



WEEKLY CHRISTIAN FOCUS

23 THEREFORE IF THOU BRING
THY GIFT TO THE ALTAR, AND
THERE REMEMBEREST THAT
THY BROTHER HATH OUGHT
AGAINST THEE;
24 LEAVE THERE THY
GIFT BEFORE THE ALTAR,
AND GO THY WAY; FIRST
BE RECONCILED TO THY
BROTHER, AND THEN COME
AND OFFER THY GIFT.



LEAVE YOUR GIFT THERE. THE POWER OF SAYING SORRY!

Greetings. Leave your gift there! What does it mean?

I met my older brother recently again after about six years. He is a wonderful man and I have seen he has grown in wisdom and love far exceeding mine. I am thankful we are still in touch. We met due to our mother's passing to heaven of which I wrote a lot about last November 2025 and at the time of our mum's funeral, my brother and my son and I stayed two nights together in an accommodation.

One thing I noticed about my brother is that he was very 'open' in spirit. By this I mean that he said exactly what he thought, quite calmly and patiently and with kindness. This encouraged me to also ask him some questions and things I was struggling with. Wisdom proceeded.

But the main thing I also noticed a few times was that it was very easy for him to say the word 'sorry'. He said this when he thought he was doing the wrong thing or might be mistaken.

For example, he was talking at the funeral from the platform to the fifteen or so people who had gathered, and suddenly realised he was addressing a member of the gathering mistakenly thinking he was our cousin. (My brother has been away from the UK for many many years). So he suddenly stopped his beautiful eulogy to our mother, and turned to the person in the congregation and said, 'Oh I am very sorry, I thought

you were 'so and so' but now I realise you are....' then he continued his very beautiful message and finished up. He seemed to display no sign of embarrassment, just a desire to say 'sorry' to the person, and make things right! God bless him. My brother has become, I would say a very devout Christian, who only seems to want to find the truth, and speak the truth. The changes and decisions he has been made in his life, in my opinion have been tremendously good ones.

Saying sorry.

Yes, sometimes we have to apologise. I do not mean we have to be wimps and apologise for any and everything, but we should apologise when we have made a mistake.

I learned a lot about saying sorry inside that CHINESE CULTURE. APOLOGISING IS A HUGE THING.

There are even different levels of apology in the Chinese language, and if you don't use the right level, it could make matters worse, as it may not be considered a big enough apology! (link below)

Huang Jiang. Yellow River.

I experienced this once while I was teaching university graduates who were getting trained to work in the oil industry in the South China Sea. There were about 40 of them and I had them in my English Department, for three hours a week. One of the students was called Huang Jiang. (Hw ang Jee ang). In my ignorance of Chinese language I thought, 'oh this guy's name

translates into 'Yellow River' (Huang meaning Yellow and Jiang meaning (sometimes) river).

Since nearly all my students had already adopted English names in their teens, (as was the cool trend) and this man had no English name, I decided to call him 'Yellow River' if I called upon him to speak in the lesson. How clever of me, I thought!

But it turns out that his name did not mean 'Yellow River' at all.

As some of you may know, there could be several or more meanings to any given Chinese Character, and this includes the Chinese character Huang and even the same or more to Jiang. So his name, and names are revered and carefully chosen in China usually, **so his name meant something else entirely.**

So there was I, the idiot foreigner, thinking I was so clever, calling this 20 year old young man Yellow River.

After some weeks, the ' (student) leader of the class', a wonderful tall young man called 'Godspeed' (in his adopted English name) , stood up before one lesson, and said very humbly, that he very much regretted to inform me, 'Teacher Jerry, that this man's name was not Yellow River, and that I should not call him that any more because it is not correct and would otherwise be offensive!'

As I had a good relationship with everyone there, (or so I thought), **I realised they must have discussed this point and the leader would then speak to me, REALLY ON BEHALF OF THE WHOLE CLASS, SINCE THEY ALL**

KNEW ABOUT IT.

I thanked the leader and went over to the student and apologised deeply to him, in my best CHINESE, and why I had made that mistake and if he could forgive me. **I don't know if I used the right level of apology**, but his next desk classmate translated for me. Huang Jiang was very magnanimous, and kind. I apologised then in English to the whole class as they had heard anyway what I had just said to him.

Of course I never used that 'name' again and I felt that the Lord had taught me a very important lesson again in my time of our Chinese decade.

We seemed to all get along splendidly and even better from that moment. As they finished their studies with me, and were due to be deployed to oil rigs in the South China Sea, we all went for a huge bash up meal, as is the custom there.

There are many stories in Chinese Christian history of times where foreign missionaries either deliberately or inadvertently offended Chinese people, and this had a negative or disastrous impact on their mission, in fact frequently put a complete end to it, never to return!

Saying Sorry again.



The opposite of **sorry** is **pride**. Our human pride stops us from saying sorry, when we should. Jesus addresses this problem in a rarely-used-by-Christians text. I have never heard this preached in a church nor read a sermon on it and it is this:

Leave your gift there. Matthew 5:23-24

Here are the verses, and then I will try to share what I think. I am using two translations:

23 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; **first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.**

And in the Amplified translation, we see this:

23 So if when you are offering your gift at the altar you there remember that your brother has any [grievance] against you,

24 Leave your gift at the altar and go. First make peace with your brother, and then come back and present your gift.

There are several key points here and should influence our lives for the better if we practice them.

