

Jesus Culture: Relationships

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[0 : 00] Heavenly Father, I pray now that as I preach your word, that your word would indeed perform heart surgery on us. We pray, Lord, that where our hearts are diseased or needs correction, we pray that by your Holy Spirit, you would do so.

So we ask, Lord, please grant us ears to hear and soft hearts this morning. All this we pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. By now, most of us probably would have heard of George Floyd. In recent weeks, many people were shocked as images of an African-American man being slowly to choke to death under the knee of a policeman was spread across the screens all across the United States and around the world.

The cop, a man named Derek Chauvin, has since been sacked and charged with third-degree murder. It's just been upgraded to the second degree, in fact. Now, I looked it up.

Murder is still murder, whether it's in the first degree or the third degree. But third-degree murder refers to acts which result in a death because of an extreme indifference to human life.

[1 : 15] I might not have planned to kill you, but I don't care whether you live or die is basically the attitude. I don't care that you're a fellow human being.

And I think it's fair to assume that all of us wants to see justice served. If Derek Chauvin has murdered, he deserves to be prosecuted. Now, are you like Derek Chauvin?

What an outrageous question! Your blood is already beginning to boil that your pastor would even dare to suggest you are anything like this bad apple. We have never even come close to wanting to murder anybody.

We would never even hurt another kitten, never mind another human being. But before you lodge a complaint against your pastor, please know that this is not actually my question.

This is Jesus asking you, Are you like Derek Chauvin? Or put another way, Are you different from Derek Chauvin?

[2 : 24] Well, Jesus sure knows how to make you sit up and take notice, doesn't he? Why in the world would Jesus even presume to ask you and me such a question? Well, let's zoom out a little and remember the context.

Last week, Jesus told his disciples that Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

In other words, Jesus' followers are to have a greater righteousness. It's greater not in degree, but in kind. It's greater because it's a different kind of righteousness to the Pharisees.

And in the rest of Matthew 5, Jesus will illustrate what that looks like. Like any good preacher, he brings theory to life by giving us work examples and concrete details of what greater righteousness means in practice.

Now, last week, you might remember that I said Jesus acts like a prism to God's law. That is, if we read God's law through the prism of Jesus, we will uncover its deeper layers, observe its unseen colours, and hear its ultimate expression and intention.

[3 : 50] And that's why, in the six examples Jesus will give, which we'll slowly work our way through in the month of June, Jesus keeps saying, You have heard it said, but I say to you.

You have heard it said, but I say to you. You can see that in verses 21, 27, 31, 33, 38, and 43.

He's saying, you've heard the law, but now hear it again through the Jesus prism. And today, when we listen to Jesus' first work example, we will begin to understand why Jesus dares to ask us, Are you like Derek Chauvin?

For Jesus will confront us with the state of our hearts. When we assume that we are not like, at all like Derek, we are actually being content with the righteousness of the Pharisees.

A Pharisee will look at Derek Chauvin and say, Lord, I thank you that I will never be like him at all. But if we are followers of Jesus, our assumptions change.

[5 : 05] We will look at Derek Chauvin and pray, Lord, have mercy, how can I not become like Derek Chauvin? We are actually exhibiting the first of the Beatitudes to be poor in spirit.

And Jesus looks at us and says, If that is your starting point, if that is your question, then you are ready to hear my words. You are ready to live out the righteousness of the kingdom.

Come, listen, and here are two ways you are to be different. First way, don't be consumed by unrighteous anger.

Don't be consumed by unrighteous anger. Verse 21, You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.

A very long time ago, before Jesus lived on earth, they lived another man called Moses. God used him to redeem his people from Egypt, and they ended up on a mountain called Sinai.

[6 : 16] And Moses went up and then down, carrying two slabs of stone. Now, that doesn't sound like anything valuable, but those tablets were meant to be treasured as it was placed in a rectangular box known as the ark and kept in the most holy place in the tabernacle.

For written on those tablets were God's law, what we call today the Ten Commandments. They define the very values of the people of God, for they show what God himself values.

And the sixth of those commandments shows that God values human life very, very much. You shall not murder. A couple of older translations might say you shall not kill.

But murder is probably better because the rest of the Old Testament shows that things like killing animals or particular involvement with certain wars have warrant.

But the deliberate, unwarranted, taking of a human life is a horrific crime for God alone gives and takes away life.

[7 : 30] God alone is creator, saviour, and judge. He has made every single human being in his image, regardless of their ethnicity, regardless of their mental capability.

