

The Way WE Deal with Sinning Brethren

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[0:00] If you would please take your Bibles or your devices and go to Matthew chapter 18.

Matthew's Gospel chapter 18. If you're visiting with us or left your cell phone at home you can pull out that black Bible in the chair in front of you.

Go to the back where you'll find the New Testament. And find page 15. Page 15. There you'll find Matthew chapter 18.

We're doing, excuse me, starting in verse 15 through verse 20. What's classically known as the passage on church discipline. Matthew chapter 18 verses 15 through 20.

And I'll read the text intermixing some of my own translation from Greek along with the New American Standard here as I read. And if your brother sins, some manuscripts have sins against you, go, reprove him between you and him only.

[1:17] If he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two more with you in order that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

And if he refuses to listen to them, tell the church. And if he disobeys even the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

Truly I say to you, whatever you shall bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven. And whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven. Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth about any matter that they may ask, it shall be done for them from my Father who is in heaven.

For two or three have gathered together in my name, there I am in their midst. First, in Article 2, Section 4 of the U.S. Constitution, it states that, the President, Vice President, and all civil officers of the United States shall be removed from office on impeachment for and conviction of treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanors.

That's it. It's pretty vague. Other things like crimes and misdemeanors is not defined. Which is probably done on purpose. Actually Congress came up with procedures by which they go through an impeachment process.

[2:48] I'll read these to you. This is how it goes, the impeachment process. First, and there's quite a few steps actually. First, an impeachment resolution must be introduced by a member of the House of Representatives.

Next, the Speaker of the House must then direct the U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary, or a special committee, to hold a hearing on the resolution to decide whether to put the measure to a vote by the full chamber and when to hold such a vote.

A simple majority of the Judiciary Committee must approve the resolution. If the Judiciary Committee approves the resolution, it moves to a full vote on the House floor. If a simple majority of those present and voting in the House approve an article of impeachment, then the President is impeached.

The procedure then moves to the Senate where a trial is held to determine if the President committed a crime. There's no set procedure for the trial. How it is conducted would be set by the Senate leadership.

Next, members of the House serve as managers in the Senate trial. Managers serve a similar role as prosecutors do in a criminal trial. They present evidence during the procedure.

[3:59] The President would have counsel to represent him at the Senate process. The Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court presides over the trial. Senators listen to the evidence presented including closing arguments from each side and retire to deliberate.

Last, Senators then reconvene and vote on whether the President is guilty or not guilty of the crimes he's accused of. It takes a two-thirds vote of the Senate to convict. If the President is found

guilty he's removed from office and the Vice President is sworn in as President.

There's the process those are the procedures. Now, I bring this up not to be good what's presently happening with our President but there's other things that we're given procedures to follow.

What to do this. Step one, step two, step three, step four. Stages, procedures, phases, procedures. We have those in different aspects of life where there's small things like for some of us men were trying to put a new faucet in and we have to follow of course we don't follow the instructions.

What do you need? I need these instructions? I can figure this out myself. Well, there's procedures and there's steps she's supposed to follow. Jesus also gives procedures, specific ways on how to deal with sinning brethren within His church.

[5 : 26] Sinning brethren within His church. Matthew's theme of his book, of his gospel, bow down and worship Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God, the King of Israel.

And today, this response of bowing down and worshiping Him is done in the way we deal with sinning brethren. We bow down, we worship Jesus, the Messiah, Son of God, King of Israel, in the way we deal with sinning brethren.

the Father in Christ, brought about by the Holy Spirit, loves His little ones.

Remember that phrase in verses 1-14. Little ones is not children, it's Christians, followers of Jesus, disciples of Christ, however else you want to define that.

Those who believe in Jesus, that's what little ones means. the Father loves them, those who have received a Son, the Son who showed humility, taking on human flesh, who welcomes us into the kingdom.

