had died since 9-11.

Listen closely: I don’t know of a correct political solution, but when you take a hard look at how many Iraqi and Afghan civilians have died as a result of our retaliation for Osama bin Laden’s deeds, it should rip your heart in two. And maybe even fill you with dread when you realize that God is just.

My government allows women to decide to kill their own unborn babies, and if some get their way, may actually use my tax dollars to pay for it. But my government has already used my tax dollars to kill hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians in places like Iraq and Afghanistan. Some might argue that an unborn baby isn’t a person, but there is definitely life in the blood of the people we bomb in the deserts in the Middle East.

See? Unless we’re sure God authorizes it, I think it may all be murder. And that’s what we’re talking about today: murder.

So, at the count of three, I want you to stand up if you’ve been party to an abortion—paid for one, had one, or caused one. Or, if you voted for a president who took us into an unjust war. Or, if you, at any time in your life, have been angry.

Maybe you're angry right now at me for simply raising these painful and controversial issues. So, if you've ever murdered someone or have ever been angry, stand up. One..., Two..., Three \_\_\_\_\_. Stay standing. Look around.

Now listen to our text:

**21 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' ("liable" here doesn't mean you might not have murdered, but that you will be judged for murdering.)**

**21 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' 22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment...**

Some may ask, "Who's my brother or sister?" Well, five verses ago, Jesus referred to everyone's father as the same father. He will soon say, "Pray, 'Our Father.'" That makes everyone your brother.<sup>ii</sup>

**21 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' 22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother [says "raca" to his brother] will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool [more]!' will be liable to the hell [gehenna] of fire.**

Now you can sit down. Sorry to do that to you, but I want you to see that we're all in this together.

Jesus just equated anger with murder. He equated an inner disposition of the heart with the most heinous of deeds.<sup>iii</sup>

Jesus equated anger with murder. When I'm angry, something in me wants to take a life, for I perceive that someone is taking my life—and by "life," I mean "*nephesh*."<sup>iv</sup> That's the word God uses in Genesis 9. "*Nephesh*" gets translated as "*psyche*" in Greek and usually as "soul" in English. God breathes his breath into dust, and Adam becomes a living *nephesh*. It refers to more than biological life, but to your relationships, your accomplishments, your mental constructs—your *psyche*.

I get angry when I think someone is assaulting my psyche. Someone says, "*You're wrong!*" And immediately I want to argue, "*No, I'm right! You're wrong!*"

I may not want to stop them from breathing at first. But I want to *take* from their psyche and *give* to my psyche. I want to humble them and exalt me.

Now I should point out that there are two Greek words that both get translated as "anger:" *Thymos* and *Orge*. They often appear to be synonymous, but *thymos* is more likely to be used to describe passionate outbursts of anger and *orge* to describe a disposition of anger.

Jesus uses the verbal form of *orge*, and he uses it as a present passive participle; so literally translated, Jesus says, "*Everyone who is being angry, or being angered, with his brother, is liable.*"

In Ephesians 4:26, Paul writes, "Be angry [*orgizo*], yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger [*parorgismos*]."

I don't think he means it's so much OK to be angry, but something more like, "*I know that you are angry and will get angry—Don't let the sun go down on your anger.*"

I think that because just a few verses later, he writes, "Let all ...*thymos* and *orge* be put away from you..." (4:31)

Well, Jesus says that just being angry with your brother subjects you to judgment. And he points out what I know to be true: When I'm diminishing a person in my heart, I naturally tend to diminish them with my words.

So, Jesus then teaches that, whoever says *raca*—it means "stupid"—to his brother is liable to the council. The council could put people in prison. And anger already is a prison. When you're angry, you put yourself and the people around you in prison.<sup>v</sup>

Then Jesus says, "...whoever says, 'You fool! (*more*)...'"—*more* from *moros* is where we get our words "moral" and "moron"... a *more* is a moral moron. Call someone *more*, says Jesus, and you "will be liable to the Gehenna of fire."

The Old Testament tells us that Gehenna is set ablaze by the breath of God; and we know that God is Love. "Love is strong as death... Its flashes are flashes of fire, the very flame of the Lord," writes Solomon in the Song of Solomon.

