

MODERNfamily

RECONCILIATION IS MESSY

August 30, 2015

- **Open in prayer.**
- **Introduction.**
 - Discuss the following two statements:
 - *Hurt people hurt people and the world is full of hurt people who need God's grace.*
 - *You can't bury your past, but your past can bury you.*
- **Relationships are messy.**
- **Read and discuss Genesis 4:1-16.**
 - What did God really mean when He asked Adam and Eve, "Where are you?" and asked Cain, "Where is your brother?"
 - Discuss the following statements:
 - *"Reconciliation is when enemies become friends and broken relationships are healed."*
 - *"You are not responsible for how folks receive your forgiveness."*
 - Can you relate to Erick's story? Share your story.
- **Relationships, vertically and horizontally are destroyed because of idolatry.**
- **Read and discuss Genesis 4:2-6.**
- Cain was a farmer. He presented **some** of his crops to the Lord. He held back his best crops from God because he didn't trust that God would supply his deepest needs.
- Abel was a shepherd. He brought his **best** to the Lord. He knew he didn't have to be stingy because he trusted God.
 - *"You often worship created things instead of the uncreated creator."* Share an example.
 - Discuss the following statement: *"When you idolize something or someone in your life, you will demonize it/them when they can't meet your deepest need"*.
 - *"Idolatry is placing something or someone ahead of God because you think that thing or person can meet your deepest needs more than God"*. Can you share an example from your own life?
 - How does the Vision of Transformation Church (The Great Commission and The Great Commandment) protect you from idolatry in your relationships?
- **Read and discuss Hebrews 11:4.**
- **Sin, like a prowling lion, will devour you and your relationships.**
- **Read and discuss Genesis 4:7.**
- God perfectly loved us.
 - Sin means missing the mark. What is the mark? (HINT: Loving God completely, loving yourself correctly, loving others compassionately)
 - What happens when you choose not to forgive? (Walk through the process: unforgiveness, bitterness, resentment, anger, despise, and dislocation.)
 - Is bitterness from another relationship causing you to take it out on someone you're with now?
- **Read and discuss 1 Peter 5:8-9.**
- **You can control the sin you commit, but you can't control the consequences of your sin.**
- **Read and discuss Genesis 4:8-12.**
 - Can you relate to Cain's response to God when asked, "Where is your brother?"
 - Are you a "homeless wanderer"—wandering from relationship to relationship?
 - When you play the victim, you stay hurt and alone or surround yourself with other victims.

How Do We Attempt To Reconcile Messy Relationships?

1. Remember Jesus' reconciling blood.

- **Read and discuss Genesis 4:10.**
 - o You and I are Cain and we killed the great Abel (Jesus) and His blood cries out and says, "I forgive you".
- **Read and discuss Romans 5:9-11.**
 - o God declares you righteous through the gift of His blood.
 - o What does it mean that "love and justice" meet at the cross?

2. Remember Jesus' reconciling death on the cross.

- **Read and discuss Ephesians 2:16.**
 - o How does this apply to us as Christ-followers? (Reconciling us with ALL people)
 - o How does this apply to your relationships?
 - o How can you not forgive someone when you realize God forgave you?
 - o What right do you have to not forgive someone when Jesus freely forgave you?

3. Remember Jesus gave you the ministry of reconciliation.

- **Read and discuss 2 Corinthians 5:18.**
 - o Reconciliation isn't an option. If you don't reconcile, you'll be stuck in your past and held captive.
 - o You're not responsible for the person's response...what they do doesn't matter.
 - o Stop trying to get even and start giving grace.
- **Soul-tattoo: Move towards that messy relationship in love.**
- **Close in prayer.**