

Depravity: Handling Disputes

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 14 November 2024

Preacher: Brady Owens

[0 : 00] And the overarching view of 1 Corinthians, just to kind of go back and remind us a little bit about how this book is functioning, this church in this city is being infected by the culture in that they are adopting Greek philosophy, rhetoric, and it is coming into the church.

And for them, they said, okay, Paul, you were a great start, but we've moved on to deeper spiritual truths. And the way that they come to understand something that is a spiritual truth is that the person who just spoke really moved them, right?

So it's all about how the person speaks and not the content of what they speak. Well, that has affected the church in so many ways. And in chapter 1 through 4, it kind of raised its ugly head through the divisions that were going on in the church.

And in chapters 5 through about 10, it shows up in their morality. There's a lot of things that they're doing that are immoral. And then when we get into chapters 10 through about 14, it shows up in their worship and how they worship.

And then when you get to the end of the book, you get kind of the big section where it's the big whammy because it's their doctrine that's the problem. Because they believe themselves to be super spiritual people.

[1 : 27] And because of that, they think that they have arrived to the end. And so their doctrine of resurrection of the end times, it's all messed up as a church. And so in this section, it started in chapter 5.

And really chapter 5 and 6 go together because in chapter 5, he's confronting them about the fact that there's a guy in their church living in very gross public sin.

And it's the kind of sin that even the lost pagans around them won't even tolerate. But the church isn't doing anything about it. And they need to excommunicate this man for the sake of his soul, to redeem his soul, right?

Remember we talked about that. Well, what happens is that when you get to chapter 6, he's still on the same topic to some degree. But he's shifting it from this gross public sin to conflict between Christians.

And how do we handle that? And so what I want to do is I want to read through verses 1 through 11. We'll read the whole section. And then we'll just walk through kind of what this is all about.

[2 : 39] So 1 Corinthians chapter 6, beginning of verse 1. When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints?

Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? Do you not know that we are to judge angels?

How much more than matters pertaining to this life? So if you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church? I say this to your shame.

Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers? But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers.

To have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded? But you yourselves wrong and defraud even your own brothers.

[3 : 46] Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

And such were some of you. But you were washed, and you were sanctified. You were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God.

Now, years ago, a friend of mine, he was pastor of a church, and they were trying to do some things to make the church a little more up-to-date in this kind of a thing. And so one of the things that they were doing is that they had this closet that was right off the stage, and in that closet were the flowers for the altar table.

And they had decided to move the flowers in order to have better use of that area for some of the sound equipment and this kind of a thing. And they were having a business meeting one Sunday night.

And in this business meeting, when they got to new business, this gentleman arose up and stood up, and with red-faced screaming, began to accuse the pastor and those who were involved with him of their indiscretions and their immorality because they moved the things out of the flower closet to someplace else because now it's going to force his wife to walk another 20 yards.

[5 : 13] So now it is kind of a funny situation. It's also kind of sad and tragic.

And we all kind of can identify with a situation like that where there's this tension, this conflict that arises because we have different views of how things ought to happen.

It is that kind of a thing, and further, that Paul's looking at here. There's disputes and conflicts happening between Christians. And what he does is he tells us how and why we should solve these things.

And so that's what we're going to look at. We're going to look at how do we deal with these things, why should we deal with them in that manner, and then we're going to close out with sort of a pathway to think about how to resolve conflict.

So let's look at this first question. How do we handle these disputes? Paul's primary objective here is to say, don't air your grievances to the lost world.

[6 : 19] Right? Look at verse 1. When anyone has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous? Before the unrighteous instead of the saints.

So you can imagine this guy standing there on that night of business meeting, like if he had decided to and gone to the court system to sue the church for whatever reason, he's taking that before the unrighteous.

He's going outside of the church to sue a person inside the church or a group of people inside the church. Verses 4 through 6, you can see in verse 4, he talks about you're going before people who have no standing in the church.

And in verse 6, he says, you go to law against brother and that before unbelievers. Paul's point is, is that when we have conflict in the church, we are not to go air those grievances outside the church.

