

How do we handle conflict? The MTG 4/28

Some Jewish converts were saying that all needed to be circumcised to be saved. Paul and Barnabas disagreed. They decided to visit the apostles and elders in Jerusalem to resolve this issue.

How do we resolve conflicts in our life? Conflicts arise from our sinfulness and selfishness in various fashions. But to experience the resurrection of Easter in our lives we must be saved from our sin and selfishness. How does this happen?

"May God have pity on us and bless us; may he let his face shine upon us. So may your way be known upon earth." God must shine on us for his way to be known on earth. "You rule the peoples in equity; the nations on the earth you guide...may all the ends of the earth fear him!" We must give God his place in our life to find the truth, for he rules us and guides us and ultimately knows what is best for us. Somehow we need to keep being reminded of this incredibly obvious fact: God knows best! But how do we experience this in our lives?

"The city had no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gave it light, and its lamp was the Lamb." In heaven God's glory is our light. More powerful and penetrating than a million suns, God is our light. Do we need to wait until heaven to experience this? No! If we will see God's glory directly in heaven, how do we experience it now? By faith. Do you believe the Eucharist is the real presence of Jesus Christ, God of the universe? It is! Not to our eyes, but we experience it by faith. Do you realize that Jesus said to almost all that He healed, "Your faith has healed you"? He was teaching us that our faith in Jesus DOES heal us. As you look at the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ, say, "I believe it is You, Jesus. I believe." And as we believe, our faith grows, as eventually our faith becomes knowledge. "I know it is you Jesus, I know you are with me." We experience God's glory by faith. It lights our path better than the sun, just as in heaven it will light our way seen by our senses. What does this have to do with our conflicts? It has everything to do with our conflicts! God must light our way out of the darkness of our selfish and sinful ways that arise as conflicts in our life. We reach out to God and cry out to God to show us the way. And we use our faith in God to guide us out. What does this look like?

"Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him." First, we must keep the word of Jesus. He is the way, the truth and the life. He is the way out of our sin and confusion. His word will always guide us. "But what word do I keep?" If there is any question, keep first His word from the gospel last week, "Love one another as I have loved you." How would Jesus love in this conflict? Love that way. Pray, "Jesus, show me how to love as you would love." Jesus will answer this prayer. "But I am weak and confused sometimes." Jesus isn't done giving to us.

"The Holy Spirit...will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you." This the second help in resolving our conflicts. "The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name," will teach us what we must do and if we don't know what word of Jesus to keep, the Spirit will remind us. Why is this not happening to us always, even now? We are not believing. We are not exercising our faith. The Spirit is available to us. Jesus promises the Spirit to us if we stay in the prayer until we receive the power of the Spirit (Luke 24:49). Let us unite ourselves to Jesus in prayer always, then the Spirit will move powerfully in our lives, for the Spirit comes from the Father, through Jesus. And what is the sign that we are on the right path as we are dealing with our conflicts?

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid." Jesus' peace will be in our hearts. Conflicts will still arise, and suffering will be experienced. The peace of the world is lack of conflict. But the peace of Jesus is the presence of Jesus in our heart giving us peace even in the midst of the conflicts of the world. Thus we offer up our suffering, ask forgiveness for our faults, believe in the presence of Jesus in our lives and are open to the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit through all situations. Thus we are guided in peace, by the Spirit, in the presence of Jesus, to safe harbor, by the glorious light of the Father, through each conflict we experience, toward our heavenly home.

May our faith grow each day.

"Father, may your glory light my way. Jesus, I believe in You. Jesus, I trust You. Holy Spirit teach me and empower me. I love you."