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Be Reconciled
 Commands of Christ #6
 Part 1

3 **Matthew 5:23-24**

- *So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go.*
- *First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.*

4 **Didache 14.2-3**

- *And let no man, having his dispute with his fellow, join your assembly until they have been reconciled, that your sacrifice may not be defiled;*
- *for this sacrifice it is that was spoken of by the Lord; In every place and at every time offer Me a pure sacrifice; for I am a great king, saith the Lord, and My name is wonderful among the nations.*

5 **Conflict is the Result of Sin – It is Inevitable**

Don't You Wish Someone Could Invent a Conflict Resolver?

6 **Reconciled**

- *diallasso* – To change thoroughly (used in Matthew 5:24)
- *katallasso* – To return to favor
- *apokatallasso* – To bring back a former state of harmony

7 **Context of the Command**

- A Discussion on Anger (Matthew 5:21-22)
- *You have heard that it was said to the people of old, 'Do not commit murder,' and 'whoever commits murder will be subject to judgment.'*
- *But I say to you that everyone who is angry at his brother will be subject to judgment, and whoever says to his brother, 'Stupid fool!' will be subject to the council, and whoever says, 'Obstinate fool!' will be subject to fiery hell. (Lexham English Bible)*

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8 **Three relationship killers**

- Pride
 - Cause us to feel hurt and become bitter
- Anger
 - Causes us to lose temper
 - Gives voice to belittling remarks
- Cutting Off Someone in Your Spirit
 - Breaks communication
 - Causes withdrawal from one another

9 **Words DO hurt!**

- Proverbs 18:21 -- Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.
- Matthew 5:22
 - Raca – Chaldean word meaning “empty-headed one; stupid fool”
 - Moros – “dull, stupid, blockhead; obstinate fool”
 - Both words reveal pride
 - Causes contention (Proverbs 13:10)

10 **God hates our pride**

- Judged in Herod (Acts 12:21-23)
- Six sins of Sodom were all expressions of pride (Ezekiel 16:49-50)
 - *Look! This was the iniquity of Sodom, your sister: Pride, abundance of food, and prosperous ease was to her and to her daughters, and she did not sustain the needy and the poor. And they were proud, and they did a detestable thing before me, and I removed them because I saw it.*
- Pride, gluttony, idleness, selfishness, public pride, abomination

11 **Why pride leads to anger**

- Pride causes us to put ourselves in an exalted position.
- We then react to anyone who fails to reverence and respect us as befits the exalted position in which we have placed ourselves.
- “Anger rests in the bosom of fools” (Ecclesiastes 7:9) so angry words prove our foolishness and cause further contention (Proverbs 18:6).

12 **Anger cuts off others**

- We “give place to the devil” when we let our anger remain.
 - Settle conflict before sundown or it will turn to bitterness.
- Purpose of anger is vengeance.
 - Vengeance belongs to God (Romans 12:19).
 - We take vengeance by cutting off others in our spirit and no longer communicating with them.

13 **Clarifying Ephesians 4:26**

- “It is not granting permission to be angry. Although v 26b recognizes that anger will occur, v 27 indicates how dangerous it is and v 31 repudiates all anger (cf. also 6:4).
- “The focus of v 26a, then, is on not sinning by indulging in anger. Its paradoxical formulation was not meant to encourage speculation about what types of anger might be permissible.

14 **Clarifying Ephesians 4:26 (2)**

- ... Its force may be conveyed by a paraphrase, *“Anger is to be avoided at all costs, but if, for whatever reason, you do get angry, then refuse to indulge such anger so that you do not sin.”*
 - Lincoln, Andrew T. *Ephesians*. Vol. 42. Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1990. Print. *Word Biblical Commentary*.

15 **How cutting off is like murder**

- Cutting off someone in our spirits is a prideful decision that we can live without them.
 - In the body of Christ, we ALL need one another (1 Corinthians 12:21-23).