Now, if you'll remember chapter 5, chapter 5 is talking about different things. And I know that it would be easy for us to think about some of the things that, like, you know, that would be both sinful and, say, a criminal act.

[7 : 29] Right? But he's not talking about those things. He's talking about disputes. And I just want to talk about the disputes for just a second in two ways. Number one is this. He does not tell them that having these disputes and conflicts is a bad thing.

Full stop. He says, the way you're trying to solve them is a bad thing. Oftentimes, I think, we have the notion in our minds that if we are without conflict, then that is the best way to be.

And we all agree that conflict is uncomfortable. But sometimes conflict is necessary. It's about how we handle that conflict that's the important part.

I mean, if you've got blood pumping through your body, you're going to face conflict if you are around someone else that also has blood pumping through their body. It's just going to happen.

Right? And so what we need to do is learn how to handle conflict in a godly, biblical way, which is not run from it or be a bulldozer over it.

[8 : 46] Right? Both directions are wrong. Think about anger. Anger can be turned inwardly and become bitter, or anger can explode. Both are sins.

We have to handle it the right way. So the second thing about disputes is that I just wanted to give you a flavor of some of the kinds of things that might be a part of this. And this all comes from my background, things that I've had conflict with people over.

Right? For instance, I had conflict with someone because I made a joke that hurt their feelings. I had a conflict with a group of parents because when I was a youth minister, they thought my choice of location for the youth retreat was bad.

So we had a big brouhaha meeting where the deacons and all the parents got together and they got to air their grievances about me in front of everyone. It was a conflict. Right? I had a conflict because someone didn't like the songs that I picked for worship.

And we had to have a big brouhaha about it. Right? I had a conflict with someone because I had set the tables up in the fellowship hall in a way that they didn't like. I've had a conflict with someone because in my preaching, I was using too many big words.

[10 : 01] So we had the deacons get together and they had to air their grievances about my too big of words. Right? And I was like, I don't think that I'm using too big of words, but okay. I've had a conflict because I misunderstood somebody's tone of voice and I got offended.

I thought that they were being ugly to me. You know? I know. I've had a conflict because I was watching someone lead a meeting and I thought to myself, this is one of the most inefficient meetings I've ever been a part of and I just was sort of judgmental and upset about it.

So those are the kinds of conflicts we're talking about, right? And many times, it might be something that doesn't initially start out because of sin, but usually sin begins to creep in.

For instance, when the pastor moved the flowers and the guy was upset about it, at that moment, there was not necessarily sin until he began to rage about this thing. And at that point, there was absolutely sin.

And what my pastor, or my pastor, he was my pastor at one point, but my friend, what he did is that when the guy got through talking, he said, sir, I rebuke you in the name of Jesus. You're being sinful and ungodly.

[11 : 13] Sit down, be silent. That was the precise correct thing to say because he was not trying to solve the problem. He was just railing, right?

So when we have conflicts, we don't want to take them to the world to solve them. And on one hand, what that means is that we should not be taking Christians to court to sue them, but instead, we should be trying to work it out, arbitrate, and solve the conflict between us.

If we can't get to the place where we can solve a conflict, then it's like, we've just lost it. I mean, what good are we? Now, I would think that most Christians probably don't struggle with that concept.

Most Christians don't really struggle with the concept of, you know, hey, you shouldn't sue another Christian, particularly within the same body of believers, right? You start talking about saying, well, what they committed a crime.

Well, that's different, right? So we're not talking about that kind of a thing, but I think most of us would probably struggle with this in a different area, and that is this, airing out our grievances on Facebook.

[12 : 25] Or airing out our grievances at the local coffee shop. You know, where we don't like something that's happened, so we say something out loud to other people.

And you know what? I, there was a, there was a, East Texas town, and there were about five or six gentlemen that once a week met together in a local coffee shop. Every one of those men were from a different church, and they were all deacons in their church.

And they met together to just air out all the things that bothered them from this past Sunday about the pastor or the staff member or this, this family that came to visit or whatever.

And they were known for this. Everybody in town knew about this, right? That's the kind of thing that as Christians we ought not ever do. We don't need to take the stuff that's a problem or that we have a problem with and just go air it out.

