

SEEKING RESOLUTION & FINDING FORGIVENESS

ser3968 Friends in Conflict, Pt1
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Good morning everyone. Once again I am blessed and very excited to bring you the message today! This week we are kicking off the series *Friends in Conflict*. The title of the message today is “Seeking Resolution by Finding Forgiveness”.

I think this may be one of the most important messages I’ve ever preached. Restoring relationships and seeking resolution with one another is so important for a child of God. Our God is all about restoration and forgiveness, so it only seems right we be about our Father’s business! Can I get an amen?

Would you pray with me?

Satan’s biggest goals are to separate us from the Father and to cause division with each other. Isolation is his ultimate goal.

If he can **isolate** us from God and others, he can then win the battle and cause us to be depressed, lonely and filled with anxiety so we will not be affective for the Kingdom of God.

Satan’s goal is to divide and conquer. He will cause division in the family of God. We see it unfold right before our eyes with all the political and social unrest going on in the world around us. I see so many relationships compromised and even broken over people’s political views and opinions.

Satan is working overtime these days and relationships are being destroyed.

Jesus calls His people to “Stand together” while the evil one screams “fall apart!” Micah McElveen

There is another Quote by Lysa Terkeurst that I think was really on point.

“Am I trying to prove that I’m right or improve a relationship? If caring for a person is my motivation, it will be reflected with careful words.” Lysa Terkeurst

Choose your words carefully if you care about someone. The ultimate goal is the relationship.

I want you to think about relationships in your own life that you know have been strained or broken. You may have even lost peace over it. Our goal today is to get that peace back by doing things God’s way!

Let’s take a look at how the second human relationship was broken. The first one was with Adam and Eve and God in Genesis chapter 3.

Sin came into the world because Adam and Eve disobeyed God by eating fruit from a tree in the garden, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Because of this, sin entered paradise. That sin resulted in the fallen and broken world in which we live today. Broken world; broken relationships.

In Genesis chapter 4 we learn about another broken relationship that caused pain and a fracture in the family. Adam and Eve had two sons, Cain and Abel. Let's look at their relationship and see what went wrong.

Genesis 4:2-7

2) Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. 3) In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. 4) And Abel also brought an offering, fat portions from some of the first born of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, 5) but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. 6) Then the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? 7) If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door, it desires to have you, but you must rule over it."

Stop here for a minute. Cain presented an offering to God and it was not acceptable in God's eyes. Abel presented one that showed his heart was in it and He was putting God first.

Abel gave from his heart, so God's favor was on him. Cain feels rejected, gets jealous of Abel and is even angry at God about it.

God asked Cain why he was angry? He told Cain to just do what is right. He told Cain he knew his nature is to be selfish but to not give in to his sinful nature and to give the best of what he had.

Look at verse 7: “Sin is crouching at your door, it desires to have you (overtake you) but you must rule over it. “

Cain is having a conflict with God because God did not look at him with favor over his offering.

God is warning Cain because He loves him. God is telling Cain to be careful, sin (the enemy Satan) is always right there. He is telling Cain that Satan lied to Adam and Eve, and that he is telling him lies, too. Cain must rule over the sin that is crouching at his door!

The enemy is always whispering to us that we are not enough, and that God cares more about others than he does us. So, we place resentment on others and even on God, especially when we feel rejection. Cain resented God and His brother Abel.

The devil will keep us from seeking resolution by making us prideful.

He will whisper, “You have every right to hold on to bitterness because that person hurt you.” Don’t listen! The devil is lying to you.

God loved Cain as much as He loved Abel. All Cain had to do was be humble and say, “You are right God. I am sorry. I will do better next time, forgive me Lord.” But Cain is a stupid head! And so are we sometimes.

Let's see what happens when we don't seek resolution and listen to the simple words of God.

Genesis 4:8-11

"Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field. While they were in the field Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. 9) Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" "I don't know", he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?" 10) The Lord said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. 11) Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand."

First, Cain lies to God and then has an attitude toward God by saying "Am I my brother's keeper?" How's he going to have an attitude with God? We are starting to see the condition of Cain's heart. Let's go on, Verses 12- 14 - The consequences!

Genesis 4:12-14

12) "When you work the ground it will no longer yield its crops to you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth. 13) Cain said to the Lord, "My punishment is more than I can bear. 14) Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence, I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me."

Verses 13, and 14: Cain tells God this punishment is more than I can bear. You are driving me from the land and I will be hidden from your presence.

Here it is, the worst punishment you can ever have. Cain was with God his whole life. Now Cain cannot bear to be away from God's presence.

Sin will keep us away from the presence of God. Cain didn't ask for forgiveness because he was filled with pride.

Cain was a restless wanderer away from the presence of God after he killed Abel. A restless wanderer. No peace, no rest, just anxiousness.

We may not be murderers the way Cain was, but our words can kill our relationships with each other.

Proverbs 18:21 tells us that death and life are in the power of our words. Choose your words carefully and choose life.

Cain allowed bitterness to overtake him and he did not ask God for forgiveness.

I want you to remember these two things about bitterness and forgiveness.

“Two things about Bitterness and Forgiveness”

1. Bitterness brings burdens. When the burden gets too heavy to bear, we break. We break and we become broken.

2. Forgiveness sets you free. The weight will be lifted off of you and you will know God's peace.

The devil will try to steal our peace from us through conflicts in our relationships. He can't steal our peace if we are willing to ask for forgiveness and forgive as God forgave us.

Unforgiveness will cause anxiety.

