

## Here to Stay: The Role of the Church in Resolving Conflict

Philemon, verses 1-14

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Read Philemon verses 1-14

Pray: Is there anybody in your life that you need to resolve conflict with? Is there anybody that you have gossiped against that needs your forgiveness? Pray that the Lord will reveal, in your heart, any “unfinished business” with others.

1. There is power in the presence of the church for resolving conflict. v. 2
  - Why does Paul refer to himself as “a prisoner for Christ Jesus”?
  - Why would Paul write a public letter about a private matter read to an entire church?
  - What role, today, does/should the church play in resolving conflict?
2. The grace of Jesus Christ is our only hope when handling conflict. v. 3
  - Has grace been a part of your life when resolving conflict with others?
  - Does that grace come naturally (easy) or do you have to dig it up?
3. The Gospel transforms our relationships from the inside out. vv. 4-7
  - What gives Paul joy and consolation? Do you share the same?
  - What do you think Paul’s purpose is in sharing these words of praise with Philemon? How does The Gospel play into that?
  - What would somebody say about your testimony? Would it sound similar? How has The Gospel changed your life?
4. You cannot completely avoid conflict, so handle it biblically. vv. 8-11
  - Do you avoid conflict or embrace it? How can it be used to bring glory to God? Have you ever experienced that? If so, what did that look like?
  - What does true conflict resolution look like? (Think in terms of The Gospel.)
5. How you handle conflict will reveal what is in your heart. vv. 12-14
  - What did Paul decide to do instead of ordering Philemon? What does that say about Paul’s heart? What lesson can this teach us about authority and how we (can) use it?
  - Side note: Why is Onesimus more valuable to both Paul and Philemon now? How has his heart changed? What part did The Gospel have in that?
  - How is Paul asking Philemon to deal with the conflict between Onesimus and Philemon here?

Unforgiveness and unresolved conflict is “like drinking poison yourself and hoping it effects the other individual.” Has this ever occurred in your life? How would you react differently after this message?

To do:

1. Read Philemon 15-25 to prep for next week.
2. Who has God brought to YOUR mind that you need to resolve conflict with...biblically.
3. Read Ephesians 4:31-32 and Psalm 34:13. Live by these verses for 1 day. 1 week. 1 month. Memorize them. Let them become a lifestyle.