

# Sermon Discussion Questions: Personal Conflict and the Cross of Christ

## Philippians 2:5-11

The following outline and discussion questions have been prepared to accompany the sermon from May 6, “Personal Conflict and the Cross of Christ” (Phil 2:5-11). The questions can be used for discussion in small groups, family devotions, or for personal reflection.

**Main Idea:** *How does the gospel free me to find joy in the humble service of brothers and sisters in Christ who have deeply hurt me or someone I love?*

### Sermon Outline:

- I. The gospel reminds me that I deserve justice not mercy (Phil 2:6-8)**
  - A. Jesus humbled himself to reconcile an infinitely appalling offense
  - B. Jesus humbled himself in an infinitely undeserved act of mercy
- II. The gospel reminds me that justice has been and will be done (Rom 12:17-21)**
- III. The Gospel reminds me that I reflect Jesus the most when I take the first step toward reconciliation (Rom 5:6-8)**
  - A. Three observations
  - B. Christ overcame evil with good, go do the same

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Encourage a few group members to:
  - Describe an encounter in which they offended or hurt someone even though they *never* had any intention of hurting them.
  - Describe how they restored or attempted to restore the broken relationship.
2. Encourage a few group members to:
  - Describe a time when their emotional engagement in an issue boiled over into sinful words or actions toward another Christian. And after the event you wish you could take everything back. But, the other person is so hurt they will not even talk to you.
  - Describe how they restored or attempted to restore the broken relationship.
3. In the sermon, pastor Mark said that the relational, psychological, and spiritual fallout of personal conflict almost always exceeds the pain of the initial offense regardless of how big or small they are. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain with a personal example.
4. When we are offended what questions *should* we be honestly asking ourselves.

5. When we talk about the pain of personal offense, we need to remember that we are prone to interpret conflict in a way that diminishes our personal responsibility and emphasizes the other's culpability.
  - With this in mind, read Philippians 2:5–8 and discuss the question, “why doesn't someone else's sin against you release you from the call to build unity in the church by putting other's needs above your own?”
6. How does this compare with the justice we deserve? What single word would you use to describe the heart attitude in Jesus' response?
7. How is it that God has shown us his mercy? (Gen 3:15)
8. What does Pastor Mark mean when he says that “Jesus humbled himself in an infinitely undeserved act of mercy?” What is the gospel doing here? (Phil 2:6)
9. What is Paul telling us about justice in Romans 12:17–21 as it relates to how Christians are to relate to others? Why is it hard to do what this scripture is telling us to do?
10. How do different personality types respond to fellow believer's offence (Aggressive personalities, passive-aggressive personalities).
11. How do these responses prevent building unity in the church? (refer to previous discussion of Phil 1:27-2:4)
12. How does Paul show us the gospel truth that perfect justice has been and will be done? How does this help us to overcome our feelings of anger and revenge? See also Rom 12:19-20, Prov 17:15, 2 Cor 5:21, Rom 3:23-26)
13. How does the fact that “God's perfect justice means that he always punishes every wrong! Either in hell for those who don't repent OR on the cross for those who do repent and believe in His Son Jesus Christ” free us to pursue unity through humble others-centered service even toward to those that have hurt us?
14. How does the cross encourage us to take the first step toward reconciliation? (Rom 5:6-8)