

Every message in the Series will land the same way

Gospel, application, accountability.


- A reference to Jesus and His good news
- One clear practical **application**
- One **action** to take this week
- One person to **share** it with that was not here today
- One close friend to **spur** you on and **support** each other in this task
- **Each will only help you grow stronger – no condemnation intended.** (If you are struggling let me know.)
- But... **get comfortable with being uncomfortable**



“...By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you **love** one another.” John 13:35

OVERALL QUESTION: What does Love “**LOOK**” like from the outside?

How will someone **see** that you “love one another”?

 Get your Journal out or you phone to take notes!

Today - #5: No Triangles

- Today is for the Body of Christ, The Church, believers only. Not the world.
- Love Goes Direct, Not Sideways
- Matthew 18

Opening Prayer

- Take us on a journey...
- Open our hearts.
- Stop us from being offended and start listening
- Help us grow.
- Help us get comfortable with being uncomfortable

Review

1. Every word you speak is either building the ‘Church’... Or burning it down. (Eph 4/James 3)
2. “Don’t do for someone what God is expecting them to do! But always help with what they cannot do alone.” (Gal 6)
3. **Serve One Another (skipped for now Acts 2-4)**
4. Bear with one another... forgive one another... and above all these put on love. (Col 3:12–14, Eph 4:31–32)




Take Note – last week

- Forgiveness is commanded.
- Reconciliation is desired.
- Trust is earned.
- **Did you do it?** I did!

Something Beautiful Is Happening

- People are serving, helping and praying.
- Keep it up.

But...

- Conflict is not proof a church is unhealthy.
- *How we handle it can be.*
-  Where there are no oxen, the manger is clean, but abundant crops come by the strength of the ox. (Prov 14:4)
- “A clean stable may look impressive, but it produces no harvest.”
- Remember we are talking about disputes within the Church body. **Believers!**

Unrepented Sin

- We talked about bearing with each other and forgiving each other.
- We talked about how that does not mean that we call evil, good.
- That we excuse and condone unrepented sin
- **What do we do then?**

Today's Big Idea

- Mature love moves toward people.
- **Immature** love talks about people.
- “If you're not part of the problem; or part of the solution – stop talking about it!”
- What do you do if you are part of the problem or want to be part of the solution?

Two-sided Coin

Heads

I Was Wronged

- Matthew 18:15–17
- Go to them
- Seek restoration

Tails

I Did the Wrong

- Matthew 5:23–24
- Go to them
- Seek Reconciliation

Matthew 18:15-17

¹⁵ “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

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Matthew 5:23-24

- ²³ So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

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Matthew 18:15

- Go and tell them their fault...
- between you and him alone.
- Escalate it if required

Matthew 5:23-24

- Stop what you are doing immediately...
- Go and fix your mess
- If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with **all**.
(Romans 12:18)

- Go To Them straight away
- Don't Go Around Them

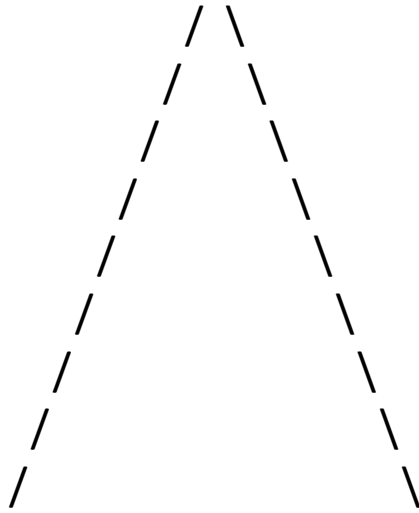
What if they still will not listen?

- 1 Corinthians 6:1-7
- When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints?...
- ⁴ So if you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church? ⁵ I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers, ⁶ but brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers? ⁷ To have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded?

The Triangle

- Talking about people instead of talking to people.
- “The problem is not being discussed with the person/s involved. It is being discussed with everyone else.”
- Examples:
 - Complaining
 - "*Prayer requests*" that are really rumours
 - **Gossip**
 - **Recruiting allies**

Person C
(the actual issue)



Person A



Person B

Why Triangles Feel Good

- **Fear Avoidance** - lets me talk about the problem without risking the relationship.
- **Safety** - Recruiting -A crowd feels safer than a conversation, **Manipulation (pseudo votes)**!
- **Validation** - When I'm upset, I want someone to tell me I'm right.
- **Protection** – don't want to hurt their feelings
- **Pride** - Wise one, All knowing one, Connected one
- **Victim** - attention, Justified

The Real Reason

- **Triangles feel good because they give us the benefits of conflict without the risks of conflict.**
 - You get:
 - ***Temporary*** relief
 - validation
 - support
 - safety
- Without:
 - courage
 - humility
 - vulnerability
 - Reconciliation

For a while until it all goes BANG 



Take Note - Crux

"Triangles **temporarily** relieve tension.
Direct conversations resolve tension."

But They Never Solve The Problem

- The **conflict** grows.
- The audience grows.
- The hurt grows.
- 🔥 🔥 Churches split or
- die a cold death ❄️

What Gossip Sounds Like

- **Christianese Gossip:**
- 'Can I share this for prayer?'
- 'I just need advice...'
- 'I just thought as leadership you should know...'
(When they have not attempted to go directly to the person first.)

The Gospel

- When we sinned against God...
- God did not:
 - gossip about us
 - avoid us
 - write us off
 - wait for us to fix ourselves
- Instead...
- “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)
- "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom 5:8)
- 👉 God moved toward us. He directly went to us.



The Cross

- The cross is God moving toward His enemies.
- At great cost.
- Not because we deserved it.
- Not because we were easy to love.
- But because that is what love does.
- 🙌 Love goes first. Love goes direct!
- **Last Week**
- The cross is forgiveness with nails in it.
- **This week:**
- The cross is reconciliation with nails in it.

How to do this properly

- First – **Be safe.** Be Wise. (Some situations need mediation, a referee, or a witness at least)
- Example: Active current abuse of a serious nature
- Then...

- **Slow** down
- **Pray** before reacting
- **Go** to them!!
- **Stay** humble (God forgave you of worse)
- **Ask** questions first
- **Assume** less
- **Listen** longer
- **Seek** understanding.


Don't Go Around Them

- Don't recruit allies.
- Don't build teams.
- Don't just avoid them.

The Goal Is Restoration

- Win your brother back.
- Not win the argument.

Practical Example - Church

- The carpark conversation.
- The side meeting.
- Coffee Shop
- *Well thought out **gentle** letter/email*
-  ***Facebook Messenger, text, post***

Real Love Costs

- Last week: absorbs cost.
- This week: ***goes first.***

Two Ditches

1. Avoidance
2. Attack

- Choose courage instead.

Diagnostic Questions

- Who am I talking **about** instead of to?
- Who am I **avoiding**?
- 1. Am I part of the **problem**?
- 2. Do I want to be part of the **solution**?
- If you're not one of the two above, then **Stop** talking!



Take Note

- Mature love moves toward people.
- Seeks restoration.

Call To Action

- This week:
- Pick One relationship
- Take One step toward someone.
- Try to Have One conversation..

Loving Accountability

- Who will you **share** this with that was not here today?
- Who will **ask you** if you did it, or not?
- Remember the rope last week?

Conclusion

- Mature love moves toward people.
- Refuses gossip.
- Tells the truth with grace.

Final Line

- Love goes direct.
- Love goes first.

Closing Prayer

- Lord, teach us to love each other like You loved us.