

## Clash of Kingdoms

Reading: James 4:1-12

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As you may be aware, there is a bit of conflict happening in Australian Cricket at the moment.

Who's responsible for the ball tampering plot in the third test in South Africa?

Bancroft, Warner, or Smith?

Or, is it the fault of the "win at all costs" culture in Australian Cricket?

Was the investigation process fair?

Who's ultimately responsible? The players or the organisation?

One thing is clear though, there are going to be some long-lasting effects and ramifications coming out of the actions from that test match.

Now we're not going to solve this today.

But cricket and some form of conflict go hand in hand.

However, to be fair, life and conflict go hand in hand.

Who's ever been in some sort of a barney?

A bunch of GBC pastors were asked this week if any had been in some form of barney, and if they'd ever been in some sort of a barney when they've been at fault or played a significant role in it?

There was a resounding yes!

While ever we've got our feet pointing south, there 'll be times when we'll be in conflict, we'll be in some sort disagreement with someone.

You could go to the trouble of isolating yourself, but even then, you'll be putting yourself in strife because of the people you leave behind.

They'd be hurt and upset.

Not sure what strife looks like in your life, but it may be at a low level, or it could be open warfare.

It can involve different people that you live in contact with.

It could be a significant other; your mum & dad; maybe your brother or sister, or extended family.

It may be a friend, or those you work with, your fellow work mates, or your boss.

It could even be people in the church here, the list could go on.

So today, don't think that I'm just aiming at any particular individual, we're all there, or we've been there, or we will be there in the near future.

Over the next two weeks I would like for us to think about conflict and forgiveness, and what the biblical approach is to these.

This week we'll be exploring conflict and how as Christians we should approach it, next week we'll look closer at forgiveness.

Today, I'd like us to see that:



### **In Any Clash of Kingdoms, True Peacemaking Starts at the Cross.**

It's this statement that I want to unpack this morning.

#### **The Clash of Kingdoms.**

#### **Peacemaker or Conflict Causer?**

#### **Peacemaking Starts at the Cross**



## **The Clash of Kingdoms.**

What do I mean by the Clash of Kingdoms?

The Clash of Kingdoms comes when we live in service of the kingdom of self rather than living in the service of the kingdom of God.

I'll repeat that.

The Clash of Kingdoms – or conflict - comes when we live in service of the kingdom of self rather than living in the service of the kingdom of God.

I want to be clear here.

Where God's kingdom, where God's glory is at stake, we must make a stand, it is necessary to face conflict for the sake of the Gospel.

The fact is that we are here today because people in the past faced conflict for the sake of God's kingdom.

We are here today because of people the Apostle Paul, because of Martin Luther, John Calvin, William Tyndale and many others who made a stand for the God's Kingdom.

But that's not where most of us are at, that's not where we live life. That's NOT what I'm talking about today.

What I'm looking for us to consider today is the conflict that happens, the clash of kingdoms that happen in our relationships – be it family or friends, at our work place – with work colleagues or our boss, or even in our church.

What do I mean by conflict, what sort of clash do I mean?

I'm talking about the negative aspect of conflict, the one in which we're insisting on my kingdom over everyone else's kingdom, including God's and His commands and desires.

This in reality is where we are all at.

It might be conflict over what TV show that we're watching, or what we're having for dinner, or you may've left the toilet seat up, or squeezed the tooth paste tube from the top instead of the bottom...

For some of us those can be important, or is it something more serious?

You may have lied, or misled someone, and have tried to hide it, resulting in conflict, much like what the Aussie cricketers faced in Cape Town.

Something may have been said, some deed or action may have taken place and your switch has been flicked, you have responded in only a bad or negative way, and voila!

A clash of kingdoms has occurred, conflict and strife has broken out.

### **Where does the Clash come from?**

Turn with me to James 4:1-3.

*What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? <sup>2</sup>You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. <sup>3</sup>You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. James 4:1-3. ESV.*

It's interesting to note that this letter of James was addressed to Christians.

