

Be Reconciled to Thy Brother

Matthew 5:20-26—²⁰ *For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.* ²¹ *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment;* ²² *But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.* ²³ *Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;* ²⁴ *Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.* ²⁵ *Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.* ²⁶ *Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.”*

- I. Verse 20—*“Except your righteousness shall exceed”*
 - A. In our last study, the Lord Jesus Christ began His fight for the souls of men.
 1. He knew that the souls He was seeking to rescue were held in the tight grip of Satan who had used the rabbis and the scribes and the Pharisees to hold the people in a type of bondage.
 2. What the Lord Jesus was embarking on as He set out on this battle was to do what Job described as follows, *“And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth”* (Job 29:17).
 - B. The people that the Lord Jesus was speaking to only knew what the scribes and Pharisees had taught them. The teaching of the scribes and Pharisees was like the strong jaws of a lion, and each of the teeth of the lion was like the traditions that were used to keep the people in line.
 - C. In order to deliver the people from the bondage of the legalistic system, He had to break the jaws of the lion and take the people from the teeth of the lion.
 - D. Now, the problem was the traditions of the scribes and Pharisees which were and are based on what they call “The Oral Law.”
 1. The “Oral Law” is just what it says. It is the law that they feel was handed down from Moses in an oral form.
 2. The “Oral Law” is opposed to the “Written Law.”
 - a. There was the view that the “Oral Law” is just as important or maybe even more important than the “Written Law.”
 - E. So, what the Lord is doing here is first of all establishing that His teaching is not against or destructive to the “Written Law.”
 1. **Matthew 5:17** says, *“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.”*
 - F. Next, He establishes the importance of the “Written Law” when He says in verse 18 that the “Written Law” stands forever.
 - G. Now, just like an army moves into battle position, in verse 19, the Lord moves into battle position by warning about teachers who break the “Written Law” and teach others that it is acceptable to break the “Written Law.”
 - H. Then, the Lord takes direct aim at the scribes and Pharisees when He says in verse 20, *“For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.”*

- I. Now, with that statement, He is talking about what He calls, “the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees” and the “Your righteousness” which He says has to exceed or go higher than the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.
- J. With that statement, the Lord is now talking about two different righteousnesses and as this theme develops, He is going to make all of the following crystal clear:
 - 1. One righteousness has its origin in man, and the other has its origin in God.
 - 2. One righteousness is strictly based on the outward acts of observance, while the other righteousness focuses on inward thoughts.
 - 3. One righteousness thrives on the praise of man, while the other righteousness thirsts for the praise of God.
 - 4. One righteousness passes away when the person passes away in death, while the other righteousness endures for eternity.
 - 5. One righteousness is based on the letter of the law, while the other righteousness is based on the spirit of the law.
 - 6. One righteousness grows out of a dead orthodoxy of rules, while the other righteousness is the fruit of living faith and relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.
- K. This is what the Lord must get the person to see if he is going to come out of the darkness of a dead religion into the light of a living union with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.
- L. So, the Lord has made the statement that a person’s righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.
 - 1. With that statement, people would ask, “What do you mean? What do you mean by saying that my righteousness has to exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees?”

II. Verse 21—*“Ye have heard...Thou shalt not kill”*

- A. The Lord starts to explain what he means by saying that a person has no chance of getting into Heaven unless he has a righteousness that goes beyond the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.
- B. Verse 21 is as if the Lord said, “Well, let me show you what I mean. Let’s take the example of murder.”
 - 1. **Matthew 5:21** says, *“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment.”*
- C. Here, He is saying, “You have heard that the Scripture in ‘Thou shalt not kill.’”
 - 1. You have further heard that if you murder you will be in danger of judgment.
- D. Most people today if they say they are not a sinner will list the fact that they have not murdered anyone.
- E. Righteousness is not good enough and the righteousness required has to go deeper and beyond just physical murder to get into Heaven.

III. Verse 22—*“But I say unto you, that...”*

- A. Now, the Lord uses that phrase that sets Him apart from the Pharisees which is **Matthew 5:22**.
 - 1. The verse says, *“But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.”*
- B. By using this phrase, *“But, I say unto you,”* the Lord was wanting his listeners to see that He was different from the scribes and Pharisees.
- C. The effect that it had on the people can be seen when He finished this Sermon on the Mount in **Matthew 7:28-29**.

