

Pursue Conflict for Peace

Westview Church | Exhortation | Pastor Brett Toney | December 7, 2025

Hear the Word of the Lord from Matthew 10:34–39, “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person’s enemies will be those of his own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”

The exhortation *I* need to hear from Jesus’ words in this passage that I share with you is to pursue conflict for peace—pursue conflict for peace. Under the banner of “Minnesota Nice,” we can default to being conflict averse so as not to ruffle feathers or stir the pot. This is especially true at family holiday gatherings. There are those unspoken “third rail” topics that are to be avoided—politics, education, the skeleton in the family closet ... religion. Interactions are dulled and tensions covered to avoid drama. And like me, perhaps that means you have shied away from a clear, bold statement of the gospel with your extended family.

This Christmas, pursue conflict for peace. Not conflict just to cause a stir. Not conflict just to win an argument or be vindicated. Not conflict to get the last word in. I mean the “Christ conflict” of Matthew 10. Love Jesus because of his death and resurrection on your behalf, Christian, so exceptionally more than you love your parents, your siblings, your aunts and uncles, that you will follow Christ to the scandal of the cross. Be willing to suffer scorn and family shame because you clearly and lovingly bring the conflict of Christ who calls *all* to repent and believe on him. Pursue the conflict of the claim of Christ to be Lord of all and Savior of the world. Pursue the conflict that comes with the clear statement of the gospel that there truly might be peace on earth with those in whom God is pleased (cf. Luke 2:14).