

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPT //

WHEN FACING CONFLICT | REBEL'S GUIDE TO JOY

RYAN BRAMLETT | MARCH 12, 2023

Traders Point, how are we doing? Hey, good to be with you. You look great.

Before we jump into the message today, I want to take a moment to pray for our lead pastor. Some of you guys know this, but he is on a trip right now. He's over in the Holy Land, walking through Israel. Walking the very places that Jesus walked. Seeing what Jesus saw. And I just want to take a moment to lift him up in prayer.

Just to give you guys a little bit of how I approach the way I serve here, I come in and I try to hold up his arms the best that I can. Some of you know that language. It comes from this account in the Old Testament in the book of Exodus where the Israelites are fighting.

And as long as Moses arms are lifted up, they are winning. But the moment his arms go down, they start to lose. So Aaron and Hur, the two people who see this, sit him down and then one on each arm, they just hold up his arms for the remaining part of the battle. And they win victoriously.

So what I try to do in my ministry here is just to hold up his arms so that he can continue to serve and to lead the way that he does. So, if you don't mind, would you just symbolically hold your arms out and we're just going to hold him up in this moment and pray for him as he is away.

Father, we come before You today and we just pray for Pastor Aaron. God, as he walks through Israel, as he sees the Sea of Galilee, as he sees what you saw, God, I just pray that Your Spirit would awaken him. God, that You would give him courage and endurance and new perspective and more strength as he comes back to lead here.

God, protect him and hold him and continue to shape him. God, we love You so much and we trust You in this prayer. It is in Your perfect and holy name we pray. Amen. Amen.

Thanks guys.

Today we are continuing in our series A Rebel's Guide to Joy, A Rebel's Guide to Joy. We've been studying just a short letter, Philippians. It's written from this guy named Paul



to this church in Philippi. And what we've been doing is just seeing how Paul, this guy, is able to talk the way that he talks, how he's able have joy in the midst of all of these different circumstances.

And today is going to be no different. We're going to jump into... Here's the big topic of today. We've looked at a bunch of different stuff. How can we have joy when temptation comes. Right? How can we have joy when our pride continues to try to steal from us. And today in A Rebel's Guide to Joy, how do we find joy when facing conflict?

Is it possible to have joy in the midst of conflict? And the unique thing about today's message that I just want to be up front about is that today's message is a collaboration. The other campus pastors and I got together over the past few weeks and we wrote this message together.

I say that, so that if you love this message, give them the credit. Right? They deserve it. At the same time, if you don't love this message, blame them. That's leadership. Right? No.

But here's what we're going to look at: conflict. A lot of times when we talk about conflict, how we deal with it, we'll set it up in two extremes. Maybe you've heard of fight or flight. The way that we talk about it around here is either silence or violence. Violence, not necessarily in the sense of physically assaulting someone.

But here's the idea. When conflict comes, if I'm more on the side of violence, I've stepped into the conflict. I want the smoke. I'm here. I want to handle things right now. But maybe if you are on the other side, you gravitate more toward silence. You withdraw from conflict. You take a step back.

I think a lot of this really begins to form within us at an early age—how we handle conflict sticks with us. I know, for me, growing up I found myself handling conflict a few times through actual violence. And not because I was a fighter.

I think a lot of people think when guys fight they are trying to be tough. I think that they are afraid. I know that was the case for me. I fought because I was afraid of what would happen if I didn't. What would be said about me? What would happen to me physically if I didn't?

I can tell you I remember the day when I decided I was done handling conflict with violence. I got into a fight with this fella and he was quite a bit bigger than I was. That's not when I decided. But we get to tussling and he grabs me and throws me into a van. Now, even then, not when I decided I was done with violence. Because I hit this van and I



landed like a cat. Alright? Like a black panther. I hit the ground square. And I've never hit somebody faster or harder in my life. I landed and then boom.

