

DO YOU AGREE WITH JESUS?

QUESTION: Who is responsible for righting a wrong?

It is inevitable in the course of human events that somewhere along the line we will suffer wrongs at the hands of another, or we ourselves may be the cause of wrong against another. How are we to treat one who has wronged us in some way? Our society seems to think that getting even is the proper course of action. Most live by the rule of “do unto others as they do unto you.” Should we seek to enact revenge, or harbor ill-will toward those who have done us wrong? Are we to refuse forgiveness to the one who has wronged us until such time as they come to us asking forgiveness? What does Jesus say?

Jesus spoke to the one who had wronged another when he said, “Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; 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 5:23-24). The responsibility in this passage is placed upon the one who has committed the wrong against another. But before we place the obligation of reconciliation upon the guilty party alone, Jesus has more to say. To the party that has been sinned against Jesus would say, “Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother” (Matthew 18:15). In this passage, the burden of responsibility rests upon the shoulders of him who has been sinned against.

According to the words of Jesus, both the offender and the offended have the personal responsibility to seek out the other party and make right the wrong. This keeps either party from thinking they have no responsibility to forgive or seek forgiveness until the other initiates reconciliation. When we strive to live according to the words of our Savior, our relationships with our fellow-man will be more peaceful and harmonious. Seek out someone you have wronged today, and ask for forgiveness, or if you have been sinned against, seek out the offender, and make every effort to be reconciled to him today!

Do you have a question that you would like for us to consider together, or a comment regarding what has been written? If so, please contact us at sixthavenue@bellsouth.net, or write to us at the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ, 1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, 35501.