

In all this the goal is to love the other person. So Paul writes; "On the contrary, 'If your enemy is hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on their head.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Rom. 12:20-21) Paul is showing us the most irresistible weapon in our peacemaking arsenal – deliberate, focused love. It's hard to resist and even harder to keep on disliking the person your committed to showing Christ's love to.

Who are you being called to go and be reconciled with?

Let us pray. Jesus we thank and praise you for reconciling us to the Father, that we might live with you based on your love and not our sin. Show us how we can live with each other based on your love, freeing us from the hurts and conflicts that arise. Breathe into us the Holy Spirit that we might seek to love each other as we are loved by you, not living for ourselves, but to bring glory, honour and praise to you as we even seek to meet the deepest needs of those we are in conflict with. Jesus lead us so that we might go and be reconciled, as we are reconciled with you. Amen.

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## Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am

Pastor: Tim 0427326553

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Reaching Out with the Love of Jesus that All my Know, Worship & Grow in Christ

21 September 2008

## Dealing with Conflict 5.

### Go and Be Reconciled



In the reading from Philippians for today, Paul urged us; "as citizens of heaven to live in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ." (Phil. 1:27) So as forgiven people in Christ we are called to forgive.

That's the sad thing about Jonah. He didn't want his enemies to repent and be saved, but he was happy with the thought of them being destroyed by God's wrath. Not even God is happy about people ending up in hell. His passion is to save, it is to forgive and restore them, that they might be reconciled to him, living life together in his love for them. Jonah certainly wasn't living in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.

It certainly is to God's glory when we deal with conflict using his resources to bring about a real peace between people. Between me and those I'm struggling with. It certainly is to God's glory when we forgive other people as we are forgiven in Christ Jesus.

We live in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ as we; "Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievance you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." (Col. 3:13) We repeatedly pray in the Lord's Prayer; "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." (Matt. 6:12)

So today we are reminded to; 'Go and Be Reconciled'. Go,

take the initiative, just like Jesus, and seek to live at peace, resolving conflict, replacing it with God's love. Don't wait till you feel like it. Don't simply forget about it or make excuses, decide to go and give the same undeserved forgiveness you have already received from God, through Jesus' crucifixion. We have been forgiven so much. Much more than anyone could ever do to us.

I read this phrase last week; 'Unforgiveness is the poison we drink, hoping others will die.' In Jesus we have forgiveness to give, hoping others will live. How would you describe forgiveness? What do you think about the 'Four Promises of Forgiveness'?

1: I will not dwell on the incident.  
 2: I will not bring this incident up and use it against you.  
 3: I will not talk to others about this incident.  
 4: I will not allow this incident to stand between us or hinder our personal relationship. (Matt. 6:12; 1 Cor. 13:5; Eph. 4:32)

This can be a useful tool to help implement your decision to be forgiving. And once you have forgiven the other person you can set about reconciling your relationship with them. You then have a Christ-like foundation to build that relationship on as you begin living the process of reconciliation.

Forgiveness doesn't mean you act as if nothing has happened, but you don't let that shape your relationship. Part of the reconciliation process

might involve some form of restitution. If you stole something a result of being forgiven is the returning of what was stolen, or replacing it with something better. If trust has been broken, then time needs to be spent restoring that trust, built on the bed-rock of Jesus'

**'Don't waste time bothering whether you 'love' your neighbour; act as if you do.'**

grace. You are forgiven, but the rubble of broken trust needs to be cleaned up and trust rebuilt. Forgiveness isn't about sweeping things under the carpet, but facing them and dealing with them. Jesus faced sin and dealt with it, so that we could then build our relationship on his love and not under his wrath, not on hurts, regrets, frustrations, distrust or the like. These can never be the

foundation for a healthy vibrant relationship. These kill any relationship. Thank God that through Jesus our foundation is now God's love for us, our sin has been forgiven, has been dealt with so that we can move on. So now we can pursue reconciliation;

changing our thought patterns from hating the other person, to seeing them in the light of God's love. We change our

language and speak well of them, not gossiping behind their back blackening their reputation. Rather we seek to enhance their reputation. We change our deeds, following CS Lewis who said; 'Don't waste time bothering whether you 'love' your neighbour; act as if you do.' As we go and seek to be reconciled we can pursue the path of 'Cooperative Negotiation' where we

have an active concern for the needs and well-being of others. Jesus says; "Love you neighbour as yourself" (Matt. 22:39). "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets" (Matt. 7:12)

The 'P.A.U.S.E' acronym might help as you seek to implement the reconciliation process. I'll quickly run through the main thoughts.

P: stands for 'Preparation'. Don't just go in and shoot of the first thing that comes to mind. Pray, then pray some more. Pray for the right attitude and a heart of love for the other person. Then get the facts, not just how you feel, as you identify the issues and interests involved. Reflect on God's word; what would Jesus do. Brainstorm more than

one solution which would benefit the other person. And for big issues make the time to share your thoughts with a trusted person. A: stands for 'Affirm your Relationship'. Keep at the fore front your respect for the other person as a loved precious child of God.

**"...not only your interests, but also the interests of others."**

Affirm the good things in your relationship. Always seek to demonstrate genuine concern and respect. U: stands for 'Understand Interests'. Interest is what motivates people. It is a concern, desire, need, or something a person values. So Paul writes; "Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also the interests of others." (Phil. 2:4) Take the time to

understand your interests, the other persons interests and Jesus' interests. One interest is to glorify God and live worthy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. S: stands for 'Search for Creative Solutions'. I find it so easy to get locked into thinking my

way is the best way, or maybe even the only way. What solutions might keep intact each other's interests. What solution will

show Christ's love to the other person. There's always more than one way to do something.

E: stands for 'Evaluate Options Objectively and Reasonably'. Have clear, simple, stated outcomes that each understands, knowing who is responsible for what. And how you'll review things to make sure your solution is functioning.