Yet it seems apparent from verse 1, that open conflict is happening among Christians.

It would seem that things had got to the point of an ongoing war-like campaign, obviously not a nice place to be in.

Note particularly verse 2, where it says;

*You desire and do not have, so you murder.*

This does seem extreme doesn't it?

However, it was unlikely that murder was actually happening in the church at this time.

What the writer seems to be pointing to the extreme end of what the outcome of anger can be, and that is murder.

This is an echo of what Jesus taught at the Sermon on the mount. [Matthew 5:21-22]

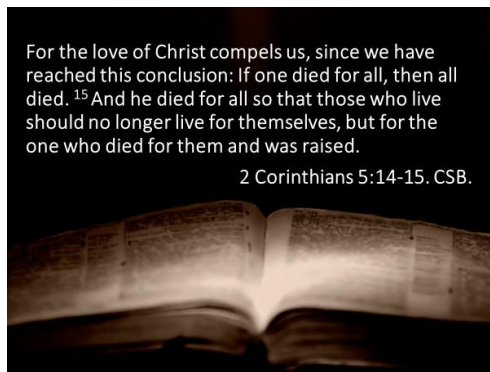
Possibly James is using this strong language to shake the Christians out of the quarrelling that they are involved in.

But James moves quickly to point out the source, to point out where the quarrelling is coming from.

The quarrelling here is from our passions and desires from within us.

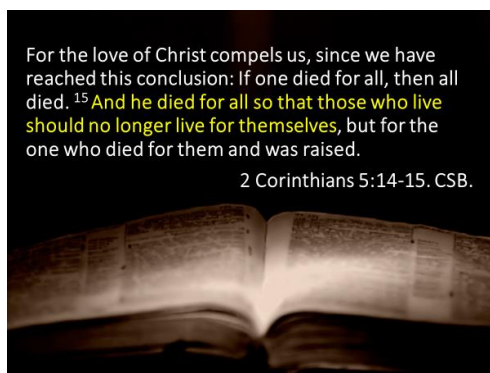
This is the fundamental battle with sin that we all have.

It says in 2 Corinthians 5:14-15.



For the love of Christ compels us, since we have reached this conclusion: If one died for all, then all died. <sup>15</sup>And he died for all so that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for the one who died for them and was raised. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15. CSB.

Note verse 15, this verse highlights the kingdom battle that is within us.



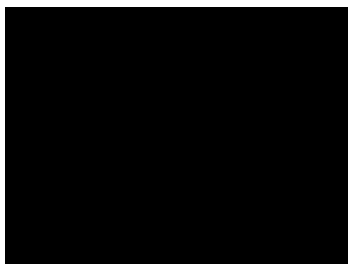
And he died for all so that those who live should no longer live for themselves

Sin causes to look to ourselves, to our little narrow world. From this we create a kingdom of our own making.

Focussing on our wants, our needs our feelings.

We become way too self-aware, way too self-important.

When we live for our kingdom of self, everything is shaped by our personal desires.



Our decisions, our thoughts, our plans our actions our words are all directed and shaped by our desires, by our passions.

We know what we want, where we want it, why we want it, when and how we want it.

Further, we know who we'd prefer to deliver it.

Because of this we shape our relationships around these demands and expectations.

We surround ourselves with people, with minions, who will serve our kingdom purposes, and from our throne in our kingdom, we evaluate them from the perspective of the laws of our kingdom, NOT from the laws and perspective of God's kingdom.

Now, when two or more people, all with their own kingdoms of their own making get together, you know what the result will be.

There will be a clash of kingdoms, there will be conflict.

However, it starts within our own hearts when our kingdom desires, don't line up with God's kingdoms, there's a battle within, and it just flows out from there, with the casualties being the relationships of those around us.

At the centre of our kingdom, there is a worship centre, a temple which we visit regularly.

