

Wednesday, March 10, 2021; 6:33 pm start, 1:18:08 recording

Participants : Tom Lutz (e), Janette Takata (m), Steve Takata (m), Jenny Naselli (m), Andy Naselli (e), Steven Lee (e) Ming-Jinn Tong (e) joining remotely, [REDACTED] (m), Daniel Kleven (m) (Elder = e and Member =e)

0-52 seconds: Discussion of whether or not people will be wearing masks in the meeting. The city mandate at the time was still to wear masks indoors.

Tom Lutz: So I'll get into agenda and ground rules in a minute and pray; but first I just wanna, I want to ask a couple of questions that would be helpful because I know I sent to everyone except you [REDACTED] and Daniel. I did like an outline for tonight. Now maybe this was forwarded to you; but, I don't know. Because if you don't have it, I at least have one extra copy. If that would be helpful.

Just so you can understand how we hope to work through this. Um, and, and really, and Steve and Janette know this because we've done it together as families. I'm going to try to facilitate this according to, I'll say some of the Peacemakers principles. And, and I realize not all of Peacemakers is perfect for everything. Um, but I at least find to start with that, um, is helpful. And, ya know, there's two, two verses that I want to share and they're ones that are well familiar, um, to all of us. And, um, Romans 12:18, right? If it is possible as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Now, that's I think. I'm, I'm trying to see which version that is. It's probably not my favorite one but nonetheless.

And then, also, Matthew 5:9. Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the sons of God. And we know there's a litany of them, but I just. I love the promises that God makes to peacemakers. I love the value that he puts on it. And the promises, ya know, just what goes with it. And obviously with Christ as our mediator, the peacemaker, it's a beautiful, wonderful thing.

So let me pray and then I'm gonna over, um, I'll call it some rules of engagement a little bit. And, mindful that, that you guys are here, um, which is fine, (speaking to [REDACTED] and Daniel). But, I want to go over rules of engagement and make sure that's understandable and acceptable to everyone. Because there's, some of the things that happen here will need to stay here, at least for a season, and there will be an appropriate time to talk to others about them. But, we wanna, we wanna have a plan and a common understanding of, of what that is.

So let me pray. Heavenly Father, we come before you. Um, we, we look to your promises, Lord of your presence, that you give wisdom without reproach. Lord, we want to be at peace with all men. We want Christians, we want the world to know we are Christians by our love. There are deep things here to understand, to resolve, Lord, so be over our evening. And Lord, do a work in our hearts now, in Christ's name I pray. Amen.

So, um, probably the, one of the most important things that I learned in Peacemakers that's been helpful to me, um, in all that I do and try to do is never to assume to someone's motive for what they do. You know, until they tell you why they did what they did, or why they're about to

do what they do, or why they said what they said. Just as soon as I assume motive, I'm always wrong and it shows up in the simplest of situations. You know, when you're a junior high girl and somebody's late to your party. You think that's because they don't like you. You know, that you, you, you go there like this and then you find out "Oh, there's a family emergency and the car broke down or, you know, that kind of thing. Or, so and so didn't talk to me. And uh, oh, it must be because I didn't send them a Christmas card. Or, ee, uh, I mean our mind just goes there to try and explain the actions of other people.

And you know often times you can be right. But sometimes you can be really wrong. And so, we just want to understand as we battle our own flesh sometimes to not presume motive. But to ask. Right, to have the courage to say, you know, when you said something, it landed on me. And, that was really hard for me to hear. Help me understand why did you say what you said? You know, kind of a thing. And somebody might not realize that. So, that's, that's something to keep in mind.

Number two, what we talk about and how we talk about it here in this room needs to be confidential to this room. Apart from we may come to agreement, and my hope is, because I think there's a lot of people looking to this. And I'm just really hoping the Lord shows up in a way that all of us in some way shape or form could be on the same page and like minded, about the right things, such that this could be a testimony to God's grace in all of this. And we're going to hold different views on things and I understand that. But how we hold those views, and what those views, how they align with scripture, those are important. But, things are confidential and I think especially for you guys as observers, you need to understand you're going to hear things here in this conversation. Um, you, you know, you might do the debrief with the Takatas, etc. But in terms of leaving this room and somehow sharing how it went or didn't go, it would be a disservice to everybody in here for that to happen. So you need to understand it's, that's gonna be confidential.

There's another, there's an acronym, I don't necessarily expect you to remember it all. But another thing that's helpful as we, as we work into this is the PAUSE principle. I have it here because I want to get it exactly right. It's, it's...P is Prepare, right? Get the facts, pray, um, seek Godly counsel.

The A is affirm relationships. Right, before you dive into hard things, you need to affirm relationships. Right? If I'm going to say something hard to my wife, um, I've just, you know I've gotta, I've got to help her understand not to take it personally. I, I'm saying it because I care and I love her. And it might be a hard truth. It might be iron sharpening iron. Right? Faithful are the wounds of a friend. It may be like that. But she's a lot more receptive to that if she understands and feels cherished and loved before that conversation begins. And if not? (Chuckles) Then, boy, it's hard to go there. So that's affirm.

U is understand interests. To understand why other people do the things they do and say the things they do and what's behind that is really important.

Search for creative solutions. Often times there's a way forward, really that, that works for everyone. Not always, but often times there is. There's a way to reconcile a conflict in a way that honors everyone involved. That is, that is, can be beautiful. Doesn't mean it's easy, but um, to search for a solution going forward.

And then to Evaluate options because there may be situations where we may need to leave the conversation in this room and come back and rejoin it, right? You might hear and learn some things that you have to process. I'm a digester. Um, not everybody in my family is. And they're at an advantage sometimes when we do this because they're quick. And I'm like, ahh, boy I really gotta think about it. But I want to respect that in this room where we may reach a point where we all agree that it's better to adjourn and that's okay. We may learn something in this process as well. I know I need to deal well with that. I'm not sure I know how to deal with that. I've got to have some time. I've gotta, I've got to go seek the Lord down and whatever it might be, we're going to be open.

