Session 1 (The Christian, Conflict, and Working Towards Peace)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 22 February 2025

Preacher: Rob Flood

[0:00] Amen. All right, so you already know me. Feel free, if anything I said elicited more questions, or you're like, well, Sean didn't ask me about this. Just talk to me during one of the breaks. This first session, you have an outline in front of you. Let me just take you through what we're going to do. You see the three main sessions that we're going to have. They're going to link together quite a bit. After lunch, we're here through lunch, right? Good. After lunch, we're going to focus on forgiveness.

So this first session is looking to lay the groundwork for how a Christian ought to understand conflict, where it comes from, what it's supposed to be doing, and how to redemptively approach it. The second session, we'll walk through what's the anatomy of conflict within our own hearts. How does it engage our souls? What are the risks embedded in it? And then the third session, which we'll do after lunch, would be, now, how do I treat others I'm in conflict with? And what does it look like to extend forgiveness as someone who's received forgiveness?
Okay? There's going to be, there's many other things I could talk about. If we had, let's say, three days to do a conflict seminar, I think there'd be lots of practicals we could get to.
My desire is to apply principles, but to send you with principles that you can then fellowship over, and you can figure out what it looks like to work those into your own life.
[1:27] And so when you think of conflict, I don't know what comes to mind for you. I've got a few examples here. I'll just share with you by way of introduction. You've got two toddlers who are fighting over a toy. In my household, that doesn't happen anymore. It's more like two sisters fighting over whose hoodie that is.

You've married couple might fight over finances. Friends, and I put that in air quotes, on social media, take their fight to the comment section.
You ever seen one of those really redemptive, God-glorifying fights? People sniping at each other back and forth in the comment section. You have neighbors who are fighting over the location of a fence.
You've got church members fighting over doctrine, or maybe more commonly, the color of the carpet. You have co-workers who are fighting over politics. Politicians fighting over policy. Nations fighting over territory.
Conflict is everywhere, if we look at it. And it's not unique to our time. It's actually one of the things that ties all of history together, is the fact that in every era, there's conflicts.
[2:46] Much of the study of history is focusing on the wars, where national lines or worldviews were determined in a particular region.

We see conflict among the people of God throughout the Old and the New Testament. So, we, in our contemporary struggle with conflict, where we have the difficulty is in maintaining peace.
And in our struggle to maintain peace, we're in, there's a lot of people in our company. We're in good company when it comes to people who have been marked by conflict.
But being in the majority doesn't mean we're right. It just means we're wrong with a lot of people.
Okay, we see that over and over again. So, what I want to do today is I want to just look at the Christian's relationship to conflict.
What's the history of it? What principles ought we derive out of scriptural teaching to shape our worldview of conflict? And then some common places we get ensnared.
[3:56] All of that will be this first session. That's a lot to promise. It's a lot to bite off. But I think we can get it done. Let's first into this for this first one. And this will be the first thing there.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-09-16 03:10:25

It's the history of conflict. In the outlines, you can follow along. You can take notes right in there. You don't have to take notes at all. But if I use any quotes, if I'm citing any scriptures, they're all going to be there for you as though we were having slides.
It's all right there in front of you. All right, so let's look at the history of conflict. We're not going to look at various wars or even various history over the years that Trinity has been around.
We're going to look at where conflict as a concept came from. Where did it come from and how has it developed throughout human history? So in the beginning, God created, and this will be by way of review, I know, but I want to lay this groundwork for you.
God created a perfect, peace-filled Eden. Peace-filled. We often think of sin-free, and that's true. But it was full of shalom.
[5:02] The Garden of Eden was full of peace. There was perfect fellowship between God and man. And because of that, and the because becomes important in this history of conflict, because of that, there was perfect fellowship between Adam and Eve.