Some families do it at their dinner table after church on a Sunday morning. This is not how we ought to live as Christians. Do we love one another or not?

[13 : 35] I know that there's a great temptation to do so because we get annoyed because somebody's doing something that we don't necessarily like. But the pathway is not to then just go air that out to just whomever, wherever, but the pathway is to resolve the conflict.

Matter of fact, he says this in verse 7. He says, endure sufferings and wrongs. He says, to have lawsuits that all among you is already a defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong?

Why not rather be defrauded? And we'll talk about what that means here in just a second, but the point is he's saying, listen, it would be far better for you to be wronged by somebody else than for you to go outside and go air that grievance to somebody.

Wow. I mean, that would take a lot of the Holy Spirit working in me to keep me from airing my grievance but instead to just say, you know, I'm just going to take it.

It's okay. It's okay. He then says in verse 8, he says, you yourselves wrong and defraud even your own brother.

[14 : 49] So, to help us deal with disputes, we don't air the grievances but instead we should just endure it and also the other thing is is we need to not try.

We need to try really hard to not defraud or wrong other people. So, what does it mean to wrong someone? To wrong someone means to hurt or harm them, to mistreat them, to do something that might even offend them, right?

We want to do our best to not be offensive. Now, we can't always help it, right? And there's two sides to this story, right? On one hand, I've got to say and speak and talk in such ways as to build others up, Ephesians 4.29, but also someone over here, you've got to stop being so sensitive.

You can't just be offended at every little thing that comes down the pipe, right? Both people need to kind of move towards the middle but when we wrong someone, that's kind of like the lady that I made a joke with, you know, she and I would always banter on Sunday morning before the service because she was in the Sunday school office counting the money and this kind of a thing and I would just walk in and she would make a joke at me, I'd make a joke at her.

Her name is Miss Hazel, she's probably 78 years old, you know, and we had a great time, she's just a sweet lady and she had a medical issue that came up because the doctor had prescribed a medicine that had a bad interaction with one of her other drugs and it sent her to the doctor's office and she wasn't doing well and I got the phone call and I went to go see her and stuff but when she got back, she was out for a couple weeks until that got out of her system, when she got back into the Sunday school office, I said, well, you know, I heard you had a drug problem.

[16 : 33] Well, I mean, I thought it was funny, you know, but she did not think that was funny at all and, you know, on one hand, she didn't need to be so sensitive but on the other hand, you know, I needed to know what the limits with her were and to be just respectful and to say, you know, so I went to her and I apologized because it was not my intention to hurt and harm.

But that's just it. We've got to do what we can to try not to hurt and harm someone. To defraud someone means to cheat them of something, to rob them of something, to deprive them of something.

And so we've got to work to try to live in a healthy way, but you've got to recognize it's not always going to keep conflict from happening, right? So that's the first question, then.

What are some things we need to do? Don't air the grievances, endure it if you're wrong, and then try not to offend other people. So the second question then is why should we handle things this way?

And Paul gives us four reasons in this text as he kind of intersperses them throughout. And the first reason is that the church is going to be judging on the last day.

[17 : 46] On the last day. The church will judge the world on the last day. Look at what he says here. in verse two. He says, or do you not know that the saints will judge the world?

Now let's just pause right there because in chapter five he says this. He says verse 12, for what have I to do with judging outsiders?

Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. But now he's saying, do you not know that the saints will judge the world?

Now it sounds like a contradiction, but it's not. And here's why. In chapter five, he's talking about what's happening right now in time and space. As we live our lives on a daily basis, it's not our job to look at lost people out there and say they're going to go to hell.

Like I know it, like this is the end, they're hopeless, they're going to hell. That's their judgment upon them. Okay? It's not our place to do that. Every single person we see is somebody we need to share the gospel with, right?

[18 : 55] But when you get to the end times, after this world is over and God, the Lord Jesus Christ, has before him the great mass of people on the great white throne judgment because we are united to Christ, we are united with him as he rules and reigns, we're united with him as he judges.