- A murderer makes a decision that he does not need someone anymore and punishes them by ending their life.
- Therefore those who hurt are like murderers (1 John 3:15).

16 **Worship demands reconciliation**

- The emphasis here is on fellowship rather than service
 - Some Christians compensate for guilt by trying to serve more fervently
 - More than service, God wants our fellowship:
 - with Him
 - with others
- Balance: You cannot have sincere fellowship with God and others without serving them.

17 **No worship without reconciliation**

- The focus of worship is loving God.
 - But when we cut off someone in our spirit, it is an expression of hatred. Hatred for others cannot coexist with love for God (who created all men).
 - God made man in His image. So when we hate men, we are hating that which was made to resemble God.
 - Worship without reconciliation is hypocrisy.
 - 1 John 4:20-21

18 **Reconciliation = God's priority**

- God is more concerned about our reconciliation than our worship – “first be reconciled” to the one we have wronged.
- Worship that neglects reconciliation is not true worship.
- A husband must be in right relationship to his wife or there is no power in their prayers (1 Peter 3:7; Colossians 3:19).
 - 1 Peter 3:7 – literally “your (plural) prayers” (husband and wife praying together)

19 **A wrong focus on the offense**

- A person offended focuses on the offense and how wrong the person was in doing it.
- The offended person fails to see his own pride or lack of love in not forgiving the offender.
- God wants us to focus on having a Christ-like response to offenses.
- Jesus told us to focus on dealing with our “beam” before dealing with someone else’s splinter.

20 **Principles of Reconciliation**

21 **Proverbs 18:19**

- *A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle.*
- In Biblical times a walled city was conquered in one of four ways:
 - Storming the walls (usually a bad idea)
 - Starve out the inhabitants
 - Searching for a small door or opening
 - Sounding the trumpets (crying out to God)

22 **1. God reproves the unreconciled**

- Things only get worse when offenses are unresolved.
- Jacob:
 - Deceived his father to steal inheritance
 - Deceived Laban; Was deceived and cheated by Laban for 20 years; fled from Laban
 - Discovered his brother approaching with a troop of armed men to kill him.
- A wise man recognizes setbacks as signals from God to reconcile with others.

23 **2. Reconciliation begins with self-examination**

- Psalm 139:23-24 -- *Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me. . . .*
- We need to:
 - See our offense from the eyes of the one we have offended.
 - See how we failed to demonstrate love.

24 **Jacob had a wrong heart**

- Love is:
 - Giving without the motive of personal reward
 - Focusing on advancing the Kingdom of God and letting God take care of all my needs (Matthew 6:33)
- Jacob:
 - Should have been focused on giving to those he was serving
 - Instead, he was more concerned about getting for himself and his own personal ambitions

25 **3. Cry out to God**

- God:
 - He alone can bring about reconciliation
 - He desires to deliver us so He will get the glory (Psalm 50:15)
- Jacob cries out to God for help (Genesis 32:9-12)
- A cry must be fervent
 - Israel conquered Jericho with a loud cry and the walls came tumbling down
 - “A brother offended is like a walled city” (Proverbs 18:19)

26 **The cry of reconciliation**

- “O God, deliver us from further contention and bring us into peace – in the name of Jesus and for His glory”
- James 5:16 speaks of the “effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man”
 - Comes shortly after James 5:9 – “*Grudge not one against another*”
 - Confess our faults (be reconciled) to one another
 - Basis of healing

27 **4. Reconciliation gives to the one we have offended**

- Giving demonstrates a changed heart and should be done as we have opportunity.
 - Proverbs 21:14 -- *A gift in secret pacifies anger: and a reward in the bosom strong wrath.*

- Luke 3:8 -- *Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance.*
- Make restitution if you took from another.
 - If you cannot make restitution, then indicate your willingness to do so.

