



new life fellowship

Sermon Title: Dealing with Conflict
Speaker: Richard Villodas, Lead Pastor
Scripture: Galatians 2:11-16

When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.

When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?"

"We who are Jews by birth and not sinful Gentiles know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified.

Galatians 2:11-16 (NIV)

Sermon Outline:

The writer of this scripture shows us how Paul navigates through a difficult conflict. The community in Galatians at this time was a mixture – it could at times be heavenly and other times be very sinful. Peter and Paul were the most-known disciples in the church at this time and, although they were holy men of God they were not protected from conflict. The Gentiles ate differently than the Christians and Peter sat down with the Gentiles and ate all that was offered to him. In Christ the people were made right with God not based on their culture, the law or their eating habits but because of their faith in Christ. This was hard for many to live out because they believed and had faith in Christ but also observed their cultural and religious laws. In this scripture, Paul is letting the community know that they are not saved by what they eat but are saved in Christ. Peter was leading people astray and Paul was calling Peter out on what he was doing wrong. What we want to pay attention to in this scripture is how Paul was able to process this conflict.

Loving each other well means addressing conflict and, if we are going to be mature in Christ, we need to learn how to deal with conflict. The definition of conflict is a serious disagreement regarding a meaningful situation. Oftentimes we are surprised by conflicts that occur between ourselves and others. We need to deal with the conflict within ourselves first before we address it with another person. What often hurts relationships is the way we process these conflicts.

The three stages of Community Life or relationships:

- Stage 1: The heavenly stage. These are the early days of new a relationship where everything seems wonderful, maybe even angelic.
- Stage 2: The hellish stage. In this stage people experience a letdown, where they might find out that the relationship they are in is not has wonderful and perfect as they might have first believed. Realizing that people are more broken and not as loving as they might have first thought. It is in this stage where people may want to leave and find another place more heavenly.
- Stage 3: Holding the tensions stage. In this stage we come to see that people are broken and full of trauma, where they are no longer angels nor devils but a mixture of both.

What do we learn about conflict in this passage of scripture:

- **Conflict should not surprise us.** The Bible is filled with many conflicts, where we see spirit filled people who have lives marked by conflict. Conflicts are part of the normal human and Christian experience.
- **Conflict usually requires confrontation.** Conflict requires face time, which is very difficult for many, if not all, of us. You cannot pray conflict away nor can you solve conflict on social media. Instead of face time, we often resort to silence, cutoffs, triangulation or attacking.

- **Resolving conflict calls for healthy speech and humble listening.** Resolving conflicts this way honors Christ and the world. We can have healthy speech by being clear, honest, respectful, and timely when we speak. We are to be humble listeners by being curious, attentive, and compassionate with those who we are in conflict with.

Conflict is not a sign of immaturity but a regular experience of humanity. For many of us, we don't enter into face time conversations because there is a message inside of us that says we won't survive. If this is you, know that by God's grace you can tolerate these difficult conversations, and will survive them.

God who moves toward us and loves us way too much to not confront us and not console us.

Sermon Summary:

This Sunday Lead Pastor Richard Villodas continues our series Life Together. Today Pastor Rich talks to us about one of the most important stories in the Bible which can help us work through conflicts in a way that we are marked by love, integrity, and the way of Jesus.

Sermon Questions:

1. How does this scripture connect for you the topic that was discussed today? What words resonate with you? Why?
2. How was conflict dealt with in your family of origin? How is it regularly dealt with in the culture you come from? Share a time you had trouble confronting a family member, what tension or anxiety did you have leading up to that moment?
3. Peter found himself living in two worlds, one where he believed we were saved by Christ and another in which he wanted to still be accepted by those who lived under the old law. What difficulties do you think Peter struggled with accepting that we are now saved by Christ? Can you relate with Peter being in conflict with two different groups of people and knowing what is true? What fears do you regularly face in these moments?
4. Which of the 4 common solutions to conflict do you find yourself drawing to: silence, cutoffs, triangulation or attacking? Where was this behavior learned? How does this behavior reflect on the family of Christ?
5. Often when we think about what we will say during confrontation, what does it look like to prepare your mind and heart to listen humbly? How open are you to being genuinely curious about the other party's position? How easy or difficult for you is it to admit you may be wrong or have blind spots?