So, First let's do greetings Tom Lutz. I've been about Bethlehem since Romans 5 and I was away for two years when we lived in [REDACTED] but that's that's my time here and family of [REDACTED] kids and we love Bethlehem warts and all. Right because there are some and we just you know, there is no perfect church on this earth, but we love it here and we love to see the body do well.

Janette Takata. I moved here in January 2003 for an internship that was supposed to be six months for my degree and the Lord did not have it in mind for me to move somewhere greener in somewhere warmer.

What's your degree in?. Music Music therapy.

I'm Steve Takata. I came here with my parents. I believe in about 1990, pre-Romans. Yeah, grew up through the ether etc. I'm an electrical engineer.

How many kids do you have? [REDACTED] The oldest is [REDACTED] youngest is [REDACTED]

How many boys and girls? [REDACTED]

There's always something going on in your house always. Jenny.

Jenny: very soft spoken and hard to hear.

Tom: So does that mean you can leave the house for short periods of time without a babysitter right because you're always Okay, right like a target run maybe or something, right? Okay, all right. But that's a yeah, that's a big deal when you can do that and not write a check to someone.

Andy: very soft spoken and hard to hear.

Steven Lee: sort of eight years with five year break in between the first four. We have [REDACTED] kids, [REDACTED] are always just exactly two years twenty three months apart. We've planned it that way sort of. Yeah, so the birthdays are making [REDACTED]

Tom Lutz: I do call that the Disney World theory of family planning. I mean, all our kids are bio kids. We're all 22 and a half months apart and it was like, well, wait a minute if I go to Disney World I don't want like a teenager going this way and a two-year-old going that way. I'm like, I want to all be able to go in Mr. Toad's wild ride as a family and be okay. Now, we never went to Disneyland, but I, Yeah multiples yeah and that was kind of yeah that was kind of the way we thought about it is I'm like once we get out of diapers we're not going back okay until we adopted.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Thank you.

Daniel Kleven, been at Bethlehem almost seven years. I've been married for [REDACTED] years and we have [REDACTED].

Minn-Jinn. Yes, thank you for doing that.

Yeah, I'm Ming-Jinn I think most people know me. I just wanted to say it real quick. I can't almost hear anything. So like I could be here the Nasellis at all. I could barely hear Steve. I wonder if putting me in the center on the coffee table might be better. They can log in as well and join their. I'm not really sure but I can't I can't really hear it.

Just better, can you hear now? Say it again? Right we put you on a table in the center of all of us Ming-jinn

Sound issues: The microphone or whatever. Okay, that's yeah, yeah. But lose video, oh you can see okay yeah, okay.

Tom Lutz: All right, thank you so. Here's what I want Steve and Janette to do and then and then Andy. And that is, spend and go look at this because I want to get right spend. Two minutes regarding your hopes and expectations for the meeting right not gonna go into the details next.

I mean storytelling comes after that, but if you think about. Walking out of here, whether it's over this session or this and one more. What do you hoping for, here and what would you like to have, um, when we conclude this.

Janette: Yeah, I don't feel like I'm good on my feet, um, So I wrote. It out and with Ming-Jinn on the computer. I can't look at digital notes. So but I have a pen and I want to take notes.

I want to be. I don't want everything to seem like prescribed ahead of time but it just helps me. Oh yes thanks. I, I just want, you Andy to know it is with great love for the gospel of grace of

Jesus Christ our Lord and in genuine love for you and our church that this whole meeting is happening today that's our posture, that's my posture towards you and I desire repentance and reconciliation. Repentance from and reconciliation with you but even more than that, I just want to remind you of the gospel of grace is by faith in Christ alone and has the power to save each one of us here.

And I pray that this meeting I've been praying that this meeting would be received as a kindness that leads to repentance and reconciliation and I want you to know that I stand ready to forgive. That's my posture incoming to to offer the arm of forgiveness in Jesus name as you extend that the arm of repentance, in submission not to me but to Christ.

I don't, I don't want your submission to me, that's. That's not Godly or biblical at all. That's my hope. Steve would you does she speak for both of you or would you add to that as well for yourself?

Steve: Um, we've we've talked much about the things that that we've I primarily. I think Janette would be speaking. For us but we've yeah, we've prepared and and I agree with this we we want we want to be reconciled. We don't want to, you know, leave things unaddressed or or broken.

Andy: Inaudible.

I'm trying to capture these so I'll take some notes here and there because. We'll come back to these at some point whether that's tonight or again later on we'll come back to these because we'll want to see are we move are we moving this way right our our are we accomplishing these things or it is also possible that expectations as things are understood your expectations that you state now, they may change right? You you may learn something and and and have an understanding of this that says, okay. I you know, I. I would not maybe say that differently or I would add to this or whatever it might be, so I'm writing it down, so.

Ming-Jinn's calling.

Ming-Jinn: I could not hear anything, so I.

Janette: Thanks.

So, I wrote down. I'm gonna repeat for you what I heard. Andy say I because I think you heard Janette, right?

All right, so you want to say again, Annie you're perspective.

Andy: So, to better hear your perspective and to own whatever I can. And to explain my perspective, my motives.

Tom: Steven (Lee): I don't want to I don't want to exclude you if you've got something you want to offer up here at this point, so I want to respect your role and and both look to you and maybe in just if you have anything you want to share at this point.

Okay being Ming-Jinn. Okay. So we're going to work in a move to storytelling and just there there's there's two ground rules we we won't we won't interrupt you with either an objection or a question. But the thought is to listen really well and then when you're done we'll have you go first Janette and Steve. When you're done we may ask you clarifying questions not a positional kind of question like well, why did you feel that way but more like hey, I just want to make sure I understand when you said this.