So we're not the ones casting the judgment necessarily, but we're a part of it because we're one with him. So what he's basically saying is like you're going to do this and then he says this about angels.

Do you not know that we're to judge angels? So his point is you got these two big judgments coming that we're going to be a part of and if we can do that then why can't we solve the trivial matters of life?

So he's arguing from the greater to the lesser, right? So there's two passages you can look at, I'll give them to you, I won't read them, but Daniel chapter 7 verse 18 through 22 speaks of this whole saints judging the world as well as Matthew 19, 28.

So Daniel 7, 18 through 22 and Matthew 19, 28. So that's one reason, right? Because the church has a legal standing with Christ and we will be a part of that judgment.

[20 : 17] The second reason is because the church has wisdom. Verse 5, he says this, he says, I say it to your shame, can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers?

It's a question that demands an answer to, well no, actually there is somebody wise enough. Why? Because we have the word of God. Our wisdom doesn't come from our experience, our wisdom comes from the word of God.

And because we have the word of God, we are able to settle disputes between one another. Which means that we need to know the word and because we have this word we need to be involved in one another's lives so that we can help to settle disputes between one another.

So the third reason is that the church is defeated already if it doesn't do it. Verse 7, to have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you.

It means that the mission, the mission that we're on to make disciples of the nations is hindered by having conflicts handled the wrong way or to let conflicts just sit and rest.

[21 : 28] I don't know about you but I know of churches that they've got conflicts between two different families in the church that go back 30 years. And in some cases in those churches they won't even sit on the same side of the church from one another.

But they attend every Sunday together. But yet nobody ever talks about it. And it's like as long as that's there the church will never be able to accomplish its mission. Because if it's that, if it's been 30 years and it's never been resolved I guarantee you lost people out there know about it.

And why would they want to be a part of a church that can't keep itself the way it should? It's a defeat for us. It destroys our mission when we're not trying to resolve conflict the right way.

And then the final thing is this. The final reason we should solve disputes this way is because the church is made up of changed people. That's the whole point of verses 9 through 11.

He lists out all these different kinds of sins, all these different unrighteous people. And he says they will not inherit the kingdom of God. Now we need to make this qualification.

[22 : 41] There's a difference between I'm a saved person and I am tempted and fall and sin one of these sins. I hate it. I try to avoid it. I go to the Lord to ask for forgiveness of it.

That's not who this list is. The unrighteous who commit these sins are people who love their sin, have no guilt about committing that sin, and have no desire to go to Jesus to ask for forgiveness.

Do you understand the difference? One is about a lifestyle of who they are. The other is just a Christian failing. So I want you to think about these, and I am going to take a little bit of a planned rabbit here, and I want to talk about specifically one sin in here because I think it's important with the culture that we live in.

Talk about men who practice homosexuality. If your translation is different from mine, yours might have two words there. it might have the word effeminate and homosexual.

And the reason is because there are two partners in a homosexual relationship. There is the passive and dominant. And I'll just leave that with you to think about in that way.

[23 : 53] And what he's saying is that both, and the reason it's important that he's saying both is because there are some people today, Christians, or maybe not Christians, who are telling us that the Bible is not against homosexuality, but the Bible is against a homosexual rape culture where people take advantage and abuse that passive partner.

Right? It could be from thinking about, you know, the molesting of children to whatever else. Right? But the problem is that the text tells us that both the passive and the dominant are sinners.

So in other words, the Bible is quite clear. It understands all of these things that the world tries to tell us that isn't true. And so it basically says that both cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

There's another thing that a lot of Christians will want to say, or maybe they're not Christians, and that is this. That, okay, yes, this is a sin to commit the act of homosexuality, but to have the attraction for the same sex is not a sin because that's just a thing inside of me.

And so they say it's very possible for me to be a gay Christian because I have attractions for the same sex, but I'm not committing the act, and therefore I'm a Christian. And I go like, okay, if that's the way you want it, then I would like to be called a murderous Christian.

[25 : 22] Because I have the desire to kill people, but I'm just not acting on it. Is that a safe and good and right thing to say?

