

WHAT IS THE REAL CONFLICT?

August 7, 2022

John 18: 36-37 NLT

Introduction

Do you believe conflict will grow in the U.S.? Conflict between Spiritual dominions on earth...God's vs. devil's God's kingdom means "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17, MEV). Thus it has to do with "inner spiritual qualities that affect outward attitudes and actions" (Stamp).

Main Idea

Represent Jesus amid conflict. How? Here are three things to do.

- 1) First, expect conflict with unbelievers. (2-6, 12, 28-31, 39-40) This has to do with our perspective.
 - a) 3 main types of unbelievers
 - i) the "religious" (chief priests & pharisees)
 - EX:** secular humanism driving our nation. Very antagonistic Driven by a world view not of Jesus
 - ii) People without conviction (soldiers)
 - Propelled by "fervent" minority Affected by Jesus' power in us
 - iii) Disappointed "followers" (crowd)
 - Disappointed & angry Follow 1 "in the flesh" like they are Barabbas = "son of the father," a murderer, robber, insurrectionist
 - b) things to remember
 - i) mass majority around us
 - ii) struggle not with men, but spiritual (Eph. 6:12)

- iii) the truth (Jesus) can set them free
- iv) we had been like them
- v) we are not to lash out at them (Malchus)

Illustration

2) Second, admit our own failures (10-11, 15-18, 25-27) This has to do with being real.

- a) as fallible followers
 - i) misdiagnosing real issue or conflict
 - ii) reacting in the flesh
 - iii) being sifted by devil (Luke 22:31-32)
 - iv) denying Jesus with words, behavior, attitudes
- b) retaining hope
 - i) Jesus not surprised
 - ii) He's praying for us to overcome
 - iii) we must continue with Him: confess, ask forgiveness, repent, keep going

Illustration

3) Finally, follow Jesus' example (5-8, 11, 36-37). This has to do with hope: Jesus did it; we can too, with His help.

- a) boldly declare Him (6, Matt. 10:32)

Matt. 10:32, MSG: 32 "Stand up for me against world opinion and I'll stand up for you before my Father in heaven. 33 If you turn tail and run, do you think I'll cover for you?"
- b) stand in the gap for brothers & sisters (8, John 13:34)
- c) submit to authorities (12, 19, 24, 28-32)
- d) keep on mission... "bear witness to the truth" (37) "Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice," vs. 37

Conclusion

If we follow Jesus, we will experience conflict. We should remember that those against us are like us, that when we fail, there is hope, and that we can “do it like Jesus.”

Altar

Under conviction? Feel weak? Raise hands.