

## 10-13-24 Confronting Conflict

### Week 1

**Text: Colossians 3:12-17**

**Topic(s):** Compassion, Patience, Peace

**Big Idea of the Message:** The peace of Christ and the word of Christ give us a place to root ourselves in the midst of conflict, and an identity to live out of as we disagree—but with love.

**Application Point:** Engage conflict from the rooted place of humility, love, and worship.

The peace of Christ and the word of Christ give us a place to root ourselves in the midst of conflict, and an identity to live out of as we disagree—but with love.

Conflict is inevitable, it is part of life, and it began in the very beginning, in the garden of Eden.

We are not to avoid conflict; we must face it head on and with a Christ centered mindset. We are no longer representatives of ourselves, we are representatives of a King. And doing things His way will still come with negative consequences, but He must be honored.

As Christians, we must remind ourselves that we serve a King and follow his example, we are to be Christlike. Living Christlike and Biblical can be very different. When you read the gospels, we see that the disciples often tried to get Jesus to live Biblically, but Jesus came for something more. When the devil tempted Jesus what did he offer Him? This world's kingdom. (**Matt. 4:1-10**). Jesus didn't come to set up His kingdom here, He came to set up His future kingdom in here (point at the heart).

Every time anyone tried to get Jesus to enter the political arena or earthly kingdom ruling, He rejected it. Jesus was able to navigate through this life and stay on course. He dealt with conflict the correct way. His aim was at the heart of man and His future bride, the church.

God has purposed my heart that when I am confronted with conflict that I do it Christlike, with my aim to preserve the relationship. At least on my side, that's my responsibility to the relationship. When my life is over, I want to be known for loving people who were different and or didn't agree with me culturally, politically, personally or even theologically.

**Read Colossians 3:12-17.**

**1. Confronting conflict in a Christlike manner WILL require lots of work.**

- You will have to be intentional; it won't just happen. It is way easier to just marginalize those who we disagree with. It is easier to justify not listening to or even getting along with.
- **Verse 13** has the key, the hinge point, this is the point that everything else balances on; **“bearing with one another...”**
- Reminder, if you are a believer, follower of Jesus, born-again, you have been chosen (elect) to be holy (set apart) and are loved.
- You might have to remind yourself, or better yet memorize that part of **verse 12**. (“put on...”)
- Because if you are going to be **“bearing with one another”** you will have to get a few things taken care of, or better stated, put on something's.

- To bear with one another, we must put on: tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering.
- Paul uses a helpful visual image here to describe what it looks like to address conflict and strengthen relationships in a community: **“bearing with one another” (v. 13)**. It’s language that acknowledges that relationships will not be all sentimental “kumbaya” singing.
- It will require work. Putting up with me is a LOT of work! (look at your neighbor and tell them)
- Have you ever helped someone move? Maybe you agreed to do it weeks ago, and now the day is here, and you must put on shoes, strain your muscles picking up heavy boxes, and exhaust yourself for the sake of a new home you will not live in.
- That’s what bearing each other’s burdens looks like: I take on weight I could justifiably ignore for the sake of someone else.
- That is crucial for addressing conflict in a family as well: what small slights can I put behind me? When can I take on responsibilities I’d rather avoid? What sorrows, stresses, or challenges can I help shoulder?
- What things can I simply let slide. We don’t have to be so petty. (having little or no importance or significance)
- This is not one-sided. **“Bearing with one another”** is mutual: conflicts are sorted out and tensions are eased when we each agree to bear burdens together.
- But for believers, this is an exhortation to respond with patience and humility even when our burdens are not mutually shared.
- Bearing another’s burden is hard work, it will require one to be intentionally merciful, kind, humble, meek and longsuffering (patient).
- Most of the time we don’t like to put in the work! We would rather be right in our opinions or situation than preserving a possible relationship or being right with God.

## **2. Confronting conflict in a Christlike manner WILL require being like Christ.**

- **Verse 13, “forgiving one another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.”**
- How can we expect to handle things Christlike if we aren’t Christlike?
- Christians are the MOST forgiven people in the world. Because of that, Christians should be the MOST forgiving people in the world. (Good thing we are, huh?!)

**“And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.” NKJV**

**“and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us.” Matthew 6:12 NLT**

- What would happen if God forgave you in exactly the same way you are forgiving others at this time? (awkward long pause, along with sheepish grin)
- Christians cannot overlook the direct relationship between God’s forgiveness and our forgiveness.

**And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. Ephesians 4:32**

**Make allowance for each other’s faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Colossians 3:13 NLT**

- God has given us an incredibly high standard to live up to when we have the opportunity to forgive someone. (How are you doing with it?)
- Forgiveness is a decision. Forgiveness is not a feeling. It is an act of the will. Forgiveness involves a series of decisions.
- **First**, call on God to change our hearts. As He gives grace, we must decide (with our will) not to think or talk about what someone has done to hurt us.
- God calls us to make these decisions regardless of our feelings.
- **Second**, forgiveness is moving forward but not necessarily forgetting.
- Forgiving is an active process; it involves a conscious choice and a deliberate course of action. When God forgives, He chooses not to mention, recount, or think about our sins again.

**“I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins. Isaiah 43:25**

- When we choose to forgive, we must draw on God’s grace and consciously decide not to think or talk about what others have done to hurt us.
- **Thirdly**, forgiving is not excusing.