Perfect fellowship between man and woman. Creation was complete. God called it very good. He was ruler over all. His will was determinative.
His heart was for us. Our hearts were inclined to him. All of that becomes prescriptive on how we solve our conflicts down the road.
More on that later. Genesis 3 happens. Man's sin in the fall didn't only introduce death into the world.
It introduced enmity. It introduced conflict and hostility. Between who first? Between man and God.
[6:05] That's where the hostility was first created. And because hostility was created there, blame shifting started to happen between man and woman.

Between two creatures. Man's rebellion sought to overthrow God's design, attempting to be like him. Adam and Eve wanted to be autonomous, sovereign, all-knowing.
They doubted the character and the goodness of God. Believing he was keeping something good from them. So right there, in chapter 3, we see the dangerous and inseparable pairing of sin against God and hostility between one another.
Where there's one, there's the other. So what happened now that there's this hostility between man and God and between man and man?
Well, just a chapter later, we don't have any idea how many years this was later, but a chapter later, we've got the story of Cain and Abel. You know the story.
[7:20] It's man's will here was determinative. Cain wanted what he wanted. He was disgruntled and questioned the goodness of God, clear enmity between him and God.

And so then Cain acted in that hostility and murders his brother. By the end of the chapter, we're several generations later in Genesis 4, there's not just conflict between two individuals, but conflict between two peoples.
Okay, so now it's just spreading like wildfire. Sin and hostility, defiling humanity. Okay, just go a few chapters later.
Genesis 6 to 9, let me ask this question. What if God said, all right, you know what? This isn't going as well as I hoped it would. Let me just start over. So he gets rid of all the hostility on earth, except for eight people.
It's not long. Like the first account of it in Scripture, though I imagine they might have gotten a little grumpy on the ark, the first account of it in Scripture is as soon as they come off the ark, there's hostility.
[8:35] So even the reboot, you know, if something's stuck on one of your devices, just start it over, it's going to get fixed, right? Just reboot your phone. Even the reboot of humanity didn't get rid of this hostility because the problem of sin between man and God hadn't been dealt with.

And so there's going to be this hostility between man and man. And so we see it throughout the rest of Genesis. In the time of Abraham, we see hostility.
Between Jacob and Esau, we see hostility. Joseph and his brothers, we see hostility. Sin expressed through deceit, jealousy, conniving, rage, all either fueled by or resulting in conflict and hostility.
And guys, we haven't left the first book of the Bible yet. It's that big of an issue. We see it between the Israelites and the nations that surrounded her.
We see it in shocking form in the book of Judges. If God was ever going to send another flood, if he was ever going to reboot it, it probably would have been sometime in the book of Judges.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-09-16 03:10:25

[9:47] What a dark, dark book that is. Why is it so dark? Because of how mankind is viewing God and because of how they're viewing and treating one another.

What they call right, the inclinations of man's heart being superior in importance to the inclinations of God's heart. The book of Judges is a case study in what it looks like for that to happen. Whenever there is hostility between God and man, there's naturally and consistently going to be conflict between man and men. All right, so it makes you wonder if we haven't figured it out since the time of Genesis, is there any hope for us?
That would be a very sad thing if I said no, thanks for coming this morning. Okay, there is hope here, but that's the backdrop. Okay, when you find people are presented with a gospel and they're like, well, I'm happily married, I've got a great job, there's no need for the gospel.
They're missing the main point. The main point is not how we can manifest happiness. Here, the main point is being reconciled to God. That's where we've got to start.
[11:06] And then we'll find we have the power to reconcile and live in peace with one another. So in order to fix a leak, I'm under the antidote to conflict now, in order to fix a leak, you can't just wish it away or pretend it doesn't happen.

We had a very slow leak that we didn't know about. I mean, very slow. Maybe a small drop a minute, maybe a little longer. But it was underneath our sink.
It went behind the counters, came under our floors, and the entire subfloor in our kitchen and living room was mold. We found it when finally the water started to creep up into the basin under our sink. So that one leak, tiny though it is, if it didn't get addressed, the destruction that it... We fixed the floor now. Don't feel too bad for us.
We have a very nice floor now. But just that one leak that if it was in your sink, you might even say, ah, don't worry about it. It can be so destructive and corrosive.
[12:12] So we can't wish away the leak. We actually have to fix it. If you don't know how to do it yourself, you call a plumber. We clearly don't know how to fix sin ourselves. And we can't wish the effects of sin away.