1. This message is for believers, people who making some attempt to serve God. We are at the altar so to speak and trying to approach the Lord.

2. We remember, or the Spirit of God convicts us, that someone has some grievance against us.

3. Stop what you are doing, go and find the person somehow and make peace.

4. Come back and finish your giving to God.

The Lord is putting the responsibility on us to act upon what you remember. The Spirit will tell you what to remember if you are open.

You should be remembering if your brother or sister or child has some pain in their heart because of something you did or said to them, or even allegedly did or said to them. You have to do something about it, according to Jesus.

And when should you do something about it? Do it immediately the moment you remember, go see them personally if possible, apologise by email, give them a call in humility,

make your heart right. Do it NOW!

Now, it may seem, I have to grant it, that the person who has a grievance, may by that time may be hardened to your overtures, or apology, but if you say it in humility and with prayer beforehand, you should generally have some success.

God is totally not interested in receiving your gift to Him, or even your prayers to some degree, if your heart is not right. Here it talks

specifically about **you remembering**, that possibly and probably and definitely your brother has some 'ought' or grievance against you, you should go out and find him (or her), and make peace with him and say sorry or straighten out the situation in humility. This is an amazing portion of the Bible.

Before I try to go into a few deeper points about these two verses, I have a few short questions:

- Have you ever heard this type of sermon/message preached in your life?
- Have you personally experienced someone coming to you and apologising, without you asking?
- Have you ever made the step to apologise to other(s)?
- If so what has been the results good or bad from this event?
- It would be great to hear your testimonies. Please email our pubs team at wcf@nym.hush.com

Deeper thoughts:

Let me suggest to you at whatever spiritual and physical cost it may require, you will be obeying the Lord by obeying these two verses.

As I look back on my life, I have known only a very few saints who have been good examples of this principle. I have seen it happen, where a person has sincerely apologised to someone, as I was there in the room or meeting. In every case, both sides rejoiced and were happy that this issue has been resolved!

To obey these two verses requires humility. People who sincerely love the Lord, are probably more apt to

listen to the 'remembering' part, and go out of their way to solve the problem with another person. However all believers should be remembering this, and the purpose of this article is to help us know what the Lord expects from us.

This situation Jesus spoke of does not only cover some grievance that happened recently. It covers, I believe any grievance that happened years ago. It may not be too late for you to make amends, or pick up that phone and deeply apologise to someone, or even a relative or a child or a brother or sister in Christ. Do it now, dearly beloved. Pray, ask God for the situation to be resolved. Your humility will win through with prayer usually.

Many Christians may be looked down upon because they are still struggling with the dregs and sins of their former lives; they do their best, but fall often. Their personal situations or semi-homelessness materially poorer circumstances hold them back, and they may struggle with alcohol, pornography, drugs or even violent tendencies (male and female). All is not well of course.

But I feel and I think the Bible teaches that this principle of NOT making things right with your brother or sister is an even greater sin before the Lord. The former 'sins' can be worked out as they are the devil's worldly influences, but the latter is something we really have no excuse for.

Isaiah spends quite a lot of time speaking about these kinds of self righteous sins and pride that stops us from obeying what Jesus (later) said. In fact it is really all through the Bible.

I am sure I have offended quite a few people. I have tried to reconcile with such people, and there are still a couple I have not been able to trace.

Owing money for example is an area where if you are the guilty party, people can easily have a grievance against you. I mention this briefly because it is a classic example of what you think is a small thing is not a small thing to the person who lent you the money!

I have owed two people money for a very long time (thirty years). In fact one was not a loan, per se, but it was something that I did realise I should pay my fair share of funds to an accident in which a car was damaged. The three of us in the car survived the crash unharmed and yet over the years, after I knew the financial damage to the owner of the vehicle we were in, I was shocked, it went to about 10,000 Swiss francs. My colleague paid the part for both of us, yet I never paid her back. I still owe this money and I should make some reparations.

The other loan, I recently went to pay back. Although I, over the years, lost touch with this kind person who bought a caravan for me and my family in England out of the kindness of her heart, I was not very often back in England.

I eventually lost touch with her, no emails, smart phones or Wi-Fi in those days. During the time of my mother passing and going to heaven, I went to her place of work, where I knew she used to work for many years. I arrived with £600 in my hand in an envelope. At this large company in Sussex, England, I asked at reception if Mrs Kind Person was still

working there. The receptionist was a Muslim woman. She made enquiries and several people were called in. I explained fully to the receptionist why I was there, but time had passed and no one knew her at all any more! The Muslim (receptionist) lady said that it was 'a very righteous thing' I had done to try and make this right. However I didn't feel it was that righteous. If I had been righteous I would have done better years earlier. 'The wicked borrows and doesn't pay back.'

I then went to visit her at the house I knew she used to live in nearby. No one knew her, and I had to leave the whole situation. It was a small house and I knew she had married, and had had at least two children. Time just moves on. That's why we should do it now, or as soon as possible.

Closing thoughts:

There are a great deal more thoughts and scriptures about this, and time would really fail me to talk about them.

I pray this article will be a blessing to those of you who wish to follow Jesus and make things right. Ask the Lord to help you obey these two wonderful verses. It could solve many of your problems. Praise the Lord. By God's Grace, we may return to this subject in a Part II, God willing.

Love in Christ,
Jerry for the WCF Team

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[yellow river 黄河 Huánghé](#)

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