



# DISCIPLE

With Jesus | In Community | On Mission

SERMON TITLE: In Community: Confrontation

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SCRIPTURE: Philippians 2:1-11

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The earliest followers of Jesus didn't call themselves Christians. They didn't think of themselves as members of a religion. They considered themselves disciples – students and apprentices of Rabbi Jesus. So if this is who we're supposed to be, how do we begin to define 'disciple'? Is being a disciple about knowing certain things? Doing certain things? Saying, believing, or rejecting certain things? If so, what? Is there a manual for this? How long does it take? And what's the point of it all? Or simply, what does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus?

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Here are the main points from today's message and the call-outs that were on the screen.

Gospel community is living in intentional relationships built around life and mission with Jesus. The Holy Spirit uses the interconnected lives of very different people. Mark it down: Disagreements, divisions, and disunity always come with diversity—*unless*—we are of "one mind" concerning the "one thing" that matters most—and that is the Gospel and living Gospel-shaped lives. That is why we have to be "intentional" and united around the common goal of pursuing life and mission with Jesus. "The Spirit of this Age" (cf Eph2:2) is breeding a divisive arrogance that is now showing up in the church. And, it is a characterizing mark of the social media mob on both sides of the issues we face today. The divisive spirit we see in our society is the same divisive spirit that's showing up in the church. So how do we deal with that? How do we deal with the inevitable conflicts that show up in the church? How do we live in intentional relationships built around life and mission with Jesus when these inevitable conflicts arise? Well, the biblical answer is—you confront it—you lovingly confront it. For this message, I will give you ONE picture of Gospel Community and ONE response.

## The Picture of Gospel of Community in Philippians 2:1-11

First, by way of review, I need to put this picture in a big frame. The Cycle of Community: (1) idealization, (2) disillusionment, (\*) Option to break away, or (3) Acceptance. Discipleship happens—your faith and love deepen—in the space between disillusionment and acceptance. Or said another way: The Holy Spirit works to form us into the image of Christ in the inevitable conflicts that arise in community. So the only way we will ever move past disillusionment into acceptance is by learning to do loving confrontation. If you never learn to do conflict well—if you're not willing to lovingly confront—you will not taste the goodness that God has for you in community. Now, we don't confront, just to confront—we don't confront someone just b/c they're annoying—confronting is not venting about everything that's wrong with everybody around you (that's called self-righteousness). What we are after is what you might call "fruitful confrontation." We want confrontation that produces fruit in both parties. The kind of conversations that cause both people involved to become the kind of people God is making them to be. *If you want to grow to be the person God in Christ created you to be—if you want to experience Gospel community the way God intends for it to be—all of us have to be willing to receive and do fruitful confrontation.*

How does God change us? How does God confront us? How do we have fruitful confrontations with one another?

#1 — Paul confronts the Philippians by reminding them of who they are in Christ (2:1-4). He starts with identity. Who you are in Christ must shape how you talk to and about others. An emotional reaction to error generates more error. There's more than one way to be wrong even if you're right. When the wrong things rule our hearts, we will forget that our identity is in Christ and not in the thing we are fighting for. All this to say, fruitful confrontation always begins with reminding people of who they are in Christ.

#2 — Paul confronts the Philippians by reminding them of who Jesus is to them (2:5-11). Essentially Paul is saying here—In all your relationships, be toward others the way Jesus is toward you. Have the same mindset as Christ Jesus—that is—Have the same mindset toward others as Jesus has toward you. Or, you could say, "In all your relationships, yield to the Spirit of Christ rather than the Spirit of the culture. Fruitful confrontation reminds people of who Jesus is to them. And, it calls for us to be for others what Jesus is for us.

Now, let's review our definition of Gospel Community and add a bit more color to the picture. Gospel community is living in intentional relationship built around life and mission with Jesus. By "intentional relationships" we mean "intentionally-intrusive relationships." (Thank you Paul Tripp). But what exactly does that look like? I'm going to talk a lot more about this next week. But for now—see if you can get the picture from these questions

**Question #1** — When in your busy life are you meeting with a group of other believers—or even one other believer—where you are encouraging each other to pursue life and mission with Jesus?

**Question #2** — Are you pursuing an intentionally-intrusive relationship with someone—or a small group of someones—where you are talking about what God is teaching you—talking about what God is doing in your life—where you are being open and honest about what a mess you really are?

**Question #3** —Who have you invited to be intentionally intrusive in your life? Who have you given permission to speak Gospel into your life? Do you have people in your life who know how and where you struggle? People who are there to remind you of your identity in Christ when you forget ...who are there to hold you accountable when you minimize sin? People to whom you have said—"I want you to ask me the hard questions?" "If you see anything in my life that's out of line with the Gospel, I'm inviting you to point that out to me?" Who have you given permission to do that? Who has given you permission to do that with them?

Relationships like this are mission-critical to being in Gospel Community. It is what intentionally-intrusive relationships look and feel like. It's what God wants for you and this is what he wants you to be for others. If you don't have a relationship or relationships like this

**Question #4** — How can you move in that direction this week? If you don't have any relationships like this, would you begin to pray and ask God who you could talk about all this with? What I'm asking you is: Are you willing to take this Scripture and this application of Scripture seriously? And if you're willing, then what's your next step? My message application last week focused on calling you to take personal responsibility for getting involved in some kind of Gospel community—a community group, a small group of some kind—approaching some friends and starting a group. My call was for you to take personal initiative—personal responsibility. That's what I'm encouraging you to do this week as well.

I recently came across a quote by a guy named Kevin Weaver—who I don't know much about—but I really like how he defines love—"Love is the willingness to fight for the highest possible good in the life of another." Love is the intentionality behind intentionally-intrusive relationships w/in a Gospel community. Do you love your brothers and sisters in Christ enough to fight for their highest good if you see them going astray?

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#### Discussion Starters —Lots of questions to choose from—

- Spend some time talking about why having a loving, fruitful, confrontational conversation is so difficult. If you see a brother or sister in Christ wandering astray, what would you do about it?
- Discuss how social media is leading Christians away from "seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" and leading them away from Gospel community.
- Discuss the picture of Gospel community above by reading Philippians 2:1-11. Read #1 above. In vv1-4, what is Paul doing with what he is saying here? Talk about the statement: "When wrong things rule our hearts we forget that our identity is in Jesus. How does error generate more error? How can what we are passionately fighting for become our identity?"
- Have there been moments in your life recently when you have forgotten your identity in Christ by getting wrapped up in some problem, some argument, some disagreement with someone else?
- Read Philippians 2:5-11—then #2 above—How does the picture Paul paints of Jesus here, call us to live in Gospel community with each other? From this picture of Jesus, what marks of who Jesus is should shape how we relate to people who are hard to love?
- Have there been moments in your life recently when you have forgotten what Jesus has done for you and thereby forgotten how you should respond to someone who disagrees with you or even opposes you?
- God uses people and community to help us grow stronger in our faith and more loving toward others. Discuss how this works in everyday life?
- In your own life, has God used someone to "speak the truth in love" to you? How did that go?
- In your relationships with others, has God used you to "speak the truth in love" into someone else's life? How did that go? Do you have intentionally-intrusive, Christ-centered, grace-driven, redemptive relationships, and community? Who could you invite into this kind of relationship?
- Talk about the quote Charlie ended with and what it might mean for you and your group. "Love is the willingness to fight for the highest possible good in the life of another" (Kevin Weaver).