1. **Matthew 7:28-29** says, *“And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:²⁸ For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.²⁹”*
 2. The people were astonished because they never heard these things before.
 3. The people were astonished at what they called, “His doctrine” which was not at all like the doctrine of the scribes and Pharisees.
- D. The great difference between what He taught and what the scribes and Pharisees taught was one word—“Authority.”
1. Authority here refers to the impact that His teaching had.
 2. When a person sees the “authority” in the Word of God, then the person’s life will change. The Bible is no longer seen as the word of man but as the Word of God.
 3. It does not take long when a person meditates on the Bible for the person to see the authority of the Bible. That is when the Bible starts to change a person from the inside out.
- E. When He said, *“But, I say unto you,”* that took His teaching from the low level of the religion of man to the high level of the truth of God.
- F. When the scribes and Pharisees taught, it was flat and not backed up by their lives. Their teaching did not come with any force.
- G. When He taught them principles, the people saw it as a law because of His authority.
- H. When He told the people what they should do, the people saw it as command because of His authority.
- I. All that authority came out when He said, *“But, I say unto you.”*
- IV. Verse 22—*“Whosoever is angry with his brother”*
- A. Now, He focuses not on the stone in the hand to be used to murder another person, but on the anger in the heart that goes before the murder.
- B. He takes the people back to think of the first murder in **Genesis 4**.
1. **Genesis 4:3-8** says, *“And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.³ And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:⁴ But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.⁵ And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?⁶ If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.⁷ And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.⁸”*
- C. Abel was a shepherd, so he brought what he had which was a blood sacrifice to the Lord.
1. Cain was a farmer, so he brought what he had which was from his harvest.
 2. The problem was that the Lord had made it clear that He wanted a blood sacrifice. When God was happy with Abel’s offering and not happy with Cain’s offering, that made Cain mad.
 3. The record says, *“Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.”*
 - a. That was the anger that resulted in murder. That anger stemmed from envy from **1 John 3:11-12**.
 - b. **1 John 3:11-12** says, *“For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.¹¹ Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.¹²”*
 4. God called out to Cain and warned him that he was in danger. God told Cain to get a grip and rule over that anger.

a. **Genesis 4:7** says, “*Sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.*”

- D. That was Cain’s last chance to respond to God and renounce the anger that was in him.
- E. The same person who warned Cain was standing there giving the Sermon on the Mount, and He is speaking to them about the danger of anger.
- F. That anger in Cain was not seen except for Cain’s face which showed that his face fell.
 - 1. Cain could have done a good job at hiding his anger from man, but Cain could not hide his anger from God. God saw Cain’s anger.
 - 2. God sees our hearts. And as God sees our hearts, He says about our hearts in **Matthew 7:11**, “*If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?*”
 - a. He calls us, “evil,” saying that our hearts are evil.
 - 3. People say, “Just look into your own heart,” “Look within yourself.” This is what disturbed Paul. What he saw when he looked into his own heart is stated in **Romans 7:24**
 - a. **Romans 7:24** says, “*O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*”
 - b. Paul was talking about the wickedness that he saw when he looked into his own heart.
- G. The Lord said what a person would find when he looked into his own heart in **Mark 7:20-23**.
 - 1. The verses say, “*And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.²⁰ For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,²¹ Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:²² All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.²³”*
- H. The reason that the people were astonished at His doctrine was that He talked about what was in the heart of man.
 - 1. The Lord Jesus loved to use plants to illustrate His teaching, especially in the parable of the sower and the seed. He used different types of ground that seed encounters to illustrate what happens to different people when they hear the Word of God.
 - 2. Here the Lord is alluding to plants when He says the following:
 - a. **Mark 7:20**—“*That which **cometh out** of man*”
 - b. **Mark 7:21**—“*For **from within**, out of the heart of men, proceed*”
 - c. **Mark 7:23**—“*All these evil things come **from within***”
 - 3. All these statements of “cometh out” and “from within” all point to the root of a plant that is responsible for what comes to the surface of the soil.
 - a. We have all struggled with weeds and used a weed whacker to cut the weed down from the surface—only to see that weed appear again.
 - a) Why? The root of the weed was not dug up.
 - b. When someone says something he shouldn’t and he is rebuked with, “Where did that come from?”
- I. It came from the heart, and that is what the Lord focused on in His doctrine—the heart of man.
 - 1. He pointed to the heart of man and said the heart is the root of evil. The actions are the fruit that stems up and out of the root.
- J. The Lord called what comes out of man’s hearts “evil thoughts” and “evil things.”

