

St Martins C3 – August 28, 2022

Blessed are the Confronters - Relate

Sermon Notes:

We are continuing to look at how we can relate well to others in our lives. Today, we are going to look at the way we can have difficult conversations – confrontations – with those people.

It is easy for there to grow a distance between you and the important people in your life. This then requires a conversation to make things right. It's difficult to do it well. To clarify expectations, express our wants and talk to someone when they have offended us or messed up in some way.

These conversations make us face up to our own frailties and need to be done wisely.

The way of God's people is to make things right with each other. It is not enough to love God, we also need to show our love for the other important people in our lives and have these conversations.

Read Leviticus 19:17; Matthew 5:23-24; Matthew 5:9

This is part of the life of God's people. To get things out into the open and deal with the issues between us. We are called to be Peacemakers. Not warmakers and not peacekeepers, but people who work to bring peace in their relationships. When we are peacemakers we are representing God well.

You have to be willing to enter into the process. What the word “confront” really means is “to turn your face towards”. To confront means to invite the other person to turn their face towards you and the issue between the two of you and to work on it until it is resolved.

Here are five tips for confrontations:

- 1) Learn When to Confront and When Not to
- 2) Genuinely Care about them
- 3) Be personally prepared for the conversation
- 4) Focus on the right things in the conversation
- 5) Aim for Resolution

Try and express clearly your feelings and needs. Use the formula: in situation A when you did “B” I felt “C”.

Look for win-win scenarios. Sometimes that is not possible. You have to let go of a little of what you wanted, and they let go of a little of what they wanted and you meet in the middle. Sometimes you will let go of more stuff and let them get what they want because that is better. Sometimes they will let go of what they want and you will get what you want. But usually, it requires us to let go of something. And that’s hard.

Challenge

Share a positive withhold, a negative withhold, and a positive withhold with someone important in your life.

A withhold is where you share with someone you are close to something you have not talked with them about. Like how great their cooking is or how they cut you off in a conversation. Get used to talking about what matters.

Questions for Connect Groups:

Sermon Reflection:

What stood out to you from this week's message?

What does it mean to you to be a peacemaker?

Are you more inclined to be a peacekeeper or war maker?

Why do many people avoid confrontations?

Life Application:

Name a quality relationship you have had. How did it get to a deeper level?

What's the worst thing that could happen if we have these types of conversations? Share a time it's gone bad.

What's the best thing that could happen? Share a time it's gone well.

What have you learned from these experiences?

How is having these conversations a tool for spiritual growth?

Which of the red flags of fighting are you most prone to criticism, defensiveness, contempt, or stonewalling? What can you do to change?

What tips would you give to someone having one of these conversations?

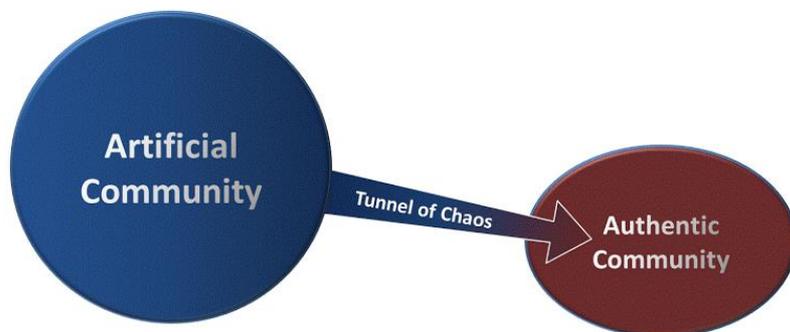
Monday Devotion: Tunnel of Chaos

Read Matthew 18:15-17; Proverbs 27:5-6

One barrier to relationships is clashes and disagreements. Whenever we have one of these clashes we have a simple choice:

- Give up on the relationship
- Not deal with it and accept a lesser relationship
- Deal with it and have a real relationship

To go deeper in a relationship often requires us to go through what Bill Hybels calls a “Tunnel of Chaos.” That is to bring up big issues with those who mean the most to us in the hope of moving from pseudo relationships to authentic relationships.



