



Bible Study Questions

15th September 2024

Matthew 5:21-26

Introduction

Ice Breaker - Would you rather...

Ask your small group a "would you rather..." question and have them take turns answering the question.

1. Would you rather have telekinesis (the ability to move things with your mind) or telepathy (the ability to read minds)?
2. Would you rather lose your sight or your memories?
3. Would you rather have a personal housekeeper or a personal chef?
4. Would you rather always be 10 minutes late or always be 20 minutes early?
5. Would you rather go back to the past and meet your loved ones who passed away or go to the future to meet your children or grandchildren to be?

Read & Reflect

Read Matthew 5:21-26 at least twice using different versions of the Bible. As you read or listen to the words reflect, and share on the following:

- What stands out or what do you notice?
- What questions are raised for you?
- What challenges you?

Questions

- How does Jesus' teaching on anger and murder go beyond the external actions that the law addresses? What insight do we get from James 4:1-3?
- What is harder, obeying the law or obeying Jesus' in Matthew 5:21-26? Why do you think this?
- In verses 23-24, what does Jesus prioritise over worship and why? If you could describe Matthew 5:23-24 as a scene in a movie, what would that look like?
- According to Jesus in Matthew 5:23, who is meant to take the initiative in reconciling a broken relationship?
- Read Matthew 18:21-35, how does Jesus' words in Matthew 18, impact and inform what Jesus is saying in Matthew 5:25-26?

Some Background on Jesus' use of "you fool" in Matthew 5:22:

Jesus says that those who say, "you fool" are "in danger of the fire of hell" (Matthew 5:22). This doesn't mean that a single insult dooms someone, but rather that a pattern of unchecked anger, hatred, and contempt can lead a person away from God's kingdom values of love and reconciliation. In essence, Jesus is teaching that our words reflect our hearts, and even seemingly small insults can reveal deep spiritual issues. The use of "you fool" is more than a casual insult—it's a reflection of inner anger and disdain that Jesus wants His followers to avoid.

Application

- Instead of harbouring anger and speaking harmful words, Jesus calls for reconciliation, humility, and love. This is not easy, what might help us live out Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5:21-26?
- Is there a step of forgiveness or reconciliation that you need to take this week? This could mean:
 - going to someone directly,
 - seeking God's forgiveness,
 - asking people you trust to pray with you and for you,
 - talking with someone you trust and/or getting help from someone you trust.

Going Deeper

If you would like to explore more of what Jesus is saying in Matthew 5:21-26, read the book **The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict** by Ken Sande.

Pastoral Note:

If today's study has awoken past hurts or if the thought of forgiving someone who has hurt you is too painful, please know that there are people willing to help you. Please talk with Pastor Ian, someone you trust, or call Hopefield on 9545 0299 to speak with a Christian Counsellor.

Please know that you're not alone in this journey of healing and forgiveness.