1. The Lord was not just talking about some people. He was speaking about all people when He said in **Mark 7:21**—“*Out of the heart of men.*”
 2. This is not just some men, but all men.
- K. The Lord concluded that all men have evil hearts, and to get into Heaven a person must have what is described in **Psalms 24:3-5**.
1. **Psalms 24:3-5** says, “**Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?⁴ He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart.⁵**”
- L. The only person who is going to ascend into Heaven and stand in Heaven is the person with a pure or clean heart.
1. But, the Lord has said that the heart of man is evil and not clean.
 2. Man on his own cannot clean his own heart as stated in **Proverbs 20:9**.
 - a. **Proverbs 20:9** says, “*Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?*”
 - b. The obvious answer is that no one can make their own heart clean, and no one can purify himself from his sin.
 - a. *What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus!*
 3. Only the Lord can clean the heart of man as said in **Psalms 51:10**.
 - a. **Psalms 51:10** says, “*Create in me a clean heart, O God.*”
- M. When the Lord said that when a person was angry and said, “You idiot,” he was in danger of the judgment of hell fire. The Lord was saying that everyone has done that at one time in their lives.
- N. The two sins of murder and sexual sins were at the top of the list in **Mark 7:21**, and those are the two sins that the Lord is addressing here now.
- V. Verse 22—“*Say to his brother Raca...Fool*”
- A. The Lord was specific when He said in verse 22, “*Whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.*”
 - B. “Raca” comes from the Hebrew word, “Raytza,” and it means to spit.
 - C. To spit on a person is to say that they despise that person.
 - D. The Lord was described as despised in **Isaiah 53:3**.
 1. **Isaiah 53:3** says, “*He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*”
 2. Twice in that verse, the Lord is described as despised.
 - E. The expression of how much the Lord was despised is in **Isaiah 50:6**.
 1. **Isaiah 50:6** says, “*I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.*”
 - F. He would come to experience this anger and Raca spitting into His face.
 - G. First, Israel expressed how they despised the Lord by spitting into His face in **Matthew 26:64-67**.
 1. **Matthew 26:64-67** says, “*Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.⁶⁴ Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.⁶⁵ What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death.⁶⁶ Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands,⁶⁷”*
 - H. When Israel spit into His face, that showed how much they despised and rejected the Lord Jesus.
 - I. But, it was not only Israel that spit in His face.

1. **Matthew 27:27-30** says, *“Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers.²⁷ And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe.²⁸ And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!²⁹ And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.³⁰”*
 - J. It was also the Roman soldiers who spit on the Lord Jesus, and they represented the Gentile world that despised and rejected the Lord.
 - K. When the Jewish leaders heard that the common people were following the Lord Jesus, they despised the people when they said about them in **John 7:49**.
 1. **John 7:49** says, *“But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.”*
 - L. When a person despises another, it is because there is pride as it says in **Proverbs 21:24**.
 1. **Proverbs 21:24** says, *“Proud and haughty scorner is his name, who dealeth in proud wrath.”*
 - M. The Lord went on in verse 22 to say that when a person calls another, “Thou Fool,” he is in danger of hellfire.
 1. Fool implies an atheist.
 2. **Psalm 14:1** says, *“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.”*
 - N. To make the point, the Lord did not say in verse 22, “Whosoever is angry with another person.” The Lord said, “Whosoever is angry with his brother.”
 1. He said the word “brother” to get people to turn away from anger because that is my brother.
 - O. The farther a person is from you, the easier it is to hate that person. The closer that person is to you, the harder it is to hate.
 1. During World War II, when the United States went to war with the Germans, there was a problem because many Americans came from Germany. Germans were seen as close to Americans, so, there was an effort to use names to distance Germans from Americans.
 - a. So, they used names for Germans like Krauts and Jerrys, and Heines.
 - b. Those were all designed to get Americans to not see Germans as close to them.
 - P. On the other hand, if hatred did creep into the heart of a brother, then it was a fierce hatred.
 1. The worst and bloodiest war that the United States ever fought was the Civil War where brother hated brother.
 - Q. Cain slew his brother Abel.
 - R. Esau hated his brother Jacob and said, *“The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob” (Genesis 27:41)*.
 1. Esau looked forward to the death of his father Isaac so that he could then kill his brother Jacob.
- VI. Verse 23—*“If...there rememberest...thy brother”*
- A. Now, the Lord speaks about what happens to a person when he is bringing his gift to the altar for God in **Matthew 5:23**.
 1. **Matthew 5:23** says, *“Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee.”*

