

Unity in the Body of Christ

Philippians 4:1-3

Big Idea: Conflict in the church? Jesus calls us to humble ourselves, go directly to the person, listen well, speak truth in love, and forgive as we've been forgiven. True unity flows from being reconciled to God first. Drop your pride at the altar today.

Key Takeaways:

1. Reconciliation with God enables reconciliation with others.
2. Go directly to the person.
3. Humble yourself first.
4. Listen before speaking.
5. Speak truth in love.
6. Forgive as you have been forgiven.
7. Unity is worth fighting for.

Scriptures:

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| <input type="radio"/> John 3:3 | <input type="radio"/> Ephesians 4:15 |
| <input type="radio"/> Matthew 18:15-17 | <input type="radio"/> Proverbs 15:1 |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 Peter 5:5 | <input type="radio"/> Ephesians 4:32 |
| <input type="radio"/> Ephesians 5:21 | <input type="radio"/> Matthew 18:21-35 |
| <input type="radio"/> James 1:19 | <input type="radio"/> Matthew 5:23-24 |
| <input type="radio"/> James 1:20 | <input type="radio"/> 2 Corinthians 5:17-20 |
| <input type="radio"/> Proverbs 18:13 | |

Opening Question:

Share a time when someone humbly apologized to you or when you witnessed a powerful example of reconciliation. How did it impact you?

Discussion Questions:

Why does Paul begin his confrontation by reminding the Philippians of his love for them? How does this model the way we should approach difficult conversations?

The sermon emphasized that we must be "in Christ and He must be in us" before we can properly handle conflict. Why is being regenerated (born again) the essential first step in biblical reconciliation?

Read Matthew 5:23-24. Why does Jesus say we should leave our gift at the altar and first be reconciled to our brother? What does this teach us about the connection between our relationship with God and our relationships with others?

Matthew 18:15 tells us to go directly to someone who has sinned against us. Why is this so difficult? What typically prevents us from following this instruction? What are the consequences when we talk to "Person B" instead of "Person A"?

Discuss James 1:19-20: "Be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger." Share a time when you failed to follow this principle. What was the result? How might the situation have been different if you had listened first?

What does it mean to "speak the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15)? How do we balance not compromising truth while also being loving and gentle in our approach?

Review the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant (Matthew 18:21-35). How does understanding the magnitude of our forgiveness from God change our perspective on forgiving others?

Read Ephesians 4:32: "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." What does being "tenderhearted" look like practically in conflict situations?

The sermon emphasized the importance of prayer before confrontation. How can we cultivate the habit of "timing out" and praying before responding in conflict? What specific prayers should we pray?

One of the church's core values is "intentional relationships." How does our handling of conflict impact the next generation's view of Christianity? What are we modeling to younger believers?

Practical Applications:

1. If the Holy Spirit has brought someone to mind during this discussion, commit to reaching out to that person this week to seek reconciliation. Share your commitment with one trusted group member for accountability.
2. Identify a relationship that might be experiencing minor friction. Before it becomes a larger issue, initiate a conversation using the principles discussed (humility, listening, speaking truth in love).
3. Create a prayer list of relationships in your life that need healing. Commit to praying daily for these relationships and for God to soften both your heart and theirs.
4. Study Matthew 18:15-17 and write out a personal plan for how you will handle future conflicts biblically. Keep this somewhere you can reference when needed.

Closing Thought/Prayer:

As you reflect on the importance of unity and reconciliation in the body of Christ, consider praying for humility and the courage to pursue peace with those around you, asking the Holy Spirit to guide your words and actions in love.