When we harbor contempt and speak words of contempt, the Love of God, that is God, will burn us as the most fearsome of all flames. We are "liable to the Gehenna of fire." But that raises a fascinating question: Is Jesus liable to the Gehenna of Fire? In Matthew 23:17, he says to the Pharisees: "You blind fools—[*more*]!"

So, is Jesus liable to the Gehenna of fire; did he get angry? In Mark 3:5, we read that Jesus looked around at the Jews with *orge*, anger. Once or twice, he made a whip and chased the merchants out of the temple.

In Colossians, Paul tells us to put all *thymos* and *orge* away because on account of these things, the *orge* of God, the wrath of God, is coming.<sup>vi</sup> Is God a hypocrite? In a few verses Jesus is going to tell us to be perfect like God is perfect<sup>vii</sup>, but God sure seems to get *angry*... *Doesn't God get angry?*

*Doesn't God shed blood and take life?*

Actually, he takes all life, doesn't He?

*And doesn't he let the sun go down on his anger?*

If there is a place of God's endless *wrath*, then God forever lets the sun go down on his anger—and God himself must be imprisoned in his own rage and never at rest, for Love himself forever fails.<sup>viii</sup> And how could Mr. Omnipotent and Mr. Omniscient ever have let that happen?

Just that thought makes me angry! It's all confusing, and it all makes me angry! I get angry at people, I get angry at myself, but when I'm really honest— I'm angry at someone else.

Maybe you're angry that you had an unwanted pregnancy, but aren't you a little angry at the God who let you get in that situation in the first place? Maybe you're angry at Trump or Obama or



It's a bit jarring when you see it, but let's be honest:

We "bite and devour each other;"<sup>x</sup> we compete at life.  
We pretend to be alive, but our hearts are rather dead.

We're all a bit angry, though it often manifests as depression or fear or addiction.  
We're all a bit angry, 'cause it seems someone is trying to take our life, our dignity, our *psyche*; and so we try to take the *psyche*, dignity and life of others.  
We all murder in our heart, which is the very worst place to do so.

A young pastor was giving a sermon in which he asked a rhetorical question: "*Who here has lived in such a manner that he now has no enemies?*" To his surprise, an old man in the back of the church raised his hand.

The young pastor stopped and asked, "*How have you lived in such a way that you have no enemies?*"

The old guy stood up and said, "*I outlived all them sons of bitches.*"

Of course, he wasn't describing heaven, but hell.

Now at this point, we all assume that we know where Jesus is going with this: "*You're all angry. Now Stop it. Be nice.*" When you're in an argument and someone says, "You're angry," does that tend to make you less angry?

Years ago, I was sitting in a movie theater in California with Susan, and these teenagers behind me kept talking and making noise. And I kept telling myself, "*Don't be angry at those stupid morons behind you.*" But the more I told myself not to be angry, the angrier I got.

Finally, I spun around preparing to curse, and one of them yelled, "*Peter!*" They were all kids from my youth group, whom I dearly loved... and immediately my anger just dissipated, and I thought, "*Those kids are such a crack up.*"

I repented—I suddenly had a new mind.

Next verse, (We're all angry. Anger is Hell.) verse 23:

**<sup>23</sup> So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, <sup>24</sup> leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.**

Now I think we all assume, (and most commentaries assume), that what Jesus really meant to say is that if you're offering your gift at the altar and you have something against a brother—if you are angry with a brother—*go and be reconciled with that brother.*

That may be fine and good, but that's not what Jesus says.

He says, "*If a brother has something against you.*"

That means, "If a brother is angry with you."

(He doesn't say anything about them being justified, or not justified, in their anger—he's already made the point that all human anger is unjustified.)

He's talking about a brother who's angry with you, and Jesus will soon have a whole world of brothers angry with him. So angry that they'll take his life on a tree in a garden.

So, if a brother is angry with you, leave your gift at the altar in the temple and go to him.

