

SWISS ARMY KNIFE

Week 7

SHARE

Have you ever reconciled with someone before? What was it like?

SEEK

Reconciliation

There are more murders happening every day than we can imagine. Not physical murders that you might see on the news, but spiritual ones. According to Jesus in Matthew 5:21-26, we probably see multiple murders every day. “You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment.” Once again, the heart of the matter is the matter of the heart.

But the reality is, we still get angry with one another. We falter. We sin. We should all be on death row for our spiritual murders. Jesus knows this. This is why verses 23 and 24 continue, “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.” What does this mean?

In ancient times, you could offer sacrifices to atone for various sins and offer worship to God. But Jesus introduces something unique here. “If you want reconciliation with your brother or sister, go to them directly and make peace, then come back and finish your sacrifices.” The times of offering sacrifices at the altar instead of making direct reconciliation with others might seem like an ancient thing, but this sort of behavior is still engaged in today. How many people have treated social media like an altar, lashing out in mysterious posts like, “I hope so-and-so gets what’s coming to them!” instead of directly facing the one with whom they need to reconcile? They would be wise to follow Jesus’ words and leave the altar of Facebook and go make true and direct reconciliation. Only then will worship to God be free and authentic.

Of course we cannot do this by our own strength. Those who simply “try harder” to not be angry at others often find themselves even more focused on their anger and give up after two weeks. We would be wise to return to Jesus on the cross, reconciling humanity to Himself, taking our sins upon His shoulders, showing the darkness of anger and what it can lead to. Now by His Spirit within us we can live in His image as He always desired, and one characteristic of that image is a person of peace; one who does not even desire to get angry.

SEE

RECONCILIATION

WHY DOES JESUS LIKEN ANGER TO MURDER? WHAT SORT OF DEATH OR MURDER HAPPENS WHEN CHRISTIANS GET ANGRY WITH THEIR BROTHERS OR SISTERS?

THERE ARE SOME HEALTHY VERSIONS OF ANGER. FOR EXAMPLE, THERE IS ANGER TOWARD INJUSTICES. SOME ANGER LEADS TO HEALTHY CHANGE. WHAT KIND OF ANGER IS JESUS ADDRESSING HERE?

DID YOU UNDERSTAND THE ILLUSTRATION OF TREATING SOCIAL MEDIA LIKE AN ALTAR? INSTEAD OF DIRECTLY RECONCILING WITH SOMEONE, SOMETIMES PEOPLE FIND OTHER MEANS TO TRY TO MAKE AMENDS, BUT THEY DO SO INCORRECTLY AND OFTEN IN A HARMFUL WAY. WHAT IS JESUS' REMEDY?

MANY PEOPLE LIVE AT ODDS WITH OTHERS, SOMETIMES FOR THEIR ENTIRE LIVES WITHOUT EVERY ATTEMPTING RECONCILIATION. HOW DOES REFLECTING ON JESUS' LIFE AND DEATH TEACH US ANYTHING ABOUT RECONCILIATION? HOW CAN WE NOW ATTEMPT RECONCILIATION WITH OTHERS AS CHRISTIANS?

Please take a few moments to pray with and for one another