

# “Lord, I’ve Got a Problem with My Brother”

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. God envisioned the churches a place of...
  - 1. Close brotherhood
  - 2. unity
  - 3. harmony
  - 4. a shining light of righteousness in a world of darkness
  - 5. Isa. 11:1-10
  - 6. Jer. 31:27-34
  - 7. John 17:20,21
  - 8. Eph. 2:11-22
  
- B. But then there is how things seem to be in this world
  - 1. The problem isn’t with God
  - 2. Problem is man
    - a) we rebel
    - b) we get at odds with each other
    - c) we think we know better than God
    - d) we get tempted, self-centered, proud, and rowdy
    - e) we offend
    - f) when offended, we do things we shouldn’t
    - g) And turn God’s perfect church into perfect chaos
  
- C. Last week...
  - 1. Remember God made us into a family
  - 2. Let love cover a multitude of sins — give the other person the benefit of the doubt
  - 3. What not to do...
    - a) Change congregations or (worse) churches
    - b) Gossip
    - c) Grumble
    - d) Revenge Plan a coup / take over
    - e) Stay away
  - 4. Division was never Jesus’ answer to disagreement

## II. WHAT TO DO...

- A. Pray
  - 1. Often bringing our conflicts before the Lord, brings things into sharper, clearer focus
  - 2. May find that there’s really nothing to reconcile
  
- B. Go talk with your brother (Matt. 5:23ff & Matt. 18:15) in private

1. Humbly
  2. Whether you are offended or the offender, you need to make the first move!
  3. It doesn't matter that you don't like confrontation
- C. Use a soft voice
1. Prov. 15:1 — "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."
  2. It keeps the conversation civil and rational
- D. Deal with each other as a brother or sister (even leaders)
1. Remember we're family (Eph. 2:19)
  2. Talk to each other not employees, not as "them"
  3. With appropriate care and compassion
- E. Take another person with you
1. As witness (Matt. 18:16)
  2. Helps keep things in perspective
  3. May help put an objective finger on the real sticking point (1 Cor. 6:5)
- F. Bring it to the elders
1. To the church (Matt. 18:17)
  2. God gave them to the church for many reasons, but one of them is to help with conflict
  3. If serious enough, let them discipline
- G. Choose to be wronged rather than hurt or divide the church
1. The Corinthian church had serious enough conflict that some were bringing it to civil courts
  2. In such extreme cases Paul plea with the brethren, "Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?" (1 Cor. 6:7b)
- H. If it is a conscience matter (different from a "billy goat" problem), do not allow your preference cause a brother to sin
1. Limiting my own liberty is sometimes important to unity
  2. 1 Cor. 8:11-13
- I. Let God be the final arbiter
1. Sometimes preferences and opinions become so strong that we regard them as commands and try to strong-arm or manipulate others to conform
  2. Jesus criticized Pharisees for this (Mark 7:6-8)
  3. Let's God's word be final — always
- J. Confess, repent, and forgive
1. VERY important
  2. "Yes, I did this, and I shouldn't have."
  3. "I will stop doing that."

4. "And I forgive you."

### III. CONCLUSION

- A. I probably haven't told you anything that you didn't know...
  1. But we need to be sure to practice the things we know
  2. James 4:17 — "Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin."
  3. It is hard, but that is why Paul said (Eph. 4:3) "being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."
- B. The aim of the disciple of Jesus should be to go from...
  1. "Lord, I've got a problem with my brother" to
  2. "Lord, thank You for my brother"
- C. Are you OK with your brother?
  - 1.