Next verse:

**<sup>25</sup> Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. <sup>26</sup> Truly, I say to you, you will never [literally: "certainly not"] get out until you have paid the last penny.**

We all assume that Jesus is saying: *When you're angry at an accuser, stop it.* But Jesus doesn't say anything about *you* being angry; it's *the accuser* that is angry, and of course, anger makes us accuse. Satan is even called "the accuser."<sup>xi</sup>

Paul writes, "Be angry and don't sin: don't let the sun go down on your anger; give no space to the devil."<sup>xii</sup> He's saying that our anger, which is unjustified, (for it's based on a lie), literally gives space to the Accuser.<sup>xiii</sup>

Well in this verse, Jesus still isn't talking about *your anger*...He's talking about *those that are angry with you*, and so accuse you. And he doesn't say anything about their anger being justified, or their accusations being true.

So why would you go to them?

- Why would you go to a brother who is unjustly angry with you, and you're not angry with them?
- Why would you go to a person that's been seduced by the evil one, and now wants to take your life from you—wants to break your body, and shed your blood?
- Why would you want to go to them?

Well, *not* to save yourself but to save them...even if it meant losing yourself—you'd be sacrificing yourself to find them.

See, this is the thing we just don't get about Jesus:

- He actually came to seek and save the lost, because he wants to. Why?
- Because he actually loves sinners.
- Because he actually has sympathy for angry people, for they've trapped themselves in a lonely prison and are burned by the presence of Love.

He came to save them, and he wants you to help him.

You are "the salt of the earth and the light of the world."

You are his body, willing to be broken and to bleed for humanity—the zombies and vampires, the walking dead.

Jesus calls us to have sympathy on those who are angry with us. And then, he says something utterly insane:

He says to *settle on your way to court lest you be thrown in prison—you won't get out until you pay the last penny.*

The last penny of what? Well, whatever you're being sued for, right?

That would mean, “Give whatever they ask.” It’s the obvious meaning. But we think, *He can’t mean that!* And yet, he says exactly that, in just a few paragraphs:

Verse 40, he says, *If someone sues*—that’s a legal term—*for your tunic...*

[Now, tunics are cheap in our society, so let me translate for us:]

He says: *If someone sues you for your new BMW, saying that the title rightly belongs to them... Well then, before you get to court, give them the BMW and your dirt bike because you’re going to give it to them anyway. In fact, you’re in prison and burned by the presence of Love until you do.*

And we must do this without anger—that’s the point. And to us, that’s utterly impossible.

Get yourself crucified, because you want to—that’s the point. How do we do that? Maybe we don’t, and yet we do. If we did, it would certainly require a new mind and a new heart.

Well, let’s take a second look at the questions we asked at first:

[image: slide showing numbered questions about to be discussed]

### **1. Does God let the sun go down on his anger?**

Well, God made the sun, and so for him it would never go down. And yet, sundown probably refers to the end of the day.

And as I’ve preached a thousand times, according to Scripture, we’re still being made in the image of God on the sixth day of Creation. A day that doesn’t come to an end until we come to Jesus on the tree in the Garden and hear him cry: “*Father forgive them for they know not what they do; it is finished,*” and watch him deliver up his spirit—the spirit that fills the temple that it is us. And we begin to experience eternal life—the life of God’s Age, the seventh day, God’s Sabbath rest.

With this, “the wrath of God is finished.”<sup>xiv</sup> The wrath of God comes to an end. Jesus is “the End.”<sup>xv</sup> Jesus is not only subject to Gehenna; he is Gehenna. He is the judgment of God.

### **2. Was God angry or is God angry?**

Well, Scripture says he was angry, or is angry, on the sixth day of creation. Yet, God clearly says vengeance belongs to him, not us.<sup>xvi</sup> We don’t understand God’s vengeance—the word *ekdikesis* means “bring out righteousness.” It flows from Jesus like a river. “Jesus Christ and him crucified,” is God’s vengeance.

The height of human anger is taking the life of another. The height of God’s anger is giving his life to another—it is a cup of wrath and in that cup, in that bowl, is the blood of the lamb. God bleeds mercy, and the mercy is judgment; the mercy is fire; the mercy causes you to lose your psyche and find it.