We are by nature worshippers and we'll attach our sense of meaning, purpose, identity & well-being to either something or someone.

What is in reality the centre of our hearts desire?

Tim Keller has put it this way:

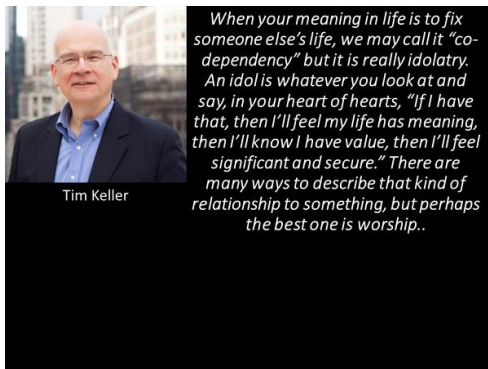


*A counterfeit god [Idol] is anything so central and essential to your life that, should you lose it, your life would feel hardly worth living. An idol has such a controlling position in your heart that you can spend most of your passion and energy, your emotional and financial resources, on it without a second thought.*

*It can be family and children, or career and making money, or achievement and critical acclaim, or saving "face" and social standing. It can be a romantic relationship, peer approval, competence and skill, secure and comfortable circumstances, your beauty or your brains, a great political or social cause, your morality and virtue, or even success in the Christian ministry...*

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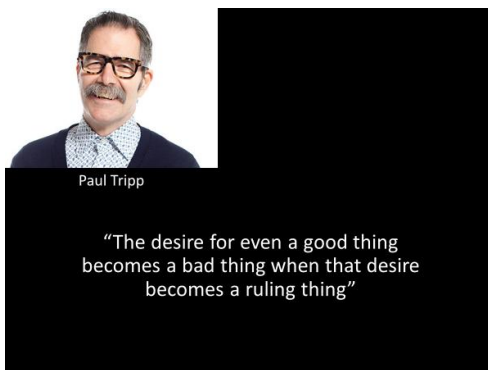
circumstances, your beauty or your brains, a great political or social cause, your morality and virtue, or even success in the Christian ministry.



*When your meaning in life is to fix someone else's life, we may call it "co-dependency" but it is really idolatry. An idol is whatever you look at and say, in your heart of hearts, "If I have that, then I'll feel my life has meaning, then I'll know I have value, then I'll feel significant and secure." There are many ways to describe that kind of relationship to something, but perhaps the best one is worship.*<sup>1</sup> Tim Keller

It may have even started out from something good but has got twisted and warped by the desires of our heart and mind.

Paul Tripp puts it this way.



*"The desire for even a good thing becomes a bad thing when that desire becomes a ruling thing"*

This is what James is pointing out, that conflict that comes out of the sinful desires of the heart. They find their source from our passions and desires, which are often those idols in our hearts and lives.

It may not have been something of itself evil or bad, at least at the start.

But it's been turned, and we've taken a good thing and have made it into an ultimate thing.

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<sup>1</sup> Timothy Keller, *Counterfeit Gods: When the Empty Promises of Love, Money, and Power Let You Down* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2009), xviii.

We've turned it into an object of worship.



An idol is anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give you what only God can give...

Tim Keller.

We all have this problem, we all have this trouble.

This is because our hearts are idol making factories, and these idols can be physical OR non-physical idols.

It's these idols that we worship that shape our responses to life, that shape our responses to others.

What is it that rules your heart? What's the idol that's there at the centre of your kingdom?

You can categorise idols into three broad categories: control; significance; and comfort.

Now for you there might be different aspects of each of these that resonate with you, but for you there may be one that's a biggie.

It might be something like Control: If I can just maintain influence or mastery over this situation, or over these people, or over my performance, or my schedule, or my income or whatever, then I'll be okay, I'll be content, strong, and safe.

It's an I want things done MY way attitude...

Parents can have this struggle with kids – trying to control everything so everything is perfect for little Johnny.

