

Sermon Series: THANKFUL #4 of 4  
@RoswellStreetBC – Marietta, Ga  
November 28, 2021 – 10: 30 a.m.



## “Gratefully Serving Into Conflict” Luke 22 : 24 – 30

### INTRODUCTION:

**VIDEO** – sermon bumper – idea of a fun family Thanksgiving or holiday conflict... maybe an apology being offered

**CONFLICT among family & friends is Inevitable** – i.e. *It will happen!*

- We are fallen people living in a fallen world.
- Hurt people say hurtful things.
- So the question is – *How are we as Disciples of Jesus to respond to Conflict when it arises among us?*

**VISION of the Lord for this Series of 4 sermons –**

- Becoming Disciples of Jesus who express *Loving Hearts of Thankfulness to God & appreciation toward one another*
- **IMAGINE** – a world of Disciples of Jesus who Love God, Love one another & transform the world!
- **IMAGINE** – the transformation of marriages, families, work relationships, classroom experiences... if Thankfulness & appreciation were practiced as disciples of Jesus!

- **IMAGINE** – the most difficult conversations that lead to conflict being healed by Jesus’ love....

Let’s open our Bibles to Luke’s Gospel, chapter 22 to observe How Jesus dealt with Conflict in the most unlikely places – i.e. the Upper Room before His betrayal.

**THE SETTING** – Jesus is in the Upper Room just hours before His betrayal, arrest, trials and death...

**Vs. 14** – Jesus is reclining at the table with His 12 disciples around Him to eat the Passover dinner with them.. He announces it will be His last supper with them...

**Vs. 17** – Jesus took the cup... sharing with the disciples...

**Vs. 19** – Jesus took the unleavened bread ... shared with the disciples.. sharing the symbolism of the bread applying to His impending death

**Vs. 20** – Jesus took the cup – symbolizing the cup of wrath and affliction... the new covenant in His blood...

**Vs. 21** – Jesus announces His Betrayer is at the table with Him....

**Vs. 23** – this creates an ‘**ARGUMENT**’ among the disciples of **which of them could it be who was going to do the act of betrayal**

Argue - συζητέω (syzēteō) **dispute**, debate, argue **talk with**, discuss<sup>1</sup>

**IMAG** – Display **Luke 22: 24 – 30** (CSB)

**<sup>24</sup> Then a dispute also arose among them about who should be considered the greatest. <sup>25</sup> But he said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who have authority over them have themselves called ‘Benefactors.’**

**<sup>26</sup> It is not to be like that among you. On the contrary, whoever is greatest among you should become like the youngest, and whoever leads, like the one serving. <sup>27</sup> For who is greater, the one at the table or the one serving? Isn’t it the one at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves. <sup>28</sup> You are those who stood by me in my trials. <sup>29</sup> I bestow on you a kingdom, just as my Father bestowed one on me, <sup>30</sup> so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom. And you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”**

<sup>1</sup> Swanson, J. (1997). [Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek \(New Testament\)](#) (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

As we learn from Jesus to *gratefully serve into conflict*, Let's make several observations about Conflict .... Occurring in this unlikely setting & how Jesus related to His disciples.

# 1. - Conflict is a Distraction from the Important.

See Verses 23 & 24

## This Moment is Serious & Significant

- Reflect on the Upper Room setting described in introduction..
- Conflict distracts the disciples from the Eternal to the temporary/ from the Important to the Unimportant/ from the Savior to selfish pursuits

"Disputing disciples"—the words don't seem to go together.

Vs. 23 – they are ARGUING about who will betray Jesus

Vs. 24 – they are DISPUTING among themselves

- How ironic that in this scene from Luke 22, it is James and John, two of the inner circle, who are in dispute.
- Seemingly, **those closest to leadership are the ones who often lead out in conflict!**
- Ironically, **those chosen to lead, entrusted with privilege, battle against others** instead of against "spiritual wickedness" (Ephesians 6:12).
- **Sadly, in our disputes with one another is the picture of a warring body.**
  - **Imagine your hand viciously attacking another part of your body, hitting yourself in the chest or stomach.** Do that a few times, and

people will begin to keep their distance, judging you as unsafe, unstable, and even worse!

