

# **STANDING ON HOLY GROUND**

**Creating Sacred Space in the  
midst of Conflict**

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# Sacred Space

**What does it mean to stand on Holy Ground?**

**EXODUS 3:5**

- ***5 Then he said, “Do not come near; b take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.”ESV***

# ***HOLY GROUND***

## ***What made the ground holy?***

- **The presence of God rather than the actual location made the space Holy.**
- **The ground was not holy prior to God's "showing up".**

## ***Why take off sandals?***

- **This represents the Humbling of Moses, along with the recognition of his sinfulness next to pure holiness.**

**To leave on his sandals would have been pride and self righteousness.**

***Micah 6:8 “He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you **but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” ESV.*****

# ***WHAT CONSTITUTES A CONFLICT?***

## **LEVELS OF CONFLICT:**

- **Author: Speed Leas**
- **“Levels of Conflict” by Speed Leas defines conflict in five levels.**

## LEVEL ONE:

### **“PROBLEM SOLVING”**

- May not be recognized as conflict.
- Often this is the practical and familiar we often forget to make it Holy Ground!
- Worship together.

## **“SELF CARE/PROTECTION”**

- There is a problem to fix, but there is distance and disconnect.
- Groups or people may talk with other people, but not share fully.
- Low communicating and low trust abound.
- Dialogue and shared stories bring persons together and increase trust.

## LEVEL THREE

### ***“Win!”***

- Only one solution, win or lose
- Vague language overstates, distorts, and dichotomizes the conflict.
- People are not yet in factions, but they clump together, with labels.
- Holy Spirit led, non-anxious leadership with attention to power dynamics and access.



## LEVEL FOUR

### **“DIVORCE/SHUNNING”**

- The goal is a "divorce "or getting rid of opposition.
- No tolerance for other. Grouped in factions.
- Prayer, fasting, mediation, expert help.
- Creating a safe space for all, use of silent reflection, creation, and scripture.

## LEVEL FIVE

### ***“FANATIC”***

- No longer about being apart, now destruction or elimination is desired
- Fighting continues because it feels immoral to stop. May believe they are called by God to destroy the evil.
- **HOLY GROUND BECOMES A BATTLE FIELD UNLESS DIRECTED BY PURITY OF HEART.**

# **INTRO TO ST FRANCIS:**

- **Turn the other cheek**
- **Love your enemy and do good to them.**

# St Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace!

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus called the peacemakers blessed.

Recognize that Jesus empowers each of us to be peacemakers, we become sacrificial. We sacrifice our own needs, being right; our own hurts so that He can use us to bring peace.

The first step is to pray and make ourselves available to be used in this way. We need to WANT to be used.

# Where there is hatred, let me sow love

- Love, it is the greatest of all gifts. It is the banner over us, and it is the very nature of God.
- We are called to choose to look behind the conflict to see the created being as God sees them and to honor and respect that person.
- This is the very nature of the Gospel. Christ died while we were yet sinners, while we were his enemy

## **Where there is injury, pardon;**

- Ask for and give reconciliation and forgiveness. It is the act of reconciliation which brought the sacred into our lives and which brings us into the kingdom of God.
- In the act of reconciliation, we must first be able to seek forgiveness, even if we were not the perpetrator. We ask forgiveness for the harm done, even if not of our own hands.
- There is a difference between hurt and harm.  
First DO NO HARM

# Where there is doubt, faith

- Scripture states that without faith it is impossible to please Him.
- Being people of integrity, matching your words to your actions, relying on God proves the faith that lives within us, and helps cast out doubt.
- Trusting the process, and showing trust to one another ushers in faith. Trust that God does the work instead of us, and that He is responsible for the outcome.
- Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen. This faith provides the building block to work towards a peaceful solution

# **Where there is despair, hope**

- a non-anxious person in the face of fear and loss can create hope in the situation and in the parties.
- Believing that the best can happen and looking to a win/win can stir hope in the process and the parties.
- Be anxious for nothing. Hope for God to intervene in miraculous ways.



# Where there is darkness, light

- Scripture tells us that darkness and light cannot co-exist, and where there is light, darkness flees.
- When we are authentically sharing the light of God's love, claiming power and authority over the principalities and powers of darkness, and resisting evil ourselves, then the darkness will flee.
- Look for the Spirit of Jesus in each person, knowing that **NO ONE** is beyond the reach of God.

# Where there is sadness, joy

- When your joy is in the Lord there is freedom.
- Bringing that joy into the conflict doesn't negate the present trials, but relies on God for His provisions and protections.
- Count it all joy when we suffer various trials. It is the joy of the Lord which transcends our present sadness.
- Joy doesn't mean happiness, the joy comes from trusting and knowing God has it all already in His plan.

**O Divine Master Grant that I May  
Not Seek:**

# **To be consoled as to console**

- It is human to want to feel better and have our needs be met.
- Being able to transcend our own needs to reach out to console another is the work of the Holy Spirit.
- It is this interaction between two conflicted parties where we leave room for the sacred to transform us and those around us.