We can't wish them away. So what do we do? We need a Savior. We need somebody who's going to come in and address the need between us and God so that the need between us and others can be addressed.
And if there were only a scripture that was like really specific on this point, that would be helpful. Oh wait, Ephesians 2. Listen to this. Ephesians 1, one of the glorious chapters in all of scripture that really paints how the triune God, each of those persons active in our salvation and making our salvation secure, giving us an inheritance, a guarantee of our inheritance.
Coming out of that, we come into Ephesians 2. Let's just start looking at 14. For he himself, this is talking about Jesus, he himself is our peace who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility.
Now here, who is he talking about? He's referencing the hostility that's existed between the Jews and the Gentiles. How they're no longer two separate people, but in Christ they're united into one person.
[13:38] As we then apply that, we realize that this same grace that is given to unite those two peoples, that same grace is available to us to unite us to one another.

But how does he do it? Let me pick up. I cut myself off. A broken, has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances.
Why? that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace. Now listen to this last bit. And might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.
Now the work of Christ to forgive sin first and foremost reconciles us to God. And it's the obvious implication from Paul, so obvious he states it, that by reconciling us to God, he's killing the hostility that exists between us.
So Christ removed this wall. This wall that pitted us against one another, that divided us, and he makes us one.
[14:57] He reconciles us. So rather than our existence being one of hostility, or one of selfishness, or one where we are rivaling against one another, rather than that, we are told in the beginning here that he is our peace.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-09-16 03:10:25

When we'll live with Christ in a central way, we know not only peace with God, but we can realize peace with one another.
one commentator says this, and the quote's in front of you, only where Christ's death for sin is taken with apostolic seriousness can the reigns of divine restoration wash away human hate, sorry, wash human hate away, and moisten sin's seeds of love.
The prospects for real and lasting forgiveness depend on the grace God grants as the gospel of his reconciling son is proclaimed, believed, and applied.
Those two words at the beginning of the quote I've never seen before, apostolic seriousness, but there's a weight given to them that I think is appropriate. Only when we not only take the death of Christ seriously for our salvation, but we take it seriously for our living, now we realize the far-reaching implications of it, so long as we are proclaiming it in our lives, believing it in our lives, and applying it in our lives.
[16:32] As each party is reconciled to God, we are able to reach peace. And let me say that, go one step further. If each party in a conflict is a Christian, then peace must be the outcome.

We're called to it. We'll get to what happens if it's with a non-Christian, we'll talk about that in a minute. But each of us have a claim on our lives to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which we're called, which is just two chapters after what I read from Ephesians earlier.
And so one of those implications, how will the world know you are a Christian? Jesus says plainly, by the love we have for one another.
So it's an implication. So I don't want to say this seminar that we're doing today is somehow going to be like fairy dust, sprinkled on a long standing conflict.
When you walk out of here, just skip and be at peace with one another. I'm not saying that. But what I am saying is that the rightly shaped Christian heart cannot allow itself to be at peace being at war with another Christian.
[17:52] We need to do all that we can, Romans 12, 18 says, to be at peace with one another. Okay? So these are the far-reaching implications of the gospel.

And we know it. We know that we don't deserve righteousness. Jesus didn't deserve the wrath of God. I've got Isaiah 53 here. He was pierced for our transgressions.
He was crushed for our iniquities. Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace. And with his wounds we are healed. I think that's an amazing statement.
Upon him was the chastisement that brought us a lot of things. It brought us eternal life. It brings us joy. It brings us love.
But it hits the issue of peace. Now I'm certain it's talking here about peace between us and God. But by implication the New Testament takes that the next step which is what Ephesians 2 does for us.
[18:56] It's in because our transgressions were laid on him and his righteousness is laid on us. Peace between Christians is not only possible it's necessary. effort is not going to solve the hostility problem.

