



THE BIG FIGHT

This Week's Primary Text: Proverbs 10:12

Sermon Points:

1. Why do we fight?

- Additional Texts: Matthew 5:19 & 1 John 4:20

The reason for conflict is the sin in our own hearts.

Our primary conflict is with God, which exists because of our rebellion and disobedience towards him. Our sin has caused separation from him, and has left us in a state of conflict. Our sin causes the same separation between us and other human beings. Our rebellion, desire for control and independence causes conflict with others, and this originates from within our own hearts. When someone else crosses our pride, need for control or desire independence, we tend to fill up with anger, which then starts the conflict. Some of us retreat in our anger, thereby "avoiding conflict", while others act out in confrontation. Both are heart reactions, they just present differently.

2. How should we fight?

- Additional Texts: Psalm 69:5 & 2 Corinthians 5:21

We will battle with sin for the rest of our lives and conflict will always be present.

Therefore, we need to learn how to deal with conflict in a helpful and hopeful way, that will bring about glory to God, as well as restoration in relationships.

Our first cue comes from God. He dealt with our rebellion and disobedience by paying the price himself. In the greatest act of mercy and forgiveness, Jesus took the penalty for our sin on the cross. His love for us covered all of our offenses, which means we do not need to cover up and live in shame. God knows every single act of sin and rebellion we have committed, and yet he does not hold it against us any longer. He has covered all of it for all time, which means we do not need to remain hidden from him. This freedom from God allows us to absorb and cover offenses in our earthly relationships***.

This does not mean that we pretend they never happened, but it does mean that we are able to extend the same forgiveness to the offender that we have received from God, and to release them from the burden of guilt and shame. This is only something we can do when we have experienced the forgiveness that Christ has given to us. The more aware we are of the hefty penalty Christ paid for our sin, and how bad our own sin really is, the more willing we will be to give grace to others. This is a work of the Holy Spirit within us, who empowers us, and it is the power through which God brings about healing and restoration in relationships.





There are a few ways that we can practically live this out. See 3 below:

- Proverbs 15:23 & Psalm 103:8 **React Slowly** – When our pride is wounded, our immediate response is to react in anger. Instead, we should go to God with our emotional response, and to take time to process how he has dealt with us and allow that to shape a gracious response to the person who has offended us. Very often, with applying some patience, we are able to see the offense in perspective, and with grace and mercy, we are able to deal with it much more wisely.
- Proverbs 17:9 **Release Liability** – When we have been wronged, we usually demand some sort of payment from the person. We want them to atone for their wrong doing. But, once again, when we realise what Christ has already done to atone for our sin, as well as the person who has sinned against us, we realise that we cannot hold it against them.
- Proverbs 16:9 **Remember Mercy** – Because God gave us mercy for all of our sin, we too should extend mercy to those who sin against us. Mercy is always undeserved, and it is something that we rarely see in this world. It is one profound gift that we can give to the world, that stands as a witness to the kind God that we serve.

****Please note that we are not suggesting that anyone should remain in an abusive situation. Please seek help should you find yourself in such circumstances.****

Discussion Questions:

1. Conflict is an issue of the heart, whether we face or avoid it. Explain what this means, and how it plays out in your own life.
2. Why is it important that we learn how to deal with conflict, and not just leave it to our instinctive ways?
3. If our primary conflict is with God, which results in separating us from him, how do we “fix” that relationship?
4. Why is it necessary for us to be reconciled to God before we can deal with conflict in a helpful and hopeful ways with others?
5. Of the practical ways suggested to help us best deal with conflict, with which do you struggle the most. Explain why. (Reacting slowly, releasing liability or remembering mercy).
6. Why is it essential as believers, for us to look at how Christ has dealt with our own sin, in order for us to best deal with the sin of others towards us?
7. *Personal Reflection Question: Has someone done something to offend you that you need to deal with? If so, based on this sermon, what is God asking you to do in response to this conflict?*

