

BRINGING IT HOME-Thinking about Peace and Reconciliation Personally

Please Note: This reflection is in two parts. Please try to look at both.

PART 1 PEACE and RECONCILIATION WITH GOD

JESUS' SUMMARY OF THE LAW

Matthew 22:37-40

³⁷ Jesus replied: **“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”** ³⁸ **This is the first and greatest commandment.** ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” (NIV)

Q. 1. Is it possible for us to love God with “all our heart and with all our soul and all our mind”? See what the Bible says:

Mark 7:6-8,20-23

⁶ Jesus replied, “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: ‘These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

⁷ They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.’⁸ You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions.”

²⁰ He went on: “What comes out of a person is what defiles them. ²¹ For it is from within, out of a person’s heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder,²² adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. ²³ All these evils come from inside and defile a person.”

Romans 3:9-11

⁹ What shall we conclude then? Do we have any advantage? Not at all! For we have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin. ¹⁰ As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one;¹¹ there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God...²⁰ Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God’s sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin. (NIV)

Q. 2. How do the following passages show us God’s remedy?

Romans 3:21-26

²¹ But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ²² This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵ God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— ²⁶ he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. (NIV)

Romans 5:1-2 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. (NIV)

Colossians 1:19-20

¹⁹For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. (NIV)

Q.3. Spend some time reflecting on God's kindness to us in making it possible for us to be at peace with him, and so love him wholeheartedly. You might like to express your gratitude to him by writing a prayer or poem or by drawing a picture.

PART 2 PEACE and RECONCILIATION WITH OTHERS

Matthew 22:37-40

³⁷ Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: **‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’** ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” (NIV)

Q. 1. What do you think it means to love your neighbour? (Make a list)

Q.2. Look at the following verses and list what (if any) additional ideas about loving your neighbour you find in them.

Matthew 5:7 and 9

⁷ Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy

⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God. (NIV)

Romans 12:17-21

¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. ¹⁹ Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord. ²⁰ On the contrary:

“If your enemy is hungry, feed him;
if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.

In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.”

²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (NIV)

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. (NIV)

Colossians 3:12-15

¹² Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³ Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

¹⁵ Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. (NIV)

Q2. Are there people in your life whom you do not love as Jesus calls us to do? Think about just one (or perhaps two) in particular. What can you do to change this?

Commit this plan of action to God in prayer.