Study. Just reading another book or coming to a seminar is not going to solve the hostility problem. Avoiding it is not going to solve it. Just fighting is not going to solve it.
None of these things have any power apart from Christ. So with Christ of course we apply much effort. With Christ of course we study and we pray and we talk our way through these things.
But apart from him those things cannot accomplish the peace and the reconciliation that God is after. So what do we do if you accept that as true?
What do we do when our minds say I should be at peace with this Christian? But we're not. What do we do with remaining conflict?
[20:04] When it all doesn't just magically go away? Now listen, the majority of our world does not know Christ. And so we can't assume that they're going to be bending the knee to Christ as we do and we're going to be able to reconcile with the world.

They will one glorious day as every knee will bow and every tongue will confess but today is not that day for the whole world. And so for us to live at peace with those who don't know Christ we need to be the ones that bring the grace.
Perhaps you've got parents who don't know Christ or a sibling who doesn't know Christ and maybe they just don't understand the choices you're making in your life. They don't understand the person you've become since you've been born again.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-09-16 03:10:25

and there may be a degree where they kind of stand in judgment or disapproval. Peace with those people cannot depend on them bringing the grace.
The Christian needs to bring the grace to that. The long suffering. We have a great example of how God deals with those who sin. The lots of words that we don't really want to take on ourselves but we're glad he does it.
[21:28] Patience, long suffering, overlooking, blessing when reviled. But those are held out for us then to mirror those attributes of God for those who treat us in the same way.

Now these things are complicated. What I've just said needs to be carefully walked through in each of those relationships you're thinking about right now. I want to explore what it looks like in world view or heart level on why conflict remains in the Christian life.
We'll look at two ways we struggle to trust Christ. Then we're going to look at three calls that God puts on us. And that should take us to the end of our first session. First, we love lesser things above greater things.
We have a tendency to love things in disproportion. The things we should love at the highest level we tend to love lower. And things we should maybe love or maybe shouldn't love at all, we love at a higher level.
And we will always follow that which we cherish. Our words and our hearts follow our desires. It's just a truism.
[22:46] All of human history. That's not a result of sin. Adam and Eve, before the fall, they were following what their hearts desire.

It's just what their hearts were desiring is what God desires. So their desires were in line with the will of God. So there's no problem here that our hearts follow our desires.
The problem is in what we desire. When things are going great, your life is just hitting it on all cylinders.
You're here at a conflict seminar hoping to learn something, but you've got nothing in mind where you could possibly apply this. Those seasons can be short sometimes, but they're enjoyable when they happen.
It's not hard to believe your desires are in line with God's desires when everything's going great, when there's plenty of money in the bank, when there's plenty of friends on the weekend, it's not hard.
[23:49] The problem comes when we get squeezed. The problem comes when we're facing trial, when things are not working out as we hoped that they would work out.

That's when we see our true passions, our real desires. They get revealed in hardship. And James dissects this for us.
Look at James 4, 1-4. What's going on in the human heart when it doesn't get what it wants? Here's what happens. What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you?
Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel.
You do not have, even when you ask. You do not have because you do not ask. And you ask and do not receive because you ask wrongly to spend it on your passions.
[24:55] You adulterous people. All right, hang on, James, hold on there. He tells us kind of directly that our quarrels come from our desires. And we're here to talk about conflict in the Christian life, right?

So when there's conflict, even if it's not expressed, even if it's something you're harboring against somebody, what's at work there is our desires are not at work, are not being met.
They're at war within us. All right, he then labels this whole pattern of giving into those desires and having them be at war within us, he labels it you adulterous people.
Now, you know, if you open a radio program that way, maybe you're going to turn it off or a podcast, right? That's a harsh label, but I want to explore the label a little bit. Why does he use that phrase? Why did he say, you rebellious people? Or you sinners? When we love in a primary way, what we ought not love in a primary way, we are revealing we've left our first love.
[26:08] Let me give you an example. humanly speaking, I'm called to love my wife, Gina, in a primary way in human relationships.

