

Life Group Notes
Sunday 28 January 2018

Speaker: Scott Taylor

Series: Confident Adventures

Title: Conflict

Passages: Genesis 13

We are getting going now in the life of Abraham and seeing how he is working out his confident adventure in God. This week we looked at the subject of conflict. We all know what it is to find ourselves in conflict. Conflict is inevitable and unavoidable as we work out life with others. So how should we go about it?

After worshipping his God on his return from Egypt we find that Abram finds himself in a conflict situation with his Nephew, Lot. They had both gained flocks in Egypt and now their herdsmen were having disputes because the land could not support both households. The conflict is therefore caused not by sin, but by blessing and the working out and probable difference of opinion in how to live in that blessing. It's worth remembering that conflict is more likely to arise from a difference of opinion or how we have taken what somebody has said rather than from sin. So what does Abram do?

- 1) **He moves towards the problem:** Abraham had a duty of care to his household and so he cannot just sit back and hope the herdsmen sort it out. He was very un-British and he moved towards the problem so it could be solved.
- 2) **He goes for relationship:** Winning for Abram was not getting the best land, but it was being in good relationship with his Nephew. He displays this in his words and his actions. He lets Lot choose where he will go and settle after separating.

Did Abram still have relationship with his nephew? Well we can see that in how Abram continues to love and care for Lot. Lot obviously chose the best land, but what we think is best is not always best in God. Abram goes on fighting for him and pleading on his behalf; relationship intact.

So what can we learn?

- 1) Overlook an offence: (Proverbs 19:11) – the first way to move towards the issue is to acknowledge it and then overlook it. We get to choose to not be offended This is about mining the gospel and preaching to ourselves about forgiveness.
- 2) Seek counsel – if you cannot overlook then it is then best to talk to a trusted advisor – one who is willing to tell you, that you are being overly sensitive! This is not gossip so speak well.
- 3) Go talk to someone. (Matthew 18 v 15-17) Working through what Jesus says takes courage, but also humility, gentleness and respect. We can only work this out because Jesus faced the ultimate conflict against the devil sin and death and still looked mankind in the eye and said forgive them Father. Still advocating even then!

Suggested questions:

- 1) How could we work this out in practice / have we got stories (good or bad) of working out conflict in our lives like this?
- 2) How can we best focus on winning being the relationship not the best outcome for our own desires? What makes this difficult?
- 3) How should we react if we are the person who is being spoken to?
- 4) When do you find yourself at risk of reacting in the wrong way, or being part of gossip about others?
- 5) Have you got areas of conflict where you need prayer to deal with it? Pray!