

We Can Work it Out

How to keep the church family happy, healthy & holy

I. Slide1 **Announce:**

- A. Slide2-7 Dan: Children's. Employment. Good News Club. DC. REAL. Women's Xmas.
 1. Slide8 Williams baby dedication (2nd).
- B. Slide9-11 Paula/Noah & Kassie: Safe Families.
- C. Slide12a Thanksgiving Eve Service: Note...6:30pm (not 7pm). Slide12b (goes away)

II. Slide13,14 **Intro:**

- A. Today we have *conflicts everywhere*. Think of the ongoing armed conflicts *between* nations. Think of the strife *within* nations. Conflicts between the sexes, generations, races, religions, cultures, & political parties...still...*even after our elections are over*.
 1. (Mark Foreman) Regardless of how you specifically voted, let's each now play our important role as *salt and light* to our friends...*Blessed are the peacemakers*. I want to encourage you to reach out to those who voted differently than you did and love them by seeking to understand their view of America. Find common ground and where possible, bring opposites together in love. *Our important role as Christians is now bigger than ever*.
- B. This section gives us *great application* to Mt.5:9 *Blessed are the peacemakers*. *What's it's not...*
 1. *Not avoiding* – some say, *I don't want to rock the boat*, but that's just cowardice. Don't run from the problem.
 2. *Not appeasing* – some believe in *peace at any price*. Or say, *I just always give in*. That's codependency. That's *peace-fakers*.
 - a) Jesus *never ran* from a conflict. God blesses peacemakers. *a peacemaker is a bridge builder*
- C. Slide15 *When it comes to conflicts you are a skunk or a turtle?* [Rick Warren]
 1. *When the skunk* in the relationship gets upset *they spray & everybody knows it*
 2. *When the turtle* in the relationship gets upset, *they pull into their shell & hide*.
- D. So Matthew moves from *Estranged Sheep* (vs.12-14 *lft the 99*) to *Erring Sheep* (vs.15).

1. He's speaking of **interpersonal problems between Christians**, that remain unresolved. These are **family matters**...and *we can work them out*.

E. **Slide16 Title: *We Can Work it Out***. [Beatles 1965, Lennon-McCartney collaboration, 1st *double-A-sided single* w/Day Tripper]

1. Life is very short, and there's no time **For fussing and fighting, my friend**
I have always thought that it's a crime, So I will ask you once again
 Try to see it **my way**, Only time will tell if I am right or I am wrong
While you see it your way There's a chance that we may fall apart before too long
 We can work it out, **We can work it out**. [John's **impatience**(1st line) & Paul's **optimism** (last line)]
2. **Sub Title: *How to keep the church family happy, healthy & holy***
 - a) We **must** learn this, **or** be miserable. **We must resolve conflict & restore relationships** at...work, marriage, w/children, friends, at school, in community.

III. **Slide17 WE CAN WORK IT OUT (15-20)**

A. **Slide18a Reconciliation, who's job is it Anyways?**

1. **Isn't it God's job to show people they are wrong? No**. Usually in scripture he used humans for this purpose.
 - a) Like Nathan w/David; Paul w/Peter; Elijah w/Ahab.
2. Conflict doesn't resolve itself accidentally. It must be intentional.
 - a) **I thought time heals all things? No**, if it does *the next time you go to the doctors office, just remain in waiting room. :)*
 - b) The only way to resolve conflict is to face it.
3. **Every member** of the church of Christ has been granted the privilege of the reconciliation procedure by Jesus Christ.

B. **Slide18b When Is It My Responsibility To Go?**

1. **Go**, if **you're** in Sin - Mt.5:23,24. **Go**, if **they** are in sin - Mt.18:15.
2. **If they are in sin, shouldn't they come to me?**
 - a) They might not *know* that they did sin against you.
 - b) They might not be *ready* to come to you - But your attitude of **submission & love** will help them to repent.

3. The Ideal is **both** cooling down & they meet each other on the way to each others house to seek reconciliation.

a) It's best when you start fighting over...*it was my fault, no it was mine.*

C. Slide18c How Much Time Do I Have To Start Reconciliation?

1. Note the **urgency** in Mt.5:24,25. *Leave it there - 1st - quickly.*

a) Note the close tie between *worship & reconciliation.*

2. These are **Emergency Priorities**, that may **not** be handled **casually** or at one's leisure.

D. Slide19a What If I **Don't** Resolve Conflicts?

1. It blocks my fellowship w/God [You can't be rt w/God & wrong w/them].

2. It blocks my prayers [God wont hear, while we stay here. 1 Pet.3:7 *Treat her/wife as you should so your prayers will not be hindered*].

3. It blocks my happiness [if your relationships stink, your life stinks].

4. It dishonors Christ's name. It saps strength from the congregation. It hurts everyone.

E. Slide19b What If I **Do** Resolve Conflicts? *Purpose*

1. To preserve the **honor of God's name**. To assure the **purity** of the Church.

To **reclaim & reconcile** the offender. [Don't have a *good riddance* attitude. Esp after Jesus' example of leave 99 for 1]

F. Slide19c How Do I Decide **When** To Confront?

1. Whatever comes between Christians **Must** be removed.

G. I believe the bible reveals **2 types of Offenses**: **Coverable & Uncoverable**.

1. **Coverable Offenses** - 1 Pet.4:8 *And above all things have fervent love for one another, for love will cover a multitude of sins.*

a) Prov 19:11 *The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, And his glory is to overlook a transgression.*

(1) Obviously **every** problem & offense *cannot* be raised & settled.

(2) We must learn, *in love*, to forgive & pass-by **many slights, annoyances, & offenses.**

b) Ask yourself, *Is it covered?* Are you dwelling on it? Can you drop it? Is it eating you up? Are you finding others to talk about it w/you?