So we'll, we'll hold those until you're done, but this is really where we want to understand we want you to walk us through what you've experienced and the offense and the hurt that you have both and I think it's both the initial engagement at the QSM and then the subsequent letter that Andy wrote.

I think so. I want you to to share your story and help us understand. How that landed on you and and and, you know, where that offense is.

Janette: Yeah. I appreciated your email earlier this morning with the agenda and how you talked about taking notes and actively listening. And so, um, so what I read is the opening statement is right underneath. Yeah.

Jenny: barely audible as she talks about not taking notes as she's an active listener.

Totally, okay. Some people are auditory some people are verbal visual. Yeah total grace for that. We can all agree that Jesus is our Lord and his is a good example to follow and our primary submission as those who profess Christian faith is to Jesus our Lord and Savior and there's Romans 10:9 and 10.

And we can all agree that we're all sinners that no one is righteous that no one understands so no one seeks for God we've turned aside. Um and you know that one of the sins laid out in Romans 3:10 through 18 is we don't have the fear of God before our eyes. So, there's the rejection of his authority that makes us, primarily offensive mostly to him. And three were incapable of of knowing how sinful we are the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick and who can understand it.

So knowing that Jesus our Lord and he makes makes our is our Lord makes our primary offense as sinners to God and then secondarily to others. So when David confesses his sin against Bathsheba and Uriah in Psalm five, um 51:4 for he's crying out against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight. So you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

I think about that as we have this this meeting of reconciliation. Our what we're doing tonight is both vertical and horizontal, right? Like we we need to be. Reconciled to God first and then he grants fellowship and reconciliation with others and so that's where my heart and my posture is.

But I strongly believe that you've sinned against me Andy in in six specific ways. The first is I believe you've sinned by attacking instead of shepherding. Your statement saying that you would resign if this motion passes puts me in the position of perpetrator and you and the position of victim.

And so the impact is that if that most that this motion passes I'm going to be responsible for you no longer being an elder. And when you stated at the QSM that the way this conversation is going is an example of what Joe Rggney was talking about in the episode, that landed on me as coded language. To accuse me of being emotional manipulative and bringing a false claim of concern. That language is used in the episode and I recognized it. And so it it sounded to me like, liike it was a reference discrediting me attacking my character or just dismissing my concerns, but, done in such a public way it felt publicly shaming.

In addition you made those accusations explicit in a private text with [REDACTED] the week after the QSM. He confronted you in disapproval of your actions at the QSM and so your words to me and about me were not demonstrative of the elder qualifications.

In first Timothy 3:1-3 and Titus 1:7-8. I believe you've sinned against me by explaining and denying instead of seeking to understand. You would email us on February 7th with an apology for effectively shutting down the conversation at the QSM. And you offered to meet with us stating you'd be happy to listen further to us to answer any questions we may have and explain what you're thinking about the matter, but then you sent the email to the QSM attendees as we were setting a time to meet.

Two of your stated responses for meeting were so that you can talk more. Your offer to listen to us and seek understanding when followed just three days later by a letter to the QSM and QSM attendees is disingenuous at best. Because it failed to show patient shepherding according to James 1:19.

I believe you've sinned by using your position of power to twist the intent and clear purpose of our words at the quarterly strategy meeting on January 31st and in your email to the QSM attendees on February 11th. I believe your attempts, your lack of attempts to understand our motion to listen to our perspective and your rush to explain yourself adding more words of disapproval in the motion is directly in opposition to the charge of an elder in 1 Peter 5:1-5.

I exhort the elders among you as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed to shepherd the flock of God that is among you exercising oversight not under compulsion, but willingly as God would have you not for shameful gain, but eagerly not domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock.

And when the shepherd, the chief shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. Likewise you who are younger be subject to the elders clothe yourself all of you with humility toward one another for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. By misrepresenting my motion for shameful gain and domineering over those who are in your charge, namely me. I believe that's where I believe that the the miss is between the exhortation to elders.

And the misrepresentation of our of our words in motion namely mine. I believe you've sinned by falsely accusing us and gossiping about us and slandering us in private meetings with members of our church. Another lay member came to you to express their concerns over your words of the QSM and in your email to QSM attendees.

They came directly to you in a private one-on-one meeting where you falsely accused us of insubordination to a pastor and acting in a manner that is intentionally divisiv. And when a fellow elder approached you with his concerns and disapproval of your words at the QSM, this is [REDACTED] you responded by saying there were no logical arguments in the presentation of the motion we were engaging in emotional blackmail and being manipulative. That's neither an example of biblical peacemaking or being above reproach as elder qualifications are in 1 Timothy 3:1-3 and Titus 1:6-8.

I believe you've sinned by looking for an offense rather than overlooking an offense. Instead of reaching out to us to understand our perspective or motion better you either visited my Facebook profile or agreed to look at a post shared with you by a peer and then asserted this information to a lay member in a manner that made them question my character.

This lay member came to you to express their concern to you over your words and actions of the QSM and/or in the email and instead you look for an opportunity to shift blame and once again make me appear to be the offender against you and against Christ. You engaged in the sin of gossip, slander, false accusations and looking for an offense under the guise and in the context of a member trying to engage in Matthew 18:15 peacemaking.

But instead you engaged in what Ken Sandy labels peace breaking. Proverbs 19:11 good cents makes one slow to anger and it is scoring overlook and offense.

I believe you've sinned by apologizing to us with no admission of guilt, insufficient acknowledgement of the impact of your actions, and a lack of patience, forbearance peacemaking and charitable judgment toward us.

You compounded the hurt and acts of spiritual abuse of the QSM by an apology to us on February 7th and the QSM attendees in the email on 2/11(/21). While acknowledging to us in your email, Quote: I'm guessing you'd wish I'd stayed a bit differently but I look forward to talking with you about these matters in person on March 10th, I think.

That's a reference to an email that you sent to us right before it went out the email went out to QSM attendees where you said hey just a heads up. This email is going to go out and I'm sure you wish we would have worded it. You would have worded it differently.

