



# Good Morning, Church!

By Rev. Dr. Carl K. Ellis, Founder and Executive Director  
The Academy for Small Membership Church Ministries

## ***The Answer Is Love and Forgiveness, Not Anger and Hate***

*By Rev. Dr. Carl K. Ellis*

I have witnessed the disintegration of families because of anger and hate. Daily family meals, traditional holidays, and meals celebrating significant life events are either canceled or have become battlegrounds where families can no longer tolerate being together. Family members can no longer listen respectfully; truth has been replaced with rumor and innuendo.

We forget that anger and hate make news. Anger and hate attracts viewers, and viewers make ratings, and ratings attract advertisers, and advertisers make news stations money, resulting in our society becoming increasingly uncivilized.

Anger and hate beget more anger and hate. Long ago, psychologists thought a person could get rid of their rage by hitting an object. They discovered hitting an object raises a person's anger level and makes them angrier; for example, when a person driving is cut off, gets upset, and hits their steering wheel, their anger increases, does not decrease, and can lead to road rage.

Jesus had some things to say about anger and hate.

“You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not murder’ and ‘whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, ‘You fool,’ you will be liable to the hell of fire. ~Matthew 5:21-22

“You have heard that I was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you so that you may be children of your God in heaven.” ! ~Matthew 5:43-45b

Jesus was very clear: anger and hate are sins. When we allow the emotions of anger and hate to control our lives, we sin; we destroy not just the one whom we are angry with and hate, but we destroy our lives as well.

Life, at times, is complex, and there are no easy answers. Sometimes, we need to make difficult decisions, which require everyone to work together, listen to different views, and be patient with each other. Occasionally, we can be absolutely correct and, at the same time absolutely wrong.

When asked which was the first commandment, Jesus said:

“The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” ~Mark 12:29-31

In the Lord’s Prayer, the model prayer Jesus shared with the disciples, we are instructed to pray, “And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.” After sharing the Lord’s prayer, Jesus doubles down his views on forgiveness when he says, “For if you forgive men and women your trespasses, your God in heaven will forgive you; but if you do not forgive their trespasses, neither will your God forgive your trespasses.” ~Matthew 5:14-15.

Anger begets anger, and hate destroys us. May we remember what Jesus said as he hung on the cross, “Father, forgive them. They know not what they do.”

During this Lenten season, may we follow Jesus’ example and be those who love and forgive.



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