### **3. So, did Jesus get angry?**

I don’t know if he got angry *at* his brothers, which are us. But he sure got angry *for* his brothers, which are all of us.

In Mark 3, he got angry that the Jews wouldn’t give life on the Sabbath; they viewed healing as a work in response to a law. Jesus viewed healing as the presence of God’s Rest on the seventh day. He gets angry that his brothers don’t want to give life, and so they can’t receive life—his life.

**4. Does Jesus take your life?**

No, he is your life. He is “the Life.”

**5. Does God take his life from you?**

Yes. So he can give it back to you continuously and freely and forever, like a river... it is the River.

God is angry... at the lies that damn the river of life—his Life.

In all four gospels, Jesus gets angry that people would believe that Grace can be bought and sold by merchants in his temple. And I hope you’re beginning to see that *we are* God’s temple. And in each temple is a throne—a judgment seat.

So, leave your gift at the altar of the stone temple and go to your brother, for your brother *is* the temple, and the gift that God desires is *you*. And the judgment he speaks from the throne inside of you is Love.

- Love is the decision to lose your *psyche* and find it in him.
- Love is the decision to bleed for your brothers, his temple, his body.
- Love is the decision that binds everything together in joy.
- Love in human flesh is Jesus and his body.

[image: slide showing numbered questions already discussed with the addition of #6 below.]

**6. So did Jesus leave his gift at the altar to come reconcile with his brothers who had something against him? Did he come to settle with his accusers and give them his every last penny?**

Yes! That’s what this whole thing is about. (And by that I mean, “all creation.” Creation is a stage for the revelation of this.)

Jesus left the Glory of God in Heaven to find you, for he knew that you were angry with him. He knows you’re angry about a million things, but ultimately one thing, and that’s him. He is the Judgment of God, and God “*subjected creation to futility,*” and “*consigned all men to disobedience,*” and that produces a boatload of anger.<sup>xvii</sup>

Now, God wasn’t wrong; he’s always right. But we don’t yet understand his Righteousness; his Righteousness is Jesus. We don’t yet fully know *the Good*, but *the Good* is revealing himself to us on a tree.

Romans 8:20 proclaims that God subjected creation to futility in hope. And Romans 11:32 declares that he “consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.”

I’m saying, he came to find you because you’ve been mad as hell at him, and he wants to turn your hell into his heaven. He wants to give you his heart—and he is relentless Love. He wants to give you his mind—he is the Logic (*Logos*) of Love.

He came to be crucified by you. He came to give his last penny to you... his life to you, and everything for you.

We think life is *saving* yourself. But Jesus thinks Life is *losing* yourself and finding yourself in another.

As he hung on the tree, the Pharisees said, “*Save yourself.*” What they could not yet understand was that this is exactly what he was doing, for we all are himself, his children, his temple, his body, and his bride.

They were angry, for he wouldn’t save them from the Romans. But Jesus was saving them from themselves... and for himself.

It’s not only something he did two thousand years ago in Jerusalem; it’s something he’s doing right here and right now. It’s something he’s doing for you and through you all the time.

I had an experience like this last week, but it’s a little too recent to tell you about now, so I’ll tell you about an experience many years ago.<sup>xviii</sup>

One night, Susan and I were praying for a friend that had been horribly abused and was understandably angry. In prayer, Jesus revealed that the one with whom she was really angry was him—mad that he ever let any of this happen to her in the first place. She was mad as hell at him, and so Jesus asked me to stand in for him as if I was his body.

He had her scream at him in me, and as I held her, he told her to beat on me. And so, she did, until she dissolved in my arms in a river of tears. It was one of the greatest privileges of my life, for through me, he showed her that he gladly suffered for her, and that he had always suffered for her, and always suffered in her, because she is his body and bride.

Do you understand, that, that is exactly what you do whenever you forgive? For ultimately people are not mad at you; they’re mad at the one who made you— Jesus. That is what you do when you forgive, and that is dumping eternal fire on the head of the ancient dragon, and that is how Jesus sets the captives free.

