



SUNDAY EVENING

AT BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH

Title: Working Through Contention

Passage: Acts 15:36-16:5

Speaker: Pastor Dan Preston

Introduction: When the Lord established the church, He envisioned a unified body of believers—all working together with one message about one Savior. There's power when homes, churches, and ministries are aligned for the gospel. But wherever there's potential for impact, there's also opposition. The enemy works hard to divide what God has joined. That's why this message matters—because sometimes the very people we're called to serve with become the ones we struggle to stand with.

I. What They Did Not Do

- A. They did not drop out of the ministry.

They may not have seen eye to eye on John Mark, but they understood that the gospel must continue.

- B. They did not become lone wolves.

They were struggling with one another, but they did not allow those feelings to bleed over into other relationships.

They realized that more can be done together than alone.

- C. They did not become cynical or overcome with negativity.



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They both focused on the work of the ministry and chose to not talk about or dwell on the problem.

- D. They did not attack each other.

You never hear Paul and Barnabas talk bad about each other.

II. What They Did Do

- A. Even though they disagreed, they maintained their friendship.

We need to be careful about breaking relationships over preferences and opinions.

- B. They kept the issue between themselves.

Spiritual people take disagreements and problems and make them smaller.

Carnal people take disagreements and problems and cause an explosion.

- C. They continued on for the sake of the Gospel.

The bigger issue is that we live in a big world where the majority of people do not know Christ.

- D. They took steps to guard against future contention.

Paul understood the importance of not getting sidetracked. Instead of allowing them to become distracted and face contention over a side issue, he decided to handle it. He was not going to allow anything to stand in the way of the gospel getting out.



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Conclusion: Let's not let contention have the final say. Let's not let past wounds write the last chapter. The gospel is bigger than our differences, stronger than our divisions, and more enduring than our disagreements. The mission hasn't changed, and the world still needs the hope we carry. So let's lay down the fences, pick up the tools, and build bridges—together. Let's move forward, not in bitterness, but in boldness, not in offense, but in obedience, not in silence, but in grace. Because the gospel still goes on—and so must we.



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