James 5:16, therefore confess your sins to one another and pray for one another that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. It is with great love for the gospel of grace of Jesus Christ or Lord and in genuine love for you and for our church that we're here today.

I don't desire only your repentance and reconciliation. I desire to remind you of this gospel of grace. I don't simply think you've offended me or merely hurt my feelings, but I contend that in addition to the sins I've charged with above you've increased the abusive power and disqualified yourself from eldership at this time.

By implying that the elders would not submit to the authority of a congregationally governed Church. When you said in your email if my fellow pastors would endorse such an approach, and I highly doubt they would. I believe you've grieved the Holy Spirit by not only shutting down the conversation which is what your apology consisted of when you email us on February 7th, but by making it clear that anyone attempting to exercise gifts of the Spirit by bringing a motion before the church would be publicly shamed and privately maligned.

Acts 2:4 says, they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as a spirit gave them utterance and verses 14 through 16 says in the last days, it shall be God declares that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh and your sons and your daughter shall prophesy. Your young men and women will see visions your old men shall dream dreams. Even on my male servants and female servants in those days, I'll pour out my spirit and they shall prophesy. I believe you haven't shepherded this member of the flock, namely me, entrusted to your care with Christ like humility nor Godly wisdom or biblical peacemaking according to James 3:13-18.

Because humility is not a tone of voice. It's a heart posture that shows up in how you live. That's Jackie Hill Perry. I believe you've perverted the gospel and have resisted submission to the Lordship of Christ by denying any admission of guilt or acknowledgement of sin. I believe your resistance to model humility, confession of sin, repentance and belief in Christ for the forgiveness of sins is a perversion of gospel that Jude warns about in verses three and four.

And I believe the sins outlined here demonstrated evidence of false teaching. But furthermore your accountability before God is greater than mine because of your position as an elder. According to James 3:1 not many of you should become teachers my brothers for you know, that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.

1 Timothy 5:19 commands do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. And so therefore in obedience to the Bible our church bylaws the elder

affirmation of faith and in the confidence and leading of the Holy Spirit, I am admitting these charges of sin against you in front of these witnesses present tonight.

But to be clear, I'm not holding you. Andy nor any other elder to a one to two strikes in your outlander developership. That's unbiblical. It's arrogant, it's ungodly. Josh Weedman says in his article from January 28th, 2020 pastors and elders are not supposed to be perfect. But rather they need to show humble repentant hearts that propel them to a poor wickedness and pursue righteousness.

And Brian Hodge says: We're not looking for one who has never sinned nor are we looking for one who will never sin again. However, he should be one who's pattern of life is to shun simple things and strive to live righteously. This is one who walks in the light maintaining fellowship with God.

Also to be clear, I'm not implying that there's just a couple of offenses that have occurred as individual events, but rather I'm asserting that your behavior toward me both privately and publicly is displaying a pattern of attacking rather than shepherding. And justifying rather than repenting. And this pattern collectively shows to me, not only the disqualification from office of elder but indications of spiritual abuse.

And so I pray that you would recognize the depth of your depravity. This part is Steve's language actually. And fall on your face and repentance before the judge of the secrets of the hearts of men. Please step down from leadership for being so blinded and for leading others astray in this perversion of the gospel.

And I pray that this rebuke would be received as a kindness that leads you to repentance modeled after our savior. And I stand ready to offer the arm of forgiveness in Jesus name, we knew extend the arm of repentance in submission to Christ our Lord. I have godly affection for you and godly sorrow for even having to share these prophetic words.

Tom Lutz: I'm gonna ask you a question because I want to make sure I uh, I understand you used a term. I'm at the top of four A is where I'm at top of page 2. This is gonna make sure because I'm not familiar with it. You say here you you you, meaning Andy, used coded language to accuse me of being emotional manipulative in bringing a false claim of concern. Tell me understand coded language, coded language. I want to make sure I'm appreciating that right.

Janette: So at the QSM when he was asked, what do you mean and you got to clarify said the way that this? I don't remember exactly the way that this conversation is going is an example of what Joe Rigney is talking about in the episode.

And part of the content of the episode is that when a woman asks their husband to apologize for something if he doesn't think he sinned he shouldn't apologize. Women can be emotional. They could be manipulative. And so, that's part of where Joe Rigney says it's hard to tell who the real victim is.

And so I interpreted those words, said at in a public way, when the way that this episode is going is an example of what happened it or what Joe Rigney's talking about. I immediately my ears went back to what I had heard in that episode. That's what I heard. I heard coded language referring to what was in that episode but in a public way.

Tom: So is it I'm going to say it differently because I want to make sure I understand what you're saying. So you what I hear you say is Andy's response and engagement with you at points in the QSM was analogous to what Joe Rigney was saying happens. I'm making that connection the right way.

Yes, and then in his text to [REDACTED] he flat out said we're emotional, emotional blackmail and manipulative. Okay. So, that [REDACTED] here it's like if it was. If it was a misunderstanding if I didn't hear that if it wasn't coded language and if it wasn't that, then it was definitely said about us.

Tom: Okay. All right.

Janette: Explicitly.

Tom: Okay, thank you for explaining that.

[REDACTED] So I was just gonna ask. Andy do you have questions if you have clarifying questions of what genetic and Steve shared.

Andy: I do I want to take a whole lot of time at that point.

Steve T: Well as as the reminder. Tonight we have a hard stop at 7:30 we have to go pick up our 12 year old at 8

Tom: Okay from okay, so you do all right push we can push it a little bit but thank you for reminding okay, all right, thank you. I I didn't want to assume that you did or didn't so it's helpful to know that we do you know, we we do we do need to be thoughtful about time, all right?

Andy: I don't have a big long n

Tom: No, no and you don't need to but I appreciate that you've put this together and provided it to us because I wouldn't have been able to take notes, that well, so thank you. But Andy I would love to hear you tell your story here.