- B. Why would a person remember a conflict with his brother when he comes to the altar with a gift for God? This is because God is for us and wants us to get right and reconcile with those we are in conflict.
- C. The closer a person gets to God (like when they bring a gift to the altar for God), the more that person will be reminded of his sin.
1. That is the job of the Holy Spirit
 - a. **John 16:7-8** says, “*Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.⁷ And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:⁸*”
- D. God is especially interested in us being able to come to Him with nothing between our souls and the Savior.
1. For example, when we come to the Lord’s Table, we are to first examine ourselves for sin from **1 Corinthians 11:23-31**.
 - a. The verses say, “*For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:²³ And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.²⁴ After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.²⁵ For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.²⁶ Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.²⁷ But **let a man examine himself**, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.²⁸ For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.²⁹ For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.³⁰ For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.³¹”*
 2. There is a necessary preparation before coming to the Lord’s Table for communion, and it is “Let a man examine himself.”
 3. It is very easy to read those verses and **stress out** when coming to the Lord’s Table over whether sins have been confessed and dealt with to not die or get sick.
- E. But, when the Lord said, “*Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee,*” that is a great encouragement for us to not be anxious. That shows that when we come to the Lord’s Table, the Lord Himself will remind us about sins that need to be dealt with first before coming to the Lord.
1. When we come to the Lord’s Table for communion, God wants us to feel our guilt.
 2. A person is not just remembering on his own that he is angry with another person or another person is angry with him; the Holy Spirit is convicting of sin as a person comes to the Lord’s Table.
 - a. A person can harden his heart and say, “That has nothing to do with me” and refuse to be reminded of the conflict between him and another person.
- F. When the Lord said in **Matthew 5:24**, “*Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift,*” it shows the importance of reconciliation. Anger stands in the way of being able to come to God
- G. It is more important to be able to come to God than it is to harbor any anger against another.

1. Because when it comes to harboring anger, a person sets at the junction between two roads where he has to decide as to which road to go down.
 - a. One road is marked “Anger,” and the other road is marked, “Friendship with God.” A person can go down only one road. If a person chooses to harbor anger at another, then there is no friendship with God. If a person chooses to have a friendship with God, then there is no anger with another person.
 - H. There was a custom in the early church that a family did to prepare themselves.
 1. The custom in the early church was that before a family came to church for the Lord’s Table, each person in the family thought about if they had wronged another and they asked forgiveness from each other.
 2. They did that before they came to church for the Lord’s Table.
 3. What would that be like if our families did that before coming to church to prepare themselves for the Lord’s table?
- VII. Verse 23—*“Thy brother hath ought against thee”*
- A. The Lord knew that when we looked into our hearts to see if we were angry with another person, our evil hearts would just gloss over anger and say, “I’m not angry with anybody. I’m good.
 - B. And the Lord knew that we would do that, so the Lord said in verse 23, *“There rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee.”*
 - C. The Lord said that the way to tell if you are angry with someone is not, “Let’s see, am I angry with anyone?”
 - D. The Lord said that the way to tell if you are angry with someone is, “Let’s see, is anyone angry with me?”
 - E. We tend to look at others who are angry with us and think, “Oh, that is their problem. They should not be angry with me. I didn’t do anything wrong to them. That is their problem. They need to deal with it.”
 1. That is why people say, “I am sorry if I offended you.” That statement is saying, “I did nothing to offend you, and if you are offended by me, that is your problem. You are just too sensitive. Your problem is that you get offended over nothing.”
 - F. That is why the Lord started with the warning “I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother” (**Matthew 5:22**).
 1. The subject is *you* being angry with your brother.
 - G. The Lord was still on the subject of you being angry with your brother when He said in verse 23.
 1. The verse says, *“If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee.”*
 2. That sure hurts! To be blocked from coming to God because someone else is mad at me? Woah!
 - H. That is a strong criterion, but this is what Paul said that he worked on in his life when he said in **Acts 24:16**.
 1. The verse says, *“And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.”*
 2. When Paul used the word, “always” as in, “I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense,” that means that it is a **constant** battle for us to have a conscience that is void of offense toward God and man.
 3. In our lives, we do end up with a conscience of offense toward God and man.
 4. When we have a conscience of offense toward God, we go to God and ask for Him to forgive us and pray that prayer, “Lord, cleanse my heart.” When we do that, we rely on His promise of **Hebrews 9:14**.