[6 : 44] We looked at this last week, the attitude of humility and hospitality, and we saw that in the gospel, God is the very epitome of what He calls us and commands us to do and to be.

Jesus humbled Himself. God welcomes us in the same way we should have that attitude towards each other. Towards His little ones.

Ah, but the question, how do you know if someone who's strayed truly does belong to the Father or is one of His little ones? And how does one deal with a little one who is not taking radical steps to deal with the entrapments in their lives?

Christ tells us how in these verses. Entrapments of their lives. Entrapments in their lives. That's from verses 8 and 9.

Excuse me, of chapter 18. Where Jesus says, if your right hand and your foot calls you to sin, cut it off, throw it from you. Remember, He uses hyperbole. If your right eye, gouge it out, cut it out, throw it from you.

[7 : 48] Why is He saying this? He's saying, take radical steps to remove evil in your life. We should take radical steps.

Well, what do you do with the brother or sister who's not doing that? And the person sins against you. Jesus tells us how. Jesus gives us both the procedures and the promises when we must confront a brother or sister.

And again, Jesus, I brought this up last week again, Jesus used specific terms to convey familial love and connection, interconnection with each other.

Children, little ones, brothers. Next week, we'll look at fellow slaves. He does this on purpose because this is set in the context of a local church, a local body, a group of believers who are assembled, gathered together.

The Greek word church, ecclesia, just means assembly, gathering. And it's the attitude as done in the attitude of humility and service.

[9 : 05] The attitude of humility and service continues as one deals with a specific conflict with an erring brother or sister in Christ. And remember, this is wrapped, we looked at this last week, it's wrapped in the tortilla of forgiveness.

If you're gonna have a burrito, you have the meat, the guacamole, all the stuff that goes right inside, the beans. My daughter used to say, I see the beans, I see the cheese, I see the meat, I see the cheese, but where's the beans?

He would say. Where's the frijoles? James, where's the frijoles? He would say. That was data.

That's what he would say. That's how we would talk. Seriously, that's how he would talk.

But you have to have the tortilla or else it's not a burrito. This whole section is wrapped in the tortilla of forgiveness and restoration.

The goal is reconciliation and return, not severance or leaving the church. I cannot stress this enough.

[10:22] Leaving a church in a situation like this is simply not on the table as far as Jesus is concerned. It shouldn't happen.

Jesus assumed that his fellow disciples and followers would work matters out, not walk away. And it's worked out so that life can maintain as normal.

not in fear. Families, married, uncles, brothers, sisters, family.

Things happen. Conflicts take place, right? And you know there's certain things that, hey, you know what? That pushes buttons. I'm going to be careful of that. The person who pushes a button, I'm going to be careful of that.

Because you just know and you're sensitive to that. And you're gracious in that way. And there's certain things you approach, you approach it one way like, you know, that was dumb. I shouldn't have said that.

[11:32] I shouldn't have done that. You know, the spouse, I shouldn't have done that. I should have said that. And there's forgiveness, restoration, and you move on. You continue. Life is normal. That's the way you should be in the church.

No. There's a time and place to leave a church. False teaching, sin not being dealt with properly. Yeah.

But leaving a body because a person sins against you or you against another just should not happen. I mean, the humility, service, and love for the little ones is the foundational basis of this whole section permeating it like yeast.

It's drought. that's why it was so vital for us to really take time and I'm gonna encourage you if you have not read it to read verses 1-14.

You can listen to the message. There's probably other better messages on 1-14 than mine. So do that. But that's what undergirds this whole thing. This church discipline is verses 1-14.

[12:52] Humility, hospitality, forgiveness. And after Jesus described to the disciples that they would be the foundational authority of the church, Jesus took that same phrase and applied it to the local church.

We have that same authority. We'll look at that later. So these, excuse me, merciful, gracious procedures are necessary.

Sins and offenses are inevitable. It's inevitable. I will offend you. I will sin against you. Hey. And you will sin against me and you'll sin against each other.

