

*Thank you to Gerald Harper for preaching for us on Sunday and giving us another voice on the Sermon on the Mount!*

### Monday

Read Matthew 5:23-26, focusing on v. 24:

“The Lord does not want to talk with a disciple who does not want to talk with another person. Jesus makes clear elsewhere in this sermon that if we will not forgive people who failed us, our failures will not be forgiven (6:14, 14-15). Thus in saying Jesus teaches that if do not seek reconciliation with people whom we have hurt (or who have hurt us) we come to the altar in vain...

“In our time one of the big debates in the churches is between evangelicals and (as they are called) social activists (or, sometimes, ecumenical). Evangelicals say that we must put Christ, his Word, and reconciliation with God first, and people, the world, and reconciliation in society second (though, happily, there are socially active evangelicals; I am using types). Ecumenicals argue for the greater integrity of the reverse order (or for serving God *by* serving others). There is something to be said for each decision when one consults the whole of Scripture. But the paradox is this: When Christians decide to put Christ and his Word first (Jesus is Lord), they soon discover that he often, as here, puts people first. We should be social *because* we are evangelical. Social reconciliation is not a Christian elective, an evangelical afterthought; it is the order of the day – it is the order of the *Lord*.”

– Dale Bruner

What does Jesus require of you in these verses?

### Tuesday

Read Galatians 3:19-25

“Although we should not interpret the Sermon on the Mount in light of later Pauline thought, there is a parallel of sorts here to

Paul’s logic that the law demonstrates the sinfulness of humanity (e.g., Gal. 3:19–25). Those who may think that they have not violated the sixth commandment, since they have not literally murdered anyone, have almost certainly harbored wrongful anger and done violence to others with their speech. Jesus is not abolishing the law, but rather is fulfilling it (Matt. 5:17), which in this instance means applying the spirit of the Decalogue to a wide variety of hateful thoughts and actions. The Sermon on the Mount is a kingdom manifesto with high ideals.”

- G.K Beale and D.A. Carson

The Sermon on the Mount is definitely a kingdom manifesto with high ideals. Where will you draw strength to live the words of Jesus?

### Wednesday

Read Matthew 5:23-26

“*Therefore, if thou shalt bring thy gift.* This clause confirms, and at the same time explains, the preceding doctrine. It amounts to this, that the precept of the law, which forbids murder, (Exod. 20:13) is obeyed, when we maintain agreement and brotherly kindness, with our neighbor. To impress this more strongly upon us, Christ declares, that even the duties of religion are displeasing to God, and are rejected by him, if we are at variance with each other. When he commands those who have injured any of their brethren, *to be reconciled to him*, before they *offer their gift*, his meaning is, that, so long as a difference with our neighbor is kept up by our fault, we have no access to God. But if the worship, which people render to God, is polluted and corrupted by their resentments, this enables us to conclude, in what estimation he holds mutual agreement among ourselves.”

- John Calvin

Reconciliation and proper worship are tightly linked – don’t try one without the other!

## Thursday

Read Luke 12:57-59

“With the signs of the kingdom around them and as Jesus stood among them, he asked his listeners, *“Why can’t you decide for yourselves what is right?”* Why was it so difficult for them to recognize him? Why weren’t they taking advantage of this opportunity to make peace with God? They ought to do so, for waiting could be disastrous, just as the man on his way to court would be wise to settle the matter beforehand. In Jesus’ day, a person who couldn’t pay a debt would be *thrown in jail* until he *paid the last penny*. A “penny” was one of the smallest Roman coins, worth two-fifths of a cent. This shows that the debt had to be fully paid. Debts were repaid by selling property or going into contract as an indentured servant or slave. If the person had no way to earn money to pay back the debt, he or she could very well die in prison. How much better to attempt to settle the matter *on the way to court* (under Roman law, the plaintiff went with the defendant to court) than to wait for the judge’s verdict to be handed down.

“God’s judgment is irreversible. Each person must decide what to do about Jesus. That decision should be made now.”

- Bruce B. Barton

## Friday

Each week in 2022, we are praying for the most dangerous places to be a follower of Jesus. Please spend today in prayer for Brunei and the Christians in Brunei. You can get more info, and this info comes from, here: <https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/world-watch-list/>

What is life like for Christians in Brunei?

In Brunei, leaving Islam for another religion is illegal—so converts from Islam who follow Jesus encounter significant persecution from both local and national sources. Converts can be disowned by their

families, and be forced to divorce their spouse and to leave the family home. Married converts to Christianity from Islam also lose custody of their children. Additionally, every level of society in Brunei is affected by the continuing introduction of Shariah law.

Areas for prayer:

- The believers of Brunei face many challenges in living out their faith for Christ. As Islam grows, pray that God will strengthen the church there.
- Please pray for God to open the doors of this country, so that many will come to faith in Christ, for only He can create such a miracle.
- Pray also for the church in Brunei, that God would bless them and use them for His kingdom