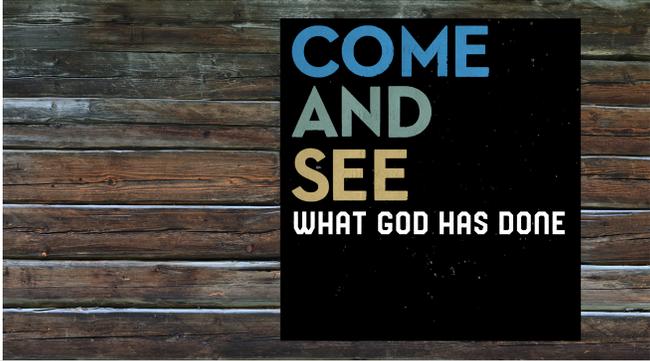


"COME AND SEE: GRATEFUL FOR CONFLICT"

Date: January 20, 2019

Speaker: Pastor Danny Clinton



**COME
AND
SEE**
WHAT GOD HAS DONE

This morning we are going to talk about a topic we haven't spent a lot of time speaking about... **"Conflict, and how to be grateful for it"**

So, let's start like this...

- How many people do not enjoy conflict?
- How many people found themselves in a conflict this week?

Question: How do we as Christians Biblically engage with conflict?

Conflict Is Inevitable

- Relational conflict is not something that should surprise us as Christians.
- We need not be ashamed that it exists, and that we're involved. We should expect it.
- The world is complicated and fallen, and we are complicated creatures and fallen.
- Conflicts will come. They are unavoidable...even in the Church.

"The question is not whether conflicts will come, but how we will handle them."

So, since conflict is inevitable... Fair Warning: At some point within this morning's message, I'm going to purposely create some...

Conflict is an Occasion for Grace.

- One reason that conflict is such a problem is precisely because it worsens with negligence. It doesn't just go away, cutting us off from the most significant opportunities for grace...
- **Consider:** "Conflict seems to be the way God does His deepest work in a world like ours."
- Not when things are peachy keen, not when all seems right with the world, not when times are easy.

Conflict brings forth the Gospels Advance.

- The life of Paul, we might say, became a series of one conflict after another — and each one a catalyst for the ongoing progress of grace.
- He wrote to the Philippians about ... (Vs) *Phil. 1:30* - "...engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have."
- A conflict, which he says, ... (Vs) *Phil. 1:12* - "I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel..."

"The high points of the history of God's people are stories not of fleeing conflict but moving toward it."

- Paul went on to recount to the Thessalonians how not cowering from conflict was essential to the gospel coming to them.

(Vs) 1st Thess. 2:2 - "But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict."

- His thirteen letters are a tribute to the fact that he wasn't afraid to address emerging conflict and see what good God had in store for his people in it.

Conflict is lived out within The Pattern of Christ

- Our most compelling emblem of not shying away from conflict but turning to take it head-on is, of course, Jesus.

(Vs) Heb. 12:2 - "...the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."

- The trajectory of Jesus' life was toward need, and inevitably toward conflict, not away.

A Powerful Thought:

"And so being saved by Him, we Christians, "little Christ's," learn increasingly to follow in His steps, empowered by His Spirit, to move toward conflict, toward need, toward pain, toward tension, looking past the imposing awkwardness and difficulty that lies before us to the promise of joy on the other side."

Following Christ means we will have these unavoidable collisions...

- Which doesn't mean we become bull-headed and pugnacious, and develop a penchant for a good fight...

(Vs) 2nd Tim. 2:24-25 – “And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth...”

“Conflict is NOT something to avoid or ignore. It is an opportunity for the triumph of grace.”

So, now with this better understanding of Conflict's role within our lives, let's see if we can sit in some together...

- **Illustration:** I'd like you to imagine a large glass box with a Tornado inside...
- **(Video:** Gillette's Ad – “We Believe”)

Question: How many people passionately agree with one side or the other of the statements presented here?

- I'm not going to do this, but I want you to realize just how close we all are to the line of very real conflict...

Question: So, what do we do with these feelings?

Biblical Rules for Conflict Engagement

- Jesus' advice about conflict resolution in these passages can be boiled down to four simple principles.
 1. Quickly
 2. Face-to-Face
 3. One on one
 4. Get help

Do it quickly

- In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warned that a believer who harbored anger against a brother or sister was just as guilty in God's eyes as a murderer. Since that is how God sees your anger, how important is it to get rid of it quickly?

(Vs) Matthew 5:23-25a – “So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Come to terms quickly with your accuser.”

Face to Face

- **Notice:** We did not say, "Facebook to Facebook." There is great value in face to face confrontation.

- It is very hard to communicate emotion in an email, text, or post and so it's very easy to misunderstand someone else.

(Vs) Matthew 18:15 – “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.”

One on One

- Pay attention to the second part of *(Vs) Matthew 18:15* – “...between you and him alone...”
- Raise your hands if you have ever talked about someone before you talked to someone!
- The one exception to this rule is when you talk to God about the conflict you are having.
- So, in a nutshell, “talk to God about the other person before you talk to the other person.”
- AND – “Talk to the other person before you talk to others about the other person!!!” ;)

Get Help!

- Here, Jesus lays out a biblical system for escalation...

(Vs) Matthew 18:16-17 – “But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.”

- What happens when you and the person you are in conflict with can't resolve things? You take it to the community. To one or two trusted (and mutual) friends who can help you mediate your conflict and then if needed to the Church.

Review:

1. Quickly
2. Face-to-Face
3. One on One
4. Get Help

The Bible says in the end we are a people transforming...

- We are developing into something. It's the Scripture and Spirit that brings us to "re-wiring" how we think and see the world...

(Vs) 2nd Cor. 3:18 – “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”