No, we know that's not biblical. Well, neither is this other. Even having the desire, even if you don't act out on it, it's still wrong because it's unnatural.

It's not the way God made us. And so I'm saying that because our culture is pushing in that direction in so many ways. But here's what Paul goes on to say in verse 11, look at it.

Such were, such, such were some of you. This is what you were like. But you've been rescued, you've been redeemed, you've been saved, you've been washed, sanctified, and justified.

Change is possible. And because change is possible for the one who practices homosexuality, it's possible for the idolaters, adulterers, the greedy, the drunkards, the revilers, for every sinner, change is possible by the blood of Christ.

[26 : 33] And because the church is full of changed people, they need to handle their conflicts and disputes with one another, not like the world.

Not like the world. There are so many times that I have had a Christian come in for counseling because of a relationship problem and they will inform me of what their lost friends tell them that they should do about this and what do I think about it.

And I'm not, I'm usually pretty gentle, but what I'm thinking in my mind is why are you listening to what lost people say? Why are you listening? You know, and usually it comes in the form of this idea, well, you know, you deserve to be treated with respect and you ought to divorce him or you ought to divorce her.

And I think to myself, actually, you deserve nothing but death and hell. Like the rest of us. Right, exactly. And so, so, so the thing is, is that when we think about resolving conflict, we can't go about resolving conflict the way the world does.

We need to resolve conflict in a biblical manner. And so that's what I want to talk about next. I want to go into kind of a four-step sort of process about resolving conflict.

[27 : 56] But before I get there, before we go through that, let me just pause and let's just sort of breathe for a second. Maybe there's a question you have or maybe there's a thought that this is making you think.

Maybe there's something that wasn't clear that I need to make more clear because you're going to take a test on this in a little bit. So you need to know the answers. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. You do. Yeah.

Well, hopefully what we're about to go through will help. Hopefully, hopefully will help with that. Anybody else? Any other thoughts, questions? Yeah.

Yeah. Oh, yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

[29 : 33] But, you know, I think we can, I think maybe we can probably think a little more about that and kind of what kinds of conflicts. If we think about like marriage, think about the last time that you had a conflict with your spouse or you had a little argument and it got a little bit heated.

If you go back to that thing and you try to lay it out and go, what was, what was, who started it? Okay. What was the offense? And was there something in me that I was being overly sensitive?

So I took offense to something and I couldn't handle it. Or was this a really difficult, you know? I mean, so the same kinds of things can happen within the church.

We tend to kind of explode more in our marriages about the little things than we do within the church because we've got the social pressure to act right, you know?

But in the house and behind closed doors, I don't have any social pressure except for her, you know? And so long as I can pay the cost of that, then I might just let myself go, you know?

[30 : 38] And I'm not saying me, I'm saying you, okay? But anyway, do you understand what I'm saying is that there's a lack of social pressure to act right sometimes when we're in the home, which is not right.

We should be acting the way we should because we're being controlled by the Holy Spirit, not because of social pressures. Same thing in the church. We should be acting right because we're controlled by the Holy Spirit, not because of the social pressure.

But I think looking at the marriage as an analogy and bringing it out here, there are things that happen all the time that could be offensive to somebody. And many of us probably actually overlook a lot of things.

And that's a good thing. Yeah.

Yeah. Exactly. Exactly. It could be because like if this person does something similar to what happened 20 years ago, then that baggage can be brought up and brought to bear on that.

[31 : 46] And as Christians, we've got to deal with our baggage and get that clear. Yeah. Yeah. What were you going to say? I interrupted you. Yeah. It does kind of help you know like, wow, there's something else going on there.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Well, let's talk about then kind of some steps to resolving it. And it's the 4G plan.

So the technology is advanced from 3G, but it's not as advanced as 5G. Okay. Anyway, I thought that was funny. The first one is to glorify God. Okay.

To glorify God. And that seems pretty straightforward enough, but let's peel that apart just a little bit and think about it. And let's think about two different scenarios. One scenario is I'm having conflict with another person.

And so how do I need to live? What should be my aim and my goal in this conflict with this person? And the primary goal I should be after is that God gets glorified.

