



Wrath & Patience

Look Back

10 Minutes

- How did you spend time last week noticing and celebrating the many evidences of grace happening in the lives of those around you?
- How is resisting envy counter-cultural?
- Discuss how you can be more intentional about acts of kindness towards others. Who have you seen model this?

Read Aloud

Matthew 5:21-26

Head: Observe the text and the author's main points

15-20 Minutes

1. How does Jesus redefine the concept of murder in these verses? What significance does Jesus place on anger in relation to the commandment against murder?
2. Go back to the start of Matthew chapter 5 and leading up to our text. How does Jesus' teaching on anger and reconciliation fit into His larger vision of the Kingdom?
3. How might these verses inform our understanding of justice and forgiveness?

Heart: Envision how the text—when applied—might transform your inner life in terms of your thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors.

15–20 Minutes

1. In these verses, how does Jesus emphasize the importance of reconciliation and settling disputes? How should we respond?
2. Let's be honest: it's often difficult to pursue reconciliation when angry with someone, and it requires humility and courage to face the task. Take some time to discuss why we are often unwilling to reconcile with others. Why is this important?
3. What practical steps can individuals take to live in Jesus' larger vision of God's Kingdom and embody His teachings on reconciliation in their own lives?

Hands: Apply the text by moving from inward reflection to outward action looking for ways to live the text out in our lives to serve others

10 Minutes

Reaching Upwards: Growing in Your Relationship with God

- In Matthew chapter 5, Jesus began one of His longest teachings on record, referred to as the Sermon on the Hill. In verses 1-12, He helps His hearers (and now readers) reimagine a reordered cosmos where God's inbreaking Kingdom redefines power, grief, suffering, peace, justice, and righteousness. By the time the reader gets to verses 21-26, Jesus has already established His expectation that His followers will embody this inaugurated new creation by doing God's will. Reconciliation is a sign that God's Kingdom has come near. Take some time to think about, talk about, and confess to God how anger sometimes impedes our call to be peacemakers (v9), salt of the earth (v13), a light to the world (v14), and reconcilers (v25).

Reaching Outward: Investing in Your Neighbors

- In Matthew 5:21-22, Jesus is raising the bar for His people. It is easy for us to feel confident in the idea that we are "good people" because we have not committed murder. But Jesus isn't as interested in our confidence in what we have not done as much as He is in the kind of person we are. Have you expressed anger, contempt, or wrath towards a friend, a stranger, or an alien? We can take confidence in Jesus' call to participate in His putting the world back to right. Take some time to discuss and pray about the relationships in your life that need to be healed. What steps can you take towards reconciliation in those relationships this week?
- The ultimate reconciliation comes from Jesus' willing death on the cross. How can you make sure that your friends and neighbors have heard about Jesus' sacrificial gift that reconciles God and man? Consider one of these two suggestions:

- Invite a friend or neighbor to Holy Week and Easter services at FPC. For information and a schedule, go to fpchouston.org/worship/lent.
- Invite a friend or neighbor to FPC Spring Alpha at FPC that starts Thursday evening, April 11 for 8 weeks. It will meet from 7 - 8:30 pm on campus with dinner, conversation, and a short video to prompt discussion. For information and to volunteer, contact Pastor of Outreach Emmanuel Paulpeter at epaulpeter@fpchouston.org.

Reaching Beyond

- Our personal lives are often marked with anger and conflict. However, we are not alone in this kind of suffering or relational fracturing. Anger and contempt for others can often take systemic and corporate forms. FPC has excellent mission partners locally and internationally who are committed to the work of reconciliation and justice - both hallmarks of God's redemptive activity in our world. How can you volunteer and commit yourself to one of those causes? Go to <https://fpchouston.org/serve/ways-to-serve/> to familiarize yourself with the local and global missions FPC supports and for opportunities to serve. Contact Madie Weir, Missions Coordinator, at mweir@fpchouston.org for additional information.