And so he is grieved when people are murdered, whether in abortion clinics by opportunistic physicians taking advantage of terrified young women, or on the streets by corrupt cops and violent protesters.

And he says, all murderers will be subject to judgment. Now, right now, you might be nodding along, but you don't really feel like any of this is super relevant.

After all, I haven't murdered anyone. And if we feel anything at all, we feel pretty satisfied. Hey, we're good people. But Jesus says, hold on, I'm not done yet, verse 22.

But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Let me ask you one more time.

[8 : 40] Are you like Derek Chauvin? If you have ever been angry with a brother or sister, Jesus says, I'm sorry to inform you.

You are no different from Derek Chauvin. Wow! In one stroke, Jesus has raised the stakes.

Jesus says, if you look at the law through my prism, you will find that it's not just murder God says no to. Anger belongs in the same category.

Shockingly, those who allow anger to well up from within them and then hold on to it will be held to the same condemnation as the murderer in the law.

When it was simply about not murdering anyone, we felt pretty good about ourselves. The Pharisees certainly would have. And so, our righteousness is exactly the same as the Pharisees.

[9 : 42] We are obeying the letter of the law. But now, Jesus says, kingdom life goes deeper. You can't just examine the externals. You need to examine your internal life, your internal self as well.

Now, at this stage, it's worth pausing and thinking. what is anger exactly? We probably know it when we are experiencing it, but it's not easy to define.

But it's actually worth taking time to be precise about it because it will actually help us to better understand and assess our anger. Now, there are a few technical definitions out there, but I like this slightly less technical one from another parser.

It's going to be on your screen. anger is a hot displeasure of the heart or soul which is experienced in response to something you perceive to be wrong and which calls for just retribution or repayment.

Let me say that again to allow it to sink in. Anger is a hot displeasure of the heart or soul which is experienced in response to something you perceive to be wrong and which calls for just retribution or repayment.

[11 : 03] Now, that's still a big mouthful, isn't it? So let me just break it down for you. Basically, there are three ingredients to anger and let me try to describe each of those ingredients in a short phrase.

First ingredient, something is wrong. Something is wrong. In other words, anger never arises in a vacuum. You never get angry for nothing.

There is always a context to anger. As the pastor's definition says, you perceive something to be wrong. Perhaps it's a colleague's attitude that rubs you the wrong way.

Perhaps it's the fact that your husband dragged his feet about servicing the car, and now that the car's broken down suddenly, you're mad. You are responding to something.

Second ingredient, I'm against that. I'm against that. In other words, anger is not a neutral emotion. It is actually a moral judgment of some sort.

[12 : 12] Your colleague's attitude makes you upset, because according to your moral system, that is wrong. It is not acceptable.

You might even call it an injustice. Wrong, unacceptable, and injustice, all those are evaluative words, all words that imply moral judgment on your part.

It is opposed against the perceived wrong. According to the definition, it is the hot displeasure that you feel. Third ingredient, I will do something about it.

I will do something about it. You see, because you think something is wrong, your colleague's attitude in this case, and you are against it, you feel that it is unjust because it puts an unreasonable load on you, or maybe makes you carry responsibility which you don't think you should be carrying, so now you do something about it, or at the very least you feel that you should do something about it.

Now, what might you do? At this point, there are plenty of options. Perhaps you will argue with your colleague. Perhaps you will grumble to your other colleague.

[13 : 32] Perhaps you will simply refuse to help your colleague out in the future as payback. But there is some sort of action in response.

So, something is wrong, I'm against that, I'll do something about it. Those are the ingredients that make up anger. And notice anger is something you do as a person.

It is not something external to you. When you get angry, you have physiological responses. You tense up, your heart beats faster, your voice is raised.

You know, there is more than one Hebrew word for anger, and it's no surprise that one of those words is literally also the word for nostrils. A really angry person will have their nostrils flaring, wouldn't they?

Anger doesn't happen to you. You get angry. And so that's the ingredients of anger. And that will help us to differentiate between what is sometimes called righteous anger, and the anger that Jesus is talking about in Matthew chapter 5.

[14 : 46] You see, we know that Jesus sometimes got angry. He had righteous anger. In Mark chapter 3 verse 5, for instance, we read this.

Jesus looked around at them, that's the Pharisees, in anger, and deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, stretch out your hand.

He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored. Now, Jesus sees something is wrong. There is a man with a withered hand, and Jesus wants to heal him.

