

The Mission Letter

The Mission Team, PO Box 3323, Leesville, SC 29070

Our Item of Need for Today



“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

Prayer Items:

- Parents to invest \$41 to adopt a girl.
- Funds to support the 63 orphans currently in the 3 homes.
- Bible funds.

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We hope that all are well. God has been very gracious to us here and we have been as well as could be expected. God has also been merciful to us in ministry.. Nancy’s mother, Cornelia Rankin passed on to be with the Lord on the night of Feb. 11. We’ll miss her. She was a very strong Christian and love to sing all those old hymns that you hear in most of time churches that still sing the old time songs. She has belonged to two family quartets in the years that I have known her and others just loved to hear her sing. But she is with her Savior now. Thank all of you for your cards And prayers that you offered. Please keep Nancy and her sister Ann in your prayers.

Her last days were very hard on each of them. Due to this we had to move the dates for the trip to India. We moved the dates from April 23 -May 5 to later in the year and set it at Sept. 17 to Sept. 30. These dates seem to work better for the whole Team as well as the Indian folks in India that are our helpers.. Pray for us.

as we try to prepare for that trip. Everything else on the letter that we mailed out to you will be the same, including the needs to do the ministry. We plead for your prayers as we all will be teaching, preaching, evangelizing, many, many people, sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with them. Pray that God will bring the lost souls under conviction as we tell each person about His Son, Jesus Christ , who alone can save them through the washing in His blood to cleanse their sins. Ephesians 2:8-10.

We have a task to do and it is found in this;

‘Let him that is taught in the word communicate (share) unto him that teacheth in all good things.’ Gal. 6:6

We as Christians are to go forth to teach those who have not heard the Word of God. Please help send us.

In Christ,
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The Law and Murder: Matthew 5:21-26

"Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has anything against you: Leave there your gift before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (vv. 23, 24). Christ here drew a practical conclusion from what He had declared in the preceding verses, in which He enforces the duty of preserving Christian love and peace between brethren. First, He held up to view the false interpretation of the Sixth Commandment given by the ancient rabbis and perpetuated by the Scribes and Pharisees (verse 21). Second, He gave the true meaning of it (verse 22). And third, He here propounded certain rules of concord between those that be at variance. Even a secret feeling of anger, and much more so a contemptuous or maledictory reproach, constitutes in God's sight a breach of His Law, and He will not accept the worship of those guilty of such a crime. We must, therefore, without delay, remove every root of bitterness that might spring up and produce so deadly a fruit.

Our Lord here spoke in the language of the dispensation then in force, but the principles He enunciated on this occasion apply equally to Christian ordinances, especially the Lord's Supper. The maintenance of righteousness and amity between one another is indispensable to fellowship with the thrice holy God. "It was the doctrine of the Scribes, and the practice of the Pharisees corresponded with it, that anger, hatred, and the expression of these, if they did not go so far as an overt act of violence, were among the minor faults; and that God would not severely judge men for these, if they were but regular in presenting their sacrifices, and observing the other external duties of religion. In opposition to this, our Lord teaches that, according to the righteousness of His kingdom, having one's mind not subject to the law of justice and love would render all external religious services unacceptable to God" (J. Brown).

Under the Mosaic law various gifts and sacrifices were presented to Jehovah, some of them being absolutely obligatory, others optional—"free-will offerings." Broadly speaking, those gifts were of two kinds: propitiatory and eucharistic: the one for obtaining Divine forgiveness, the other as expressions of thanksgiving. Christ alludes here only to the latter, but under it He comprehended all manner of true outward worship, whether legal or evangelistic. The Lord Jesus had not yet offered Himself to God as the great antitypical sacrifice, and therefore He conveyed His lesson through the terms of the ceremonial law; but we have no difficulty in transferring what He then affirmed unto ourselves. It was as though He said, If you come to worship God in any way, either by prayer, hearing His Word, offering sacrifices of praise, or celebrating the Lord's Supper, you must live in peace with your brethren, or your worship will be rejected.

