

FIRST BE RECONCILED

We are presently discussing the seven firsts given by Jesus in the book of Matthew. Really, they are His core values for our lives. Our goal within this series is to latch onto heaven and allow His values to become part of our daily living.

Today's first is **"First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."**

The importance of relationships

Blood is thicker than milk.

Matthew 5:23 - 24 – "So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar and go. **First** be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. (NIV)

TCC - we are not intended to be alone, we are intended to be in real lasting relationship with others. Relationships are at the heart of God.

On the earth there are two covenant bound relationships sanctioned and promoted by God... one is the **New covenant sealed in the blood of Jesus**... we are partakers of this Covenant by new birth... accepting His offer of eternal life

The 2nd is the marriage covenant... God joins this union... this new couple is to be a joy and bring forth the next generation of believers in the earth

- Both: Powerful in prayer - a redeeming glue that holds society together

TCC- We were created by and for God and for each other...we are born to belong to the family of God... to each other

Made for relationship

Genesis 2:18 – “It is not good for man to be alone...” (NIV)

TCC- we are made and intended for relationship.

It's about living stones

1 Peter 2:5 – We are living stones built up together...

God is building his kingdom on purpose **with people** His people as the building blocks.... living stones

Living stones not bricks

- Individuals... flesh and blood ...with different personalities... divergent views... unique backgrounds

Edges... wear on each other...

- Edges bring offense... chipping, cutting, fitting in... sandpaper ministry
- Intended to cause us to be refined and useful in His kingdom...
- Edges also leads us to this kingdom first... **practicing the art of reconciliation**

John 17:1 – He said to his disciples, "Offenses will certainly come... (CSB)

Matthew 24:10 – At that time many will fall away and will betray and hate one another.

- The remedy for us is found in the statement.... **When you come to the altar to offer your gift and remember your brother...First go and be reconciled...**

Reconciliation is His remedy to the offense He knew would inevitably enter our lives.

It's about Kingdom alignment

Priorities....firsts

When asked what was the greatest and most important of the commandment Jesus said – “**You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart souls mind and strength**” ...then immediately and without pause he said “**and the 2nd is like unto the first... you shall love your neighbor as yourself**”

- In this Jesus ties these two irreversibly together
- Love God love others
- This is kingdom alignment

²³ So if you are offering your gift at the altar (Love God) and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, (love others) and then come and offer your gift.

As important as our devotion is to the Lord ... when we come with our sacrifice to the brazen alter to show Him our desire for relationship with Him

Linked together

Love God love others... sounds so simple, so easy, but to put it into practice is often much harder.

John said: **You cannot say that you love God and hate your brother... (1 John 4:20)**

It is not our relationship with God that we sacrifice when we do not reconcile our offenses.... it is our intimacy with Him.

Q. Have you ever felt unclear in your relationship with God? Clouded, and cannot hear His voice... **closeness is interrupted**...

- We come to worship excited anticipating and **remember that guy** that bugs me... God said first go take care of that relationship and then we can be close.

TCC- First go and be reconciled...brings value to the gift we leave at the altar to God. How we approach Him is just as important as the gift we bring.

Because I value Him I choose to align myself with His remedy...

Reconciliation involves pursuit

Matthew 5:24 – leave your gift there before the altar **and go**. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

- Go is directive. Pursuit is purposeful, aggressive and specific.

Matthew 18:15 – “If another believer sins against you, **go privately** and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back.”

2 Corinthians 5:18- And all this is from God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and has appointed us to serve in the ministry of reconciliation. Weymouth

TCC – God's way is to be reconciled. Not just an attempt, but a state of being.

2 Corinthians 5:19... God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. (NIV)

Jesus was sent into the world when there was no visible desire for Him to do so. He was proactive and pursued us. Our directive is the same... Remember... Go... pursue... win your brother over

Ephesians 4:32 – Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. **5:1** – Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children... (NIV)