In each of the jobs that I've had, including my current one, I work with a number of women. I'm also called to love them, but not in a primary way.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-09-16 03:10:25

if my heart, I still love Gina, but if my heart loves them in a primary way, you can see why James uses the phrase, you adulterous people.
Is that clear? All right. On the grand scale, we are called to love God in a primary way, such that his will is what we do.
He says that we do it, that ends it. But if we love any number of things, let me use the example I just did. If I love Gina more than God, such that her happiness matters to me more than pleasing the Lord, I've left my first love.
[27:21] And I am in that moment part of an adulterous people as the bride of Christ, loving something more than its bridegroom.

Are you with me? That's the language James is using here. If you are in regular conflict with someone, or many someones, let me ask this.
Just pause and ask yourself, what are you loving most? What right now is rivaling for the attention of my heart?
what has God not given me in this moment that I'm willing to sin to get it? When we are willing to sin to get a good thing, what we're revealing is that good thing is functioning as an idol within us, as an adulterer or adulteress within us, because we're willing to leave our first love.
I'm going to rebel here so I can get this thing you should have given me. And I've used adultery as an example because that's Paul's language.
[28:46] I said Paul again. That's James' language here. But what if the thing you want is peace? That's been an idol I've had to fight in my life as I've had a number of kids come through teenage years.

And it's just so obvious how we could not fight with one another, but there's fighting happening. What I want, God wants, but he's not giving it to me right now. So my temptation is to get what God wants in Rob's way and Rob's time.
Right? And sure enough, if I just yell louder than any of the other people, keep in mind I'm professionally trained, you know, I can produce some volume.
Right? So if I just yell, that silence is the house. But there's not an ounce of peace that comes out of that. It's just silent, conflict. It's fear.
I'm getting that result that I want God to provide, but it's not done in his way. I've been willing to sin against him to get it. These are the desires that creep up in our hearts that we are called to take to task.
[30:02] We're going to spend much more time on James 4 in the next session. Okay, let's move on to the second one. We fail to cultivate grace-producing gratitude. gratitude. When conflict and contention is commonplace in your life, I can almost guarantee there's a shortage of grace and gratitude.

Because there's no spirit power for you to overlook an offense, to forbear under mistreatment, to suffer long with someone's weaknesses. We cannot project the transferable attributes of God if we are not actively grateful for the work of God in our lives.
I want to suggest to you that the lack of grace in our relationships and our attitudes is a result of a shortage of grace-producing gratitude in our hearts.
We're thankful for the love of God. We're thankful for the blood of Christ. We're thankful for the infilling of the Spirit and the promise of salvation. I trust every one of you is thankful for your salvation.
But when we are in conflict, in the throes of temptation, if that gratitude is not within reach, if it's not front of mind, then we're going to act out of those passions and desires of our hearts rather than out of the gratitude we've needed to cultivate.
[31:37] All along. You can't just summon gratitude in a given moment if you're not regularly cultivating it. If you're sitting on your couch and you're like, man, I could go for an apple.

If you've not gathered the apples at the store first to be in your refrigerator or on your counter, you can't just summon the existence of an apple.
You have to have gathered it so that it's there for you when you need it. And it's the same with gratitude. You can't in a moment access gratitude. It has to be cultivated and gathered and at your disposal, a regular discipline in your life.
love. As we grow in gratitude, as we demonstrate more and more faith in the direction of God and living his way, what happens is grace abounds in our lives.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-09-16 03:10:25

And it's there for us to be able to share with those who need it. We're going to spend much more time on gratitude in the last session. Okay?
[32:45] Let's look at what does it look like here to be gospel-centered livers, people who live with gospel-centered lives when facing conflict, when our desires are not met.

