

Man's Greatest Challenge
Sermon
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What is the greatest challenge man has faced down through history? Living together in godly love -- with peace, harmony and goodwill. Failing that challenge has produced conflict, slaughter, mayhem, wars, death and misery on a massive and near universal scale.

Each of us faces the challenge in everyday life and here in Church. How are we doing as individuals and Church, in meeting this challenge? God is developing a corps of leaders to deal with living together in peace and goodwill. Only those who have learned the lesson to sufficient degree will be used by Christ, and will be part of that group.

You may ask, "What am I doing to live at peace with others?"

One thing: Positive attitude. We cannot live at peace with negative attitude. No leader, in the long run, can be effective with a negative attitude toward those he leads. We cannot put on rose-colored glasses, but seek positive solutions. Have confidence in God to rectify wrong His way and in His timetable. Strive for perfection in our own behavior and allowing for mistakes in others.

Four principles:

- 1) Let God be God.
- 2) Let people be people.
- 3) Seek spiritual perfection.
- 4) Love one another.

We will see weaknesses, problems and imperfections in those around us in Church which may lead to negative attitude.

God is the Supreme Judge.

1) Example of David: Most of his life he was pursued by Saul. Saul wanted to kill him. David could have been bitter or hateful to Saul, but wasn't.

We can't let the problems of other people destroy us and get us in negative attitude.

I Samuel 18: 12, 30: 22: 11 – 19: 23: 14: 24: 4, 10

David saw more than the human element. He saw God in the picture. He was not going to take into his hands the prerogative of God. David didn't pretend things were other than what they were, but he maintained a positive attitude. We can apply this to us when we feel someone has been unjust to us, or truly has been unjust to us. The tendency is to take matters in our own hands

Matthew 5: 44 – If we're told to love our enemies, how much more so our brethren. Must recognize mistakes as opposed to becoming bitter and hostile.

James 4: 11 – God will judge all of us so we do not need to judge each other, especially in sense of condemning. Not in a situation where we need to make a decision, but this is in deciding someone needs to be punished, how they should be punished, and then

punishing them. We need to let God handle His own responsibilities.

Romans 16: 17 - Even though we may need to separate ourselves from someone at some time we still need to pray for them rather than lashing out in vengeance.

James 5: 19 – sometimes the only thing you can do for someone is to pray for them (I John 5: 16).

We are responsible for our own actions. Ephesians 4: 1 – 6. There are times when you have to commit an injustice to God and let Him deal with it.

2) Understand we may sometimes have to put up with a great deal. Moses as example: He was just trying to do what God asked him to do.

Numbers 16: 3 – people rebellious. Moses did not react with bad attitude toward them. v. 19 – Moses could have very well said, “Okay” but prayed for mercy instead.

v. 41 – God did destroy the leaders of rebellion but not whole congregation who still murmured against Moses. They blamed him because the leaders of rebellion died. So again, God was going to consume them. Moses prayed for them again. To be effective leader you must realize people are weak and sometimes weaknesses are manifested in outrageous behavior. Leaders must be longsuffering. Just as Moses mediated for congregation, Jesus mediates for us. Moses understood weakness of human nature.

Malachi 3: 1 – Prophecy of coming of Christ. God had a purpose for creating us and intends to see us fulfill that destiny.

Psalms 103: 8 – give the opportunity to change; space to repent. Each of us in Church are at a particular stage of personal and spiritual growth but not all at same stage, not all have same weaknesses and faults. Each has individual strengths. We don't always see things the same way. We do have differences of opinion. How do you deal with those you do not agree with?

Acts 15

3) You, yourself, should seek perfection. Do not make excuses for yourself. Seek perfection, not in others, but in yourself.

Philippians 3: 12

If we are seeking God's will in our life and asking Him where “I” need to change. He will show us. Seek perfection in own growth and character. We are all working toward the same goal if we are seeking to grow and develop and overcome. Give others the benefit of the doubt. Avoid disputes and arguments with others.

II Timothy 2: 23 – be patient, be humble, know what you are talking about.

4) Commanded to love one another.

Ephesians 4: 29 – Do not gossip in negative way, to tear someone down. Be without malice in your heart; edify each other. As leaders we must develop godly character, expressed in God, which is love, and we must be leaning to live in peace and tranquility. We will be preparing for God's Kingdom and will be capable when we are resurrected.