28 **Illustrated by Jacob**

- Genesis 32:13-31
 - Sent Esau a gift
 - Actually, he sent the gift in stages so it was perceived as several separate gifts
- Gifts do not always need to be things.
 - Give of your time (my most precious commodity)
 - Perform an act of service that requires humility

29 **5. Reconciliation serves**

- Jacob identified himself as Esau's servant rather than as his brother.
 - Genesis 32:4 -- *Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau; Thy servant Jacob saith thus . . .*
 - Genesis 33:4-5 -- *And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept. And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children; and said, Who are those with thee? And he said, The children which God hath graciously given thy servant.*
- Jesus is our example (Philippians 2:5-11)

30 **6. Reconciliation requires sincere repentance toward God**

- David disgraced Bathsheba, murdered Uriah, and offended Ahithophel (and other members of Bathsheba's family) and the nation of Israel.
- But his primary offense was toward God.
- *Against you, only you, I have sinned and have done this evil in your eyes, so that you are correct when you speak, you are blameless when you judge.*

31 **Illustrated by Jacob**

- Jacob associated Esau's countenance with the face of God Whom he had offended
 - *And Jacob said, "No, please, if I have found favor in your eyes, you must take my gift from my hand, for then I have seen your face which is like seeing the face of God, and you have received me." (Genesis 33:10)*
- All offenses are first toward God which is why we cannot worship with unresolved offenses

32 **7. Reconciliation seeks release from the offended one**

- Reconciliation is not just going through the motions of asking forgiveness
 - Sometimes the one offended will not forgive immediately
 - They are waiting to see our change of heart and evidence of our sincerity before they release us
- We must demonstrate *dialasso* (a complete change) in order to complete the restoration

33 **Illustrated by Jacob**

- Jacob bowed before Esau and had his family also bow to Esau (Genesis 33:1-11)
- Jacob bestowed on Esau the blessing that he had stolen from him
 - Genesis 27:29 -- *Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you; Be lord of your brothers, and may the sons of your mother bow down to you. Cursed be those cursing you,*

and blessed be those blessing you.

– Jacob's attitude caused Esau to release and forgive him.

34 **What does reconciliation do?**

- Removes hindrances that non-believers would have from becoming Christians
- Allows the body of Christ to function harmoniously with each member bringing health to the Body
- Helps us be one with the Father so the world will know that we are His disciples
- Enables God to bless us

35 **How does Christ illustrate this command?**

36 **He initiated reconciliation**

- He took the initiative to reconcile us to God. (We – who caused His death -- should take responsibility of our offenses.)
- 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 -- *And all these things are from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ, and who has given us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.*

37 **2. He humbled himself**

- He left the splendor of heaven for us (Philippians 2:5-8)
 - *Think this in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, did not consider being equal with God something to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a slave, by becoming in the likeness of people. And being found in appearance like a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, that is, death on a cross.*

38 **3. He removed the wall of separation**

- Jesus tore down the wall that separates us from God.
- This was illustrated by the tearing of the veil in the Temple at His death
 - Started from the top and torn to the bottom
 - Removed our hindrances to access God

39 **4. He made restitution**

- 1 Peter 1:18-19 -- *...because you know that you were redeemed from your futile way of life inherited from your ancestors not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb*
- He became our Passover Lamb to take away our sins

40 **5. He anguished over our reconciliation**

- Just as Jacob wrestled with the Angel, our Savior wrestled in prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane
- Luke 22:44 -- *And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*

41 **6. He demonstrated love and complete forgiveness of sin**

- He gave gifts to men (Ephesians 4:8) to demonstrate His complete forgiveness

- His most important gift is the Holy Spirit
- He gives us spiritual gifts:
 - Motivation gifts – Romans 12
 - Manifestation gifts – 1 Corinthians 12
 - Ministry Gifts – Ephesians 4

42 **7. He strengthens fellowship through the body of Christ**

- We are all part of the household of faith
- We are urged to increase our fellowship with one another (Hebrews 10:24,25)
- Our goal is unity with one another that glorifies Christ
 - Ephesians 4:13 -- *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:*