

Repentance and Grace

Intro

- After 3.5 years our church is facing it's first real challenge. Think it's ok, even appropriate to talk about it in this context because of our size and relationships.
- When churches face challenges there is one of two results - church gets stronger, church divides.
 - Strength is the result when everyone submits to the leading of the Spirit and the word of God.
 - Division is the result when (a) the Spirit and the word are not in charge or (b) when people act sincerely on incomplete or inaccurate information.
- The other thing that challenges do is they force us to to look at the word, look at ourselves, and walk what it says even if we don't like it right now. We'll get to that.
- I would like to couch what I'm going to talk about in this question - **When the body of Christ is divided, pray tell, who bleeds?**

Brief walkthrough

- Going to depersonalize to a degree because it is just as important to understand and apply the Biblical principles as it is to be emotionally and relationally involved with real people.
- Situation
 - Couple married for 9 years, one daughter.
 - The marriage has been messy from the beginning.
 - Both are equally responsible, have equally contributed to the current state of things. REPEAT.
 - Both are not responding or reacting equally to the situation, and are being approached and treated different by the church and it's leadership.
 - This is the point where seeds of division are being planted and sprouting.
 - Their fight is being brought into homes, spreading like cancer. Needs to be addressed.
- Going to walk through a few Biblical principles, then going to walk through the situation in more detail and how we have handled it.

Marriage, divorce, sexual immorality

- I realize some have been through this. Some variables to this. Kind of general, kind of over-arching. Point is don't read yourself into this too much.
- **Matthew 5:31-32**, amplified in **19:3-9** (slide)
 - Sexual immorality is ONE OF THE WAYS in which the "one" becomes divided. Not an automatic "get out of marriage free card" which is hard to hear when your marriage feels like a prison.
 - Sexual immorality - porneia, blanket term for any kind of sex outside of marriage. Prostitution, symbolic of idolatry. Idolatry equals spiritual/emotional adultery with God and people.
- **1 Corinthians 7:10-11** (slide)
- **Malachi 2:16**. (slide) **Could God's view of divorce be any clearer?**

What to do with a sinning believer

- The goal - restoration of the individual's relationship with the Lord and the church
 - Galatians 6:1, (slide) this after Galatians 2 and confronting Peter!
 - 2 Timothy 2:24-26 (slide)
 - Matthew 18:15-18 (slide)
- What if you encounter resistance and non-repentance?
- Luke 15:11-32, prodigal son, let them go until they come to their senses.
- 1 Corinthians 5, encourage repentance, cut them off for their own sake and that of the body. Don't like it, but that's what it says.

Walk through situation making application

- Re-emphasize equality of contribution and responsibility.
- We did step in and try to help, didn't take.
- Because of equality, when things went bad, we were on the side of marriage, family, and restoration. I, personally, interacted with both of them through this whole process.
- Both initially acted and reacted out of anger and fear, both tried to take control of the situation in their own way, equally in the wrong, not God's way, no Lordship.
- Dealt with them equally and independently because they were doing the same thing. What way was that? Encouraged repentance and submission to Jesus' Lordship, direction of the Spirit, word of God. Specifically Ephesians 5.
- People coming along side both to encourage, support, and correct. That's a good thing to a point. What is that point? Repentance.
- At a point, one of them did repent, did surrender, did die to self, even offered to meet the other's demands. It is at this point where I/we began treating them differently. Why?
 - One responded to restoration. The other did not and is on a path that goes in a different direction than the one we are on. What path? I'm entitled to divorce.
 - "I want it my way." I want the right thing, just on my terms. That doesn't cut it.
- The result of my pleading, the result of my seeking restoration and pointing to scripture has been a request in no uncertain terms to butt out, I'm no longer their pastor.
- This person needs to be lovingly confronted with the word for restoration, and if they don't then they need to be cut off.
- "Why not come along side and offer love, support, forgiveness and grace? Because forgiveness and grace are extended when sin is confessed, repentance is in place, and forgiveness and grace are sought.
- Repentance - revealed truth, recognized sin, reversed direction, restored relationship

How God deals with us in these areas, gospel

- Grace is that which bridges sin and repentance, wants to exchange sin for salvation, involves change, works through the HS, is always actively available.
- Judges Shuffle
- Hosea 1
- Are the people involved hurting? Yes. Are we hurting with and for them? Yes. Now we know how God feels! 1 Sam 8.
- JTB's and Jesus' message. Must be shared and lived out. Jesus wants restoration.