“You enter the tunnel when you choose to engage in crucial confrontations with a solid commitment to hold steady until you’ve reached a positive resolution and a deeper friendship.”

Think of your three most significant relationships. How often do you settle for some sort of pseudo-relationship? Today, commit to entering a new level of relationship by talking with each other about the barriers in your life to an authentic relationship.

Tuesday Devotion: Why Bother?

Read Romans 5:5

Why would we willingly enter a process of chaos?

Relationships matter, therefore, it's worth battling to make them better.

“Unsolved conflict is like cancer it gets under the skin and grows.” Ian Grant

We do something if the reward is greater than the cost. And in this case, the reward is far greater than the cost.

Our tool to defeat bitterness is to engage in these difficult conversations. We need more than just forgiveness that pretends there was no problem in the first place, but forgiveness that does the hard work of having healthy confrontations.

The word “confront” means to turn your face towards. To confront is to face up to, rather than run away from, issues in our relationships.

God could have turned away from us because of our sin and rebellion. But He turned His face towards us and gave us the way to be made right with Him through the sacrifice of Jesus. Now we get to enact that in the relationships in our lives.

Will you battle in your relationships to help them become better?

Wednesday Devotion: An Example

Read Galatians 2:9-16; Galatians 6:1-3

Our modern entertainment is built around conflict. We watch tv dramas where people shout at each other. We watch reality tv, which is only interesting when people are against each other. We watch sitcoms, where the catalyst of 90% of the comedy is bad communication and misunderstanding.

Can you believe what he said? Can you see what she did? Did you hear the thing he's focussed on?

We must be careful not to bring the world's culture into our dealings at church. Instead, we must learn the skill of confronting well. For example, the time Paul confronted Peter.

This was over a serious issue that was central to the heart of the gospel. Paul knew what Peter was doing was very wrong.

Whilst we might not confront as openly as Paul did, there are several principles here that can help us when we have concerns about another believer's ministry

Maintain the honour of the other (vs 9), speak to them face to face (vs 11), identify the issue (vs 12), and speak truth into the situation (vs 16). May we do it all with grace.

God, help me to talk with people about concerns I have in a way that honours you and brings truth.

Thursday Devotion: Going to the Next Level

Read Acts 18:24-19:7; Hebrews 10:24-25

We all need assistance to go to the next level in our ministry. As we develop a culture of helping each other this is the end goal. Here in Acts, we see two great examples of people who are more mature in the faith guiding and releasing those who still had some things to learn.

Apollos and the 12 disciples of John only had limited knowledge of the saving work of Jesus, yet they were committed to bringing that to others. Priscilla, Aquilla and Paul were able to guide and direct these people to new understandings of God and new ministry.

We have the opportunity in our church to get alongside others and increase their ministry ability. One great way to do this is by being involved in a connect group. As we commit to ongoing relationships with others in the church, we can support and encourage them in what God is calling them to do.

As we meet weekly, we also give people the opportunity to speak into our lives and spur us on towards being all that God has called us to be.

God, help us to lift each other up through the words we use. May we be those who take each other to the next level in ministry.

Friday Devotion: Wrestling Together

Read Acts 21:7-15

This is one of the most fascinating stories in all of Acts. Paul is heading for Jerusalem, once he is there he will be arrested, transported to Rome and eventually killed.

The prophet Agabus lets Paul know what his future will be. It seems to be a warning for Paul not to continue with his current course of action. Instead, Paul ignores it and recommits himself to his journey.

So, who was right? Did the church misinterpret the point of the prophecy? Did Paul keep going when God was warning him to change his course of action?

The Lord's will was certainly done. Being in prison allowed Paul the time to write many of the letters which are essential for our faith today (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon). Equally, Paul may have continued great ministry had he stepped away from his path to Jerusalem.

When there are no clear answers, it is important to find other Christians to wrestle our ministry decisions through. It is in the struggle that clarity comes.

God, please help me to know your will in ministry. Please, put people in my life who will give me words of direction but above all may I hear and obey your voice.