Andy: Some of the backstory here is Joe Rigney is someone I love and respect. He's a friend. I spend a lot of time talking with him about his work on empathy for the last year and a half. I saw the Man Rampant episode once when it came out. I haven't seen it since so I've given him feedback on some of his writings, especially his fourth article. He talked a lot about it and I

found it helpful. So I think of his views on it. I think of our conversations in that fourth article and he's just really helpful on this issue. I appreciate it.

In the process of selecting Joe as our school's next president, it's significant that there's 3 groups of leaders that really carefully scrutinized Joe. Which included asking a lot about this issue.

And I was part of two of those groups, so the first group was the school's presidential succession commission. And it's with the school's Board of Trustees appointed and we spent hours and hours of talking about the meetings and talking to candidates and talking to Joe about this. And the Board of Trustees appointed him as the president and then the elders collectively affirmed this with the trustees.

So that's been a ton of work and I suppose. Is it okay if I've talked about some of my intent here?

Tom: Yeah, okay.

Andy: Yeah, so my intent was in no way to hurt you. It was for again. I didn't find any of this. I didn't know I came in thinking it was a budget meeting, we'd be in and out. My attempt was to protect the church from going down a road that I perceived, perhaps wrongly, that I perceived to be dangerous.

So I perceived. Perhaps wrongly, that one effect of this motion whether you intended it or not would be that it would drive a wedge between our church and our school. And I perceived, maybe wrongly, and I perceived that the motion would publicly distance the church from Joe Rigney prior to his assuming the presidency of our school.

Now, it helps. I thought through this and I think I can own these seven unwise actions. I can briefly state them. My words at the QSM have the impact of effectively shutting on the conversation. I deeply regret that. Second, my words of the QSM had the impact of being intimidating to some members. I deeply regret that.

Third my words at the QSM had the impact of feeling like an ultimatum or a threat. I deeply regret that. Fourth, my words of the QSM had the impact of hurting some members. The last thing I wanted to do. Five my words at the QSM were unwise in the moment. Oh I wish I could take them back. 6. My words of the QSM may have misjudged and uncharitably interpreted you motion. So I may have read more into it than was there. Is it okay if I ask you questions here, Tom?

Tom: Yeah.

Andy: Yeah, okay, so I wasn't sure you wanted me elders to publicly distance themselves from Joe Rigney's views to basically say Joe Rigney is wrong. The motion doesn't technically require

that conclusion. Perhaps this is why I thought that's where going when you already had given reasons to support it. It seemed like you reasons were that the teaching was harmful, hurtful. It seemed like it was that you were wanting us to say that Joe Rigney's wrong.

But, if what you intended is more to say, Sure, not Joe Rigney is wrong, but Joe views are notre not our churches views. And that's it. Then I've misunderstood, you know, and I am glad that that's all you intended. Okay so do you mind clarifying that for me?

Janette: Yeah so the actually do you want to answer

Steve: Sure sure well and I don't know that I don't have an in front of me so I don't recall the exact wording. But the intent was that the elders would issue a, a statement of separation. A statement separating the views of Dr. Joe Rigney in this particular episode from the teaching of Bethelham Baptist Church. And then we said put a requirement on the timing of the statement. Our our intent, my explanation at the microphone from what I recall, was to clarify we're not seeking to cancel anyone. We're not seeking to denounce or uh, you know argue against Joe Rigney's views But, separate that particular teaching from the teaching of Bethlehem Baptist Church,

Janette: I don't think the word cancel even came up at the QSM. I think the word cancel didn't come up until your email to the QSM attendees. But I do recall Steve saying we don't want because you had spoken through and then he got up and said we don't want you to change your use. and QSMs get really tricky because people aren't supposed to speak more than twice.

And I had already given the motion and then I was permitted to speak to the motion and so I wasn't sure of the QSM rules. Like am I permitted to get back up and clarify again or is it like nope? Roberts rules you're hogging the microphone. So Steve jumped up and that's when he said we don't want you personally to change your views at all. your review stands.

And it wasn't about changing that it was about separating the views of one man from the teachings of the church. I wish I could have or would have gone back and elaborated more about the abuse seminar on June 1st of 2019 that was held at the downtown campus with Chris Moles. and the whole purpose of that seminar was how to identify and respond to abuse and so because that happened in June and was in all campus event and then this episode came out. And I think I was able to share in the QSM the ways that some assumptions could be made to link the views of and teachings in that episode to the views and teachings of the church. And so the intention of the motion was to remove assumptions and just separate them. But I was hoping Steve was clear at the QSM. and it's it goes fast, nothing is. Hindsight's 20/20 when you have more time to digest.

Andy: Like I heard most what you said, actually while you're talking. I was doing a text from [REDACTED] and trying to talk to different people and..

Janette: Yeah, it's too fast, it's too fast and so.

Andy: Okay yeah so I've listed seven things I can own. Here's the seventh. My follow up email was unclear in a few areas. I wanted to speak to all the elders suggest to somehow speaking for all the elders to mention that I had, excuse me, want to speak to all the others suggest to someone I was speaking for on the elders and then I were that highly doubt, they would suggest that I know the mind of all the elders and I didn't I didn't intend that.

I have more thoughts but I don't want to speak out of turn.

Tom: oh I think it's helpful. I mean go ahead.

Andy: okay we've got [REDACTED] kids and we distinguish between when to say I'm sorry and when to say I'm sorry, please forgive me, so one of the kids chuck the block across the room and get their sister ahead.

If it was an accident. That's a I'm sorry. But you don't say please forgive me, but if she took aim and whacked her, that's a I'm sorry, please forgive me. Content matters. So we distinguish between the two and I think that's a pretty important distinction and sometimes a sister will come to one of us complaining that they feel hurt by something one of their sisters did.

And if they come to us with basically the logic I'm hurt therefore, she sends against me we say well maybe she did maybe she didn't let's talk what happened and sometimes we maybe wrongly judge it but we're trying to twist him to say I don't think that's just a sin against you.