What are the calls on our lives? I've got three of them here at the end of this session. Three foundational calls. Whatever the issues you're going to face, whatever additional tools you may need, these foundational principles or calls should be at work.
Are things the gospel calls us to. Let's look at the first one. We are called to Christ-centered living. I've been alluding to this all along, that in order for us to honor God in the disagreements, we have to be living Christ-centered lives.
Paul spends in Romans 11 chapters expounding on the substance of the gospel. In case you haven't read it, it's the first 11. Chapters 1 through 11, he spends expounding the riches and the depths and the contours of the gospel.
He entertains objections to those things, and then he cites claims of the gospel throughout those 11 chapters. chapters. When he turns to apply those 11 chapters, he does in the last four chapters of Romans, when he applies them, did you ever notice where he first applies them?
[34:16] It's our view of the world. Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Right? And then the whole rest of that chapter is relationships.

how we deal with other people. The first half is how we deal with those that we're at peace with. How do we act toward people?
And then the second half, which we're going to read here in verses 14 through 21, is how we treat people when we are acted upon. So 9 through 13 is kind of proactive Christian living, gospel living, and 14 through 21 is reactive gospel living.
Look at what it says. This is when we are acted upon. Bless those who persecute you. It's the first thing he says, guys. It's the first thing when he's talking about reactive living in the gospel is to bless those who persecute you.
Bless and do not curse them. rejoice with those who rejoice. So somebody's already rejoicing. We join them in rejoicing. Weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another.
[35:27] Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. Here's a toughie.

Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. And I alluded to this earlier. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.
Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God. For it is written, vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord. To the contrary, if your enemy is hungry, feed him.
If he's thirsty, give him something to drink. For by so doing, you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.
Now, before we get any further into this, I want to call to your attention. That is precisely how you've been loved by God. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
[36:33] While we were enemies of him, he loved us. God so loved the world he gave. This is how, so God, it's not fair to ask me that.

He's asking us to do nothing that he's not done himself. And then he's given us his Holy Spirit to empower and enable us to go do it.
Now, I don't know the circumstances going on in your life. I don't know what issue or sin or offense has stirred within your soul has happened to you, and I don't want to trivialize it in any way. Whatever it is, and whatever else I need to know about it to give good, sound-specific guidance, I believe I'm standing on the inspired Holy Word of God when I call you in whatever that is to walk in this way.
Walk out this Christ-centered living. Now, you may say, Rob, I get it, but how are we supposed to do that? And I'd say, though there's a thousand ways to answer that question, they all should reflect by choosing to live Christ-centered, where Christ-centered living is hardest.
[37:57] We can't just be, you know, Pilgrim's Progress is a wonderful illustration of this. We can't just be a pilgrim with Christ steadfast when the path is easy. We've got to remain steadfast when it's hard.

Now, there's no get-out-of-obedience free card here. This happened to me so I can disregard what the Bible calls me to do. No, that's the place you've got to double down and say, if I'm a Christ

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-09-16 03:10:25

follower, I need to redouble my efforts where it's hardest.
Now, there may be more to it than that, as I hear about your situation. There may be more to it than that, but I'm here to tell you there's not less to it than that.
We can't reduce it further. We must face our relational challenges and our temptations by unwaveringly heeding God's call to be Christ-centered.
One of the implications of that is the second call on our lives. We're called to be peacemakers. What's implied within that Romans 12 passage that I read is explicit in Matthew 5, where he says, blessed are the peacemakers.
[39:14] And that takes all of the wind out of the sails of conflict, of people who just thrive in conflict. It takes all the wind out of the sails of the excuses we give for remaining in conflict.

Paul lifts the hood on this at the beginning of Ephesians 4. I quoted it earlier, but let me read the whole verse. Ephesians 4, 1 through 3. I therefore, a prisoner of the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you've been called.
How? With all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.
Keep your eyes on that for a minute. You may often know that verse that gets quoted, walk in a manner worthy of the calling, right? But that's not a vague phrase to Paul.
He tells us exactly how in the next verse, and it's all peacemaking. It's all conflict pointed. It's all how we live with one another. With all humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another, eager to maintain unity.
[40:22] There's just no getting around this, which is why I've cited there, again, I referenced it earlier, that people know we're Christians because of the really strange amount of peace among us.