[32 : 56] Now, it'd be nice also if we can resolve the conflict. It'd be nice if they saw my way. But it may not. Just because we try to resolve conflict doesn't mean it's going to get resolved because there's two parties involved at least.

But I have to have the aim that I want to glorify God. I want to glorify God by trusting Him that resolving this conflict is the right thing to do.

Because it could be that this is the hundredth time that this person has done this to me. And I think to myself, there's no use in confronting them because that's just the way they are.

But living with that attitude doesn't glorify God. Instead, glorifying God means obeying Him. And He tells me to be a peacemaker. Right? That's part of the Beatitudes, being a peacemaker.

So I need to work towards resolving this conflict, but I need to do it so that it glorifies God, not so that I am relieved of tension. I don't know about you, but like I don't like conflict to last very long because I don't like the tension.

[34 : 02] And I'm a very aggressive person when I feel like there's a conflict that needs to be resolved. Like I'll hear something and I'll immediately grab the phone and I'll call somebody. I'll be like, hey, so I hear that you're saying bad things about me.

What the heck? You know? Like I can be pretty aggressive in those situations. I try real hard to sort of back off because I know that that I'm coming at it because of the tension I feel.

I'm solving this issue so that I don't have to feel this anymore. Well, that's not a godly attitude. The godly attitude is that I need to do this so that God gets glorified, so that God is exalted, so that God is exalted in me and in this person and in the way we deal with this situation.

I want God to be glorified. So that's got to be the number one attitude we have, right? Second thing, we've got to get the log out of our own eye, right?

Matthew 7, can't take the speck out of your brother's eye when you've got a log in your own eye and there's two kinds of logs. You know, let me pause real quick. I said there are two scenarios.

[35 : 09] One is a dispute between me and somebody else. The other scenario is that I see a dispute between two people and I'm stepping in as a third party to try to resolve the conflict.

Because sometimes we need to do that. Sometimes we see two people who can't resolve the conflict themselves and so I've got to step in to help them, right?

Sometimes for me as the pastor, that involves marital counseling. Sometimes that's me seeing two people sitting on the opposite sides of the church and going, what gives? You know?

And so we need to be people ready to do that as well and all of these steps I'm talking about fit that scenario or that scenario, okay?

So getting the log out of the eye, so if I'm trying to resolve conflict between two people, I might come with a judgmental attitude that says, at least I'm not like these people.

[36 : 06] At least I can resolve my own conflicts and I don't need a third party. Well, you can't come to that conflict resolution that way, right? It's a lot of pride and you've got to stay humble, you know?

So I can have a critical or negative attitude about this moment of conflict resolution. It could be one of the situations like I described a while ago. I could just think it's never going to change.

Why should I even do this? That's a judgment that I'm making about this person. I've got to get that log out of my eye in order to, because if I'm sitting there going like, you know, Jack, Jack, he always does this.

He has done this a hundred times. There's no way that he's going to change. I am not glorifying God and I'm making a judgment call about him. I'm keeping a log in my eye and therefore I'm going to get exactly what I think I'm going to get.

No resolution. That's right. Let's do it. Let's do it. But also sometimes we can come to that moment of resolution with sinful words, sinful actions.

[37 : 12] The guy who stood up at the business meeting, if he had gone to the pastor and the people who did that privately and had said, so listen, I'm just telling you, I'm just struggling with the fact that my wife is going to have to walk 20 yards further.

I don't know if you know this, but she just had a hip replacement last year. Well, now that brings some color and context to the situation and why he feels bad about this and now they could work to figure out a compromise, a solution to help both parties, right?

But because he waited for the church so that he could blast it, that is not getting the log out of your own eye. Not at all.

until it explodes.

Yeah. It explodes or it implodes and they stop attending or they go to another church and part of it is that as pastors we have not taught about how to have biblical conflict resolution within our churches.

[38 : 31] That's right. That's right. You know, one of the reasons that I try to do the midweek Bible study is so that we can have this and I'm recording it right now. It'll be on the thing so you can go to different people in the church and say, you need to listen to this.