And try to help them work through that we found to be helpful so I know you've already written out charges but would you be willing to consider listening to my intent and reconsider some of your charges because we haven't even talked and these are pretty strong charges.

My intent was not the harm anymore. I think what's happened is the impact has been. Massive way bigger than I realized it's like we're backing up your car smashing car behind you, oh. Yeah, I didn't mean but if people had the impact if you might as well, you know punched on the gas and purposely destroyed a car so I think intent matters.

One thing I've done is I've tried to discern if I'm guilty of the what's the category of unintentional sin. So I I contacted Jason DeRouchie, he's a Old Testament professor and said brother help me here. I want to know does this apply to me in a situation?

And he wrote me a really really helpful, helpful email with this. I'll give you some highlights. This is the Bible distinguishes on premeditated accidental acts. Versus unpremeditated spiteful facts and whether you feel only sorrow or also seek forgiveness is fully contingent on your heart during the act. I say this because we're not dealing with an explicit violation of a given law, whether it's ceremonial or moral.

So what's at stake is the intent of your speech. Then I explain what happened at the QSM and said you didn't come to the QSM ready to sinfully malign or harm. but the lack of premeditation does not mean you didn't sin. Nevertheless the hurt of another does not mean you did sin either and he points to Numbers 30:24-25.

Some of it says, he pushed him out of hatred or hurled something at him lying and wakes that he died or an enmity struck him down with his hands that he died. Then he was struck the bullsh*it we put death. He's a murderer. But if he pushed him suddenly without enmity or hurled anything on him without lying in weight or used a stone that would cause death and without seeing him drop it on him so that he died though, he was not his enemy and did not seek his harm, then the congregation shall judge.

So now Jason concludes it according to that tax and others like access 21 divided in 19 Joshua 20. A judge needs to identify whether your words or hurled in hatred. Or enmity or whether they're proclaimed without hatred or enmity. They do act in spite or anger or out of pure heart?

And he says having your thought through that matters. I'm not sure whether we should regard accidental harm as unintentional sin for the text is clear that such as not worthy of death. Nevertheless because the manslayer had to wait to return to his family until the death of a high priest. God may indeed count these as actual sins, even atonement.

So, My hesitancy here is it's it would be so. Relieving to this say please forgive me for XYZ and shake hands or how you can move on but I, I'm afraid that if I did that at this point. I would be lying to make peace. So, I feel terribly that I hurt you and I own that and I regret it and I'm so sorry. I'm not convinced that I sinned against you. I had 0 ill intent against you. And I could walk through charge by charge to explain that, if it would be helpful.

Tom: So the the timekeeper in me is sensitive here and yet this. This becomes really the next stage in the conversation and that is. What you've shared. Andy what you shared and to to define the problem right to boil it down. So I can appreciate Andy's wrestling with this and yet you know you illuminated some things in your which are not only the words that I heard exchanged in the email that I read but at least you know, you you talk about conduct thatt Andy had with [REDACTED] where your your view is and I'm not disagreeing with you, I'm just trying to make sure I'm understanding it. Your view is that. In that moment. Andy was gossiping about you. Or or something to that effect or you know what I mean was not was not talking in a healthy sheperding way when he what he and [REDACTED] were sharing.

So there's clearly things there and you know, I'm I'm looking at this and. You know, could I take all of that and and encapsulate three statements that you would say, you know, your call you're saying Andy did the following right? I mean, there's some themes to these even though you have them illuminated as seven different things, I might say there's really significant shepherding sins there's you know, some kind of an abusive power and authority both in shutting down conversations and shaming you know what I mean?

That's the next step is to articulate them clearly. But Andy also to have you know from his perspective he heard him say it was not his intention doesn't mean it didn't happen. And I appreciate what Andy's done with reaching out to Jason because there is such a thing as unintentional sin. Intent does matter. How do we wrestle with that? In pursuing peace here, and I'm mindful about seven. It's about 7:30.

Jantte: Can I can I respond?

Tom: Absolutely,

Janette: I think. There is intent and there's impact. If you back your car into someone and you say oops you you can say I'm sorry and you may not have to offer forgiveness but you will offer your insurance and your insurance will pay for that damage. And so it may not be labeled forgiveness, but there is some transaction even for something that's not intentional.

And some of the things that I am charging tonight are not only in the, from the QSM specifically or from the email, but I do believe that there's a pattern from, that was repeated not only from the QSM but repeated in your email. And One of those is to claim I did an intend, I didn't intend.

And yet you're able to understand the impact that you've had. Maybe you didn't intend to have a congregant come to you. In the. Process of Matthew 18:15 to say I was really bothered by or whatever words they used by the QSM or the email or whatever they came to you.

But when you add to that conversation, did you know that [REDACTED] told the Takata's not to bring that motion because it would be divisive.

Did you know that she has a Facebook post that names Man Rampant and and uses my name sarcastically. So when I get a text from a congregant who comes to me and says, this was said about you is that true. She did not come to me because she was thinking He's probably wrong. She came to me: Did you do that? Did a pastor tell you not to bring a motion? Because it would be divisive and you intentionally did that? That was my sister coming to me and checking me on sin and I said no that's not true. That's not what [REDACTED] said.

But that conversation had no place. No place in a one-on-one conversation where someone comes to you to confront you on harm. So whether they brought it up or you brought it up whether you intended to gossip or slander. Intent doesn't matter. You gossiped about us. You slandered us. You falsely accused us.

I'm searching my Facebook over and over again doing searches of Joe Rigney of Man Rampant of Douglas Wilson of Andy Nacelli. I'm like, oh look in 2013, there it is. I named Joe Rigney because I have a little guy who's now eight and when he was a year and a half I took a video of him throwing a baseball and he's left-handed and I tagged Joe Rigney a 2013 and I said, You're looking for a South Paw? I know you coach baseball. Would you take my little guy in a few years?