By the strange amount of love that we have in our midst. I don't know if you've ever heard this. I've heard this. You know, Rob, I don't believe what you believe.
I think it's closed-minded, but I love the way your kids love one another. Or I love, I like coming to your church. I don't agree with the teaching.
I've had people say, I come for the worship and then I leave. They don't like the teaching, but they like being around God's people. And why is that? Because there's a, worldly speaking, there's a strange amount of love and peace there.
Because we're all seeking to live in a Christ-centered way, being peacemakers with one another, such that conflict amongst Christians should be the exception.
[41:22] Because we labor to maintain it. Third and last, we're called to Christian ethics and methods.

here's what I mean by this. Colossians 3, 17 says, whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.
All right. One of the most difficult words is when God says everything. He doesn't say most things. Do as much as you can in the name of Jesus. He says, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.
And that would have to include, I think you'd agree, at least on an academic level, whatever thing you wish it said you didn't have to do, it includes that. Okay? I'm going to skip reading that Matthew quote, but that's essentially underscoring the fact that whatever comes out of our mouths is what's in our hearts.
Okay? The good person out of the good treasure brings forth good. Okay? There's that principle that whatever it is we're loving, we're going to do. Whatever our passions are pointed at, that's what we're going to strive for.
[42:35] And so if we're going to agree, you're here today to learn, let's all agree it's at least your desire to walk in a manner worthy in these things. Let's assume that's everybody's desire. So that's our motive.

Does that matter? Yes. But our method matters too. This is where the Christian ethic comes in. Our method matters too. James tells us words have power to steer ships, to set forests ablaze. Proverbs tells us words have power to heal and to be sword thrusts. So our words on how we pursue these things, our words matter.
That's actually the heart behind the book that Sean was referencing, is how much our words matter in marriage. It's what the book is on. So let me say this. There is, and I'm going to use a big word here, not a lot of letters, but it's just big.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-09-16 03:10:25

There is never a context where we get to set aside Christian ethics. No matter what is done to you. [43:41] That doesn't give us any freedom to use words to destroy rather than build up. It doesn't give us any freedom to set aside being Christianly in our words and our deeds.

Now, that doesn't mean, you shouldn't take that at all to mean you're supposed to just lay down and take it. That's not what I'm saying at all. God is not just a God of peace, but a God of justice. And so there's ways to pursue justice, ways to pursue what's right.
That honor God with our words and our thoughts and our deeds. We don't want to set those aside to pursue justice because we will commit injustices along the way.
The pursuit of justice and what's right must be done in a just and right way. The caution there is be careful not to give yourself a pocket of your life where you're allowed to sin without account.
Whether that's verbally, electronically, withholding relationally. These are all a result of the fall.
[44:58] These effects of sin, these calls are implications of the gospel on how we're supposed to live. And along the way, we've got to remember that we and our efforts and our obedience to these calls are not the primary source of conflict resolution.

resolution, the work of Jesus is the primary source of conflict resolution. As he remains paramount, as we maintain our first love, these things fall into place in our desire to pursue obedience, to cherish what God cherishes, to love one another within the church and in our lives.
So learn your own heart. Know what rivals for first place in your heart. Be patient with one another. But beyond all of that, embrace a desire to love what God loves, to pursue Christ first. He promises to complete the work he's begun in us.
And he makes us more and more like him when he allows hard things into our lives so that they all work for our good to shape us into the image of Christ.
[46:15] God is faithful. He will do it. And in the next session, we're going to be focusing on the anatomy of this within our own hearts as we look more closely at James 4.

Let me pray and then we'll take a break. Okay? Father, thank you for your word. Thank you, Lord, you know conflict. You have received it from mankind for nearly all of our existence.
You stepped in and received the judgment and the anger and the rejection of your people. Lord, you've been tempted in every way we are tempted and yet without sin.
And so, Lord, help us to not just walk in a manner worthy, but to walk very, very closely with you so that we experience your supernatural help as we engage each of these situations for your glory and ultimately for our good.
We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-09-16 03:10:25