

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 think most of you realize that the answer is no. When a couple says they've never had a fight, our level of concern goes up. Why do we have that instinct? Because we have a sense that a relationship without conflict is probably immature. We suspect that the one or both partners in the relationship don't trust each other enough to say what's really on their mind. We wonder if they are completely honest with each other. Of course conflict is often bad and it can point to all kinds of places in which conflict causes great harm in our broken and sinful world, *conflict free relationships are not deep relationships. They're probably not growing relationships.* This isn't just true for marriages, it's true for friendships and co-worker relationships and for churches. It's true for churches. If a person tells you, our church is perfect, we never disagree! That's probably a sign that while the church is comfortable, it may not be healthy. We are broken people, and we need each other become the people God means for us to be. That doesn't mean without some conflict and some confrontation.

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 to restore us. Jesus also practiced confrontation. Regularly. As part of His preaching ministry through the gospel of Matthew. Jesus gets into lots of conflicts with the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Jesus is the one confronting. His preaching ministry starts out with confrontation and He teaches us to do it in a productive way. Jesus is the one confronting. His preaching ministry starts out with confrontation and He teaches us to do it in a productive way.

(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 here, *but in other passages*, like Matthew 6, He says things like, "Judge 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