- Let His church/ friends boil with conflict, one member of Christ's body attacking another, and it won't be long until many others, both believers and unbelievers, will keep their distance from such an unsafe place.

### **Such is the nature of conflict.**

- It distracts from the seriousness and significance of Christ's purpose for the hour.
- **Only the thief who seeks to steal and destroy is a victor when we become distracted in conflict** (see John 10:10).
- Conflict entangles a widening spiral of innocent bystanders as friends are challenged to take sides in the conflict between warring factions.
- It scars the weaker brethren, leaving behind bitterness long after the conflict, and prompts fear that life is not truly a safe place.
- In a most needful hour, **the testimony of unifying love to an unbelieving world is lost**—often irreparably so—for families, friends, and entire communities wounded by dispute.

### **So it is for us today... What's the purpose of a gathering?**

*As Family for holidays, Friends or Even the Church?*

- **Is it not... To minister to the Lord with loving hearts & to minister one another in love by meeting relational needs?**

SADLY, *Arguments about Vaccines , politics, recent trails/ news, lifestyle choices..* is going to distract from What's most important – RELATIONSHIPS.

- This is **KEY to Passing on our Faith to the Next Generation**
- The Message of Jesus is NOT What we are against.... It is what we are For... for loving one another, for ministering to needs, for the worship of the Lord and honoring Him in all things...

**TRANSITION:** As we learn from Jesus to *gratefully serve into conflict*, Let's make several observations about Conflict .... –

- **CONFLICT IS A DISTRACTION FROM THE IMPORTANT.**

## 2. - Conflict is Common in Culture.

Jesus takes this moment of tension among His 'disputing disciples' to teach concerning His mission & Kingdom

- **Jesus Shares - His Kingdom is not like the kingdoms (culture) of the world**

**IMAG** - Vs. 25 – 26a - *But he said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who have authority over them have themselves called 'Benefactors.' It is not to be like that among you."*

- The Romans vied for honors and did all they could, legally and illegally, to win promotion and recognition,<sup>2</sup>
  - Betraying, killing and acting as a savage – i.e. Nero
  - The term "benefactor" was frequently used to describe *gods, heroes, and kings* who were in fact at times quite despotic, so that there may be some irony in this statement<sup>3</sup>

**Vs. 26a – "It is not to be like that among you"**

(Jesus' Kingdom was just He & His disciples at this point)

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*Jesus' Kingdom of Love is Counter-cultural*

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**IMAG** – Display the following diagram contrasting kingdoms

	<b>WORLD'S KINGDOM</b>	<b>JESUS' KINGDOM</b>
	Ignores	Gives Attention
	Complains	Appreciates

<sup>2</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [The Bible exposition commentary](#) (Vol. 1, p. 266). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>3</sup> Stein, R. H. (1992). [Luke](#) (Vol. 24, p. 549). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

	Curses	Blesses
	Selfish	Supportive
	Discouraging	Encourages
	Cold, harsh	Affectionate, kind
	Divisive	Peaceful/ secure

**Notice** – **JESUS CALLS YOU TO THE UNCOMMON LIFE of His Kingdom of Love!**

**In God's Kingdom** – **IMAG** Display highlighted below

### **Greatness = Service to others**

**Vs. 26 a** – *“On the contrary, whoever is greatest among you should become like the youngest”*

- the youngest represent **people who possess the least claim for “ruling over” others.**<sup>4</sup>

**Vs. 26 b** – *“Whoever leads like the one serving.”*

The Greek word for “serves” is *diakonōn*, from which the word *deacon* comes. Compare Acts 6:1–6. The terms **“serves,” “servant,”** and **“service”** occur over ninety times in the NT.