And that is not something that you can simply decide to do. That is only something that God can do through you. And he does it in you, and then through you, when you return to the tree in the garden and see that what was taken has always been given—His Life.

At the cross, the tree of the knowledge of Good and evil is transformed into the tree of Life... and I suspect it always was.<sup>xix</sup> For what changes? Not the tree, but *you*. You change. It changes you.

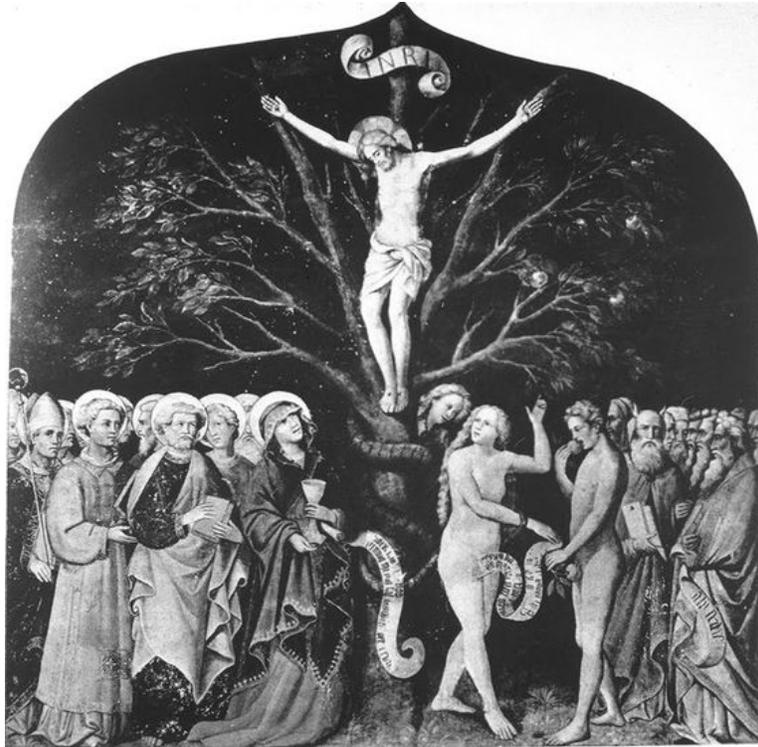


Figure 1 "Mystery of the Fall and Redemption of Man" by Giovanni da Modena (1420)

At the cross, we learn that what we took and killed, the Good and the Life. We learn that what we took has always been given. It's Love, and love is giving your life to another.

It seems that we, the church, have largely forgotten this. But the world longs for this; they even write it into their monster movies.

Video clip: *Bram Stoker's Dracula*  
Columbia Pictures (1992)

*Scene depicts woman (Winona Ryder) crying over the dying Count Dracula who is now on the floor of the cathedral from the previous clip.*

Woman      My love...

*She looks up at the cross that once was stabbed with the sword in previous clip.*

Woman      There in the presence of God, I learned at last how it was possible for my love to release us all from the powers of darkness.

*A light shines down on the decrepit Count's bleeding face, transforming his appearance to the young, handsome version of his previous self.*

Woman      Our love is stronger than death.

*The scene shows the now transformed Count trembling, looking upward as his grieving love weeps over him. The scene pans up to an image painted on the cathedral ceiling of the young count and his bride together.*

That's not perfect, but it's pretty good. In the end, Dracula gets saved by love.

Did you see the tree? Did you discern the power of the blood? I edited it out of the first clip for those of tender heart, *but* in the first clip, Dracula drinks the cup, and when he does, he stands condemned.

That's the beginning, and yet it's also the end. He returns to the tree and sees that the life he took has always been given. It's forgiven. The life of God is forgiven to all of us. It is relentless, unquenchable Love. It's Love that condemns our anger, and Love that sets us free.

The Spirit of the Bride quotes the Song of Solomon 8:4: "Love is strong as death... Its flashes are flashes of fire, the very flame of the Lord"

Dracula dies the second death, the death of death, and begins to live.