It could be something like Significance: I'm wanting this person, this social group, the colleagues in my profession, if they find me worthy of attention or love, or if they acknowledge my value or my greatness, and as long as I'm not being disgraced before them, then I'll be worthy, I'll be important, and acceptable. I'll have significance.

I think the Apostle Paul had this one before he came to Christ.



There was pride, saw significance in the fact that he was a Jew, of the tribe of Benjamin, Hebrew of the Hebrews, a Pharisee, zealous to the point of persecuting the Church. [Philippians 3:4-6].

But found it was loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ.

The last category is one that I think that is a big issue here in Australia, and that is Comfort: If I can just maintain physical ease or relaxation, if life can just be laid back and chilled, if I can just keep away from

King Solomon was a guy who had the resources and time to pursue leisure to his heart's desire and did so.

But he found it was nothing – a grasping for the wind.

Which one resonated with you most?

Idols can be like the ring of power – the one that rules them all - in “The Lord of the Rings”.

In that, whoever had the ring was willing to do ANYTHING to achieve their hearts desire.

They became enslaved and addicted to it, because we just can't live without the idol; “We wants it, we needs it, we MUST have it, my precious!”

So much so we can harm not only others, but even ourselves in the pursuit of our precious idol.

Ultimately our hearts are the source of all our thoughts, desires, words and actions, it's from our hearts that we worship and pursue our idols, our hearts desires

The root cause of conflict then is unmet desires in our hearts.

When we want something and feel that we will not be satisfied unless we get it, that desire starts to control us.

Then, if others fail to meet our desires, we sometimes condemn them in our hearts and fight harder to get our own way.

We have a desire that grows until it controls us, this has a demand and control like no others.

When others or other things get in the road, we are disappointed and these demands [idols] compel us to act, to speak, at times in ways that are not good, even to the point of murder.

Unmet desires can grow, particularly ones that we think we deserve or need, and thus we MUST have these desires satisfied so that we can be happy or content.

We can even justify our desires...

It evolves from “I wish I could have this” to “I must have this, I’ve earned this”

This leads us to judge people when they fail to satisfy our desires and live up to our expectations.

We criticize, nit-pick nag, attack, condemn.

We fail to remember that

There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbour? James 4:12.

We end up the self-righteous judge in the kingdoms of our own creation in our minds.

We end up acting like God.

We judge and then we punish...

This can be seen in outbursts of anger, either physical or by words, with the aim of inflicting pain.

Kids may use foot stomping, or pouting, or dirty looks to express disapproval and shame toward others.

Adult would never do that would they?

No worse.

I know I’ve used some of these at times, what about you?

Silent treatment, withholding affection or physical contact, refusing to shake hand, no eye contact, even abandonment of relationship completely.

These and other means can be used as tools of punishment to manipulate others into change, but the result can be anything but a happy family, the result is poor relationships.

A question here, who are we punishing in our lives at the moment?

Is it the other half, our children, a sibling, Dad and Mum?

What about those we work with?

How do we treat our workmates, our employees? Are they suffering under

This may not be openly and immediately clear, it may be covertly – secretly.

If this is happening, or you catch yourself in the act of doing this, it's warning that there's something other than God ruling our hearts.



**Illustration:**

Soon after my dearly beloved and I were married, you wouldn't believe it, but yes, we fell into a moment of conflict.

The apartment that we'd bought, I'd lived in for a few months before we were married.

Before the wedding and honeymoon, I'd gone through and cleaned everything.

I was so proud of my efforts; my new bride won't need to do a thing when she comes to our new home I thought.

I'd not only cleaned the apartment, I'd even organised everything in the kitchen into the order it should be in.

As happy as I was in my kingdom of cleanliness and order, things we're not as it should be in my wife's kingdom.

My dearly beloved wanted everything perfectly clean at her standard, she wanted everything organised the way that she wanted, according to HER kingdom.