It is indeed solemn and searching to ponder the important practical principle which our Lord here enunciated. How deceptive is the human heart, and what numbers impose upon themselves in this matter. But we cannot impose upon that One before whom everything is naked and open. Of old the Jews were guilty of this very thing. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me? says the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks. . . and when you spread forth your hands, I will hide Mine eyes from you; yes, when you make many prayers, I will not hear" ([Isaiah 1:11, 15](#)). Why? "Your hands are full of blood." While they cruelly oppressed their brethren, the worship they offered unto God was an abomination unto Him. So again in [Isaiah 58:5, 6](#) we find Jehovah despising the religious fasts of Israel because they omitted those acts of mercy which He required, and instead were guilty of evilly treating their fellows.

The Lord charged the people with the same sins in the time of Jeremiah: "Will you steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely. . . and come and stand before Me in this House, which is called by My name?" (7:9, 10). Other passages might be quoted, but these are sufficient if we duly lay them to heart. From them we may learn that the performance of any outward service unto God is displeasing to Him if it be separated from sincere love of the brethren. To serve God acceptably we must perform not only the duties of the first table of the Law, but also those of the second. Make no mistake, my reader, the Holy One abhors all professions of piety from those who make no conscience of endeavoring to live in peace with their brethren.

"Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has anything against you; leave there your gift before the altar" ([Matthew 5:23, 24](#)). The words "your brother has anything against you" clearly signifies, "If you have done him some injury," or *he* has cause of complaint (either real or imagined) against you. If you have treated him in some way inconsistent with the fraternal relationship, if he is conscious that you have wronged him, then you must promptly seek to right that wrong, no matter what the cost may be to your pride or interests. It may be that you were guilty of what some would lightly dismiss as, "only an outburst of temper," and which you regretted afterwards; nevertheless, peace has been disrupted, and God requires you to do everything in your power to lawfully restore it.

Does not failure to heed this rule go far to explain why the supplications of so many of the Lord's people remain *unanswered*? What number's fondly imagine that so long as they are regular in their attendance in the house of prayer and maintain a reverent demeanor therein, that their petitions will prevail—even though they be at enmity against some of their brethren. Not so: the words of the Psalmist on this are much too pointed to be misunderstood, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" ([Psalm 66:18](#)). Before bending the knee in prayer, let us call to mind that we are about to draw near unto Him who is as much the Father of the offended brother as He is ours, and that He cannot receive us while we continue casting a stumbling block in the way of the other. No worship or service can be acceptable to God while we are under the influence of a malicious spirit.

"Leave there your gift before the altar, and go your way: first be reconciled to your brother." This means there must be a sincere and penitent acknowledgment of the offense committed and proper restitution made for any injury done, so that by all proper means and reasonable concessions we seek forgiveness from the one offended. "In this case the person, instead of offering his gift, is to go immediately to his brother, and be reconciled to him; dismissing all malignant feeling from his mind, he is to repair the injury he has done to his brother. If he has deprived him of his property, he is to restore it; if he has slandered him, he is to do all that lies in his power to counteract the effect of his calumny, and acknowledge his regret for having acted so unbrotherly. In this way he is likely to be reconciled to his brother, that is, to be restored to his brother's favor" (J. Brown).

The question may be raised, What can be done in a case where the one whom I have offended is no longer accessible to me?—one perhaps who has moved to far-distant parts. Answer: every effort must be made to obtain his or her address, and then write them a confession of your fault and your grief for the same, as frankly as though you were speaking to them. But suppose their address be unobtainable? Then in such a case you are hindered by Divine providence and God will accept the will for the deed, if there be a willing mind, providing you have done all you could to right the wrong, and have humbly confessed the same unto God and sought *His* forgiveness.

It should be pointed out that in this rule concerning reconciliation with an aggrieved brother, the Lord furnished a third direction for the expounding of God's commandments. First, He showed that under any *one* sin prohibited in the commandment, God forbids *all* sins of the same kind, with all the causes thereof (verse 22). Second, that to the breach of any commandment there is *annexed a curse*, whether it be specifically expressed or not (verse 22). And now, third, that where any vice is forbidden, there the contrary virtue is enjoined; and on the contrary, where any virtue is commanded, the opposite vice is reprehended. Herein the Divine Laws evidence their superiority to human, for man's laws are satisfied by abstaining from the crime prohibited, though the contrary virtue be not practiced: so long as we abstain from murder, it matters not though we fail to love our brethren. But God requires not only abstention from vice, but also the practice of virtue.