- Eternal life is not something that you can take and possess.
- Eternal life is someone who gives himself to you.
- Eternal life is in one body animated by Love; it's Jesus and his Bride.

## Communion

And so, the night before we all took his life on the tree in the Garden, he gave his life at dinner in the upper room.

He took bread and broke it saying, *This is my body given to you.* And he took the cup saying, *This is the covenant in my blood. Drink of it, all of you.*

Like I said, this is a vampire trap... and a zombie trap. This turns zombies into sons and daughters. And this turns vampires into brides and grooms.<sup>xx</sup>

Evil is taking the life of Christ on the tree in the garden. And the Good is giving his life on the tree in the garden; the good is receiving his life at the tree in the garden.

The Good is Love, and you will love because you've been loved...and that's Life.

When you see that Jesus suffers all that you suffer,  
and when you see that Jesus suffers all your anger,  
and when you see that everybody is his body...  
all your anger will be transformed into worship.

Psalm 76:10 · "Surely the wrath of man shall praise you, [Lord God];"

Psalm 34:8 · "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is Good!"

Dark cup is wine, light cup is juice.  
They are both *the Life*, and *the knowledge of the Good*.

## Benediction

So close your eyes. And maybe while I was preaching you were thinking about your anger. Who are you angry at? Maybe it's another person. Maybe it's yourself. Maybe it's God, 'cause he made everything and he put you here, and he's sovereign. You just said not my will but your will be done. So take your anger and put it at the foot of the tree. And if you can, discern the river that flows from the tree. Everything you have is a gift. Everything you've done is forgiven. He could not love you more than he does. Now you surely have all kinds of questions. But drink from this river of mercy, and then do whatever the king sitting on the throne in your heart tells you to do. There may be days that he asks you tells he tells you to make a whip and drive people from the temple. There may be days he has you turn water into wine at a party. And there may be days he asks you to climb up on the tree with him, but whatever you do, it will be done in a new way—a living way that brings life to this broken creation that increases your capacity for joy. Eternal joy. In other words, love because you've been loved. Amen.

So, what am I saying? Try harder to act nice? *No*.

[Image: Slide illustrating the following numbered points]

I'm saying, "Repent!"

1. The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.
2. The Kingdom of Heaven is a body.
3. Your dead... until your connected.

So, stand up. Look around. Look at someone. There's really no such thing as *your* life or *their* life. It's all Christ's life, and you all are his body.

So, it makes no sense to be angry at them. They're your body. However, it might make sense to be angry at the lies that divide you *from* them. And if you are, if that's the anger-- I think you're experiencing the wrath of God... his own anger. And if you want to do something about it: forgive.

*You are the salt of the earth and the light of the world.*

You are the Body and Blood of Jesus the Christ.  
So believe the gospel. Live the gospel.

## Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> The Guttmacher Institute reported 862,320 for 2017. The CDC reported 623,471 for 2016. The CDC relies on state reporting that is not complete.

<sup>ii</sup> In a few more verses he'll command them to pray "Our Father."  
Remember that these people that Jesus is talking to are from Galilee, Judea, the Decapolis and beyond the Jordan. He thinks that these Jews and Gentiles—none of whom are what we'd call "Christian—have the same Father, and the same father as him. He says, "Pray, 'Our Father'"

<sup>iii</sup> You know, once I hear God's command as a law it reveals that my heart is evil. It reveals that I don't want what God wants... and that to do what God wants my heart must be restrained and imprisoned by fear.  
The moment the command to Love becomes a law, it reveals that I don't love Love... and must make myself love for fear of what will happen if I don't love.

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Be fruitful and multiply was a command on my honeymoon night.  
But I sure didn't think of it as a law.

<sup>iv</sup> Technically, in places, Scripture seems to say that the *neshamah*, *ruach*, or *pneuma* (in Greek) is the Spirit and the Life that flows through every *nephesh*, or *psyche* (in Greek). However, Scripture seems to use these words rather interchangeably. In Greek there is one "life" (*zoe*), but many "lives" (*psyche*). Jesus is the one *zoe* that animates all our psyches. His Spirit is the breath in the blood that flows through all of us earthen vessels in the One Body that is the Body of Christ.

