

# Living In Harmony With Others

(Updated 5/2021; Dr. Baines, Jr.)

**Read:** Matthew 5:17-26

**Summary Highlights:** In vss. 17-20, Jesus teaches about the fulfillment of the Law. Heaven and Earth are said to pass away before any part of the Law will. Those who live by and teach the Law will be blessed. Those who break any part of the Law and teach others to do the same will be the least in the kingdom of God.

In vss. 21-22, Jesus talks about the danger of being at odds with others. Not only is murder wrong but being angry with one's brother is subject to judgment. Using insulting language is subject to punishment.

In vss. 23-26, Jesus teaches that reconciliation with brothers is more urgent than offerings to God. Jesus talks about leaving the offering, reconciling with brothers, and then giving the offering. Matters are to be settled quickly among brothers.

**Introduction:** A key idea in today's lesson is that God wants His people to live in harmony with one another. Prayerfully, we will be challenged to work on living in harmony with one another.

## **Applications:**

**1. Fulfilling the Law.** Notice in vss. 17-20 the idea that the Law must be fulfilled. The Pastor subscribes to the idea that Jesus fulfills the Law. That is, the righteousness that the Law aimed to provide is only provided through faith in Jesus. Another way of saying this is to say that instead of trying to live by all of the Law requirements to be right with God, we accept Jesus as our savior by faith to be right with God the Father. *Let's live like we appreciate the righteousness available to us through Jesus.* Such living should be known for gratitude and striving to love God, others, and our selves.

**2. Living and teaching.** Notice in vs. 19 the ideas of blessings following those who obey and teach obedience to God, while punishment follows those who disobey and teach disobedience to God. It seems to a great degree that we have to choose to obey or not obey God. In doing so, we also teach by our example the idea of obeying or disobeying. *Let's work on obeying and teaching obedience.* Life is challenging enough; we don't want to be responsible for teaching people disobedience with our example.

**3. Behavior and attitude.** Notice in vss. 21-22 the idea of God being the ruler of our behavior and attitudes. The behaviors of murder and uttering insulting words are sins, and the attitude of sinful anger is sin. God doesn't want us to act righteous with a wicked heart. He wants our actions and attitudes aligned with His will. In other words, He wants to rule our outward behaviors and inward heart. *Let's work on submitting to God's rulership of our entire person.* Prayerful studying and obeying are strong steps in getting our attitude right. The more we do right, the more we feel right in doing it.

**4. Giving and reconciliation.** Notice in vss. 23-24 that the gift to God is paused until reconciliation is secured. There may be those who justify their lack of giving by noting that reconciliation has not been obtained. Indeed, reconciliation cannot be obtained, if the other parties are not willing to be reconciled. The Spirit of the text is that we should strive to be reconciled with our brothers and sisters with more zeal than we have in giving to the Lord. At some point, with or without reconciliation, believers ought to give to God, as God has prospered them. *Let's work on reconciliation and giving.*

**5. Quick reconciliation.** Notice in vss. 25-26 the emphasis on quick reconciliation. There are too many old grudges in the church. The one who is accused is to initiate reconciliation. This is a tall order. But yet it is what God is calling us to do. A practical issue is raised in the text. If there is no quick reconciliation, the issue may end up costing us more in the long run. *Let's swallow our pride, stubbornness, or whatever tempts us to avoid reconciliation and obey God.* The greatest measure of our spiritual maturity is not our knowledge but our love. Love calls for reconciliation.