You know, pastor says you need to listen to this. But, you know, I do think you're right. There's a lot of people that are afraid of hurting feelings because we think to ourselves that if I tell this person that what they've done has offended me, number one, it makes me look weak, number two, it might offend them and I don't want to offend them but the problem is that we're causing more trouble with that and we're going to get to some things here in just a second that talk about well, how do we restore?

What do we need to do? How do we need to approach somebody and I think it'll be helpful but, but yeah, no, you're, you're right. There's just a lot of fear and it's like, well, I'm, I'm going to mess this up.

yeah, so as you're, if, you know, like Jack, right?

I'm just kidding. You know, I think, I think that if I end up having an offense with someone like that, I've really got to work hard to get the log out of my own eye, right?

[39 : 53] Because I've got to recognize their, their ability. So think about, think about it this way. I can have the same kind of conflict with a seven-year-old as I can a 27-year-old.

They can do the same thing and I'd be offended by that. How would you handle a seven-year-old versus a 27-year-old? Well, there ought to be some differences in that, right?

So I think that when we're dealing with somebody who's got something going on, I think we need to recognize and make accommodations for that. It doesn't mean we let them off of sin, right?

Because sin, sin doesn't come from my brain. Sin comes from my heart. So that brain may make it so they're having trouble, you know, being able to live the right way, but that sin comes from their heart and they still need to be confronted, but I have to make, I have to, I have to understand where they are, what they can do.

I think it's the same, right? Because if they're the one that's offended, then as I go to resolve that, I still have got to understand where they are and help them see all the issues involved.

[41 : 04] And if I'm struggling because I don't understand their situation, we need to get some outside help to come in, you know? So, all right, let's talk about gently restore.

Gently restore, and I want to start with 1 Peter 4, verse 8. It says this, above all, keep loving one another earnestly since love covers a multitude of sins.

Since love covers a multitude of sins. If you find yourself in the place of someone having done something to you that could be a conflict and a dispute and an issue, if you can, let love cover a multitude of sins and just let it go.

Okay? If you cannot, you just are hanging on to it, then you're going to have to work through some conflict resolution. But if you can let it go, like at our house, we have a coffee pot, it's a great coffee pot, all we got to do is take the water, we take it off, we pour it in, we shut the lid, it brews it in like two minutes, and then we've got this glass pitcher and this metal cap, and I put the glass pitcher there and a lot of times I leave the metal cap here.

And I hear after I've gotten up and made the coffee, clink! I go, oh yeah, I left the lid off. You're such a man. Now we can have a conflict about that.

[42 : 31] No, she has said, she said, why don't you put that back on? I'm like, I don't know, because I just like to hear you go clink, I don't know.

But, you know, love can cover a multitude of sins in that because even though she doesn't particularly like that and she's the one having to do it and she doesn't like seeing the clutter or whatever, she's loving me, realizing that I'm not doing this, you know, just to irritate her.

But that love, then not only covers what I've done, but it covers the conflict that could arise that could escalate. Right? And so if we can do that, then we need to.

But there are some things that need to be confronted even though we feel like we could let it go. And there's four questions. No.

I want you to think, I want you to think about these four questions and if you, and if the situation you're looking at, maybe it's a conflict between you and someone else, maybe it's a conflict between two people that you see, if you answer yes to any one of these questions, that conflict needs to be resolved.

[43 : 46] If you can answer no to all these questions, then you can just let it go. Here are the questions. Is the offense seriously dishonoring God?

Leaving the cap off the little thing for the coffee pot is not a serious dishonor to God. Moving the last pew in the sanctuary and putting in a sound booth is not seriously dishonoring God.

Showing up on a Sunday morning to preach, being absolutely toasted and drunk, that's seriously dishonoring God. and somebody better confront me.

You know what I'm saying? Okay. Second, has it permanently damaged a relationship? Has it permanently damaged a relationship? And I see that in two ways.

Number one, I can see this happening when, and I've had this happen before, and I have somebody who's coming to me because they have a complaint. They need to vent.