Or I tagged him in mom's because when you do a search, this is me the next day trying to figure out like. This is me the next day having a sister come to me and ask me about my behavior.

She says to me, did you delete the post?

It would help me to know who you're talking about because I never said that

Janette: [REDACTED].

Andy: I talked to [REDACTED].

Janette: Right and [REDACTED] came to me and said did you do this and her heart posture was it must have been me who was insubordinate to the pastor. it must have been me who deleted a post

Andy: Because but I didn't say that about you no it's it's it's helpful. I mean, I I think I've talked to Steve directly this is a communication breakdown from me to [REDACTED]

Janette: I've talked to [REDACTED] directly. This isn't a communication breakdown.

Andy: I'm talking specifically about the Facebook thing. Someone is miscommunicating or remembering because I've never even thought what you just said.

Tom: Regarding on Facebook?

Andy: Regarding me you mentioned me or Joe Rigney on Facebook. I've never said anything. I could go into detail to help

Tom: but no I mean and no, I think it's

Janette: I understand intent I get it we have [REDACTED] kids right we're like all of us in this room have kids we understand that there's times when your child does something or we do something and we don't intend we can't even foresee the impact.

But I also firmly believe that we we say prayers like. May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be pleasing and acceptable to you oh God because we cannot judge whether our meditations and our words are pleasing to him, so we have to ask him.

Create in me a clean heart, oh God and renew a right spirit in me. You have to be the one as the judge of the secrets of the hearts of men. The heart is deceitfully wicked. So if I don't want to own any offense towards you if I don't want to own my impact or my intent on the way that I brought the motion.

Maybe I could say I didn't intend for it to be that way. And we move on. But that's not my posture towards you. I want to say I see. I see how the way that I worded the motion and the fast pace of the QSM led it to land on you in a way that we didn't intend that I didn't attend.

I see that and I'm sorry for that. And I prayed and I'm asking you to forgive me for the the impact of the way that I brought the motion. I don't want to just own impact. I want to own. Intent as well or I don't want to focus so much on intent that I can't own the impact with you.

Andy: When our Lord says I ask you to forgive you do. So of course I forgive you but I would also argue I don't think you need to ask forgiveness if you didn't intend to hurt me. If you think you need to ask if you.

Would it be helpful if that's going some of what's this accuser well.

Tom: Well, I'm sensitive to time. I'm because I'm a. Some sensitive of time and I know I don't want I I want I at least you know, I at least want to leave this at a point where we can go from this with some thoughts about next steps some probably maybe some follow-up examinations of our own selves to have and to reflect on these things and come back and meet again, so I'm looking kind of for that that break and one of the things I think.

And and it's because I don't know it as well but I suspect it's there and I want to understand it. I think it would be helpful for you Andy to understand. That Janette I. I think what I think there's reasons why the Joe Rigney Man Rampant video concerns you and I think you I think you know of others that it's hard thing to deal with and I think it would be and I think that I think that's an I want to be thoughtful here but I think that's all behind one of the reasons why you feel it's important to separate the views that Joe expressed in Man Rampant from the teachings at Bethlehem because there are there are wounded people here in the flock.

That matters to them

Steve T: What one of the things that I think to that end, yes. I think that's a discussion that is valuable but in the context of this meeting and this reconciliation. The contents of the motion itself to me feels irrelevant. The the thing that's going on here is beyond what was in the motion right and is what happened because of the motion or as a result or things after the fact. And so. That might be interesting information it might be reasonable background, but regardless of whether any of us believe that Joe Rigney is absolutely right or absolutely wrong or we're somewhere in the middle.

What happened here between us and between you Andy is now far beyond the motion itself

Janette: and the context that you set in your email this morning is that we wouldn't be talking about the motion

Tom: no I be true but I think you know, I've heard two things that are I think just helpful for us to make sure we remember as we as we go from this and reflect back on it.

Andy's there there there's an understanding and a respect and a love that Andy has for Joe Rigney and his teaching that the Nasellis have found helpful and so he would be he would be predisposed to give Joe Rigney the benefit of the doubt and he's going to be an advocate for Joe Rigney, you know, he he brings that into the conversation maybe unconsciously, but it's there just like, Between your own experience and the experience of others, you know, you are looking out for the weak and vulnerable and you see you see this as and that's your motive that was I I see that as a motivation for the one of the reasons why you made the motion that you did and I just want to I just want to illustrate that both of those are noble and honorable things so as we work to reconcile the difference and, The offenses that have occurred.

I don't want to lose sight of. You know, there's no guile in what you introduced as a motion it came from a place of saying I think this is important that we do this because we have people that are hurting. same point time and he's got extensive experience with Joe Rigney to say man, he's seen the scholarly approach in a number of things and they walk through things together and it's like he, he knows Joe you know what I mean, so I I think that's important.

I see your finger over there. Stephen go ahead.

Steven Lee: I appreciate you guys sharing. I obviously know Andy I just want to maybe offer I think two key questions seem to be bubbling up from this conversation. I think one is how do we understand and do we ask for forgiveness for our full impact what I just saw you do Janette is asked for forgiveness for her full impact and not just intent and so I think you're modeling something and you're wanting that reciprocated in Andy and Andy is I think, Has a fundamentally different understanding of that and I think that's a good question for us to ponder as we leave from here, you know, how do we understand asking for forgiveness for our full impact because there are legitimately people who feel deeply hurt deeply wounded by things that have no ill intent and so someone runs you over they they were glancing down they had no hurtful impact they weren't trying to run you over but they ran you over and so how do we deal with that?

I think that's a really good question to deal with so that feels really significant. I think the other is it feels like To me that there has been a number of misinterpretations and potentially uncharitable judgments because of the the difficulty of the setting so there's a motion being made it's very high-paced kind of quick and perhaps your motion is being judged uncharitably or you both are being judged uncharitably in that moment and then I think when Andy got up to speak he had certain intentions, but I think his words landed with.