<sup>v</sup> President Clinton tells of his first meeting with Nelson Mandela. In his conversation with this great leader of South Africa, the president said, "When you were released from prison, Mr. Mandela, I woke my daughter at three o'clock in the morning. I wanted her to see this historic event. As you marched from the cellblock across the yard to the gate of the prison, the camera focused in on your face. I have never seen such anger, and even hatred, in any man as was expressed on your face at that time. That's not the Nelson Mandela I know today. What was that all about?"

Mandela answered, "I'm surprised that you saw that, and I regret that the cameras caught my anger. As I walked across the courtyard that day I thought to myself, *They've taken everything from you that matters. Your cause is dead. Your family is gone. Your friends have been killed. Now they're releasing you, but there's nothing left for you out there.* And I hated them for what they had taken from me. Then, I sensed an inner voice saying to me, 'Nelson! For twenty-seven years you were their prisoner, but you were always a free man! Don't allow them to make you into a free man, only to turn you into their prisoner!'"

An unforgiving spirit creates bitterness in our souls and imprisons our spirits. A failure to forgive imprisons us.

- Tony Campolo, *Let Me Tell You a Story*, (Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 2000), p. 67

<sup>vi</sup> Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. <sup>6</sup> On account of these the wrath of God is coming. <sup>7</sup> In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. <sup>8</sup> But now you must put them all away: anger (*orge*), wrath (*thymos*), malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. - Colossians 3:5-7

<sup>vii</sup> Matthew 5:48

<sup>viii</sup> This would also mean that something other than God is stronger than God and able to endlessly thwart his will. It's a bit shocking to realize how our doctrines of hell may, in fact, be advertisements for the supposed victory of satan.

<sup>ix</sup> "Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy [*anaxios*: incongruous, unfitting, untoward] manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord." -1 Corinthians 11:27. "Unworthy" is an unworthy translation, for the word *anaxios* doesn't really mean "unworthy" and no one is "worthy" of the blood of the Lamb—especially those that think they're worthy like Vlad in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*.

<sup>x</sup> For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. <sup>14</sup> For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." <sup>15</sup> But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another. - Galatians 5:13-15

<sup>xi</sup> 1 Peter 5:8 ("adversary" is the same word as "accuser" in Matt. 5:25, *antidikos*).

<sup>xii</sup> My literal translation based on the Greek.

<sup>xiii</sup> This should scare us all, for we're all a bit angry.

<sup>xiv</sup> Revelation 15:1

<sup>xv</sup> Revelation 21:6, 22:13

<sup>xvi</sup> Deuteronomy 32:35, Romans 12:9, Hebrews 10:30

<sup>xvii</sup> Romans 8:20 and 11:32

<sup>xviii</sup> This past week, at one point, praying for a friend who had been severely abused. Jesus began speaking through me as I prayed in tongues and this friend began hearing what he was saying in English and responding in English. She began saying things, accusatory things, like "You left me. Why do you always leave me?" I kept answering in tongues, wanting to be angry at the accusations, but realizing that Jesus wasn't angry but pleased that she was speaking. When it was over she

described how weird the experience was, and then asked, "Peter why do you think he leaves? He like vanishes into thin air." I thought a minute and said, "I don't think he leaves; he's inside you." She smiled and said, "That's just what he told me." He never leaves her or forsakes her; he's in her, suffering.

<sup>xix</sup> Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also [or "again"] of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—" – Genesis 3:22

I think God kicked us out of the garden and subjected us all to death, so that we couldn't remain zombies and vampires forever without end, but so that dying we would die; so that we could die to death, the second death and then return to the tree and live in the eternal 7<sup>th</sup> day—with the knowledge of evil, but the will to always choose the Good (our God) in freedom.

<sup>xx</sup> Then the very cup that condemned Dracula sets him free.

"It's Grace that taught my heart to fear and Grace my fears relieve."

It's Love that consigned all to disobedience and love that has mercy on all.

It's the Judgement of God that gives us over to death, and the judgement of God to raise of from the dead and sets us free.

It's the will of God to make us in his own image.