

Matthew 5:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

Analysis

Worship means nothing if relationships are broken. Before offering sacrifice, reconciliation must occur. Jesus prioritizes horizontal relationships as essential to vertical worship. God refuses gifts from those unwilling to make peace with others.

Historical Context

Temple worship involved bringing sacrifices to the altar. This was considered the highest act of devotion. Jesus shockingly says even this must be interrupted if reconciliation is needed—showing that love for others is inseparable from love for God.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. Is there anyone you need to reconcile with before you can worship God authentically?
2. How does unresolved conflict poison your prayer life and worship?

Interlinear Text

Ἐὰν οὖν προσφέρῃς τὸ δῶρόν σοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ^{G3588}
if Therefore thou bring^{G4374} gift^{G1435} thee^{G4675} to^{G1909} G3588
G1437 G3767 G4374 G1435 G4675 G1909 G3588

θυσιαστήριον κάκεῖ μνησθῆς ὅτι ὁ ἀδελφός σοῦ^{G3588}
the altar and there rememberest that^{G3415} brother^{G80} thee^{G4675}
G2379 G2546 G3415 G3754 G80 G4675

ἔχει τι κατὰ σοῦ^{G4675}
hath ought against thee
G2192 G5100 G2596 G4675

Additional Cross-References

Mark 11:25 (Parallel theme): And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

Matthew 5:24 (Sacrifice): Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

Matthew 8:4 (Parallel theme): And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

Matthew 23:19 (Sacrifice): Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?

Luke 19:8 (Parallel theme): And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.

1 Samuel 15:22 (Sacrifice): And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

Hosea 6:6 (Sacrifice): For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