But the Pharisees are only concerned with catching out Jesus and saying, gotcha, because he healed on the Sabbath. And so Jesus says, I'm against that.

In other words, he is against the attitude of the Pharisees, and their lack of compassion, and their misreading of the Sabbath law. And so he takes action.

[15 : 46] He teaches by posing a rhetorical question to the Pharisees, and then he goes on to heal the man. And so what we can take away from this incident is that anger in itself is not inherently sinful.

Paul makes the same point in Ephesians 4 verse 26 when he says, in your anger, do not sin. He draws a distinction between sin and anger. righteous anger makes an accurate appraisal of the wrong, responds in a proportionate way, and is always under control.

That's Jesus' anger. In its uncorrupted origin, the pastor Tim Keller says, anger is actually a form of love.

But this is not the anger Jesus is talking about here. And frankly speaking, the anger that Jesus experiences is very seldom the anger we experience.

The anger we experience is usually at odds with a desire to love. It only seeks to harm the other person. It's disproportionate.

[17:00] It's biased. It only wants to elevate ourselves, to prove that we are morally superior. And often, it gets out of control really quickly.

It's unrighteous anger. And one big telltale sign is the words we use. Verse 22 again. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, Raka, is answerable to the court.

And anyone who says, you fool will be in danger of the fire of hell. To say Raka is equivalent to using a swear word against someone else.

And to say, you fool is literally you moron. Now, some commentators even think that there might be an escalation going on in verse 22, where someone starts by being angry inside, first of all, before progressing to expressing it in swear words like Raka.

And then finally, they say moron. Now, that's a serious thing because elsewhere in Matthew, to call someone else moron is to imply that they don't belong in the kingdom.

[18:16] And remember, who these words are directed to? A brother or sister in Christ. And so, it's equivalent to calling him apostate.

Now, not all the commentators agree, but it is possible that Jesus is showing us how we progressively lose control as anger consumes us. Now, regardless of whether there is escalation or not, the big point is that our words often reveal our hearts, and they reveal the murderous heart within.

Is that you? Have you ever said angry words? Perhaps not out loud, but in your mind? over the past week, have you had any resentful thoughts towards anybody?

Have you ever fantasized about how you would say certain things to the person that you're angry with, and that everyone applauded you afterwards for stating the truth? Now, we might not physically murder, but our death stares can be pretty piercing.

You see, like Derek Chauvin, we no longer see the other person as a fellow human being made in the image of God. You don't plan to kill him or her, but if unrighteous anger consumes you, you don't care whether he or she lives or dies.

[19:47] Now, it's worth noting here, of course, that murder and anger are not exactly the same thing. Someone doesn't literally die just because you got angry with them. But they share the same DNA.

Anger is the root of which murder is the biggest fruit. But perhaps some of you are thinking, hey, no, that's not me.

I'm a pretty chilled person. I'm not an angry person. I'm laid back. I'm chill. Sure, I lose my temper from time to time, but who doesn't? And if I do, then I certainly have good reasons for doing so.

I think of myself as a pretty patient person. But we need to understand that anger exists on a spectrum. Violence and murder are the biggest fruit that springs from the root of unrighteous anger. But anger produces all sorts of other fruits as well. A sour attitude, a bitter indignation, an acidic disposition.

[20:53] And so our anger can bear different fruits. Now to change the analogy for a moment, think of a kitchen. Some of us are those massive fires underneath the wok of your char kueh tiao cellars, burning hot and releasing smoke easily.

Others of us are like the freezer, very stable and even, but actually freezing cold towards those whom we're angry with. maybe some of us are like the slow cooker, where we are busy simmering with bitterness under the surface for ages and ages when others have long forgotten.

Or some of us might be like a microwave at the end of its shelf life, passive-aggressive in its behaviour, resisting what it's been told to do, and getting irritable without warning.

Which one are you? Jesus knows that every one of us has an anger problem, whether we recognise it or not. And that's why he wants us to deal with it.

And so he gives us this stark warning. If you're letting yourself be consumed by unrighteous anger, you are in danger of being consumed by the fires of hell.

[22:14] It matters. And so what can we do to deal with it? Now there are whole books written about this, but let me try to get us started by briefly suggesting a few steps, which I've tried to summarise in four hours.

The first step is simply to recognise it. As I hope I've just shown you, anger can take many forms. It isn't just about slamming doors and shouting. Annoyance, irritability, and shutting out people are tied to anger as well.