- a. **Hebrews 9:14** says, “How much more shall **the blood of Christ**, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, **purge your conscience** from dead works to serve the living God?”
 - 5. When we have a conscience of offense toward man or when we know that someone is mad at us, we go to that person.
 - a. **Matthew 5:24** says, “First be reconciled to thy brother.”
 - I. There is one person that wants us to get right with our brother more than we do. That is God.
 - 1. The word “come” is like the Lord is saying, “I want you to come to me. Just first go, reconcile with your brother, and then come to me.”
- VIII. Verse 25—“*Agree with thine adversary quickly*”
- A. The Lord uses a certain illustration to further make His point when He says in **Matthew 5:25-26**.
 - 1. **Matthew 5:25-26** says, “*Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.²⁵ Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.²⁶*”
 - B. Now, when the Lord is speaking here about “the adversary,” “the judge,” and “the officer” and “the prison,” He is speaking about the legal system.
 - C. The Greek word used here for “adversary” is the word “Antideekos.” It means the accuser, and it is the same word that is used for the devil in **1 Peter 5:8**.
 - 1. **1 Peter 5:8** says, “*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.*”
 - 2. The devil is the great accuser of the brethren.
 - a. **Revelation 12:10** says, “*For the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.*”
 - D. The adversary here is the legal opponent who accuses us.
 - E. The Lord is saying to agree with your accuser quickly before you get in front of the judge because you might find yourself in a much worse situation. You might have a judgment against you and end up in prison having to pay dearly. You won’t get out until you have paid the very last cent of that judgment.
 - F. The adversary is the person who is accusing you.
 - G. The judge is used as an example of the legal system. This in no way refers to God.
 - 1. He is talking about having a conflict with a brother. He is not talking about having a conflict with God.
 - H. The Lord says to agree with your accuser quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him.
 - I. “Whilst thou art in the way with him” means “while you are in the way with him to the court for the trial.”
 - 1. In other words, while you are both on your way to court, talk with your accuser and agree to settle the case before you get in front of the judge because it may go very badly for you if you get in front of the judge.
 - 2. **Matthew 5:25** says, “*Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him.*”
 - J. It is not a matter of who is right or whom you feel is right. It is more important to not be mad at another person and to not have someone else mad at you.
 - 1. That is the issue here—not who is right and who is wrong. The issue is seen in the following verses:
 - a. **Acts 23:1**—“*And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.*”

- b. **Acts 24:16**—“*And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.*”
- 2. God will decide who is right and who is wrong. God will decide what to do about who is right and who is wrong which is why we are told in **Romans 12:19**.
"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."
- K. The principle of verses 25 and 26 are found in **Romans 12:18**.
 - 1. **Romans 12:18** says, “*If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*”
 - 2. It is not always possible to be at peace with everyone, but that is our goal. Swallow pride, accept the wrong done to us and don’t try to get even or set the record straight. Just do everything you can to “live peaceably with all men.”
- L. Because the damage done by anger and bitterness and not living peaceably with all men is too great—especially when you consider that it blocks our relationship with God.