

A Community of Shalom

This is part one of a two part sermon.

“Sin is a vandalism of God’s shalom.” – Cornelius Plantinga, Jr.

Proactivity

The goal

... is to “gain” your brother. To win him back, as though he is the sheep that has gone astray (vv. 10-14)

Engaging in the process of correcting a brother is an act of love. It is a gift to the other person that puts their best interest at heart. There should truly be a familial (brotherly, sisterly) relationship.

The method

Tell him his fault between you and him alone.

Acting promptly – the 10/10/10 rule

Ephesians 4:26-27 “Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.”

Privacy

Understanding gossip

Proverbs 18:8 The words of a whisperer are like delicious morsels; they go down into the inner parts of the body.

Comment: People gossip because it “tastes good.” But the second half is ominous – it will affect you.

Proverbs 16:28 A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends.

Comment: The effect of gossip is the destruction of previously close relationships.

Proverbs 20:19 Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets; therefore do not associate with a simple babblers.

Comment: You have a duty to resist, rebuke, and redirect gossiping speech. Avoidance may be necessary

Name names, or stay quiet!

Breakdown in process – a story from Natalie.

“It’s not that you sinned against me, but against somebody else, and I won’t tell you who.”

Peace

If it is possible

Ephesians 4:3 (NLT) “Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace.”

If it is not

Romans 12:18 “If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.”

Hope in heaven

“... In a little while you will meet in heaven; he will then be dearer to you than the nearest friend you have upon earth is to you now. Anticipate that period in your thoughts; and though you may find it necessary to oppose his errors, view him personally as a kindred soul, with whom you are to be happy in Christ forever.

But if you look upon him as an unconverted person, in a state of enmity against God and his grace (a supposition which, without good evidence, you should be very unwilling to admit), he is a more proper object of your compassion than of your anger. Alas! "He knows not what he does." But you know who has made you to differ. If God, in his sovereign pleasure, had so appointed, you might have been as he is now; and he, instead of you, might have been set for the defense of the gospel. You were both equally blind by nature. If you attend to this, you will not reproach or hate him, because the Lord has been pleased to open your eyes, and not his.” – John Newton

Questions for Personal Study

1. Conflict is deeply uncomfortable for most people. Do you avoid it, or do you speak truth when needed?
2. Gossip is damaging for any community, including a church. Given today’s teaching, how are you shaping up in this area? Do you need to watch your tongue more closely?
3. Do you stew in your anger and store up bitterness, or do you deal with it quickly?
4. How does our future in heaven give us perspective toward one another in conflict?