

From the message on May 21

The Church the World Needs: Conflict and the Gospel, Acts 15

Text Acts 15:1-35

From the Sermon

"Fortunately God has a plan even for conflict. It's a plan that is far better than any plan of our own. And God's plan revolves around the power of the gospel. We see that quite quickly in our study of the early church, in Acts 15. John Stott observed, "Conflict between believers is one of the most difficult things we face. There are those whose total outlook on Christianity has been drastically affected as the result of a church split or Christian friends not speaking to each other. Thankfully the Bible is not silent on conflict. It has much to offer on how to deal with conflict and differences in ideas in a godly way." Acts 15 is one such passage." (Paul)

Opening Interaction.

How do you experience conflict?
What do you most often feel?
How do you most often respond?

Read the passage and Discuss

- In this passage, what details seem important? Does anything jump out at you?
 - What is the author communicating to his audience (the readers)?
 - What does this passage teach us about Jesus mattering most?
1. Read Matthew 7:1-5. What does Jesus teach about the heart when we are in conflict?
 2. Ken Sande, in the book *The Peacemaker* (p209), offers this about forgiveness:
Through forgiveness God tears down the walls that our sins have built, and he opens the way for a renewed relationship with him. Therefore, forgiveness may be described as a decision to make four promises:
I will not dwell on this incident.
I will not bring up this incident again and use it against you.
I will not talk to others about this incident.
I will not let this incident stand between us or hinder our personal relationship.
Talk about the importance of each of these points.
 3. How does the grace of Christ help us when we are in conflict?

Encourage Each Other

To remain connected and love each other.
To grow through prayer.
To invite Jesus to matter most this week.