And so perhaps a good first question to ask is, which kitchen appliance do you most resemble? That will help you to recognise your own unique warning signs. And then after that, think about those ingredients of anger again.

Do you think something is wrong? Is it a real wrong or just a perceived wrong? Is your assessment of the wrong accurate? Why are you against the wrong?

Is it truly because there's a fairness issue at stake and you truly want to honour God? Or is it because you just want your own way, you have your own preference? And how do you react? [23 : 29] Is the way you react about ultimately building the other person up? Or is it ultimately about condemning the other person? Do you lash out to feel good about yourself?

If so, unrighteous anger is at your door. The second step is to take responsibility for it.

Remember, you can't say, I lost control, I'm actually not an angry person, that's not who I am.

James 4, verse 1 and 2 says, what causes fights and quarrels among you?

Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill.

You're covered, but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight.

The scriptures are clear, it's not our circumstances that are at fault, it's our hearts. We desire things, and when we don't get it, we get angry.

[24 : 29] we fight. I once heard it said that you can't really know a person's true spiritual maturity until you take something away from them that they love, and then see how they respond.

I think that's wisdom. And Jesus says, Jesus' culture means that when you are sinfully angry, you don't rationalize it away, you own it, you accept responsibility for it, you accept that if the perceived wrong wasn't actually wrong, or if the thing that you're upset about is more about your kingdom of convenience than about the kingdom of God, then your anger is unrighteous, and you have sinned. And that brings us to our third step, where I cheat a little bit by squeezing in two R's, you repent and receive, you repent and receive.

having accepted responsibility, we go to God and confess our wrongdoing. And we don't just say, oh, I'm sorry God, but he was just so annoying. Instead, we humble ourselves before him and confess the anger that is our own.

We confess that what we actually want is our kingdom come, our will be done, and that when we didn't get that, we got mad. And then we remember these words also from James chapter 4, but he gives us more grace.

[26 : 04] That is why the scriptures say, God opposes the proud, but shows favor to the humble.

And so with thanksgiving, we receive grace afresh as we bring our anger to the cross and let Jesus crucify it.

And then finally, fourth R, we ready ourselves for the next battle. I think we all know that battle with sin is ongoing.

I'll be fooling myself if I think that just because we heard a sermon on anger, we're all going to perfectly deal with it now. But I hope that I've given us more tools to progress as disciples of Jesus. You see, we ready ourselves by getting to know how anger works and also our own hearts better. what are our triggers? What big thing is so important to me that when it gets threatened, I get defensive?

Maybe after a long day at work, I sit down to dinner only to discover that it's something I dislike when I've been daydreaming all day long about my favourite dish and so I just grumble and I mutter at my wife throughout.

[27 : 19] It seems like a small thing. But I'm angry inside because I think that since I work so hard, well, I'm entitled to a reward and that reward is my favourite dish.

So I no longer receive dinner as a gift, but as something that I'm owed. Now if I know that about myself and how my heart works, I can be more ready. I let God's word reorient me, that everything is to be received with thankfulness, that he has already blessed me and has reserved an eternal reward for me, and I let that be my weapon in the fight.

And so Jesus says, don't be consumed by unrighteous anger. But he doesn't stop there. Do you want to be different to Derek Chauvin?

Do you want to be different to the Pharisees? Then, Jesus says, there is one more way you need to go. Secondly, be a radical reconciler.

Be a radical reconciler. That's verses 23 to 26. Jesus now gives two illustrations, and what I find interesting about both illustrations is that Jesus reverses the roles.

[28 : 37] He's been talking about us getting angry, but he then gives examples of people being angry with you. And I wonder if he deliberately does that to remind us that we are not always the victim, but also the perpetrator.

People have not just wronged us, we have also committed wrongs against others. And remember, Jesus is talking primarily about our relationships with other believers here.

I haven't stressed that, but verse 22 reminds us that this is about relationships between brothers and sisters. Now, that doesn't mean we can't apply what we said to unbelievers as well, but it is church family that he has in view here.

He will deal with relationships with unbelievers later on at the end of Matthew 5. And now, Jesus begins to talk about reconciliation. Why?

Well, as someone once nicely puts it, because conflict follows anger like smoke follows fire. And in these two scenarios that he lays out before as he stresses both the priority of reconciliation and the urgency of reconciliation.

[29 : 51] So, number one, the priority of reconciliation. Verse 23. Therefore, if you're offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar.

