

“So if you are presenting a sacrifice (gift) at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.” Matthew 5:23-24 NLT

## lectio // Matthew 5:21-26

Who associates MURDER with having angry thoughts towards someone? Jesus! Jesus says, everyone knows if you do murder, you're judged and penalized accordingly. Murder is wrong, I think some still agree on that. Then he says, but in God's "Kingdom Economy," in God's value system, even the thought or word is judged. So "if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell." One thought or a couple of unchecked words and you've violated God's code! How's that fair? "I didn't actually DO anything," you may protest. Well Jesus said you did. What happens between humans effects what happens between you and God. Jesus is saying we don't have the right or the authority to think murderous thoughts or label someone stupid, or even speak a curse on them. Why is that? Because we are NOT God, and we are NOT responsible for others behavior, even when it offends us. It is so interesting that Jesus tells us to PAUSE before giving a gift to God. If WE suddenly remember that someone else has something against us, we should initiate RECONCILIATION. Leave the gift, do what's right, then come back and do the "spiritual" thing before God. The real "gift" or "sacrifice" is doing what's right - reconciliation! That's the act that God is looking for. Why? Because when we do that, we're acting like one of his kids! And not like the other bullies on the playground. But really, who behaves like this? Not us, that's for sure. We'd rather shovel poop around in our heart than humble ourselves and do what's right. We rather harbor, fester, judge and hold grudges rather than be obedient to the idea of reconciling! Jesus is so gutsy, so counter culture. Of course we are much smarter than Jesus though and we will find ways to convince ourselves and manipulate TRUTH to fit our wishes, our comfort, our sense of what's right.

## oratio

Dad,

Well, no wonder we have a tough time being human. You've given us just enough creativity and power to out-maneuver and manipulate your truth to fit our own selfishness. That so human! Yeah, we've got knowledge of good and evil, but boy we sure lack in wisdom and truth. Thank you for not letting our great grands eat the eternal life tree - what a mess that would have been. We'd be lookin at us being eternal idiots. Help me to yield to your Holy Spirit and not my own desires when it comes to humbling myself in the pursuit of reconciliation. Help me to do what's right before offering you a bribed-gift to look the other way.

## contemplatio

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root