

Jesus 101

“Grace Thoughts”



A short devotional to help get you excited about Jesus!

“Leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.” –Matthew 5:24

We arrived at an inpatient rehab where one of our acquaintances needed to stay for a while, due to alcohol abuse. A sign outside the building had a quotation that made a lasting impact on my mind: “Those who are at war with others are not at peace with themselves.” Later on, I learned that the words are attributed to William Hazlitt, a British writer, who authored many other such quotes.

God took the initiative to reconcile us to Himself, and when we believe in the sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf, we are given true and absolute peace with God: “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have *peace* with God *through* our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1). This is a core principle of the gospel: we didn’t earn our peace, but we have peace through Jesus. This is the *vertical* dimension of peace. Having received this divine gift through Jesus, His followers are to allow the overflowing of that peace into their daily affairs with all people (the *horizontal* dimension), becoming peacemakers, as far as it depends on them (see Romans 12:18). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus addressed this, pronouncing a blessing over peacemakers: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God” (Matthew 5:9). In this sermon, Jesus makes six pronouncements expanding the meaning of the commandments (Matthew 5:21-48). The first one is about the commandment: “You shall not commit murder” (verse 21), which Jesus expands to include anger against our fellow humans (verse 22). His first illustration on this statement is: “Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering” (verses 23, 24). As God did with us, we are to take the initiative. After we have done our part to share the peace that we have been given, then God will accept and bless our worship. Let’s share the peace of Jesus that we have received. *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.* (Matthew 5:9).

Talbot, Elizabeth *Jesus Wins! Daily Devotional*, p. 181