My head was spinning, in MY kingdom everything WAS perfect, so why would you want to change anything?

You can see a kingdom clash coming can't you?

I thought that I'd done a terrific job in cleaning the kitchen sink, but oh no, it wasn't quite good enough.

Somehow my dearly beloved got the sink to shine like it was new, you nearly needed sunglasses to enter the kitchen.

I felt just a little crushed seeing that I thought I'd done such a terrific job.

But it was ok, I could let that slide.

Did it end there?

No.

The cutlery draw...

You would've thought I'd leave it alone...

If I could just go back and talk to my younger self, I would've said; "Look it's ok, just walk away quietly, it's only cutlery."

Would I have listened? Probably not!

I didn't leave it alone, I couldn't leave it alone, it was my pride, my kingdom that was driving me.

I thought that I'd organised the cutlery draw, you know, the knives, forks and spoons in the right order.

There was no other order possible, it was just like my mum had done it!

I'd organised everything, my wife didn't have to do a thing.

But she didn't like it, I was crushed, the kingdom of my own making was coming down, I had to speak....

And I did, and it was NOT pretty...

The problem was my heart, it was My kingdom, it was My pride, it was an idol of my own making, and idol of my heart that lead me to speak harsh angry words.

But it was over knives, forks and spoons...

What was I thinking?

When you look back on your conflicts, and maybe you're in one now, what is it really over?

Look past the fork and the spoon, look at your heart, what idol is there at the heart of the matter?

To help identify any idols we can ask ourselves these heart check questions.

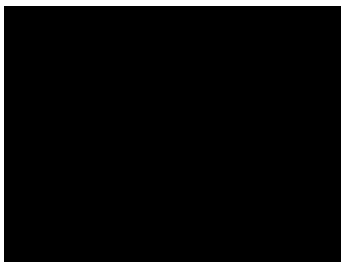
#### Heart Check Questions;

1. What is the first thing on my mind of a morning and /or the last thing on my mind at night?
2. How would I fill in this blank? "If only \_\_\_\_\_, then I would be truly happy, fulfilled and secure."
3. How do I spend my money?
4. Where do you spend your free time?
5. When a certain desire is not met, do I feel frustration, anxiety, resentment, bitterness, anger or depression?

1. What is the first thing on my mind of a morning and /or the last thing on my mind at night?

2. How would I fill in this blank? "If only \_\_\_\_\_, then I would be happy, fulfilled and secure."
3. Jesus said, "Where your treasure is there is your hearts also" [Matthew 6:21] How do I spend my money? [What on, what NOT on?]
4. Related: Where do you / I spend our free time? What does this reveal about our religion and idols?
5. When a certain desire is not met, do I feel frustration, anxiety, resentment, bitterness, anger or depression?

With these idols that rule our hearts, the idols at the centre of our kingdoms, these are the things that can shape our opinions, expectations, interests, priorities.



You can see then, when people with completely different kingdom desires get together, it's inevitable that there'll be a clash of kingdoms.

And this clash, this conflict can be in the home, or at our work place, even in the church.

Who's at fault then when conflict, when a clash happens? It's both sides!

You can say, Luke, you don't understand, you need to hear my side...

Well it really doesn't matter, because whatever has been you're part in the conflict, you're 100% responsible for that part!

We've looked at where conflict, where the clash of kingdoms starts, and that's from our hearts

How then are we to respond when faced with Conflict, when there's a clash of kingdoms?



## Peacemaker or Conflict Causer?

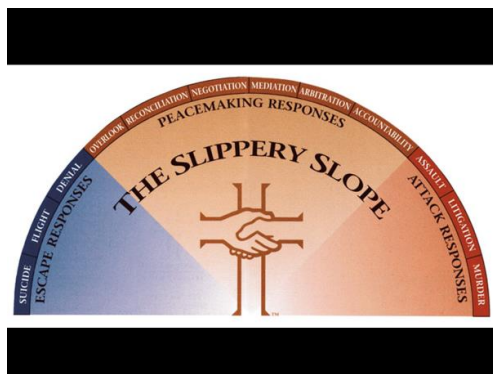
Are we a peace maker, Conflict Causer?