I'm going to be honest with you guys. I thought I killed him. I thought when I looked over he would be out cold. But to my surprise he did not fall. He did not stumble. The only thing that moved was his neck. He moved his head to the side and then right back.

And then I realized I was fighting the terminator from the future. I spent the rest of the time running in a circle, thinking hopefully somebody would break this thing up before he killed me. That's when I decided I'm done with violence.

What I didn't realize, even though I was done with that, I never really developed the tools to handle conflict. It wasn't until I got married that I realized that I really had no tools to handle conflict. And I often gravitated toward silence. I didn't have the language.

Looking back I can see how I would often withdraw or I would downplay the times I would hurt her or offend her because I didn't know how to have the conversation.

What is it for you? When conflict comes, which side do you kind of default to? Maybe you're more silent. Maybe you're more violent.

What we're going to do is we're actually going to pick up with a conflict that happened in the church at the time when Paul is writing this letter. He's going to address that very conflict. And that's no surprise. Right? I'm sure you're walking through some conflict right now. The Bible is filled with it. Our lives are filled with it. And we need to address it, because just like everything else, God has a plan for how we handle it in a healthy way.

So if you have a Bible go ahead and flip to Philippians, chapter 4. We're going to start in verse 2 today. This is what Paul says. He says:

"Now I appeal to Euodia and, man I practiced so hard on this, Syntyche. Please, because you belong to the Lord, settle your disagreement. And I ask you, my true partner, to help these two women, for they worked hard with me in telling others the Good News. They worked along with Clement and the rest of my coworkers..."

I want you to think about that. A lot of times in this context, when they would get a letter from someone like Paul, they would bring the whole church together and they would read this aloud with everyone in the room. Imagine, this letter is being written, these two women know what is going on between the two of them, but they don't know that everyone else knows, maybe. Or they don't think that Paul knows from all the way over there.

And they get to this part and they read their names. Wow. But I think that points out a really important thing here. It's that conflict is a big deal. It's such a big deal that Paul specifically calls it out between these two women.

Now, I'll put this out there. Hypothetically, I don't know this for sure, but I'm just going to put it out there. You might be here today as part of this church because of a conflict that you had at the last church. I'll go a step farther. You may be thinking about leaving this church because of a conflict that you are currently having.

And I don't want to say that there is never a reason to leave a church. But what I want us to see from this small account here is there is a really big reason that we should try to stay and to settle our disagreements.

Please, because you belong to the Lord, settle your disagreement.

That's what he does with these two. He says, "Hey, there is this conflict going on." And then you see what he says? "I want you to settle." Why? "Because you belong to the Lord. Your life is no longer your own. Your purpose is no longer your own. And I actually have a big plan for your life. So I'm going to need you to reconcile. I'm going to need you two to work this thing out."

And I do want to just take a moment to celebrate these two women. It says that these two women worked along side Paul. They were there shoulder to shoulder bringing the gospel to the world. They are soldiers for the gospel.

It is women's history month. And I know that what was true of those women, they were working hard for the gospel, is true of many women in our church today. So can we just take a moment and celebrate all of the women in ministry? All the women leading in all of the different environments around here. You... I don't have to say it out loud, but I will. This place would not be running without you. Okay?

So I want us to see that. That conflict is a really big deal. And Paul spent the last few chapters trying to bring to unity because of what is at stake. So when he hears about this, he's like, "We need to address this."

So here's the kind of umbrella that I want to put over our talk today, to kind of bring things in. To what reality is. Okay? Here it is:

Conflict is common. Reconciliation is required.

Conflict is common. Reconciliation is required. I think a lot of times, especially in the church, when we experience a little bit of conflict we think, "Oh, this must not be the



space for me. I need to go find somewhere where I won't experience conflict." I don't know that place. Because once you get there, there is going to be some conflict.

It reminds me when I sit down sometimes with a couple who just got married. Honeymoon phase is over. They are like, "Hey, we need to sit down." I'm like, "Okay." We sit down, start talking. They are like, "We're fighting, like a lot."