# **To be understood as to understand**

- Allow the other to speak first, be prepared to hear things which may make you uncomfortable, and do not rush to defend yourself.
- Use clarifying questions and make sure you understand the other's point of view before giving your opinion or stance.
- Honor what the other has said, and give the benefit of the doubt. Listen intently without worrying about the words you will say.
- This requires practice.

# To be loved as to love

- We all want to be loved, and sometimes avoid unpleasant conversations in order to be loved.
- Love speaks the truth, in patience, kindness, it is not angry, it does not boast, it is not rude, it keeps no record of wrong, it does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.
- Using these qualities as we encounter conflict ushers in the sacred, since God is love.

# **For it is in giving that we receive**

- The sacred is sacrificial. We give our time, attention, and selves to the other.
- Counterintuitive to our thinking, we gain self respect, peace and often our desired outcomes by being generous.
- Generosity of spirit and resources can bring healing to those who feel cheated or oppressed. The act of the sacred is found in abundance, not fear of scarcity.
- IF we truly believe He is Jehovah Jireh, then we need to trust Him to provide all we need to do His will.

# **It is in pardoning that we are pardoned**

- As we pray the Lord's Prayer, we pray, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive others who have trespassed against us."
- Being forgiven and forgiving others are interlocked.
- Grace and forgiveness are extended not just when it is deserved, since God forgave us while we were His enemy (sinners).



# **It is in dying that we are born to eternal life.**

- No greater love has man than to lay down his life for a friend.
- When we die to our selfishness, our lusts and our desires, we grow closer to our Lord and Savior.
- What can man do to us? Do not hold so tightly to the things of this world, when our citizenship is in the Kingdom of God!
- Why not rather be wronged?

# **Stories of reconciliation**

- Brook in Africa
- Family Life Restored

# Know yourself

- **Spend time in reflection, prayer, fasting.**
- **Don't worry about what you want to say as much as what you need to hear from the other.**
- **Focus on hearing the other's journey and how your story impacts them. Be mindful of fear, anxiety and hurt that you carry into the conversation.**
- **Observe yourself, describe yourself accurately and factual without evaluation and judgment. Know that you are worthy. God made all creation good.**

# Know the other

- **Pray for the other; ask questions to learn more about the other.**
- **Be open to hearing the other's story and possible negative reactions to you or your journey without being defensive.**
- **Respect that person's journey. Be mindful of the other.**
- **Observe and describe accurately without judgment or attempting to fill in information. Ask questions/clarify. Know they are worthy. God made all creation good.**

# **Be invitational**

**Show hospitality and grace  
without demands.**

**– Allow the other to save dignity  
while still speaking the truth in  
love.**

**– If culturally acceptable, break  
bread, or serve food/drink.  
Invite someone into a neutral or  
comfortable place.**

## Find the right time

- **Be respectful of the other's needs and be patient waiting for the right time. Be aware of how long a conversation has energy.**
- **Understand how sleep and hunger effect the conversation. Use pauses, and ask for more time, if necessary.**
- **Do not rush the process. Silence, reflection and separation can keep conflict from erupting further. But be cautious that silence is not used against one another.**

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## **Find the right place**

- **Be respectful of location and access.**

**Find a mutually respectful place which is serene and allows for contemplation.**

- **Limit noise and distraction so each party may be fully engaged. Make sure everyone has equal access to the conversation space.**

# Find the right voice

- Invite the other to have a representative or have a third party.**
- Be mindful of safety and be aware of power dynamics. Balance those with equal voices.**
- Make sure the injured party speaks first and the other listens well.**



# Invite the Spirit

- **. Bring things which symbolize grace, spirit and truth.**
  - **Do not try to manipulate. We cannot control where the wind goes, neither can we control the Holy Spirit.**
  - **Each group and culture will have symbols and rituals which create meaning and significance for them. Do not assume they will be the same for each.**

# **Be persistent**

- Don't give up too early and don't give in too soon.**
- Take as much time as the process needs.**
- Allow as much time as the process demands.**
- Trust God to move and wait upon the Lord.**

# **USE ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS:**

- Make sure you are not defensive and you hear what the other person is saying**
- More than just the words look at non-verbal communication.**
- Sharing stories brings us into the other experience and connects us.**

# **INTERACTION: ROLE PLAY**

- Using a current conflict, let's try it out!

# **INTERACTION: ROLE PLAY**

- **Consider a conflict which has affected you. Using this framework, consider how to create sacred space. Take one step and practice. What will you use to create the Sacred space meaningful to your culture?**

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## **DO NOT MANIPULATE!**

- **When Jesus took the bread and wine at the last supper, he did not do so to create a symbol or a ritual for its own sake but to use as a reminder of His sacrifice.**

# Betrayal

- **Jesus washed the feet of the disciples symbolize the sacredness of the sacrifice of our Lord making himself humble, EVEN THOUGH SOME were about to betray him.**

**SHALOM is the sacred space  
between two people.**

**A safe space becomes a sacred space where authentic conversation, humble spirit, and true desire for peace is done in the presence of the Lord.**



# REMEMBER

- **Disagreement and conflict occurs naturally, but we surrender our desire to be right and instead desire the best for another.**

## MICAH 6:8

- **We follow what is required of us, to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly before our God.**

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

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