

## Kingdom First Living (part 2) –

### “Right Relationships”

#### 3. Reconcile with People (Matt. 5: 23-25)

We are constantly reminded in the scriptures that man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart (I Sam. 16: 7). He is far more interested in mercy and forgiveness than sacrifice (Matt. 9: 13). When we harbor ill feelings and bad blood with our neighbor, this is what God sees first, before He sees the gifts we bring.

Therefore, when we approach God with our sacrifices of praise or our gifts and offerings, even when we serve Him in ministry, we should do so with a pure heart and a clear conscience (Ps. 51: 10).

If we are in worship and remember that someone we know has something against us, we should leave our gift at the altar and go to that person to seek reconciliation. This is obviously more important to God than the gifts of worship, service, tithes and offerings.

True worship begins with treating people with respect and doing no harm. “Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law (Rom. 13: 10).” Our worship will never be acceptable to God unless we do all we can to live at peace with others (Rom. 12: 18).

It is our duty to make things right with our neighbor if we have injured them. This should be done before we attempt to offer any gifts or sacrifices to God. This is often the reason God does not accept our offerings and why we go away without receiving what we seek from God.

Leave the church and go to your brother or sister. If there is offence, acknowledge it. Ask their pardon. Bless them, verbally or tangibly. If restitution is needed, don't avoid the issue; make things right. Then come back to church and offer your service, your praise, or your offerings. Then they will be acceptable to God.

(Also see Matt. 9: 13; Hos. 6: 6; I Sam. 15: 22; Is. 1: 11-17; Amos 5: 21-24, Micah 6: 6-8; Mark 7:6).

#### 4. Cut off Sin (Matt. 5: 27-30)

(Also see the parallel passage in Mark 9: 43-48)

Jesus quotes the seventh commandment. He makes it clear that adultery is more than just an act. However, this is more than just a passing glance or a momentary impulse of desire. It is lust that has conceived, and given birth to sin in the heart (Prov. 24:9; James 1: 14-15). We all know when that happens inside, and God knows as well. This is adultery of the heart.

Obviously if the problem is the heart, the answer is not the literal castration of a bodily member. So what does Jesus have in mind here? Also, why just the right eye and right hand?

The literal meaning of the term "offend" is bait in a trap. So Jesus may be saying that our eye is being baited to keep causing us to sin. The verb is continuous, meaning your right eye is constantly causing you to sin. The eye receives and excites the mind; the hand and foot acts.

The instruction is not intended to be taken literally, but to contrast being maimed or gouged as opposed to being cast bodily into hell (Gehenna, a trash dump on the south side of Jerusalem in the Valley of Hinnom, where there was always fire burning). Being in hell with all bodily parts is far worse.

Some people or things become to us as important as a right eye or right hand. The right side was considered the more important in that time, so the idea may be of those among us that are most important to us that cause us to sin. They must be removed and cast away from us.

Matt. 10: 37-39 “He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me...He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it.”

Luke 14: 26 “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.”

So the sin in this passage can either be referring to sins involving the body, or sins of loving the world or even ourselves more than Him. Either can lead to eternal damnation in hell. We must avoid it at all cost and encourage others to do so as well.