

Memory Verse:

“But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.” - Matthew 5:22

Big Idea:

Jesus uses the topic of murder in His sermon to remind us that it's not about the letter of the law; rather, it's all about the heart. Yes, our actions matter and our words matter, but ultimately, it's about the condition of our hearts that really matters.

Jesus affirms that murder is wrong – it is sinful. However, He takes it deeper and tells us that our words can also be sinful. In fact, Jesus tells us that calling someone bad names and speaking evil towards them is the equivalent of murder. Calling someone a “fool” is so bad because our words matter, and they “have the power of life and death.” But Jesus keeps going deeper and also tells us that anger is equivalent to murder. Anger is a sin, and Jesus shows us that murder actually starts with anger. Anger is the root. Anger is at the heart of the matter. What you are in your heart is who you really are. So, what's in your heart? Let me remind you that if you are in Christ Jesus, He is in your heart. If Christ is in your heart, you have a new heart that is powered by His amazing grace. You have all you need for Life and Godliness. You can GO DEEP without fear because that is where Jesus is.

Finally, where there has been anger or any other sin, there is a need for reconciliation. God loves reconciliation. He desires it so much so that He sent Christ Jesus to pay the ultimate price for our reconciliation. He reconciled us to our Father God. Jesus loves people and He wants us to be reconciled with one another. He wants us to forgive one another and love one another. Listen to the voice of Jesus and respond to His call to GO DEEP!

Scripture and Discussion Questions: *Read the Bible passage(s) and discuss the questions.*

1. **Matthew 5:21-22** – Do our actions matter to God? Why is God even more interested with what's in our hearts? How can a changed heart change our actions?
2. **Proverbs 18:21 & James 3:9-12** – Have you ever been the recipient of hurtful words? Do you see how words can cause severe damage to a person? How can a heart that is purified by Christ affect how we speak to others and how we treat others? Make it a point this week to speak life.
3. **Matthew 5:23-26 & Romans 12:18** – Why is reconciliation so important? How can unforgiveness affect our relationship with God? Have you ever tried to reconcile, but the other party wasn't interested? What should you do? Ask God to reveal anyone you to be reconciled with.

Kids Corner:

Talk to your children about how we need to remove sin from our lives, but we must go deeper than what we just see. We must deal with sin at the root level or else it might come back. Now, it's time to do some gardening. Find some weeds that need to be pulled and tell your children that the weeds are like sin, they don't belong and they can make things look ugly and actually kill the good plants. Cut the top of a weed off and then talk to your children about how that weed will grow back because the root is still there. Now help your child pull some weeds – root and all. Explain how that weed won't grow back and that when we allow God to pull the sin out of our lives, roots and all, that the sin can be gone and not return.

Prayer Time:

Have a discussion with God about what you have just studied. Ask God to examine your heart and to reveal any corruptness or impurity that is present at your heart level. Repent. Ask for God's powerful grace to purify your heart and to separate you from the junk that had attached to your heart. The grace of Jesus is amazing and powerful and will purify a heart that is surrendered to Him. Do not be afraid. Jesus is at the heart level and He is full of grace, mercy, forgiveness, and love. GO DEEP!