*“Excusing says, “That’s okay,” and implies, “What you did wasn’t really wrong,” or “You couldn’t help it.” Forgiveness is the opposite of excusing. The very fact that forgiveness is needed and granted indicates that what someone did was wrong. Forgiveness says, “We both know that what you did was wrong and without excuse. But since God has forgiven me, I forgive you.” Ken Sande (The Peace Maker)*

- “Unforgiveness is the poison we drink, hoping others will die.”
- Too often we try to live the Christian life like a buffet, picking and choosing what Christlike characteristics we want to display. God is very clear on forgiveness.

**But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Matt. 6:15**

- The greatest need of all of mankind is forgiveness and God wants to and is willing to forgive anyone seeking forgiveness out.
- **Matthew 18:21-35.**

**3. Confronting conflict in a Christlike manner can only happen by being intentional.**

**Verse 14, “But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.”**

**And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ESV**

- What is your why or what? What motivates you? What is your why? To be able to confront conflict in a Christlike manner, to guard our testimony, to represent our King and not ourselves, we must remember the why?
- Why are we here? What is our responsibility? What does God desire from us? What is our purpose? What is our mission?

- My (why/what) is to build caring relationships with the hope that I can gain permission to share the life changing good news of Jesus Christ in a non-threatening manner. That is my what.
- Why? God loved me enough to save me and equipped me so that I could share His love with others. And the love that He desires I share is an agape love.
- Agape love is an unconditional love, an action. One that isn't dependent on how I feel but one that I am to extend despite how I feel.
- God's love is a preemptive action, one that does not require someone to be worthy or one that must be reciprocated.
- God's love is one that is preemptive, acts first. We love God because He first loved us. God's love acts first, so must we act, extent love first.
- Remember the first point? It will be hard work. We must remember the why and what because it will be hard and there will be times you want to throw in the towel.
- Especially in the house and lives of God's people, it is the only way to live in harmony. When God's people love each other, CHOOSING to love each other, the Holy Spirit will usher in harmony.
- Have you ever experienced what God can do through a harmonized group?

#### **4. Confronting conflict in a Christlike manner requires God's peace to rule the heart.**

- **Read verse 15.**
- To do this an individual must be born again. You cannot have peace with God let alone have His peace rule your heart until you have surrendered to Him. (you must be born again)
- As followers of Christ, we are called to be one body with its aim to live at peace with each other, and that can be obtained through being thankful. Intentional about having a gratitude attitude.
- Consider how the human body functions. It functions best (harmony) when it is at peace with the other members of it. When one member of the body hurts the other parts compensate for it. If the hurt body part does not heal properly, it will create more or other issues within the body.
- Being thankful cannot exist with entitlement and selfish ambitions.
- There is only ONE thing we are entitled to and that is hell. What we deserve is to spend eternity in hell for our sinful nature. To this day all I deserve is hell's fire and judgement.
- Outside of that, I am entitled to nothing. I don't deserve to have all the blessings that God has given me. **"But God..."** Two of my favorite words.

**But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. 9 And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation. 10 For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. 11 So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God. Romans 5:8-11 NLT**

- I don't deserve to be called a child of God, I am not entitled to have the blessings I have or deserve more; but boy oh boy am I truly thankful for God's mercy, grace and love. (Praise God!)
- I must intentionally live a thankful, and grateful life for God's honor and glory.
- **Read verses 16-17.**
- The beauty of **verses 16 and 17**, is that when we as Christians struggle with family/church conflict, we have resources for healing that we shouldn't ignore. We can find strength and comfort in the rhythms, music, and community of the church.
- My thankfulness must ooze the Words of Christ. Because I am thankful, I will seek His wisdom. In my life I will teach and admonish others.
- In my thankfulness I will focus on the greatness of Jesus and His grace. I will sing His praises. The consequences to living a thankful life is the peace of God ruling in your heart.

**Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. 5 Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; 6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:4-7**

### **Conclusion**

Our differences often come from a deeper place of conflicted and tightly held identities. For Christians, we have the ability to engage in conflicts from the rooted, solid place of peace in Christ. The conflict may get heated anyway, but our part to play in reconciliation and de-escalation may very well be to speak and act from a place of the peace of Christ.

Maybe you are here today, and you are in a conflict so deep that you cannot see a way out.

Maybe that conflict is with yourself.

Maybe you can't imagine being thankful, because you feel unworthy of anything.

Where I said we don't deserve anything but hell. God says you are loved despite that. He loves you unconditionally and desires to walk with you. Don't let Satan get you twisted. God loves you. You are not alone. Hear me, you are not alone! Don't grab ahold of a feeling, trust what God says and shown through His Son, Jesus.

- No matter what comes my way, I don't have to be afraid because even if I can't feel it, I know God is with me.

**This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” Joshua 1:9**

In **Joshua 1:5** God told Joshua that He would not fail him or abandon him. This same message was shared with the church in Hebrews.

**Don't love money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has said,“I will never fail you. I will never abandon you.” 6 So we can say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper, so I will have no fear. What can mere people do to me?” Hebrews 13:5-6**

Sought after (Isa. 62:12) Precious in his sight (Isa. 43:4) A new creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17)  
Not condemned (Rom. 8:1) Forgiven (Col. 1:14) Loved (1 John 3:1) Accepted (Rom. 15:7) A child  
of God (John 1:12) Jesus' friend (John 15:14) Free (John 8:36) The temple of God (1 Cor. 6:19)  
God's treasured possession (Deut. 7:6) Complete in Christ (Col. 2:10 NLT) Chosen (Col. 3:12)  
Called (2 Tim. 1:9) An ambassador of the Most High God (2 Cor. 5:20) God's masterpiece (Eph.  
2:10 NLT) Able to do all things through Christ, who gives you strength (Phil. 4:13) **More than a  
conqueror through Jesus, who loves you** (Rom. 8:37)