

## “To Tell You The Truth”

*Series: Love Comes to Town Week 3. Healthy Conflict*

Nathaniel Brodish

The Woodside Church

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Good morning church family! I want to give a warm welcome to those joining us in person and online! And a special welcome to those here for the first time. I want you to know — you belong before you believe. Here at Woodside, you’re family, even if you don’t believe everything we do. But have you ever had one of those weeks where conflict found you before you even got out of bed? Maybe it was a text you didn’t want to answer... or a coworker who knows exactly how to get under your skin... or a roommate who thinks the trash walks itself out? If you’ve been there — congratulations, you’re human. And today, love has something to say about it. Let’s pray. Today’s message comes with both a welcome... and a warning.

The welcome is that we’re in week three of our series Love Comes to Town, where we’ve been learning how to love better. Pastor Doug gave a great message last week on how love is sacrificial. Today’s title is To Tell You the Truth. And the warning is that we’re talking about something every single one of us faces — conflict. Whether it’s at home, at work, with your family, or even the person sitting next to you, none of us are strangers to it. The question isn’t if we’ll face conflict, but how we’ll handle it. So grab your Bible and your notes — we’ll be moving through a few passages today, and you’ll want to follow along.

When we look around, there’s no shortage of things that cause conflict — doing the dishes, taking out the trash, running late, or just plain old opinions. But I’ve narrowed it down to four that I believe cause the deepest division. These are The 4 wedges of conflict Politics The first is politics. Oh yea... I said the P word in church. Isn’t this supposed to be a neutral ground where we really don’t talk about this sort of thing? No, I believe that the church is the exact place to speak about it. But you don’t need to worry about me telling you who you need to vote for. I am purely just using this as an example, politics can become a wedge between all of us.

That we try and convince you that you’re wrong and that I’m right. With what started as a civil conversation has turned into a heated debate. Where is the love in that. Politics is a strong wedge that comes between us all. 2. Tradition The second is tradition. Some of you may be sitting here thinking that your traditions are not bad at all and have never caused a wedge between anyone. Everyone turn to the person next to you and say “so are mine”. Because this is true about all of us. We all think that are perceived traditions are harmless. But the reality is that our entire lives growing up from a child to who you are today have been absorbing all that has been around you. For the adults in the room think about how you grew up.

Think of your life like a stew. You’re the meat. And all those carrots and onions — those are the people, places, and moments that have seasoned you. That is what it’s like as adults. You have maybe left where you grew up and have your own family now but you still carry a taste of where

you came from. These traditions can be things you may expect of others, or even things you feel they should already know.

This is the wedge of tradition. 3. Preference Next is preference. Now turn to the other person next to you and say “I have a preference”. And for some of us, it’s the toothpaste in the sink... pray for me. When it comes to preference it is purely the things you like. In a marriage it could be the color of the curtains or even leaving the seat up (this was the moment all the wives looked around). Things we may not necessarily think about but they still impact our daily life. (STORY) Something for me is that I prefer to not have toothpaste left in the sink and I’ve had roommates that didn’t share that preference.

This instantly caused conflict. But it was unspoken conflict. And unspoken conflict kills especially in a relationship. Let me hear you say it “Unspoken Conflict kills relationships” The last wedge I believe get’s us all. It comes from the heart and overflows into every avenue of our lives. This wedge can sneak into every conversation and can corrupt our hearts. It’s the wedge of Pride. 4. Pride This one... sneaks in quietly. You don’t see it coming — until it’s already between you and someone you love.

It is this wedge that many of us think we can be better than the people around us. This wedge poisons us to think that when we’re in conflict it has to be because of what other people have been doing and not because of what we might have done. It can blind us to who we truly are and allows us to only see what may or may not be wrong with the other person. The truth is when we’re confronting someone we have to approach them understanding that we are all on equal ground. And we have to be honest with ourselves. Like scripture says: Matthew 7:3–5 NIV 3 “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? 4 How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye. I’ll be honest — I’ve had to do that.

Being in a relationship with Markie for a while there have been times when she has confronted me about something I said. And instead of listening, I get defensive. I replayed the conversation in my head a hundred times just to prove she was wrong. But the truth was, pride had built a wall so high I couldn’t see them anymore. I wasn’t fighting for peace — I was fighting to be right. And that’s what pride does. It blinds us to our own plank and makes us experts on everyone else’s sawdust. We have to clearly evaluate ourselves before we can say anything about what other people are doing. Pride comes from within and I have seen it ruin relationships, friendships, and even businesses.