I'm like, "Yeah. You know why? Because you guys are the worst. You've had your whole life to hide parts of yourself. Now, this other person doesn't get the first date version of you. She gets the real version, the sweat pants version of you. He gets the no makeup version of you. That t-shirt that you wear that has the paint on it, she has to look at over and over. She gets that version of you."

So, yeah. Conflict is going to come. But conflict doesn't mean that we need to leave. Conflict is a cue, which tells us this relationship needs to be repaired. And because of Jesus, reconciliation is always possible.

So the way that we're going to look at this today is a little bit different. We're not just going to work through a chunk of Scripture, but we're really going to do some character studies. Because of what's going on in the Philippian church, Paul says that he's hoping to send two people.

And we're just going to read the accounts of these people he is sending and kind of saying, "Okay, what is it about them that if we apply it to our lives it would help bring joy into our relationships?" Because it's so much more about who we are than what we do.

Last week, Pastor Aaron was talking about how a lot of times character is revealed during crisis. I would say that the same thing is true about conflict. Character is revealed during conflict. So who do we want to be before we ever find ourselves in a conflict.

Well, let's see what we can find. The first character study we're going to do is of Timothy. Paul talks about Timothy in chapter 2, verse 19. Look at what he says:

Character Study #1: Timothy

"If the Lord Jesus is willing, I hope to send Timothy to you soon for a visit. Then he can cheer me up by telling me how you are getting along. I have no one else like Timothy, who genuinely cares about your welfare.

"All the others care only for themselves and not for what matters to Jesus Christ. But you know how Timothy has proved himself. Like a son with his father, he has served with me in preaching the Good News." Philippians 2:19-22 (NLT)

So in just a few verses here we can see why he's sending Timothy why, in the midst of some conflict, he would send someone like Timothy. And I think the big thing we see that is different about Timothy is that he is humble. He has a humility about him.

And I think what Paul is doing here is he is actually using Timothy as a real life example of what humility looks like, which he taught from the beginning of chapter 2, maybe you remember this, but let's take a look in case you don't. It's been a few weeks. He says:

"Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others." Here it is. "Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too." Philippians 2:3-4 (NLT

I want you to think about that. Think about the conflict in your life, both now and in the past. How many of them came, if you're being honest, because you were a little bit selfish—because you cared a little bit more about your interests than the interests of the person on the other side of you?

And Paul knows that's human life. That's really what's going on in this church. So he's like, "I'm going to send Timothy." And the unique things about Timothy—he gives two things about Timothy that are different from pretty much everyone else that he interacts with.

He says, first he:

Genuinely cares about the welfare of others.

Who do we want to be? Do we want to be the type of people who genuinely care about the welfare? I love that word. It reminds me of the message God gives Jeremiah when he's looking out and they are being exiled. He says, "Hey, you're going into this city and I want you to know your welfare is tied up in their welfare. So live accordingly. You won't prosper unless they prosper."

It reminds me of the words of Jesus with this body, this church that He is putting together. He says, "You are no longer just your own. You've actually been brought in on something—this body where she's a hand, and he's a foot, and you're a finger, and they are toes and this is all working together, your welfare is built on theirs."

You've got to place their wants and their desires over yours. You've got to treat them... You can't just treat them one way and expect to live another.

Paul says, "Timothy gets this. Timothy cares about people." And then look at the second thing. He:

Cares about what matters to Jesus.

What a lens to think through life with. Think into those conflicts that you went through, that your going through now, and what if you place that filter over it? "What matters to Jesus in this moment? Does it matter that I'm right? Does it matter that I proved them wrong?"

No. What Jesus is trying to do is bring us all together. He died so that we could not only be reconciled with Him but with one another. That we can have this unique spiritual family that nothing should be able to break. So here it is:

God would rather you be reconciled than right.

If you're wondering what matters to Jesus in the midst of conflict, it is not that you are right. I know you are sitting there going, "But you don't understand. I'm right. I didn't do anything wrong." I understand. But you can be right and still be wrong. You know what I mean?