2. **Uncoverable Offenses** - If the matter continues to rattle around inside **or** carry over till the next day, it should be handled.

a) If it *drives a wedge* between 2 Christian brothers/sisters the wedge *must* be removed.

H. **How Do I Confront? *The Five Steps of Instruction...***

I. **Slide20 STEP#1 KEEP IT PRIVATE (15)**

1. **Alone** - Keep the Circle small.

a) Anything else is Gossip. *But I need counsel. Be careful...* it seems that that is in the *next step*.

2. **Gaining a Brother** - This is our **Goal**. The very heart of the issue is to gain back a bro/sis.

a) Above all else, go to him w/the idea of **winning your brother**, **not** an *Argument*.

b) It is possible to **win** the **argument** & **lose your brother**.

3. **Some Principles: Don't condemn** the offender. **Don't** hold it **in**. **Don't** let it **out** (Gossip).

a) Watch out for the *Transmutable Disease* of **Gossip** *or leprosy of the tongue*. *If 2 couples have a problem, & each of the 4 told only 2 friends, which only tell there spouse, now 20 people are involved.* [No wonder why Jesus & Paul compared *sin* to **leaven**]

4. **Our Attitude: if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.** Gal.6:1

a) **Restore** - used especially as a surgical term, of *setting a bone or joint*. Which obviously requires **patience & tenderness**.

(1) Our **attitude** should not be that of a **policeman** out to arrest a criminal, **but** rather that of a **physician** seeking to heal a wound in the body of Christ, a wound that will spread sickness and death if left alone.

b) **Note:** this doesn't necessarily mean *only one visit*. **Make every possible attempt to do this before going on.**

J. **Slide21 STEP#2 GET HELP FROM A FEW (16)**

K. **Do you know why to bring in 1 or 2 more? *INTIMIDATION!!!* :)**

1. **No! The opposite.** Bring in **worthy arbitrators** the offender could receive from.

- a) These Partners can assist in *Prayer, Persuasion, & Witnesses* of the truth of the conversation.
- 2. Note again, this isn't necessarily only a *1 time shot* either [perhaps several visits]
 - a) They must work at this *until* they've reached *reconciliation*, or are convinced it must go to *step #3*.
- 3. **Note:** it doesn't call for: *2 pastors, or Elders, or Deacons*, but *2 Christians*. *It is ALL of our jobs!*
- L. **Slide22 STEP#3 GET HELP FROM THE CHURCH** (17a)
 - 1. Telling it to the Church is still a part of trying to *Win* an erring brother.
 - 2. Very rarely does it have to come to this if the *1st steps* were done properly.
 - 3. I believe that *taking it to the church* isn't for *public humiliation*, but is *broadening the circle* once again. Bringing in **All** friends now for *again...restoration purposes*.
- M. **Slide23 STEP#4 TREAT HIM LIKE A HEATHEN/TAX COLLECTOR** (17b)
 - 1. This means that you *treat him as* an *unbeliever*. *It doesn't say* that you are *judging* if the person is saved or not, you don't know.
 - 2. *So, how do we treat unbelievers?* We seek their **salvation**. We are **kind** towards them. We show **love** towards them.
 - a) They obviously shouldn't serve in any capacity in the church.
 - 3. It also hinders *true Fellowship* w/them.
- N. **Slide24 STEP#5 KEEP THE LOCAL CHURCH SPIRITUAL** (18-20)
 - 1. Jesus adds some words about **Authority, Prayer, & Fellowship**.
- O. **Authority** (18)
 - 1. Church discipline doesn't refer to a group of *Christian policemen* throwing their weight around. *Rather*, it means **God** is exercising **His authority** in & thru a local body, to *restore* one of His erring children.
 - 2. Paul *bound* the offending brother in (1Cor.5) & *loosed him* after he had confessed (2Cor. 2)
- P. **Prayer** (19)
 - 1. **Agree** - (sumphoneo) our English word **Symphony**. *These are sounds that agree, though not identical, they agree in general*.

a) A number of Christians concurring in an opinion.

2. We can also note the Power of *combined Prayer*.

Q. Fellowship (20)

1. The local Church must be *a worshiping community*, recognizing the *presence* of the Lord in their midst.

2. *The Presence of the Lord is: God's presence is... The Fixed Center of the Assembly. The Reason for its coming together. & The Power w/which it acts.*

R. Couldn't **all** offenses between 2 brothers be mended by simply putting this last verse (20) before vs.15?

S. Slide25 I just know church that if God is calling us to this...then, *We can work it out. We can work it out.*

T. *****

U. Rom.12:18, *If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.*

V. 2 Cor.5:18-20 nlt *All this comes from the God who settled the relationship between us and him, and then called us to settle our relationships with each other.*

W.It's always more rewarding to resolve conflict than dissolve a relationship.

X. The more **insecure** you are, the more you try to **control** things in your life. The most **controlling** people are the most **insecure** people.

Y. **112** years ago, a large statue of Christ was erected high in the Andes on the border between **Argentina and Chile**. Called *Christ The Redeemer of the Andes*, the statue symbolizes a pledge between the 2 countries that as long as the statue stands, there will be peace between Chile and Argentina. Shortly after the statue was erected, the **Chileans** began to protest that they had been slighted - the statue had its **back** turned to Chile. **Just** when tempers were at their highest in Chile, a **Chilean newspaperman** saved the day. In an editorial that not only satisfied the people but made them laugh, he simply said, *"The people of Argentina need more watching over than the Chileans."* March 13, 1904

1. [made from the cannons of war] Engraved at the feet in Spanish are the words, *"Sooner shall these mountains crumble into dust than Chileans and*

Argentineans break the peace which at the feet of Christ, the Redeemer, they have sworn to maintain."