Pride blinds us to our faults and will poison us to think that we are better than all those around us. That because we have a perfect family that we are better or because we own our business we are better. Or even because of our image that we want ourselves to be perceived as better. But the truth is we’re not. Especially as believers we have to walk into conflict with understanding that you are both imperfect and fallen beings. That there was probably things you both could’ve said better. Now — how do we bring it all back together? How do we have healthy conflict? And all

the husbands just leaned in... But seriously — this is where the healing starts. If you're taking notes now would be the time to pull out your notebooks, notes app, or even the bulletin you were handed (the back of it is generally empty). I'm sure we've all handled our fair share of conflict.

The problem I've observed that many of us have is that we never really know how to start the conversation when dealing with conflict. Either we beat around the bush or there's those of us in this room that always address the issue directly. And if that's you that's where we're starting today. Say to the person next to you "Address the Issue" Always Address The Issue Directly We always need to be address the issue directly! Here's what Matthew 18:15-17 says: Matthew 18:15–17 NIV 15 "If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. Now, some of you heard that and thought, "Finally! I get to tell people what's wrong with them! — No, that's not what I'm saying. Paul goes on. Matthew 18:15–17 NIV If they listen to you, you have won them over. 16 But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' 17 If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector. When it comes to this passage there are things that we can see right away.

We can see that it starts with approaching the person directly. As brothers and sisters in Christ we have to understand that we are called to watch out for one another. We are called to have one another backs. But we have to approach this with loving kindness. We have to keep in mind the passage we just read about the speak in someone else's eye. We can't go on and point out the sin in someone else's life if we're struggling with the same sin. And the pointing out of their flaw is not about showing that they are not as good as you at being Christian it's about caring for them!

As Christians and being apart of this family as a household family would look out for one another that same model should be us in the church. Knowing how to approach one another and help. When we address the issues we have to understand that it is never you (this better human) against them (a worse human). You're not fighting against the person, you're fighting against the issue. You're also not trying to change their mind but you're coming alongside them in love to fight against the issue. There is a caveat to the things I'm saying here today. I know that it may seem like a great idea to go up to the person you don't like in this room and tell them all the things they're doing wrong but that's not what I'm saying. When it comes to understanding how much truth you can speak into someone's life you have to look at the relationship you have with them.

You have to use the relationship you have with them as the gage that will instruct you on the amount of truth you can speak into their life. You're not going to go up to a stranger and tell them all the things they're doing wrong. You'll look like a crazy person. Another thing we have to keep in mind for when we address the issue directly is that we have to be gentle. Turn to your neighbor and say "be gentle" Be Gentle - Proverbs 15:1 says: Proverbs 15:1 NIV 1 A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. I know we can all think of a time when we have approached a situation without being gentle. Or we know someone that has approached us without being gentle.

I know that we've all had our moments and there are situations we all wish we would've been more gentle. But if we can reflect on those times when we weren't being gentle we can see that because we were using harsh words we did stir up anger. Looking back on my life I know that there are times that if I would've only spoken more gently things would've gone differently. This is what I mean when I say you need to come along side them.

If you're taking notes the second point is — 2. Speak in Love - Let's say it all together "Speak in Love" one more time "speak in love" because Ephesians 4:15 says: Ephesians 4:15 NIV 15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. This verse is saying that if we speak the truth in love we will grow to become more like Christ and we will be more like a family! And after all that is our call as Christians to be a family. To look out for one another. But again there is a level of this that we need to understand.

When we are speaking in love we have to know that this is the most important part. When we speak in love you are seeking out their best interest you're not just looking to critique. We need to understand the level we need to elevate to if you're not there already is understanding that Love... is the bridge between truth and transformation. If you really love someone, you'll risk the awkward conversation... because love doesn't hide from truth — it delivers it gently. Think about it like this.

The love that you show someone will allow them to either see the gospel through your words and actions or it will blind them to it. Because the truth is if you really love those that are closest to you, you will speak truth into their life even if the relationship is on the line. (passion) Because you see the care you have for them and you know that when you approach gently and directly even if they get upset you are approaching in a deep love for their good and benefit.

The final point I want to leave with you today is — 3. Choose forgiveness — say it all together "Choose forgiveness" Forgiveness isn't pretending nothing happened — it's saying, what happened won't define how I love you now. Let's read Colossians 3:12-14: Colossians 3:12-14 NIV 12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. As we read this passage we have to understand what the calling as believers is.