### **Leadership = Number of people served**

Luke 22:27 a – *“For who is greater, the one at the table or the one serving? Isn't it the one at the table?”*

*One sitting at Table is NOT a Leader*

<sup>4</sup> Stein, R. H. (1992). *Luke* (Vol. 24, p. 549). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

## *One Serving Table = Leader*

- **Consider – What a paradoxical statement of role-reversal** Jesus is giving -
  - Rather than exercising authority,
  - a godly leader willingly becomes a servant of others.<sup>5</sup>

**Q.** – Do you see this in CULTURE today? – Sadly, Conflict is common in Culture

- **Maybe this has sadly been the culture in your family of origin –**
  - *How did your family deal with conflict?* – ignore, aggressively argue, not speak to one another... Or respond with confession or forgiveness....
  - Question for you now – *Which kingdom will you become like? – kingdom of culture or kingdom of Jesus?*
- **Maybe this is the culture of the Work environment**
  - *What’s your work environment like?* – people ‘lording it over them’ ... looking out for their image, platform, agenda, promotion..?
  - Question for you now – *Is not looking for another place of employment, but how can you reflect the kingdom of Jesus in that space? His light, love and light?*
- **Jesus calls us to be Change-agents**
  - *“You are the Salt of the earth”*
  - *“You are the Light of the world”*
  - You/ We are being sent to this family, relationships, workplace to bring transformation.

**Q.** What is Your Response to Jesus for His Sending You to Serve into conflict?

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<sup>5</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Mt 20:26). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

**TRANSITION** – As we learn from Jesus to *gratefully serve into conflict*, Let's make several observations about Conflict .... –

- CONFLICT IS A DISTRACTION TO THE IMPORTANT.
- CONFLICT IS COMMON IN CULTURE.

### 3. - Conflict is to be Served with Jesus' Love.

**Vs. 26** – *“It is not to be like that among you...”* – the culture in conflict

**Vs. 27b** – *“But I am among you as One who serves”*

In this context, **John 13: 1 – 30** occurs.

- In contrast to the disciples' focus on fighting for “greatness,” Christ now lives before them the secret to true greatness and to harmony in relationships.
- He girds himself with a towel and begins to wash their feet.
- NOTE : the disciples missed the opportunity to serve the Master in this way, and we soon find them in dispute.

**ENCOUNTER JESUS** – Put yourself **“IN”** the Text... as a disciple whom Jesus is washing your feet. What does that do to your heart? How would you feel in that moment?

- here is the good news, *Jesus is still washing feet.*
- He is still the great and mighty Lord of all who washes the feet—and hearts, and souls – of whosoever will come (Mark 8:34).
- It may be A bit embarrassing to keep dragging mud behind you. Come anyway.

Here Jesus now say to you –

**IMAG** - John 13:13–15 (CSB)

*<sup>13</sup> You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are speaking rightly, since that is what I am. <sup>14</sup> So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. <sup>15</sup> For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done for you.*

**Q.** - Who in your traffic patterns needs their feet washed with tender compassion and acceptance that Jesus has shown you?

- Muddy feet are usually left to others to care for, but not today.
- Today the Lord appoints you to be His hands and His heart.
- Maybe it's a muddy attitude or muddy conflict.. or muddy situation...

**Ask Him now:** *“Holy Spirit, WHO would you send me to that I might champion Jesus as our only hope of life and life abundant?”*

**CHALLENGE** – **IMAG** – Display the 2 following challenges

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*When facing CONFLICT, RELATE ; don't REACT.*

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Allow the 'Jesus in You' to care for the 'Jesus in them.'

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*When facing CONFLICT, 'WORK THE WORD'*

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**IMAG** – Display the following Highlighted sections and Bible texts -

**'Work the Word' from the following texts :**

**James 5: 16** – Humble, Vulnerable Confession to one another–

*“Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed.”*

- At times, I will be prompted by His Spirit to confess my faults (James 5:16) to someone.
- It might sound like, “I regret I was impatient and insensitive toward you last time we were together; it was very wrong of me. Will you forgive me?”
- **How long has it been since you shared such a heartfelt apology?** Maybe that’s too long.
- Pause, asking the Holy Spirit to search your heart, allow Him to bring someone to mind who needs to hear the “godly sorrow” of your confession (2 Corinthians 7:10–12).

**Ephesians 4: 32** – **Graciously Forgive one another**

*“And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ.”*

- A second discipline, which brings healing to inevitable conflicts, is the grace of forgiveness.
- Relationships inevitably mean that each of us will be challenged to experience the power and freedom of *“forgiving one another as we have been forgiven by Christ”*.
- Failing to forgive lets the sun go down on anger and disputes surely follow.
- Paul speaks of “putting away anger...becoming kind, tenderhearted.” (4:32).
- Anger and unforgiveness quench kindness and make tender hearts grow cold.

