

Sermon Series: TRANSFORMATION
Focus: Relationally Connected
Sermon Title: The Process of Peace
Text: Matthew 18:15-17

Discussion Questions:

- Confrontation can be such a difficult topic...and a much more difficult thing to do well.
 - Has it been your observation that there isn't a lot of middle ground when it comes to confrontation? [Some people seem to enjoy confrontation - and have no qualms whatsoever when confronting people to the point of making them squirm. While others absolutely hate confrontation - and get nauseous at the thought of having to hold someone accountable]
 - Where, on this spectrum, would you put yourself? Why is that?
 - What are some examples of healthy confrontation that come to mind?
 - Do you think it's Biblical to confront others? What verses come to mind?

Examination:

Read **Ephesians 4:11-16**.

- This list of gifts in verse 11 isn't an exhaustive list of spiritual gifts (see Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; and 1 Corinthians 12:28 for other lists). What are some of the ways that apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are similar? Do each involve a measure of confrontation?
- The gift of prophecy isn't limited to declaring the future. The Greek word "prophecy" literally means "a speaking forth," and involves declaring the purposes of God - whether by reproof and admonishing the wicked; comforting the afflicted; or revealing things hidden (i.e. the future). How is confrontation a part of exercising the gift of prophecy?
- Verse 12 talks about "*equipping the saints for ministry*" and "*building up the body of Christ.*" What role does confrontation play in seeing these things happen?
- Verses 13 & 14 states that this equipping and building up is for a purpose - "*until we all...*" What is this purpose (or these purposes)?
- Verse 15 contains one of the most fundamental and easily remembered principles with respect to how we are to treat (confront) each other in the entire Bible: "***Speaking the truth in love.***"
 - This principle includes both WHAT we are to do (speak the truth) as well as HOW we are to do it (in love). How do these two things balance each other out?
 - We see in John 1:14 that Jesus came to this earth "*full of grace and truth.*" What can we learn from Jesus as to how to speak the truth in love? How did He do it?
 - The ultimate and desired result of appropriate and honest confrontation done in love is for each part (person) to "*work properly*" and be built up "*in*

love" (v. 16). Talk about how important it is for this to occur within the life of a healthy church family?

Our focus text this morning is Matthew 18:15-17. But it is important to see these three verses in the context of the entire chapter of Matthew 18.

- Read **Matthew 18:1-5**.
 - Are children the greatest in the kingdom of God - or those who are childlike? How is a child a metaphor for those who are "great" in God's kingdom?
 - Not only are we to BE childlike - but we're to "welcome" childlike people (v. 5; "*one such child*"). How do we do this?
- Read **Matthew 18:6-9**.
 - Causing a childlike person (v. 6; "*one of these little ones*"; "*those who believe in me*") to stumble is obviously a very bad thing. How do we cause other Christians to stumble? Might we be causing other Christians to stumble in ways we're not even aware of? How important is it that we are aware of them? What action should we take when we become aware of ways we're causing other believers to stumble? What is the end-result for a person who causes another Christian to stumble, is aware of it, and does nothing to deal with their sin?
- Read **Matthew 18:10-14**.
 - Jesus continues on the theme of how to treat "little ones" (aka: "Christians") - dealing specifically here with what do if a believer wanders off. What is our responsibility?
- Read **Matthew 18:15-20**.
 - These three verses continue on the theme of what to do when a "brother or sister" (fellow believer) sins (or "wanders off").
 - What is the first thing you should do (v. 15)?
 - What is the second thing you should do (v. 16)?
 - What is the third thing you should do (v. 17)?
 - What is the ultimate purpose of all of this confrontation?
 - What does "*binding on earth/heaven*"; and having "*two or three gather in my name*" have to do with restoring wandering Christians?
- Read **Matthew 18:21-35**.
 - What must our response be when a fellow believer sins directly against us? How does this parable point us to Jesus?

Application:

Remind yourself ten times every day this coming week that you are to speak the truth in love. Ask Jesus every morning to reveal to you how you might be causing others to stumble.