Or you just say stupid things. Jesus said that in verse 7, offenses are inevitable.

But the goal is total restoration. So the overriding response and top rule within the faith community is forgiveness. We should be known as a forgiving community to this community.

[14:12] We should be known as a people who are forgiving towards each other within a local body.

This enhances and puts flares on a community witness, on our evangelism, corporate evangelism. That's what this does. So, there's two main points here. First, procedures. Second, promises. But notice, we have to put some adjectives in front of the procedures.

Humble, hospitable procedures. We approach these procedures, not just, no, it's humility, it's hospitality, it's welcoming, I want to serve you.

That's testamentality. And notice, the humble, hospitable procedure number one, verse 15. A continuation of Jesus' teaching on showing humility and service towards God, towards little ones, from a brother who entraps to a brother who has been sinned against if, but if your brother sins.

[15:35] The hypothetical situation he presents here. Notice the possible, positive, and negative responses. The positive response, if he listens to you, you've won your brother.

It results in reconciliation. The word won literally means you win over from estrangement. There's been an estrangement and you win him over. You win her over.

One must not entrap another believer or sin against a fellow Christian. If that happens, the first step is to have a conversation with a brother or sister. Notice he says, numeric and sentence says in private, literally, it's between you and him only.

Nobody else needs to know. The two of you. Some manuscripts, if you notice, a little footnote says, has sinned against you, which seems to be like it was in the original.

But the conversation happens between the two of you and notice something as well. The offended person takes the initiative, not the person who did the sin.

[17:03] If your brother sins, you go. You correct. You do this. You should not wait for the person who did the sin to come to you. But to keep from bitterness and from gossip arising and taking a foothold within the community, deal with it.

I notice this dealt in all love and kindness. Again, the undergirdings of this, the tortilla, is forgiveness. It's wrapped in humility and a welcoming attitude and spirit.

Rebuke, he said, or reprove him. Correct based on evidence in order to persuade the offender to repent and then there can be reconciliation.

You won him. Correct based on evidence. Now it seems like, but even with the seeming things. Talk about it and bring things up lest bitterness take a foothold in our hearts.

Deal with things. Talk about things. It seemed like you meant to do this. I apologize. Please forgive me. I didn't mean to come across this way. This is what I was saying. Oh, I took it the wrong way.

[18:21] You know what that's like if you're married especially. If you have family that you're close to. You know what that's like. That happens in the church too. And once it's accomplished, the whole situation's over and done with.

It's done. You move on. You don't bring it up again. Have a conversation about it again. I mean maybe like, man, I just feel bad that I sinned against you.

Hey, hey, hey. I forgave you. Don't talk about that anymore. It's done. And I'm like, hey, remember the time when you, I didn't talk about that. And other people don't need to know.

Humble hospitable procedure number one. Known as humble hospitable procedure number two, verse 16. The negative. But if it does not listen, take one or two more with you in order that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established or confirmed.

Listen in the sense of obey that private rebuke. If she or he does not respond positively, the second step is to involve one or two others.

[19:37] And Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy chapter 19, verse 15. Now, there's two views on this. Either the witnesses, the one or two, testify to the rebuke, they watch the rebuke happen, or they testify to the actual sin that was committed.

my view is that these one or two are actual witnesses to the sin, not to the confrontation.

That's my view. because these quotes from Deuteronomy chapter 19, and that's how you present evidence. You don't convict somebody based upon a testimony of one person.

It's two or three people actually saw that person did something. That's why I think two or three witnessed to the sin. But whichever, notice, the point is that it still is before a small group of people. It's not meant to be made public. Wisdom is included here from me, and may be wise to include those who are in leadership of the church.

[20:50] Maybe it would be wise to include them as witnesses. Or it could be after this, but either way, you'll see how the final say of the matter does not rest with elders.

It rests with the congregation as a whole. Which is why we believe in congregationalism here at Cottonwood Bible Church. The congregation has a final say when it comes to not only a person coming in to become a member, but the person going out.

