

Thursday Conflict Resolution

Joshua 22:30-34 ³⁰ Now when Phinehas the priest and the rulers of the congregation...heard the words that the children of Reuben / Gad, and ...Manasseh spoke, it pleased them.

Vs. 31 Phinehas said “This day we perceive that the LORD *is* among us, because you have not committed this treachery against the LORD. Now you have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the LORD.”

Vs 32. Brought back word to / children of Israel

Vs 33 pleased children of Israel, and [they] blessed God; spoke no more of going against them in battle...

Vs 34 children of Reuben/Gad called the altar, ***Witness***, “For *it is* a witness between us that the LORD *is* God.”

- Israel / Prepared for war = But instead of rushing into battle
 - sent delegation led by Phinehas to confront their brethren
 - Result? Peace / not bloodshed = Understanding / not division
Reconciliation / not war

World filled w/miscommunication/assumptions/fractured relationships

- Joshua 22 offers = remarkable case study / in conflict resolution
 - speaks w/power to families / communities / the church today
- Reveals principles that can: 1) prevent division; 2) restore harmony; and 3) preserve / unity for which Christ passionately prayed
- **John 17:21** “That they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You”

- **Six powerful principles** this story teaches us

1. Communicate Early—Don’t Suppress Conflict (Joshua 22:11–16)

- Too often / we let frustrations build silently / until they explode
- Western tribes / did not stay silent = they confronted issue

- Though misinformed = their concern/ genuine
- Don't wait for misunderstandings to fester
 - Better to raise a concern in love / than to stew in silence
- **Matthew 18:15, ESV** "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone"
- Approach others in humility = seeking clarity /before judgment

2. Avoid Hasty Conclusions—Give Benefit of Doubt (Joshua 22:11–12)

- Western Tribes = quickly assumed / altar meant apostasy
- How often do we do the same?
 - Assuming motives / reading between lines that don't exist?
- Principle / clear = even when evidence seems strong
 - Must pause / pray / pursue truth = **not** gossip / presumption

3. Talk Before You Act—Dialogue First (Joshua 22:13–20)

- Western leaders didn't launch arrows = they sent messengers
- Opened space = for dialogue
- This model = should be central / to every Christian conflict
- **James 1:19** "Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger"
- In families / churches / leadership teams = our impulse to **DO** something often outruns / call to **LISTEN**
- But meaningful dialogue may reveal = completely different story
 - as it did here

4. Be Willing to Sacrifice for Unity (Joshua 22:19)

- Western tribes / valued UNITY over ENTITLEMENT
 - made surprising offer = share their land
 - if distance was / issue driving rebellion
- That's = **humility in action**

- **Philippians 2:3** “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves”
- ?? You willing to give up pride / convenience / personal preferences
 - to preserve unity in your family / church?

5. When falsely accused = Respond w/ Grace = Not Retaliation (Joshua 22:21–29)

- Accused of great sin = Eastern tribes / did not lash out
- Instead = explained their motives w/ = calmness / clarity
 - **Proverbs 15:1** “A soft answer turns away wrath
- Not defensive / proud = but patient / sincere
- This kind of response defuses hostility = fosters healing

6. Rejoice When Peace is Restored (Joshua 22:30–34)

- When / truth was revealed = Israelites Didn’t cling to wounded pride
- They were glad = blessed God = rejoiced in unity restored

Psalms 133:1 “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”

- This joy reveals = heart aligned w/ Christ = who prayed for unity
- When reconciliation triumphs = it reflects / gospel

1 Peter 3:8–9 ⁸..be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; ⁹not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.

- Important to note: had Eastern tribes truly rebelled
 - Israel would have acted = to preserve covenant integrity
- Unity / not peace at all costs = certainly not at / cost of truth
- Church Discipline may be necessary = but only as LAST RESORT
 - After patient dialogue / truth-seeking efforts

CLOSING THOUGHT:

Building / Culture of Grace for CONFLICT RESOLUTIONS

- Practice empathy—ask, “What might I not be seeing?”
- Lead w/ humility—Philippians 2:3 / key
- Teach active listening—especially in leadership / family roles
- Slow your responses—train yourself to pause before reacting
- Celebrate restoration of unity