

How does Jesus want you to see yourself in confrontation? To get a picture of that you need to go to the parable Jesus tells right after our passage, the parable of the unforgiving servant. The parable of the unforgiving servant is a story of confrontation done badly. A man owed his king an unpayable debt. Hundreds of millions of dollars. He can't repay this debt and so he is facing slavery for himself and his family. He falls on his knees before the king for mercy. The merciful king forgives this enormous debt. Amazing grace as he leaves the palace, the forgiven servant runs into a fellow servant who owes him money. A couple of thousand dollars. He grabs the man by the neck and demands payment. The man falls to his knees and begs for mercy, but the servant snarls and throws him in jail. The king hears what the servant did and is furious. He puts the unmerciful servant in jail for the rest of his life.

*What does the unmerciful servant get wrong in this confrontation?* I would say that he doesn't see himself properly. How does the unmerciful servant see himself? What's in the center of his mind when he confronts? His grievance. He sees himself as an aggrieved victim, he sees the other servant as a monstrous sinner. How would Jesus have him see himself? Jesus would have him see himself as a forgiven sinner. Jesus would have him see himself as a sinner who is saved by an immeasurable grace. In our confrontation, we don't forget our victimhood, we don't forget the injustice, but it isn't the root of who we come to our conflict in the shadow of the cross. We come to our conflict knowing that we are sinners, we are perpetrators, we are oppressors, but His mercy has forgiven us a debt that we could never pay. We still confront the people who sinned against us, we still name the pain that they caused, but I think you can see that if we come into our conflicts with a deep consciousness of the amazing grace we've received in Jesus, our conflicts would be so much more grace-filled and healing. All this reminds us that Jesus may have practiced confrontation, and Jesus may have hit people hard with the truth of their sin, but ultimately He was willing to lay down His life for the people He confronts. Jesus confronts our sin, but He also gives His life to forgive that sin and His power. In the end you could even say that the cross is really the answer to three of our points. The cross is the foundation of conflict, because it is through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross that we become the loving, trusting family of God.

Jesus models this. Jesus comes to transform us, to make us the people God means for us to be, and so Jesus practices confrontation. In our passage, Jesus confronts our sin, but He also gives His life to forgive that sin and His power. In the end you could even say that the cross is really the answer to three of our points. The cross is the foundation of conflict, because it is through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross that we become the loving, trusting family of God. Jesus is the one confronting. His preaching ministry starts out with

(10:34) Confrontation and conflict are part of the fabric of community and love, you will only create anger and alienation. Now in our passage He calls us to practice confrontation. In our passage this is one of the reasons why as a staff and as church leaders He teaches the family of God how to do conflict. I want to dig in to this passage talking about the family of LaGrave. Even though this church is la in a moment, but before I do, it's important to see this text and all of Jesus' confrontation texts in their larger context. Yes, Jesus sometimes confronts it to feel like a family. We want this to be a place of familial trust sharply. *He tends to do that with insiders*: people close to Him and religious professionals. But when it comes to the really broken people like the woman caught in adultery in John 9 or the tax collectors and the sinners in Matthew 23, Jesus seems remarkably non-confrontational. Also, Jesus urges us to confront you, to proclaim the gospel here, *but in other passages*, like Matthew 6, He says things like, "Judge not, lest you be judged. Take the plank out of your own eye before looking at the speck in your brother's." Or Matthew 13 where the parable of the wheat and the weeds tells us to leave final judgments to God. All this to say, healthy Christian communities confront, but healthy Christian communities don't *always* confront. If we take this passage as a license to confront each other over little things, we will tear each other to shreds. Patience and forbearance are Christian virtues and they remind us that often, instead of confronting, it's better to hold our tongue. Wisdom discerns when to keep silent and when to speak. The goal of our confrontation is to win the person over. The Having said that, when the time comes to confront our brothers and sisters when conflict is inevitable, what does Jesus teach? There is so much going on in these 6 short verses, but let me say just three things Jesus tells us about conflict and confrontation in this passage. (Three points. So predictable.) I want to talk about the foundation of good confrontation, the goal of good confrontation, and the person doing the confrontation. The foundation, the goal and the person. First, the foundation of confrontation. For Jesus, church confrontation is family confrontation. "When your brother or your sister sins against you, go and point out your fault just between the two of you." The brother and sister part of this is crucial. Jesus is talking about confrontation that takes place within the orbit of the church family. Church conflict is family conflict, and family confrontations are different, right? Who's the most direct with you? Who's most likely to tell you the unvarnished truth about your behavior? It's your family, right? Adult children are the worst. They turn on you! You raise them, you love them, you give them nice vacations and pay for their education and how do they