So this is this call for you and me to walk humbly, to deal with the selfish ambition that is in our hearts, to lay that down, to die to ourselves and say, "What is it going to take for me to be reconciled to the person on the other side?"

Character Study #2: Epaphroditus

That's what we see from Timothy. It is all about humility. The second one we are going to look at is a character study of Epaphroditus.

Take a moment. I mean I can imagine one name, you know, but all three? Can I get like a Chris or a Paul or a John, a Stephanie something? Epaphroditus, um, beautiful name.

Let's take a look at this. Verse 25, chapter 2. He says:

"Meanwhile, I thought I should send Epaphroditus back to you." He's from there. "He is a true brother, co-worker, and fellow soldier. And he was your messenger to help me in my need."

Wow. Then skip down to verse 29. Look at Paul's call to them. He says:

"Welcome him in the Lord's love and with great joy, and give him the honor that people like him deserve. For he risked his life for the work of Christ, and he was at the point of death while doing for me what you couldn't do from far away." Philippians 2:25-30

So here it is. If we look at the first one, Timothy was telling us all about what it looks like to be humble as we go into conflict. I think a lot of you guys can agree, a lot of conflict comes from a lack of humility.

And I think what Epaphroditus is showing us is that a lot of conflict comes from a lack of honor. A lack of honor. When we don't give people the honor that they deserve, when we dishonor them or we've felt dishonored in the moment. A lot of conflict comes from that.

And Paul gives us an example of what it looks like to honor somebody. Did you catch that? He talks all about Epaphroditus. He says, "I know he's from there. But this guy is a soldier. This guy risked his life for the gospel. He stood shoulder to shoulder with me through it all. So when he comes, meet him with the love of God and give him the honor that people like him deserve."

Honor. I love honor. I come from a very honoring, loyal type of a background from my family growing up. And also, this church, it's one of my favorite things about Traders Point. It's the way that we honor one another. It's the way that we show respect for one another. It's the way that we value one another.

Any time I talk about honor, I cannot talk about honor without thinking about the movie, *Men of Honor*. Anybody in here seen the movie *Men of Honor*? Cuba Gooding, Jr.? Three of you. Great. Go back about 20 years. Great movie. It's about the first African American to become a master diver in the Navy and his story of going through it. He's at the end and he's trying to be reinstated into the Navy and he gives this incredible speech of how important honor is. And just in case you didn't watch it, I'm going to read it for you—the speech that he gives. He says:

"We have many traditions. In my career, I have encountered most of them. Some are good, some not so good. I would, however, not be here today were it not for our greatest tradition of all."

Captain Hanks—and if I was ever going to settle another conflict with violence, it would have been with Captain Hanks. He says:

"And which one is that, Chief Brashear?"

Here it is:

Carl Brashear: "Honor, sir."

And when you watch this for the first time, you'll be crying at this moment. It's just this power of honor. It brings so much beauty and it strengthens relationships when we show honor to one another.

And it's here at Traders Point, but it's not a Traders Point thing. It's a biblical thing. In Romans, 12:10, look at what it says. Paul says:

"Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor." Romans 12:10 (ESV)

The idea here is you and I should be competing. It's one of the only times in Scripture that it encourages us to compete with one another. And it's to compete in showing honor.

Maybe you're asking the question, "How do I honor people? What does that even look like?" And I just want to give you three ways, because I guarantee there is someone in your life that you need to honor, myself included. So, three ways that you can honor someone this week.

How do I honor people?

Celebrate them.

Celebrate what God is doing in their life. Highlight what you see. Just like what Paul did with Epaphroditus. The second one is:

Value them.

Value them. Let them know that you are valuing them. Re-arrange some things to show how important they are to you. Value their time this week. That's how you honor them. And then:

Show respect.

Show respect for who they are. Show respect for who they are to you. And here's the thing. Show them and give them the honor that they deserve, for people like that—what they deserve.