You know with the impact it had and I think there are some who are reading him uncharitably and then with the apology as well, which I read in advance and added correction and asked him to change a number of sections. I think that is also landing with significant hurtful impact and I think could be read charitably or could be read less charitably and so I think those feel like two

key areas how do we understand asking for forgiveness for her full impact and then how do we judge one another that are both charitably and/or?

When we feel that we've been heard or read or judged uncharitably. So those feel like two significant rounds. I don't mean to say that I've got to figure out. I don't think I do but those are two things. I'm noticing. No, I think you're wrong. That's helpful.

Janette: Ming Jinn, do you have anything? Are you still there?

Ming-Jinn: I am still here. Yes. Well, I mean noting the time. And you know I don't want to kind of open up a whole other conversation if we don't have time to to get to it. So, Takatas, how are you guys you guys are probably going to be late now.

Janette: What we're gonna we're gonna pick up one kid before the other is how we're gonna do this. We're gonna hit 35 before we hit Philips.

Ming-Jinn: Tom is it okay if I respond to this?

Tom: Yes, certainly.

Ming-Jinn: Steven you asking if we need to seek forgiveness for impact, that certainly is an important question and Andy going to Jason DeRouchi seeking that biblical wisdom and categories that really is. Talk about as a church both to grow in our understanding of not only biblical wisdom, but also how to love each other. I think I do hear. Andy saying, I can see how I backed my car into you and You know, I feel terrible about that. And I think I also hear Janette saying, okay, I I hear you saying that but you know, I at risk of putting words in Janette's mouth, it's kind of like okay but you backed over me and if you backed over a bunch of people at the QSM, you know, what you know Janette you you began a metaphor about an insurance, you know that you offer your insurance to pay. So, I guess my question for Janette might be to elaborate on. What does that payment look like?

Steve Takata: I'm just kind of chuckling, because you know as with any analogy, there's a point in which the analogy breaks down right but. I mean it yeah to carry on the. I at least for me short answer is I'm not sure. The longer answer in sort of playing with these analogy further.

If if there's a wake of unintended dented bumpers going down the street. You know, is there a point at which that individual who did not intend to run over those cars should have their license suspended. You know, I I think it's it's an analogy but I think that's sort of what I'm wrestling with is.

What is the implication? For. What feels to me what looks to me what sounds to me like a pattern of. Unintended. Damage, but damage nonetheless and. Multiple instances. And so you know, I I don't know what yeah this is kind of where the analogy starts to break down is with with forgiveness with repentance.

There isn't...Christ paid at all. There isn't. For for either personal or corporate sins there isn't a an exchange of currency that makes everything okay, you know there. I think that's where I don't and it it's not a punitive thing, it's not like well because of these sins therefore this is your 30 days of community service, you know, that's that's not the way that that sin and repentance and forgiveness works yeah.

Ming-Jinn: Yeah, yeah that's very helpful. And again it's just an and analogy but I thought I wanted to give you an opportunity to speak more to it. Maybe if I can just say one more thing. You know Andy, the 7, you said that I think I can own these Unwise actions and you listed 7 of them.

And I do think there might be you know, not necessarily in the spirit of payment. And you Takatas, I'm not reading anti-Romans 8:1 kind of payment. That's not what I'm hearing from you at all. I'm hearing the opposite. But for the sake of clarity or the hurting members of our body, I do wonder if it would be appropriate for Andy to write those seven unwise actions and as a follow up to Andy your original email. I think it would be very helpful for our people to hear: hey Andy recognizes he does understand these seven impacts and then perhaps there's others that you would add in from what you've heard tonight from Janette, perhaps, there's not not suggesting that there is just saying within the realm of possibility and I think that you know, if you were to write another email to the same body the QSM members that you addressed before to say not only did I shut down the conversation unintentionally, but that my words felt intimidating they could feel like a threat or Ultimatum.


They hurt people and also that you know, you didn't mean to speak for all the elders even though the the words could be interpreted that way. I just think that might be another way forward in this particular case. I'll pause for now because of time.

Janette: I feel rude, but we really do have to get children.

Tom: I I understand that you need to get children, um, so what I. I'll reach out to to everyone because what I'd like to do is I'd like I'd like to have a follow up conversation with you with you two. I'd like to have a conversation with Andy separately because I'd like to get us back together.

I will tell you the one thing that I see here and I'm just reading your words back to make sure you know, and and this is on your page five, right? I'm admitting these charges of sin against you in front of these witnesses now. So I I mean, that's clear.

That does trigger a process at Bethlehem outside of what we do here in this room to mediate this particular conflict and I I can't I we talked about the constitution last night, but there are some things that will happen as a result of that and just and and I just that's that's a fact.

I mean, it's not meant to dissuade you from this at all or change this. I just want you to know that separately. I mean, Andy and Steven Lee and I and others will talk. About that and say okay out of respect for what you've done and according to the Constitution what does that mean because they're and that may be an independent, you know, it may it will be distinct from this but certainly relates to this and I just I want to be clear about that with you. 

Knowing that you guys need to go. I'm going to pray really quick a reminder that so far that I mean we Steven Lee and I and we'll have to share some of this within the elder be within the elder council of what you've done, but other than that what we've talked about here needs to stay here at this juncture is that seem is that seem right and good to you you okay with that.

Steven, would you pray?

Steven: The most high king, Father, we are children. Of the most high. King father and we thank you that. We could have this time Lord. I thank you for the hearts that were shared thank you for the things that were explained the I think the progress that was made Lord willing and yet what we ask for more where we look to you we thank you for the blood of the cross that washes us clean as wide as snow and I thank you for the Takatas, thank you for the Nasellis.

Lord, thank you for their desire to honor you and all things and we pray that through this through future. Activities. Lord that all of this would resound to the praise and glory of Christ. So we entrust this time to you. You thank you for, in Jesus name.