It's the congregation that has to vote on that. Not the pastor or a group of elders. Hospitable, humble hospitable procedure number two, unfortunately, that goes south.

So then you have humble hospitable procedure number three, verse 17. If the offender does not listen, refuses to listen to them, tell the church if they do not obey these two or three and the issue is not resolved, then the matter must be taken to the church at large.

And remember, here, in chapter 18, verse 17 of Matthew's gospel, and then Matthew's gospel chapter 16, verse 18, those are the only two places in all four gospels where you see the word church or ecclesia.

[22:11] He doesn't use it anywhere else. which is why I think here, in Matthew chapter 18, Jesus has the local church in mind.

In Matthew 16, I think he has the universal church in mind. Here, though, in chapter 18, he has the local church in mind, the local assembly, the local gathering. It would definitely be wise to include leadership at this point before bringing it before the church as a whole, if they're not used from verse 16 as witnesses.

But the church as a whole graciously calls the sinner to his senses. The offender is graciously given three opportunities to repent, but if she or he will not even listen to the higher earthly court of the local church, notice what Jesus says, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

Community fellowship should be withdrawn. Why? As a way to defibrillate the person into repentance. You know, a defibrillator, when the person's heart stops or it's off rhythm, you take a defibrillator and you shock them, right?

And it kicks, starts their heart once again. That's what this is meant to do. Community disfellowship is meant to defibrillate that person into repentance.

[23:45] The offender is regarded as a Gentile or a tax collector. She or he is now an outsider cut off from the faith community.

not to the point where she or he is not allowed to come to a service. Although there may be cases in terms of sexual offense where that would happen.

Because they should come to hear God's word preached. Okay, well, what does this mean then? Jesus says, what does this mean?

What does this mean? What does this mean? We treat them as a non-Christian, not a true follower of Jesus and calling him to repentance is a main topic of conversation with the goal of restoring this person to the faith, community, and fellowship and fellowship.

And we, here at Conway Bible Church, would go through the process of removing him or her from membership. Now, you don't know if they don't know Christ.

[24:58] You can't read their hearts, can you? It sure would be so much easier if you open their eyes and say, okay, you know Christ. You're eventually going to repent. You don't know that. You have to go based upon what's being said and the actions that they're doing.

The action of non-repentance, the action of, I don't care what you say, you as a church, I'm going to do what I want to do. So you have to treat them as such. And the main topic of conversation, it doesn't mean you don't converse with them anymore.

You should converse with them. But it's not just, hey, how about those cardinals? Or, hey, those cougars lost yesterday. That's sad. It's, so where are you at with everything, brother?

Where are you at with everything, sister? As your heart becomes soft because we love you, that becomes a topic of conversation, not just the latest football game.

The Father takes sin, takes sin seriously and loves his people too much to allow it to go unattended. It must be dealt with because it is an action of the church where they actually do God's specific will for his church.

[26:26] You'll see that in just a moment. and repeated rejection of the call to repent from a fellow disciple is really a rejection of Jesus and the Father.

A repeated rejection of the call to repent from a fellow disciple is really you're rejecting Jesus and the Father. because they sanction the judgment of other believers.

Friends, we don't judge the world. We're not meant to judge the world but we're called to judge each other. I mean, the phrases that Paul uses in 1 Corinthians 5 in reference to judgment.

He says in verse 12, for what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within? But those who are outside God judges. You expect non-Christians not to, you shouldn't say oh my God, you shouldn't say Jesus Christ in front of me.

Really? I mean, I know that's offensive, I get that. Or sinning and doing different things. I know that's offensive from a non-Christian but what do you expect?

[27:46] Of course they're going to act like that. Of course they're going to say stuff like that. But when Christians act like that, in a local body, we're meant to judge each other.

And we're meant to do that all with humility and hospitality. Here's the humble, hospitable procedures. And now notice the second part, steadfast, sure promises.