Here's the thing. Everyone you come into contact with is someone who God created and Jesus died for. They are worthy of your honor. If Jesus thought they were worth dying for then you and I shouldn't have a problem deciding that they are worthy of giving honor to. Right? Amen?

So that takes us back... Just to push it in harder. Who should I honor? I love this saying that we have around here. It's actually a cultural value of our staff. When we talk about honor we say:

HONOR UP, DOWN, AND ALL AROUND

We honor up, we honor down, we honor all around. Right? We honor up, we honor down, we honor all around. Honor gets real wonky and I think this is why a lot of people push back from honor. When honor only flows up. When honor is only given to the person who is above you. When honor is only for my boss. Honor is for the king or the queen.

No, no, no. Biblical honor goes up, it goes down, it goes all around. So for you, at your job, honor for sure for your supervisor. But honor for the people who you are leading as well. Honor for those you share office space with. We honor up, we honor down, we honor all around.

So those are the first two. Paul says, "Hey, when it comes to conflict if we can be people of humility and be people of honor, man, that's going to make so much difference when it comes to the conflict in the church.

Character Study #3: Paul

And the last case study, character study that I want us to look at is actually one of Paul, himself. Paul, himself goes through this beautiful change from who he once was to who he is now. And it will make all of the difference as we continue to work through conflict. This one is in chapter 3, verse 5. Paul kicks off with this:

"I was circumcised when I was eight days old." Anybody have a friend who just shares information and it's like, "Thank you?" He has a point but it's just a lot to take in.

"I am a pure-blooded citizen of Israel and a member of the tribe of Benjamin—a real Hebrew if there ever was one! I was a member of the Pharisees, who demand the strictest obedience to the Jewish law. I was so zealous that I harshly persecuted the church.

"And as for righteousness, I obeyed the law without fault. I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with him.

"I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith." Philipians 3:5-9 (NLT)

This is beautiful. Paul is sharing all of this because that is the way that he used to identify, he was a Hebrew from birth, from his bloodline to what happen to him when he was eight days old, to the education that he got, to the status that he had within his culture—that is now he was known. And that was the most valuable thing to him.

And because that was the most valuable thing, for a season it even blinded him from God. He even started to persecute the church. He was there when some of the first ones were being executed. He was blinded to this because he was being these things that were so valuable to him, but in the grand scheme of things, were actually worthless.

And that's what he says. He says, "Hey, you can check my resume. I had more respect than anyone else." But he says, "Now, I count it as garbage." And that's a real churched-up translation that they gave. Another churched-up translation but closer to what he says here is, "I count it as poop. I count it as excrement. It is nothing."

Not that those weren't good things, amazing things. He achieved so much, "But in comparison to Jesus, in comparison to the life God has for me, in comparison to what Jesus has done for me and the relationship I have with Him now, I count it as garbage, as rubbish, as nothing."

So I just want to ask you today... Here's the question.

What am I considering valuable that is worthless to Jesus?

It may be the thing you grew up with. It may be the thing that has brought you identity. It may be the thing that creates so much conflict in your life, though, because you're constantly trying to protect it or to prove yourself—you try to make yourself right before God and before other people.

That's one of the dangers of religion. It makes you pretend. It makes you believe that you have to be right to be made right. It is all on you. But here's the beauty of the gospel, what it allows you to step into. You no longer have to pretend. You no longer have to break yourself down and kill yourself to be made right. You've already been made right by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

And here's what we have on the other side of the cross. We are able to embrace brokenness. So many fights come because I'm trying to protect something that I deem



to be valuable, that I'm afraid of losing. But because of the cross, I'm able to embrace my brokenness. I don't have to pretend. Because it's not on me.

And I'm telling you, when we get into a conflict and we don't have anything to prove and nobody to prove it to, that's when people stop being the problem. People cease being the problem when we cease feeling like we need to be the hero.