First, go and be reconciled to them. Then come and offer your gift. Jesus tells his disciples, imagine you're at the Jerusalem temple.

You're presenting a sacrifice where you seek atonement for your sin. And as you reflect on your own guilt and your need of forgiveness, you remember that your brother has something against you.

The idea here is not so much some unreasonable grudge, but a legitimate grievance. you have truly wronged him in some way. And so what should you do?

After all, you're at worship. Well, Jesus makes it clear. Reconciliation matters more than ritual. How much does it matter?

[30 : 58] Well, let's think about it. If you are in the crowds right now, listening to Jesus preach, you are most likely from Galilee. And to offer your sacrifice, you have to travel 80 miles to Jerusalem.

That's further than from Kuching to Lundu. And remember, they don't have a car. And Jesus is saying, leave your sacrificial animal at the altar, take one week to travel back to Galilee, reconcile with your brother, then make another one week journey back to the temple to complete your sacrifice.

That is how high a priority Jesus places on reconciliation between Christians. Yes, it's difficult. Yes, it's inconvenient.

But Jesus says your worship is meaningless otherwise. What's the point of coming to church or Bible study and prayer meeting if you are at odds with a brother or sister and have not sought his or her forgiveness?

Religion is no substitute for relational repentance. You need to go and sort out matters with the person you have wrong. Now, Jesus doesn't mean that we can never go to church until there's reconciliation, but he is stressing that this is not too high a priority.

[32 : 26] And that brings us to our second scenario. Number two, the urgency of reconciliation. Now, this time the scenario moves to the law courts, verse 25. Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court.

Do it while you are still together on the way. Or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. Truly, I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.

Notice that your brother or sister has now become your adversary. That's why reconciliation is a priority, because when left on its own, the relationship could easily deteriorate even further.

And just as out-of-court settlements are more prudent than being thrown into prison, so reconciliation is a better option than unresolved tension.

And once again, Jesus presumes that we are actually guilty of the wrong that we have done against our brother or sister. And so Jesus says, sort it out quickly before it gets worse and worse.

[33 : 42] Well, Jesus really knows how to pierce our hearts like no one else, doesn't he? But he is clear. Do you want to be different to Derek Chauvin?

Than be a radical reconciler? That's really the final R I want to add to the other four R's. The New Testament makes clear that love for God cannot be divorced from love for others.

1 John 4 verses 19-20 says this, We love because he first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar.

For whoever does not love their brother and sister whom they have seen cannot love God whom they have not seen. Reconciliation matters.

Is there someone today that you need to go and sort out things with? A brother or sister whom you have fallen out with? Maybe over some small matter?

[34 : 46] But now you've allowed it to get to the point where you've not spoken to each other for over a year? Well, Jesus says, sort it out. But I want you to see not just the challenge but also the hope.

In the scenario that Jesus just laid out, the possibility of reconciliation is also present. There is a chance that the relationship can be made right again.

Verse 24, go and be reconciled and then come back to the temple to offer your gift. Jesus thinks your mission can be accomplished.

It is not yet too late. There is hope. And isn't it beautiful when genuine reconciliation happens?

It is the very picture of the gospel itself. Now, if we have genuinely wronged somebody, what can we do to pursue reconciliation?

[35 : 51] Once again, entire books have been written about this. And to be honest, I am still very much learning myself about what it means to be a radical reconciler.

I am still a rookie myself. But let me share with you what I have learned on my journey so far. First of all, ask yourself, how can I glorify God in this situation?

In other words, intentionally bring God into the conflict. Don't see the situation just as something to sort out between yourself and your brother or sister, but see it also as an opportunity to honor God. And when you see it in that light, well, that should cause you to pray. You see, when God is in the picture, you will pray that His will to be done and His will for you is that reconciliation should happen.

And then, when you see your brother or sister, you admit your wrong specifically. You don't just say, oh, I'm sorry that I did something to make you mad.

[37 : 01] You say, I'm sorry I talked about you behind your back. You name the offense. And you avoid the ifs and buts.

You don't say, I'm sorry I shouted at you but I was tired. No, you simply acknowledge your sin. And then, you ask for forgiveness.

You don't just say, sorry. You say, can you forgive me? And if you're on the other side, don't just say, oh, it's okay. Say, you're forgiven.

You'll be surprised at how powerful those two little words are. Now, it's also important to recognize that if you have done something seriously hurtful and you are now asking for forgiveness, you need to give your brother or sister in Christ some time.

