

Week 10: Paul and Conflict Resolution in the Community

1. Overview

- 1) Paul faced various conflicts within early Christian communities ranging from doctrinal disagreements and ethical issues to leadership divisions and social tensions.
 - 2) Rooted in the truth of the gospel, Paul sought to resolve these conflicts with pastoral wisdom, aiming for unity and maturity in the body of Christ.
 - 3) This session explores Paul's conflict-resolution strategies through real cases in Corinth, Galatia, and Philippi.
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2. Key Texts

- 1) 1 Corinthians 1:10–17– Division and factions; solution through the centrality of the cross
 - 2) Galatians 2:11–14– Paul's confrontation with Peter over gospel truth
 - 3) Philippians 4:2–3– Mediation between Euodia and Syntyche (leadership conflict)
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3. Main Causes of Conflict

- 1) Doctrinal misunderstanding (Legalism vs. Freedom)
 - 2) Leadership-centered divisions (e.g., "I follow Paul," "I follow Apollos")
 - 3) Ethical and moral issues (e.g., sexual immorality, lawsuits)
 - 4) Social and cultural tensions (e.g., slaves vs. free, Jews vs. Gentiles)
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4. Paul's Principles of Conflict Resolution

- 1) Gospel-Centered Resolution– Emphasis on grace and unity in the cross
 - 2) Balance of Truth and Love– "Speak the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15)
 - 3) Community-Building Ethic– "All things are permissible, but not all things are beneficial" (1 Cor. 10:23)
 - 4) Leadership with Authority and Humility– Reproof and encouragement side by side (cf. Pastoral Epistles)
 - 5) Restorative Discipline– Discipline as a tool for repentance and restoration (cf. 1 Cor. 5)
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5. Practical Applications

- 1) Paul did not avoid conflict but faced it head on to nurture the community.

- 2) The church must evaluate and resolve conflicts based on gospel truth.
 - 3) Remember: Peace without truth is hypocrisy; truth without love is brutality.
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6. Discussion Questions

- 1) What forms do conflicts take in today's churches?
- 2) How can Paul's pastoral model be applied in modern congregations?
- 3) What unresolved conflict in your community needs a gospel-centered solution?