Pause and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to whom you are not showing kindness

. Listen quietly as the Spirit speaks to you saying, *“Will you share with this person some of My forgiveness which I have given you?”*

Listen again to the question. It is God’s forgiveness, which by His grace, He has put within you. It’s not yours! *As a good steward of divine grace, will you share some of this unmerited favor of forgiveness with another?*

**Romans 12: 18** – Pursue Peace with one another

*“If possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”*

- Practicing the disciplines of confession and forgiveness helps us experience this text – becoming ‘living letters of hope’

## CONCLUSION:

Jesus gratefully served into His Disciples’ conflict –  
Conflict is a Distraction from what is important.  
Conflict is Common in Culture.  
Conflict is to Served with Jesus’ Love.

Follow the Spirit to **guard you from the distraction of dispute** by a servant’s heart.

- Jesus’ work and example speak loudly to such a truth.
- A servant’s heart keeps us focused on the needs of others, while the distraction of dispute begins its journey with the shift in focus to oneself.
- *“The greatest among you shall be the servant of all”* (Matthew 23:11).

**Pause and Listen to the Lord** – What Relationship is the Spirit calling you to serve with the towel, basin & water of Jesus’ love?

- Friendship
- Marriage
- Family Member
- Co-worker

**Simply practice Ephesians 4: 29** – *“Speak Words that Edify”*

- Focus on the NEED, not the DEED
- *What NEED for blessing, appreciation, support, attention, security... might Jesus desire for you to meet?*

It could sound like – “*You are a hard worker for our family & I appreciate you.*”

Or it could sounds like – “*You are a \_\_\_\_\_ person; I celebrate you!*”

Or “*I recognize we have had our differences, and I want to you to know I am committed to our relationship*”

### **One Area of Conflict that is evident in our Community is that of the Role of a Teacher –**

- I serve on few school board advisory committees here in our community...
- I was sitting next to a teacher and she expressed how little appreciation is displayed...
- The Holy Spirit impressed on my heart... for us to write notes of appreciation to each of the teachers at **Park Street Elementary School...**
- There are **90 teachers who work there...** So I’m trusting the Spirit to prompt 90 of us to pick up one of these cards, pray for the teacher by name and write a note of appreciation to them... before you leave today... there are baskets in the back to place them in... we will mail them...

**May this exercise move our hearts to serve in to additional areas of Conflict –**

- Public Safety – if you personally know an officer...
- Military – if you personally know a soldier...
- Government, teacher, employer, etc....

**IMAG** – Display writing on the inside of a card –

Dear <NAME>,

I am a member of our community, and I would like to express appreciation for you teaching your class of \_\_\_\_\_ grade students at Park Street. For all your hard work, long hours and care for students, I would like to say a great big THANK YOU! I paused to pray for you today.

Gratefully,

Sign your name

Just IMAGINE the Witness of Jesus' love this will be each of these teachers who maybe experiencing a lack of appreciation.

Invite congregation to pick up a Card... Pray for the name of the teacher.. then write a note on the card... drop in basket to be mailed by church...

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INVITATION TO RESPOND –

Conflict is too Common Yet God is able to Reconcile.

We all need Reconciliation with God – Romans 3: 23

Jesus' Cross is the Reconciling work – for He died to pay your sin

Come to Jesus!

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### Working the Word Challenges –

- As you encounter conflict this week, Reflect the example of Jesus washing His disciples feet and His words *"It shall not be so among you."* Hear Jesus call you to the uncommon life. **Who may the Spirit be calling you to serve with Jesus' love?**
- Prayerfully seek to 'Work the Word' in times of conflict by: **Vulnerable confession (James 5: 16); Graciously Forgiving (Ephesians 4: 32); Pursuit of Peace (Romans 12: 18).** Develop new Spirit-prompted responses to relational challenges.
- **With a partner or small group, discuss opportunities to serve into conflict.** Possibly a note or act of kindness to a teacher, public safety officer, co-worker or others.
- **Join your church family in 30 days of Scripture & devotional reading** along the theme – *"What's So Special About Christmas?"* You can locate this resource written by Pastor Michael [HERE](#).