As Christians, we know that we should forgive, but we should also understand that if the wrong is substantial, sometimes the wrong party needs some time to heal.

[38 : 11] They need God to work on their heart so that they are ready to forgive you. Sometimes we so stress the need to forgive that we minimize the offense and risk doing more damage.

Yes, a Christian must be willing to forgive, but we need to show some grace and allow for some time for the gospel to do its transformative work so that the person, the wrong party, is enabled to forgive.

And finally, you accept as you alter your behavior. To move on, you accept any consequences from your wrongdoing, and then you seek to change.

You seek not to repeat what you did. Now, do you find that difficult? I certainly do. Reconciliation does not come easy.

And I almost didn't want to preach to you what I just said because I worry about living up to them myself. So I am preaching as much to myself as to you. But Jesus says it's a priority.

[39 : 20] It's urgent. It's what you do if you embrace Jesus' culture. Don't be consumed by unrighteous anger, but be a radical reconciler.

But as we end, remember the rest of the Sermon of the Mount. These sayings do not come in isolation. And so Jesus says, if you're feeling that this is tough, that you need supernatural help, then you're in the sweet spot.

You're being poor in spirit. And if you're grieving over your past failures, you're still in the sweet spot. You're mourning over your sin.

And Jesus says that's a good place to be if it causes us to turn to God himself to help us to live for him. Now praise the Lord, he is patient with us.

But there is one other thing I want us to see. Yes, this is tough. But I want to make sure that we end on a different note. I want us to see that what we've heard today is also beautiful.

[40 : 32] I want you to imagine again. Imagine not just one individual, but one entire community that takes Jesus' words seriously here.

I want you to imagine a whole people group or even an entire nation that takes Jesus' words seriously here. A community that wants to renounce unrighteous anger and pursues reconciliation seriously.

A community that only gets angry the way Jesus does. An anger that appraises the wrong accurately, responds appropriately, and is always self-controlled.

You see what Jesus says here is not just about individual piety. It also lays the foundation for an alternative society. Just imagine if the entire church embraced Jesus' culture in this way.

And a world that right now only sees an anger that results in riots and looting, an anger that only further divides people of different races, will see something deeply attractive.

[41 : 48] Imagine if people read the news and then they turn and they saw the church practicing what Jesus taught in this way.

to them. Wouldn't that be good news? Well, I'm going to pray in a moment.

But just before we do that, I just want us to give us some time for reflection. And on the screen, I'm going to put some take-home actions. Over the last couple of weeks, we had take-home questions. take-home actions. And I just want you to look at those two possible actions. There might be others as well. And I just want you to ask them about yourself.

How are you doing on the anger front? And is there someone that you need to go and reconcile with, even today? So let me just give us some time to pause and to reflect, and then I will lead us in prayer.

[42 : 53] One of ways we enough to hear the purposes of to submit to the right to see our notesern Heavenly Father, we thank you that your word is living and active.

And we know that through your word, you often lay bare and expose our hearts. You lay bare what is unknown even to us.

And so Father, we pray that by your spirit, you help us to examine ourselves today. Help us not to be too quick to judge the other person or think about the other person, but help us to think about ourselves first and foremost.

And Lord, we come to you and confess to you where we have been angry, perhaps not always in the most obvious ways like shouting and slamming doors, but perhaps in other ways where we have maybe been very irritable or frozen somebody out.

Whatever way it is, Lord, we just come to you and we just want to lay them at your feet and repent of them. We thank you once again that because we are living under the new covenant, you have given us a heart that is transformed by the spirit, a heart that can change, a heart that can be directed to live your way and to live in light of Jesus' culture.

[44 : 36] So please help us to do that. Help us to continue to recognize our anger, to assume responsibility for it, to repent, to receive your grace and then to ready ourselves for the next battle.

Lord, I pray that if there's people in our church or whoever is listening who needs to go and reconcile with your brother or sister in Christ, I pray that you would move them and allow that to happen, help them to move in that direction no matter how difficult it is.

and we pray, Lord, that you will bring an outcome that will magnify your name, all of that desire to please you in this way. We continue to pray that as a church, both KEC and Malaysian church as a whole, that we would be agents of reconciliation, we would be people who want to model what your society looks like, to give a preview of the kingdom of heaven in this way.

And so, Father, we ask, Lord, please, help us to live this way. So we commit all this now into your loving hands.

In Jesus' name we pray.