

Modern Romance
Week 4 - Conflict

Welcome to CHC!! Thank you so much for taking the time out of your week to spend a few moments with us. It is our honor and privilege to serve you today.

Our hearts are full of gratitude. We have so much to be thankful for. How many of you have something in your life that you thank God for??

Before we jump into today's message let me give you a couple of notes: *Ignite event on March 29 & 30 and kickoff 1 John series next Sunday.*

Today we are closing out our series called Modern Romance. Has this series helped anybody? I pray that our current marriages and future marriages have been strengthened.

We believe great relationships still exist. Every marriage doesn't have to be dysfunctional.

God offers us so much wisdom on how to deal with people and especially our loved ones.

Today we are going to be looking at conflict within a marriage.

I know that some of you never have any conflict in your relationships, but I figured you could use this to help the people around you.

For the rest of us who want to be a little bit real today, we know conflict is a natural and inevitable part of relationships. Every couple has disagreements and differences.

When Shira and I first married we had these little nitpicking conflicts. I thought, man this is not as fun as I thought it would be. She thought we were broken. It must mean something is super wrong if we are consistently in conflict, right?

One Pastor said it like this, "You're going to fight with someone for the rest of your life. Do you want it to be Shira?"

This is true because we are all in the process of sanctification and we will be until Jesus comes back.

We have areas of victory, but we also have areas that need work and repentance. In other words, you're a sinner! ---- Tell somebody next to you...You're a sinner!

To be a sinner essentially means you are selfish. To be self-centered means that we are destined for conflict in our relationships.

Not only that...you can't treat people like crap and worship Jesus properly.

Usually when someone starts talking about handling conflict your mind goes to the other person. Hope he's listening. Hope she's taking notes.

God may be speaking to someone today saying, put down the magnifying glass and pick up the mirror.

God may want to set someone free today...but you need to listen.

Let's stand to our feet in honor of the reading of God's Word today.

Jesus is preaching his famous sermon on the mount. Very rich text today.

Matthew 5.21-24 | ²¹“You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ ²²But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell. ²³“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

Pray

Here in this portion of His sermon Jesus begins to list 6 antitheses. He was taking an OT law that the readers would have heard and obeyed and is explaining the true meaning.

Many Scribes and Pharisees misguided people on these so Jesus is breaking them down a little further to help people understand their true meaning and purpose.

So here in vs. 21-22...We know the commandment do not murder...but Jesus is taking it a step further. It's not just the action of murder. It's also your attitude and your words that I'm concerned with.

Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.

That's a little scary, because I've said some worse things than Raca and you fool.

Here is what Jesus was trying to get them to see. He wasn't opposing the O.T. command of do not murder...he was letting people know...**Long before something happens in your life, it happened in your heart.**

The things that come out of your mouth, started in your heart.

Did you know that you can turn your home into a living hell by what you allow in your heart.

The things in your heart can taint and tarnish everything God has given you. We see Jesus teaching this all over the place.

Mark 7.20-23 | ²⁰ And he said, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him. ²¹ For from within, out of people’s hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immoralities, thefts, murders, ²² adulteries, greed, evil actions, deceit, self-indulgence, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. ²³ All these evil things come from within and defile a person.”

It’s all about your heart. The conflict we all experience comes from our hearts.

Now, we can get into the weeds of unmet expectations, and lack of communication, and other relationship principles, but I want to focus on something else that Jesus emphasizes.

Matthew 5.23-24 | ²³ “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

Do you see what Jesus is telling them to focus on?? **Disciples of Christ focus on reconciliation not on the offense.**

(Timeout for a second) We live in an age where everybody gets offended about everything. You know anyone like that?

Post something on social media and find out... (*Story of seizure email.*)

Maybe the reason some of you are so unhappy is because it’s so easy for you to get offended.

Make it harder for you to be offended and you will probably be a much happier person.

(Time back in)

So, Jesus is flipping everything on its head...it’s not just murder, its thinking about murder, it’s saying angry words.

Do everything you can to reconcile with people or else there will be destruction.

This shouldn’t surprise God’s disciples because we know the enemy’s agenda, right?

John 10.10 | ¹⁰ A thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.

Your enemy's agenda is for the destruction of your marriage and relationships. His strategy is division. If he can divide, he can conquer.

You know what he uses the most to cause division...offense.

If I am consumed by offense, then reconciliation is nowhere to be found.

The Bible teaches us that marriage is a picture of Christ and the Church.

Satan wants to do this to your marriage he wants to do this to God's Church.

For some listening there is division in your marriage. There is division in your family.

Matthew 12.25...Every kingdom divided against itself is ruined. And every city or household divided against itself will not last.

(Illustration: Bring a married couple up.... the two shall become 1...but the enemy wants to separate. Every battle and argument...his agenda is destruction and his strategy is division. What Jesus is teaching us in Matthew 5....its subtle. It starts in your heart. The enemy doesn't show up and announce.... I'm here to ruin your marriage. We would fight back. The enemy usually starts in a small way...a small offense. If you get something in your heart and you nurse it and rehearse it long enough...it will create a living hell in your life.)

God takes 2 and turns it into 1...the enemy takes 1 and turns it into 2. How? One offense at a time. One small conflict at a time.

How many of you know that...nobody can really hurt you like the person you've given your heart to.

The closer the relationship, the greater the opportunity.... offense (and intimacy)

(Story about telling Shira I always take the girls everywhere)

There is power in the words that you use...**you have the power to strengthen or strangle your relationship.**

Look at the strong emphasis here:

Matthew 5.23-24 | ²³“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

(Explain the leaving the gifts and going)

The division the enemy can cause will do more damage than you can imagine.

Reconciliation has much to do with transformation.

It's the moving from a place of separation, hurt, and brokenness to a place of healing, wholeness, forgiveness, and reunion.

The Greek word for reconciliation is "katallage," which translates to "adjustment of a difference" or "restoration to favor,"

The Hebrew word is "kaphar," which translates to "cover over" or "atone."

It's taking the wrong and covering it with the cleansing power of God, restoring it to a new state of transformative unity with the Lord and all creation.

"Reconciliation is merging two separate, closed-off pieces into one unit."

Practically speaking...How can you truly and wholly offer yourself and your gifts to the Lord, if in your heart there is conflict and strife?

Jesus puts a huge emphasis on getting that horizontal relationship right.

Conclusion:

Conflict is inevitable. How we respond starts in our heart and moves to our words and actions.

So, let's take an internal look... how's your heart?

Here is our posture: **Psalm 139.23-24 | Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my concerns. ²⁴See if there is any offensive way in me; lead me in the everlasting way.**

Seek the Lord and allow Him to reveal the truth. Not your feelings.

"Struggle makes us stronger; it builds us up and deepens our faith. But this result is achieved only when we face the struggle head-on, not when we run from it."

If someone was watching the two of you dealing with conflict, what would you want them to see?

What if the goal of marriage wasn't to make you happy, but to make you holy?