Another general principle is brought out in the verses before us, one which is of considerable importance in the correct interpreting of many New Testament passages, namely, that to be "reconciled" to another does not signify so much to cherish kindly feelings towards one with whom we have been offended, as to be restored to the favor of one we have offended. This throws light on such a statement as, "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" ([Romans 5:10](#)). The primary reference is to the Redeemer's propitiating God and obtaining for us His blessing—the same holds good equally of [Ephesians 2:16](#); [Colossians 1:21](#). In like manner, "Be you reconciled to God" ([2 Corinthians 5:20](#)) means not only throw down the weapons of your warfare against Him, but primarily, be restored to His favor.

One other important principle enforced by Christ in our passage is there are *degrees* of value in the several duties of Divine worship: all are not equal, but some are more and some less necessary. The highest degree of holy worship is prescribed in the First Commandment: to love, fear, and rejoice in God above all, trusting Him and His promises. The second degree is to love our neighbors as ourselves, living in harmony with them, and seeking reconciliation when any division exists. The third degree consists of the outward ceremonial duties of God's worship; and that these are inferior to the other is clear from Christ's, "first be reconciled to your brother." Even the outward solemnities of Sabbath keeping are to give place to the works of love. God esteems mercy above sacrifice. Alas, how many today are sticklers for the details of baptism and the Lord's Supper who will not even speak to some of their brethren.

Vain Offerings and Vain Worship

"When you come to appear before me, who has required this at your hand, to trample my courts? Bring no more vain offerings" (Isaiah 1:12-13). "In vain do they worship me" (Matthew 15:9).

The people of Isaiah's day were "trampling God's courts" without His approval, the people "drawing near" to the Lord with "vain offerings;" God's rebuke was, *"This people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me"* (Isaiah 29:13), stating further, *"Incense is an abomination to me"* (1:13). The people were outwardly observing new moons and Sabbath days, but they were told, *"I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly."* The Lord Jehovah was displeased with their religious observances: *"Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates"* (1:14). Does this have any application to us?

What we must constantly be on guard against is dry intellectualism and lip worship without true fear of God. Amos also recorded Jehovah saying: *"I hate, I despise your feasts....Take away from me the noise of your songs"* (Amos 5:21-23). God said "I hate" that which He Himself had appointed! "Singing to the Lord" is a wonderful thing, and ordained to His praise, but not the "noise" He was hearing then; He cared not for "the melody" of their harps, did He?

In our day, we can be strictly observant of doctrinal correctness, yet lose Jehovah's approving presence; the "courts" of God's professing people can be filled with "forms," "liturgies," "songs," "sermons," "observance" of days, etc., but we may be under this same rebuke: *"Even though you make many prayers, I will not listen"* (Isaiah 1:15). How solemn, how humbling! How we in the modern church need calling to repentance: *"Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes"* (verse 16).

If we can "read, study, preach, pray, worship, sing, fellowship" in "a form of godliness," without our hearts being humbled by divine power, this never can be true worship that glorifies our Savior. Neither does it do us any good spiritually, for we know that the Lord desires what David confessed, *"Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being"* (Psalm 51:6). Do we not need both the truth of the gospel and the presence of the Holy Spirit with us? Yes, *"In spirit and truth"* (John 4:24). Let us also remember that it was our Lord Jesus Christ who said to the Pharisees, when asked about the disciples not washing their hands: *"And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?"* (Matthew 15:1-9). What a powerful rebuke to all religious people who put too much emphasis on outward things! Our hearts must be taken up with Christ!

Isn't it more important to have our *hearts* in worship, with fervency and holy emotion, than being puffed up in "vain worship" by pleasing men and their traditions? In another day and time, our churches once met in simple houses of worship, both "singing" and "feeling" this:

Brethren, we have met to worship and adore the Lord our God!

Will you pray with all your power, while we try to preach the Word?

All is vain unless the Spirit of the Holy One comes down!

Brethren, pray, and holy manna will be showered all around!