We get to come into this place and we get to meet people right where they are and we get to move into this shared pool of meaning, where I want to be reconciled with all of you and I can put up my hands and I can embrace my weakness and I can say that I messed up and I can say that I hurt you and I can say I've offended you and I'm not overwhelmed with guilt or shame, because in my weakness I am made strong. That is what we have because of Jesus.

And I know a lot of you are tracking with me. But this is kind of big, it's kind of out there—theoretical: humble, honoring. Some of you are like, "Okay, but Janet is going to be in my cubical at 9 a.m. tomorrow. What do you have for me that I can give to her?" Right?

And I do, I do want us to close today with some practical handles because here's the thing, the best kind of conflict is the one that never had to happen because we live humbly and we've honored everyone around us. The second-best type of conflict is one that is done in a God honoring way. In a healthy way. And one of the best ways that you can get a feel for this is, it is kind of a marker of health, other organizations use it whenever there is a conflict. You can use it personally as well.

When something happens. When a conflict starts. When someone is offended, what's the time between the offense and the action that was taken? And for you and me, as followers of Jesus, here's something that should be true of us as we continue to follow Him:

The longer and deeper your walk with Jesus, the shorter the time between mistake and repentance.

Once again, because of the gospel I embrace my brokenness, I've got nothing to hide, nothing to prove and nobody to prove it to. So when that moment comes, I don't shift to silence. And I'm also not too aggressive or hot headed. But I come in humbly and honoring and I address it head on. Right?

Now, I just want to give us five steps to reconcile conflict in your life no matter if it's in a marriage, with some friends, people at school, or at the job—wherever it is—here are five steps to resolve conflict. Alright?

5 steps to resolve conflict:

Here's the first one. And they all begin with a "D" because everything is easier if it begins with the same letter.

Define the problem

It's just a pro tip. If you sit down and you're having a conversation and you're defining the problem, don't say that the other person is the problem, even if they are the problem.

I'm sitting down with them. I'm defining the problem. And hopefully I'm coming in humbly. I have a history of honoring them, of celebrating them, of valuing them. If I have a history like that, it makes it so much easier to bring a problem into a relationship.

The second thing is:

Describe what's not working.

There is something that is going on, maybe it's a pattern. Maybe it's a big moment that kind of hurt me and I'm worried that if this continues it's going to separate our relationship.

So I'm going to define the problem and then I'm going to describe what not's working. What's not working in this situation? And I want to make sure that we're solving the same problem and we're looking at the same things that are not working.

Here's the third thing:

Discover new possibilities together.

Discover new possibilities together. Once again, this is not the time to say, "Hey, here's what you need to go do, because (if we go back to one) you're the problem." No. So we talk about new possibilities together.

And that gets us to the next one:

Detail how each person contributes to the solution.

Hey, this is what's been going on. This is the problem. We've talked about it. We've brainstormed some things. Here's what I'm going to do to make this relationship better, to bring reconciliation. Here's what you say you're going to do. And then we're actually going to do what we said we were going to do.



And then we're going to come back and:

Debrief later.

Maybe it's in a week. Maybe it's in a month. But we're going to get back together and say, "Hey, how is it going? Was that really the problem? Is it getting better?"

So I would just encourage you to take a screen shot of this right now. These five steps. And just try them this week. Chances are you have a conflict in your life. Just sit down with someone on the other side and begin to work through this together. What could happen if we could have that kind of reconciliation?

I could tell you it would be a lot more help to the church. It would lead a lot more people to the church. It would bring a lot more people to Jesus if you and I could do our part of bringing reconciliation to others.

I want us to end with hope though. Because I know it can be heavy and I know that you can be thinking about the conflict that you have. Maybe you're thinking it's impossible, "I don't know if reconciliation is required. And I'm feeling anything but joy right now."