As it takes generally two people to tango, so in conflict it takes two.

Next week I do want to spend more time in this area, particularly in peacemaking and forgiveness.

Paul Tripp points out that whatever is ruling our heart, will automatically exercise control over our desires, thoughts words and actions.

So how do we respond in the clash of kingdoms?



Ken Sande has put together a diagram that can help us picture different responses.

There are two extremes, escape and attack responses both of which are aren't good;

We can get out of there – the escape response.

Over that side we can use the Sargent Schultz approach of “I know NOTHING”, and deny it even exists. This doesn't solve anything, generally, it only makes it worse.

Or the Road runner response when we just flee from conflict.

But generally, this isn't a real long-term response, it only delays things.

It can cause frustration and larger problems if things are delayed.

Sometimes this does need to happen if physical violence is involved.

Maybe things have got heated, and you need to step aside to cool down, to collect thoughts and pray.

Now sometimes this is important, I know I've done this at times.

If you're at work or at home and someone does push your buttons, you need to cool down, to give yourself a time out.

Kids at times know how to push mum and dad's buttons.

Those of you with kids know that somehow or other they sneak off to some school somewhere to learn how to do this.

How do we respond?

Often, unfortunately, it can be in anger, and as parents this is not a good look, nor is it a good example.

Because if your dear little one loses their lolly over something that doesn't go right in their little kingdom, how are you going to respond?

Do you say; "Don't do that, that's naughty?"

Well, guess where they learnt it from!

The last option in the escape response, suicide, isn't a real option either in dealing with conflict.

Up the other end of the scale are attack responses, these aren't good either.

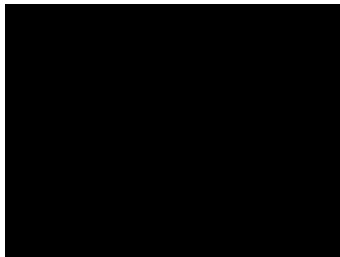
This can be physical or verbal assault, court, or even murder.

This is the culmination of what James was pointing out in our passage today.

*You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel.*

None of these responses are good, at either end of the scale.

None of them do anything to make peace, rather they only serve to extend, or intensify conflict.



**Illustration:**

Colin, was a bloke that I was working with on commercial photocopier/printers, he was a guy who'd served in the Australian Navy, and so was fluent in the extreme end of mono syllable language – in other words he swore.

This was the bloke who used this language when things went wrong.

As we were a small team, just the two of us, we worked together for a number of years.

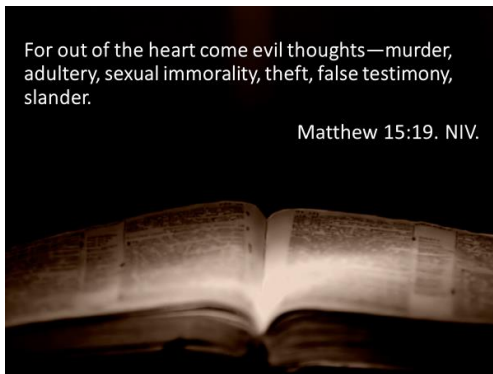
One day, he said that I must be having a bad influence on him, as he noticed that he wasn't swearing as much as he used to.

In working together, when things went wrong, he'd go off, but I didn't and through time this obviously had an effect.

Colin wasn't a Christian, but through our lives we can in little ways, by not reacting on the extremes when conflict happens, we can be more of a peacemaker, rather than causing conflict to inflate further.

How we respond is what is in our hearts, and what's in our hearts comes out..

Jesus said in Matthew 15,



For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. Matthew 15:19. NIV

What is ruling in our hearts at the time of clash of kingdoms come out in our actions.

