

From the Rector's Study, the Rev. Bryce Sangster  
Sunday, February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Epiphany VI  
Deuteronomy 30:15-20 Psalm 119:1-8 1 Corinthians 3:1-9 Matthew 5:21-37

This gospel it's basically in four parts, four themes. Anger, adultery, divorce, and oaths.

The first two are primary then perhaps inform the other two.

It seems unfair equating anger and lust with murder and adultery.

These feelings are normal, anger and lust and all of us if we are honest will have those feelings. But if they dominate our thoughts and feelings then they may lead to behaviors such as murder and adultery.

Anger is what I call a surface or upfront emotion. There is always something behind it, another emotion, usually I think related to fear. Some sort of loss or potential loss. When it leads to murder, a sense of entitlement, something being taken away that they deserve and seeing others as only a means to an end. Thus, taking lust to the extreme is objectifying others and not seeing ourselves and others as complete or valuable human beings.

The sense that there is something missing in both the idea of recognizing and knowing that we are loved by God and others is missing. This is all about relationship and our understanding of self and others this is the sense of anger in all of this. That we get angry when others don't meet our expectations the problem is; more about the unrealistic and idealistic expectations than the reality of the actions of the others.

Do we cut ourselves and others enough slack?

Maybe that's why I disagree with what Jesus says today when he tells *to leave our gift at the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift.*

Maybe I don't completely disagree, because Jesus was talking about bringing a gift to God to the altar, maybe as a sacrifice. While I'm talking about coming to the altar for communion. It's not quite the same thing. I'm thinking the difference between the two is what we receive from God. Giving a gift to God is for God and not us receiving anything, but we do receive when we come for communion. In other

words, to not come to the altar of God for communion because of a conflict with a brother or sister feels emotionally appropriate, but is it missing the opportunity for strength and insight and support from God to be able to reconcile with our brother or sister?

The temptation then is potentially to stay away from our brother and sister then we have the conflict with and stay away from God as well because we don't feel good about coming into the presence of God for communion. God can help us understand our anger and understand what is motivating our brother or sister.

There is no perfect way to come to God, but it makes sense to come to God as honestly as we can to bring to God our hopes and fears, our pains enjoy. When we are at peace and when we are in conflict.

God is God of all of who we are and who we strive to be.  
Amen

May God give to you and to all those you love  
his comfort and his peace,  
his light and his joy,  
in this world and the next;  
and the blessing ...