I just want us to go right to the next verse after Paul calls out the conflict that is going on in the church. It's a big one. So big he feels he needed to address it. He's calling the whole church to come around to figure it out. But look at his next words, even in the midst of the conflict. He says:

"Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice! Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon." Philippians 4:4-5 (NLT)

So he says, "Hey, I know that this is getting everybody's attention. I know you're a little worried about how it's going to go." He says, "Hey, I want you to have joy. I want you to have joy because this conflict is a big deal. But once again, in comparison, if we could just take a step back and remember the joy, if we can remember that Jesus was able to reconcile us to God, then there is hope in this situation."

And then, if Jesus is who He said He is, then even though I messed up and even though I hurt this other person, I don't have to live with the shame or the guilt or the fear. I can embrace my brokenness and step forward; there is hope in this relationship.

And then he says, "The Lord is coming soon."

He places some urgency on this. And I don't know if unfortunately you've ever been in that situation where you thought you would have more time, "I thought we would be able

to work this out. I thought that it would get better one day but then it just got farther and farther away from us." We put this urgency on it.

He says, No, no. no. Have joy. Go in humility. Go in an honoring way, but handle it right now. And that's only possible because of Jesus.

I just want to put this out there. It's the same place we started. It's how we're going to end. But I'm going to take a different approach to it:

Conflict is common. Reconciliation is required.

Conflict is common. Reconciliation is required when it comes to having a relationship with God. Maybe you've been coming in for a little bit. Maybe you have these different ideas of what religion is and what it's not.

Can I just say that there is only one way to get to God? And I know you're probably experiencing that conflict. You're wrestling with God. You're trying to make sense of it all. The only way is to come to Him is to trust that the finished work of Jesus is enough and now it is by faith that we are reconciled to God.

Jesus, the Son of God, lived this perfect life for me and you. He went to a cross. And on that cross He defeated sin and death, paying the penalty, making us right with God. Reconciliation is only possible because of Jesus. And that is a relationship that you can step into and begin today.

And for all of us, I really want us to drill in on why reconciliation is required because it's bigger than us. Not only did Jesus save us from something, He saved us for something. He has a very specific mission and purpose for your life. Take a look at it in 2 Corinthians. It says:

"And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him."

How can we reconcile people to God who we are not reconciled with?

"For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation.

"So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, 'Come back to God!' For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ."
Corinthians 5:18b-21 (NLT)



Reconciliation is required and it's possible. And what I've been loving over the past few weeks, what Pastor Aaron has been doing is just creating a space to respond here in the moment. Because, as you know, once you leave these doors, the next thought is, "What's for lunch? And what do I need to get done today so I can be ready for tomorrow?"

So we just want to create another one of those spaces today. And this may be the most important thing that happens throughout your time, when no one is up here speaking, no one is up here singing, this is just a moment between you and God to wrestle, to hold up a mirror, and to say, "How am I doing with humility? God, where can you grow me? God, how am I doing with honor? Who do I need to honor? How can I embrace brokenness? What is the conflict in my life?" And just watch how God begins to bring things to the surface.

Maybe for you this is the moment where you come back to God for the first time. And I just want to stand here as His representative calling you back to Him. This is a place where that can happen in the next few minutes. Take advantage of that.

I just want to pray over us and then the next few minutes are yours for you to do a work between you and God. Would you pray with me?

Father, we thank You so much for today. God, we thank You for the joy that is possible because of Your gospel. God, we thank You for the freedom that it brings when we no longer have to prove or protect or defend ourselves, but God You allow us to embrace our brokenness and to come to You and to be made strong by You.

So, God, I just pray right now that this would be a moment where Your Spirit searches out humility, where Your Spirit searches out honor, where Your Spirit brings brokenness to the surface.

God, will you bring real people to the heart and the minds of everyone in this room and everyone watching that, God, this would be a day and a week and a season of reconciliation. A day where relationships that we had already walked away from, God, could be reconciled in the name of Jesus.

And, God, I pray that today is the day that for the first time people experience a reconciled relationship between You and them.

Father, we give You this space. We give Your Spirit the room needed to shake some things up, break down some walls, and to bring us into the life that You have for us.

Father, it's in Your perfect name we pray. Amen.

