

May 19, 2024 – Pastor Jason Smotherman

DISCUSSION GUIDE:

1. What is the best way to handle disagreement amongst believers?
2. Why are disagreements so important in the body of Christ?
3. What are some ways to create the type of relationships that foster deep conversations about the Lord?

SERMON NOTES:

The Power of Disagreements

We speak often of unity, agreement, like mindedness, and togetherness. We rarely, if ever, spend any time speaking about the vehicle that creates the opportunity for unity. There is a power in disagreement, IF it leads to the TRUTH found in the Lord. It creates the crossroads for unity or destruction.

Two of the more popular scripture in Philippians.

Philippians 4:4

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say rejoice

Philippians 4:6

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

These 2 scriptures are in response to the Philippian church being in the midst of a disagreement so large, that word spread to Paul who was out on mission. Paul writes in verse 2, "**agree in the Lord.**"

I don't care who is right or wrong, find the TRUTH in the Lord.

Agreement in the Lord is not as easy as it sounds.

In our community today, we are one of many local Houses of Worship that belong to the church of Grants Pass. Most of our local bodies are divided because of doctrinal issues, relational issues, power and control struggles, and a mindset of scarcity not advancement. Some believe in the continuing of the Spiritual gifts, others don't. Some are egregious in their error of placating to sinful lifestyles, while others are so harsh with the truth that they have left love at the cross.

We are tasked to be apart of a body of believers who must seek to "**Agree in the Lord**". The fact still stands. If Paul wanted the Philippian church to agree in the Lord. He would want the church of Grants Pass to agree as well. Again, sounds super easy, **it is not.**

Let me give us some guidelines on the power of disagreement:

1. Disagreement is okay to visit but not to take up residence.

Disagreement is only fatal if it leads to disengagement.

Scripture tells of incredible story:

Paul and Barnabas had such a disagreement over John Mark that it causes them to separate for a season. Paul declared that John Mark was not ready and had abandoned him on a missionary journey. Barnabas still saw potential in the disciple. Both were right, they eventually saw that young man write one of the gospels and pen the words, "Go into all the world and preach the good news...." While on that particular trip, Paul and Silas ended up in Prison. Would John Mark have been ready? Their disagreement was temporary not permanent. It allowed the cross, the compromise, to be rubbed off of John Mark.

2. Disagreement is okay, but you better watch your words.

Paul made it a point in verse 3 to point out that these that are in disagreement, **their names are written in the book of life.** Not every disagreement that we have in the body of Christ should lead to people being called false prophets or teachers. We should address those, but we better be careful about partnering with the enemy and slandering or accusing fellow believers.

Apparently Paul had to address that these two in disagreement were still fellow believers. **Rebuking someone to be outside of the family is not the same as rebuking someone to be inside the family.** Our goal in correcting, reproofing, and rebuking is RESTORING. If restoration to the family of God is not the goal we are fighting on the wrong team.

3. Disagreement should not lead to compromise, but reasonableness.

Philippians 4:5

Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand.

The mark of a spiritually mature body is being grounded upon reasonableness not compromise. Compromising on truth is never the answer, but either is religious speech void of love.

Reasonableness is gentleness, moderation, and patience. Unless you are willing to walk the road of deposit, you should never expect a return. That's what the cross teaches us. Relationship, rooted in love, is the best way to deliver truth.

Disagreements come from somewhere, scripture tells us where.

James 4:1-7

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? **2** You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. **3** When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. **4** You adulterous people, [a] don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. **5** Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us [b]? **6** But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble." **7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.**

The reason why the church of Grants Pass needs growth is because Parkway needs growth. The same forces that bring disagreement to the larger body are the same forces that bring it to the local bodies. To be clear, the quarrels and fights are from ME and YOU.

If we want to apart of the willed and planned move of God we must do three things.

1) Start with us

Famed theologian Ravi Zacharias always would bring big questions from out there to in here. An example of that would be, Why does so much pain and suffering exist in the world? Using this technique, why does so much conflict in the church happen?

2) Create and grow relationships that speak truth and grace ROOTED IN LOVE.

You will never be able to walk in true relationship with conquering disagreement. So train yourself to not run from disagreement, but run to it and fix only when you agree in the LORD.

3) Be the example

Disagreements that are ignored are not resolved.

The root cause of interpersonal conflict is sin (Gal. 5:19–20).

James explains that fighting is the result of uncontrolled passions and desires (James 4:1–3).

The book of Proverbs characterizes those who stir up conflict as persons given to anger (Prov. 15:18; 29:22), greed (Prov. 28:25), hate (Prov. 10:12), gossip (Prov. 16:28), and worthless perversions (Prov. 6:12–15). Such conflicts inevitably result in personal destruction (Prov. 6:15), discord (Prov. 6:14), and strife (Prov. 10:12; 16:28). It is no wonder that "the Lord hates ... who stirs up trouble among brothers" (Prov. 6:16, 19 HCSB). The Bible places great value on the ability to live at peace with one another (Ps. 34:14; Mark 9:50; Rom. 14:19; 1 Thess. 5:13; Heb. 12:14; 1 Pet. 3:11), in unity (Ps. 133:1),



and harmony (Rom. 15:5–6). At the same time, the Bible declares unequivocally that such peace is given only by God (Num. 6:26; John 14:27; 16:33; 2 Cor. 13:11; 2 Thess. 3:16) and lived out only as believers pattern their lifestyles after that of Jesus (Phil. 2:3–8).

Purpose to be in your heart, the answer not part of the question.