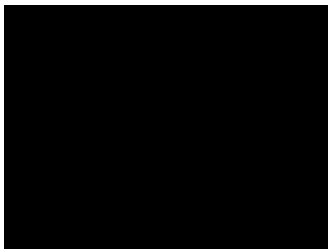
**Illustration:**

It was in the early 90's, the 1990's that is.

And my dearly beloved and I were out shopping with our only child of the time, Joanne.

At that time there was a bit of debate going on in the news on how parents were treating their children.

The debate was around not only physical abuse, but also verbal abuse.



We were a happy family out at the shops one Thursday evening, and we were coming up to our dear little girl's birthday.



The plan that Dot & I had was for me to occupy Joanne's attention while Dot snuck off to purchase a birthday gift.

A kingdom clash occurred.

Dot and I wanted to purchase a gift to surprise our daughter, Joanne's kingdom wanted to be with her mum, now...

Here I was, trying to fulfil my end of the bargain, but whatever I did, did not satisfy the demands of my daughter's kingdom.

"I want my mummy!" is the cry that is burnt into my memory, even to this day.

'I want my mummy now!' that was the demand flowing from the heart's desire of my daughter.

For me, this was awkward, my daughter before me heralding to the world the demands of her kingdom.

What do I do? Submit to her demands? Apply a lesson of education to the seat of learning?

There was the debate of the time swirling around my head, would I be arrested as a result of this performance?

What about what Dot and I were looking to accomplish?

I couldn't reason with her.

My kingdom was hurt.

I was embarrassed, I was frustrated, I got angry, and that didn't help the situation.

A clash of kingdoms.

The only advantage was that I was big, she was small, so I could pick up my little girl at the time and walk out with her and take her to the car.

I know my heart was only filled with what my kingdom wanted, and my daughters heart was filled with what her kingdom wanted.

I had two responses I got angry, which isn't right, and I fled the scene!

When faced with conflict how do you respond?

By focussing on OUR kingdom, it's really a guarantee that there will be a clash of kingdoms that won't start or end well.

How then do we make peace?



### **Peace making Starts at the Cross**

We make peace by being at peace ourselves, that really starts at being at peace with God.

We need to start at the cross.

We need to start by addressing our heart.

The problems come when the wrong things rule our hearts, because whatever is ruling our hearts shapes our response to relationships, it shapes our response to life, it shapes our behaviour.

Whatever idol is at the centre of our kingdom shapes us.

We need, as Paul Tripp has put it, worship realignment.

Firstly, we need to realise that we've drifted, that we're been pursuing the interests of OUR kingdom first instead of pursuing the interests of God's kingdom first.

Generally, the issue is that we've lost satisfaction in God and pursued our own desires.

John Pipers belief for life is

God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him. [Ephesians 1]

If we reflect back on where conflict comes from, it would be a result of our hearts not being most satisfied with God, and we've lost sight of the blessings that we have, and we've gone off pursuing empty promises.

We fail to appreciate that God does have the very best for us in mind.

God's glory and our happiness and contentment are not mutually exclusive, the reality is we can't have one without the other.

Secondly, confession.

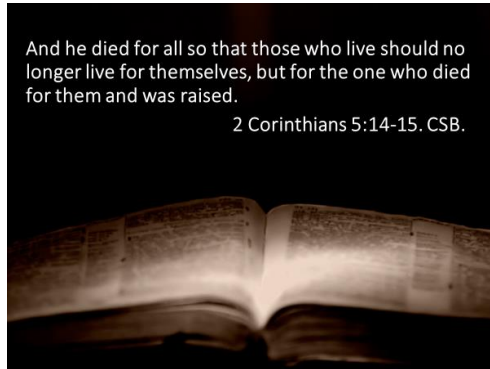
We need to return to the foot of the cross, confessing our error, our sin.

We can be thankful

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9.

