

Healthy Church: Unhealthy World Healthy Churches Handle Conflict Biblically Rev. Eric Smith | September 5 & 6, 2020

Sermon Summary

Everyone experiences conflict. Conflict literally means to “strike together”. The bible contains many episodes of real life examples of conflict. Some of the conflict depicted is handled well and some is not. Jesus gave specific instruction regarding how to properly deal with conflict in the church. We will draw on Jesus’ teaching to unpack and apply principles to deal with conflict inside and outside the church.

Diving Into The Message

*So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits. **Matthew 7:17-20***

Healthy, biblical conflict resolution takes humility and courage!

Christian Conflict Resolution always begins with the Good News. The Good News is the amazing story of the work that God has done through Jesus to resolve the conflict that SIN causes between God and humanity!

*God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people’s sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. **2 Cor 5:19 NLT***

Conflict is UNAVOIDABLE. Conflict is a part of the human experience!

We see examples of conflict throughout the Bible:

- Cain and Abel after Cain’s Gift is Not Accepted by God **Genesis 4:6-8**
- Moses and God’s People Traveling Through the Wilderness **Exodus 18:13-16**
- The Dispute Between the Groups of Widows (Origin of Deacon Ministry) **Acts 6**

We are surrounded by conflict in the world!

We experience conflict in our lives!

- Conflict can Make You Sick , Literally
- Conflict Can Be PHYSICALLY Painful
- UNACKNOWLEDGED Conflict is Unhealthy

We RESPOND to Conflict in One of Three Ways:

1. Escape.
2. Attack.
3. Peacemaker.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. **Matt 5:9**

The Way of the Peacemaker in the Church and in the World

"If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back. But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two others with you and go back again, so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses. If the person still refuses to listen, take your case to the church. Then if he or she won't accept the church's decision, treat that person as a pagan or a corrupt tax collector. **Matthew 18:15-17 NLT**

Five Steps to handling conflict IN THE CHURCH

1. Overlook minor offenses **Matthew 18:15**

Sensible people control their temper; they earn respect by overlooking wrongs.

Prov. 19:11 NLT

Ask these questions:

- Is this worth fighting over?
- In what ways did I sin in this matter?
- What "rights" am I worshipping?
- How have I attempted to avoid my responsibility?

2. Talk in private (**Matthew 18:15**)

Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters.[a] Be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude. 9 Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and he will grant you his blessing. For the Scriptures say,

"If you want to enjoy life and see many happy days, keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies. Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace, and work to maintain it. The eyes of the Lord watch over those who do right, and his ears are open to their prayers. But the Lord turns his face against those who do evil." **1 Peter 3:8-12 NLT**

3. Take one or two with you. (Matthew 18:16)

4. Tell it to the church (Matthew 18:17)

5. Treat him as a non-believer (Matthew 18:17)

- a) it protects the Lord's name from dishonor
- b) it protects other believers from being led astray
- c) it helps the rebellious person to see their sin and repent

Four Steps to handling conflict IN YOUR WORLD:

1. Communicate

2. Actively Listen

3. Review Options

4. End with a Win-Win Solution

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Matt 5:9

The Goal of Handling Conflict Biblically: Restoration and Reconciliation

*God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. **2 Cor 5:19 NLT***

LIFE APPLICATION SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

Healthy Church: Unhealthy World Healthy Disciples Make Healthy Churches Matthew 18:15-17

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Life Application Questions

1. How have you viewed relational conflict?
2. How is your life different due to Christ's reconciling work in your life.
3. Read one of the three biblical examples of conflict listed in the teaching. Discuss how those depicted in the scripture responded to conflict. (Escape, Attack, Peacemaker)
4. What is your default response to conflict. Do you escape, attack, or strive to be a peacemaker?
5. Review the Five Steps to handling conflict in the church. (If you are in a group have someone read each one out-loud.)
6. Discuss the difference between a "minor offense" and a "sin against." Use the 4 questions.
7. Will you commit to be a peacemaker in your church and in your world? Do you need to take some specific steps in your church or world to be a peacemaker today?