[44 : 48] They've got a gripe. And they don't choose their timing very well. They don't get me by myself or something like that. They just sort of walk in and sort of hit me with some things. And the thing that they're complaining about is the thing that this person standing next to me did.

And I don't know if they're aware of it or not, and I find myself going like, do you not know that this person, like, are you aware of yourself and what's going on here? And I'm looking at that, and I'm thinking to myself, okay, this could damage relationships.

And there's been many a times that I'll look at the person and say, I'm sorry, are you okay? Do we need to fix this? And they'll be like, it's just, no, I'm good, you know. And it's like, okay, well then that's fine. I'll let it go, you know.

But sometimes the relationship is damaged because it's been 20 years, 30 years, and nobody's done anything about it, and they don't speak. And they go to the same church still.

And if that's the case, then no, we got to get that solved. That can't just stay. Right? Third, is it seriously hurting other people?

[45 : 55] Is it hurting somebody else besides these two people? You know, if it's in a marriage, is it hurting the children? If it's in the church, is it hurting, you know, some group of people?

Maybe it's within a small group, or maybe it's somebody who was a part of whatever, you know. Is it hurting other people? And the last, is it seriously hurting the offender? You know, if Jack has done something, and I'm looking at this, and I'm going like, Jack, that is hurting your witness in the community.

You're doing that is hurting your marriage, and I can see it. I can watch it. I'm seeing it. And you're causing pain to yourself. It's like, okay, I need to step in. I need to help resolve that because that doesn't need to go that way.

So, so that's, that's, these questions, I think, are important. And if you answer no, it's like, well, no, nobody's really, that person's not hurt, nobody else is being hurt, it's not damaged the relationship, it's not really dishonoring to God, then let it go.

Right? Then let it go. And if you can't let it go, then that's where you've got to approach them and say, listen, I was trying to let this go, but I just can't. We just need to talk about this. And then at that point, I'd tell you, go listen to my study that we did on forgiveness.

[47 : 15] Y'all remember that? We did one on forgiveness and if you want the link to it, I can show it. That's a great study, not because I did it, but because of the topic. And we really covered a lot of things there.

So then you say, okay, I have to approach them. Here's some things, nine things you need to think about as you approach them. Number one, you got to pray for humility and wisdom, pretty obviously. You need to plan your words carefully.

You got to think about what really needs to be confronted. You really need to think long and hard here because you don't need to just go off half-cocked. You need to plan it out.

You don't need to confront like I have done at times, just emotionally, just pick up the phone and go like, boom, we're going to deal with this now. You know, take some time, really think about what's going on there.

Anticipate reactions and plan appropriate responses, like rehearse this thing. Solving conflict can be a beautiful, glorious thing when two parties come together and they go like, I'm so sorry and I'm so sorry and we forgive and love and grace.

[48 : 21] It's worth rehearsing it and taking some time with it. Choose the right time and place. And I'm going to tell you something. I've done this to other pastors and I've had it done to me right before preaching the sermon is not the time.

Not the time. Not the time. Assume the best about the other person until you have facts that prove otherwise. This is a great piece of marriage advice.

Assume the best of your spouse. Every little thing that annoys you that they do, assume the best until you have facts that prove otherwise. Until Michelle has facts that prove that I am trying to irritate her about leaving that cap off, she needs to assume the best that I'm just an idiot, I guess.

I don't know. Listen carefully. So we want to listen to all the things that people are saying. We don't want to jump in and speak over them. Speak to build other people up.

that Ephesians 4.29 is all about speaking so that it gives grace so they're built up. It doesn't tear them down. Ask for feedback from the other person.

[49 : 32] Get them to speak to. Get them to ask them questions to understand their perspective on things. But ultimately, recognize your own limits. Only God can change that person. You know, you might go through and have just a good, godly way of thinking about conflict and you go to try to resolve it the right way and this person walks away still angry.

You can't change them. This is not a foolproof plan. You just have to wait on God to change that person's heart and so you pray. But you've done your part to be able to try to help.

And then the last thing is go to be reconciled and that's all about forgiveness and reconciliation and I'm going to refer you again to the study we did on forgiveness to fill that out.