We need to humble ourselves before God, to give up the rights of our kingdom for ourselves and to willingly submit, to the Lord of our life.

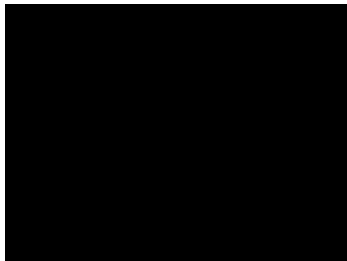
Remember the verse in 2 Corinthians?



And he died for all so that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for the one who died for them and was raised. 2 Corinthians 5:15. CSB.

We are not to be living for ourselves, it's not our kingdom.

Jesus died to free us from the slavery to self, to sin.



Thirdly, it's a returning to delight in God, to delight in Him and trust Him and what he is doing in our lives.

When the Lord Jesus is at the centre of our worship, when we have Him at the right place in ruling our kingdom and not us.

It means then that we will be doing things with His best interests at the hearts of things, and not our own.

It's a putting to

Death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Colossians 3:5.

It is a counting ourselves dead to sin, dead to our old nature, but alive to God.

In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. <sup>12</sup>Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. <sup>13</sup>Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. <sup>14</sup>For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace. Romans 6:11-14. NIV.

Now since we've been raised with Christ, by setting our mind on things above, by setting our minds on God, and what He has done for us through Christ.

This is done through personal worship and meditation on the scriptures, through times of Corporate worship, like we have today, this replaces the idols of our hearts.

When our hearts and minds are filled with the wonder of Christ and the cross, when we are delighting in the blessings God has given us through Christ.

Then when faced with conflict, when kingdoms start to clash, we'll be operating not from a kingdom of our own making but pursuing the interests of God's kingdom.

It's a radical change of focus isn't it?

In society today there is so much of a "me" culture, what the Bible presents is opposite to this.

It's a doing

..nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, <sup>4</sup>not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. Phil 2:3-4

The best interests of others, is seeing them come to God, or grow closer to Him.

This only comes as a result of us making the cross of Christ big in our hearts.

For us. Here today let us examine our hearts.

May we address any idols there.

If we're pursuing Our interests, Our kingdom it won't be drawing others to God.

May we have the rightful king on the throne room of our hearts.

Next week we'll be looking closer at relationships and forgiveness.

But it all starts here today with us examining our hearts.

Let's Pray.

## Clash of Kingdoms.

[James 4:1-3 8th April 2018]

**Main Point: In Any Clash of Kingdoms, True Peacemaking Starts at the Cross.**

Please pick a few relevant questions from each section and ensure that the majority of the time is focussed on application.

### **General Questions:**

1. Why is it not surprising that James addresses conflict with Christians?
2. With Tim Keller's quote on idols; Could the type of idol change as your season of life changes? - Would this look different if your single, married, married with kids, retired etc? Discuss why or why not with people in your group who are in different seasons of life.
3. What ways can we strive to ensure that our worship centre remains aligned with God?
4. Why is the cross central to be a peacemaker?

### **Application Questions:**

1. Out of the three broad categories of idols, which one do you think resonates most with you?
2. Ask these Heart Check [Idol Check Questions]
  - A. What is the first thing on my mind of a morning and /or the last thing on my mind at night?
  - B. How would I fill in this blank? "If only \_\_\_\_\_, then I would be happy, fulfilled and secure."
  - C. Jesus said, "Where your treasure is there is your hearts also" [Matthew 6:21] How do I spend my money? [What on, what NOT on?]
  - D. Related: Where do you / I spend our free time? What does this reveal about our religion and idols?
  - E. When a certain desire is not met, do I feel frustration, anxiety, resentment, bitterness, anger or depression?
3. What Idol has been exposed? Do you need help or accountability to help you deal with this?
4. Are there any further steps that you need to make to overcome an idol?
5. What steps can we make back toward God?
6. How do we dethrone and keep idols from our hearts?