Do you feel like the burden of anxiety is too much to bear sometimes? Ask God to bring to mind those from whom you need forgiveness and those you need to forgive. 'Be at peace with everyone, as long as it depends on you.'" Romans 12:18.

If others don't want to restore the relationship, it's not your responsibility. You are only responsible for obeying God. Forgiveness doesn't always require reconciliation. Sometimes reconciliation isn't possible or safe.

Saying you forgive someone isn't saying that what they did to you was right. It's simply an act of obedience to God.

Step out in faith and ask God to put the forgiveness in your heart because we can't do this on our own.

You may feel like you are always the one seeking resolution. That's okay! You are doing what God wants and God will always bless obedience.

There were times when I had to be the first person to say I'm sorry to people I love, but God has always honored it.

My dad is in heaven with the Lord and I miss him so much. There were times my dad and I had a rocky relationship but I thank God for always being there to lead me.

My dad was a wonderful father. He worked hard for our family and he always made sure we had everything we needed. Sometimes I think he put too much pressure on himself. Even after all of us were married he wanted to make sure we never went without. But that pressure sometimes brought out an irritable side of my dad.

I knew without a doubt that my dad loved me but there were times he would act mean for dumb reasons and he never would say he was sorry. After my mom died, my dad lived another 8 years and we both grew a lot closer to each other.

My dad would come over every day for coffee when my kids came home from school. My girls loved their grandfather and he would always bring them TastyKakes and sit and talk with us.

My dad did not like a messy house and I can be a messy person at times. I had very small children then and sometimes my house was a mess. It didn't bother John as much because he grew up with 8 kids in his family. He was used to living with some chaos. Not so for my dad.

One day he came over for coffee and while my kitchen was clean, my dining room was a mess. The table was a catch-all and the living room was a mess too because I hadn't gotten to it.

Well, my dad walked by the dining room and started complaining. "How can you keep a house like this? This is terrible! What's the matter with you? What do you do all day?"

Really? What do I do all day? I had little kids at the time and my life was very busy.

I told him, "Dad, just sit in the kitchen, that's clean. Have a cup of coffee." He did not stop complaining, so I said, "Dad, I am an adult. This is my house, not your house, so let it go or don't have coffee with me."

His reply was, "You call yourself a Christian keeping your house like this!" I'm not sure where in the Bible it says, "Thou must keep a neat and perfect house at all times!" LOL

Well, he left angry and I thought he would get over it and come to my house with groceries because that's what he always did when we would have a disagreement. He would never say he was sorry, he would just come in with a bag of snacks or food for us.

A week went by and I was waiting for him to call, but he didn't.

I said to my sister, "I am not calling Daddy. He will have to call me this time. I am just sick of being the one to always make things right. He needs to stop treating me like a child! I fix him coffee every day. He needs to chill. This is ridiculous!"

Later that day I heard the Holy Spirit say, "Call your father." I said, "No Lord, I don't want to. He won't say he's sorry. He never

does.” But the nudge wouldn’t go away, so I called my dad and I said, “Dad, you just aren’t coming over anymore for coffee?” He said he was coming over that evening.

I prayed and I said to God, “God I don’t understand. My dad never says he is sorry. I am always the one who has to say it and he doesn’t say I love you very much either. But I know he loves us. He worries about us and he makes sure we have whatever we need. Please help me to understand.”

That night my dad came over and it was just he and I in the kitchen. He brought TastyKakes for the kids, as he always did.

He said to me, “You know what, I always remember my mother leaving me TastyKakes in the morning.” He told me his mother worked a full- time job and she left early in the morning, before he even woke up. His father worked in North Jersey and sometimes wouldn’t be home for weeks.

Then he said, “I was only 6 years old and my mother would always leave a cup of coffee and a TastyKake next to my bed so I could have it before I went to school every day.” He said, “She always made sure I wasn’t hungry in the morning before school.”

I heard the Holy Spirit say to me, “That’s the way your dad was taught to love.” My dad always had coffee with me and he always brought over TastyKakes and groceries to us.

My dad didn’t know any other way to show his love to us. He wasn’t taught to say I am sorry; he didn’t hear the words I love

you very much growing up. But coffee and TastyKakes represented love to him.

That day I made resolution with the fact that my dad loved me and he said he was sorry the best way he knew how. With a bag of groceries, coffee and TastyKakes.

I no longer needed to get something from him that he didn't know how to give.

We need to set people free from our expectations of what WE need and LOVE them for who THEY are.

Is there someone you need to set free today? Maybe it's yourself?

Jesus' last words on the cross speak volumes to us. He said

“Forgive them father for they know not what they do”

Right up to the very last hours of His life, Jesus was preaching forgiveness. God wants all of us to seek resolution with Him and with each other! If you take the first step and obey God, I promise He will help you do it.

I don't ever want to be like Cain, wandering around the earth filled with bitterness and wishing I could just hear the voice of my Father God one more time.

You may feel far away from God today. Jesus is right there waiting for you to come to him. He paid the highest price, His own life on the cross so you could have a relationship with him. Ask Him in your heart today.

It easy as ABC...

A. Admit you are a sinner, Ask God to forgive you.

B. Believe God sent Jesus His one and only son to die on a cross to take your place so you can be forgiven and made whole

C. Commit your life to live for Jesus.

If you would like that relationship today, please say this prayer.

Dear God, I admit I am sinner and I have done things that are wrong. Please forgive me. I am sorry.

Jesus I believe you took my place on the cross for my sins. Please come into my heart and be my Lord and personal savior. Dear Holy Spirit please fill me with your presence so I can live my life for God. In Jesus name I pray. Amen!