First you had the procedures done with humility, done with welcoming, hospitality, and serving others. And now you have steadfast, sure, certain promises.

You got three of them. First one, heavenly approval, verse 15, excuse me, verse 18. Truly I say to you, whatever you shall bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven.

and whatever you loosed on earth shall have been loosed in heaven. What's Jesus saying here? The authority behind this ominous task is the faith community.

[28:59] They act in congruence with God's will. If or when they do these steps in the way Jesus described, with the attitudes Jesus commanded, it is something always, always, always has

heaven's backing.

Jesus and the Father and the Spirit will back you up. That's what that means. Because Jesus uses the same phrase, words, that he used in chapter 16.

Remember? Chapter 16, he said, Peter, the keys of the kingdom are given to you, singular, wherever you, singular, bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, wherever you loosed on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

He gave Peter the authority of the church and with the disciples, they are the foundational authority of the church given to them.

Now Jesus uses the same words and phraseologies here. So what's he doing? Binding and loosing has to do with retention of sin or forgiving the sin.

[30 : 17] With loosing comes forgiveness, reconciliation, restoration. With binding comes withholding, forgiveness, exclusion, disfellowship.

If there's no repentance, how can you give reconciliation? If there's no repentance, how can you, life go back as normal? If there's no repentance, how can you have fellowship with the person again?

You can't. And now the church is making a judgment call with all humility and hospitality. It seems like this person is not a Christian.

Lord, we're going down this road. You have the approval of heaven. Why is this important?

Because the eternal destiny of this person is in jeopardy. Time will tell. Because you, we don't, you can't read their hearts.

[31 : 17] We can't read their hearts. We don't know. That's why we keep calling them to repentance and we just keep loving them. Because remember, what's the goal? Restoration.

What's the goal? Reconciliation.

It ain't over. It ain't over. But you have heaven's approval. So here's the authority that we have as a church, a local church.

One writer put it like this. The local church is the locus of authority. The locus of authority here is the local community.

It's not just Peter and the apostles. The faith community is authorized by heaven to carry this out in full. Remember, the Lord's prayer.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Let your kingdom come. Let your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Right? As God's will about this person has already been done in heaven, so it will take place on the earth as God's people call him or her to repentance.

[32 : 34] We're assured that doing this process is totally sanctioned by the Father who guides us and confirms to us these actions.

Which leads to a second promise. Heavenly answer. verse 19. Again, I say to you that if two of you agree on earth about any matter that they may ask it shall be done for them from my Father who is in heaven.

The two that Jesus speaks of here in verse 19 are the two from verse 16. This has absolutely nothing to do with prayer in general.

I cannot stress this enough. People use this verse and then verse 20 and say, look, we're praying together. There's two or three of us. We're gathered together. Jesus is here in the midst. That has nothing to do with that. Absolutely nothing.

Saying that this verse has to do with prayer in general in verse 20, it profanes the text and rips it out of its context. It has nothing to do with that.

[33 : 50] This is what it has to do with. As fellow disciples deal with an erring brother or sister, answer prayer, the prayer regarding this brother, we're praying for this person, is promised.

Our prayer becomes Jesus' prayer and when Jesus intercedes, oh, the Father will answer him, won't he? Jesus will answer our prayer, maybe not now.

Maybe it might take a month, two months, five months, five years, 20 years. But Jesus will answer. The Father will answer the prayer. That's what this has to do with. God will faithfully answer us and his answer might be no.

And his answer might be no, you will not be able to reconcile with the person because they don't know me or rather I don't know them. It's not up to us. Heavenly approval, heavenly answer and the notice heavenly attendance.

[35:07] Verse 20, for where two or three have gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them. Again, that's nothing to do with prayer in general.

This has to do with dealing with this person who's in sin. It is so enriching and comforting to have the very presence of Jesus amid the difficulties of the process of dealing with the sin of a fellow believer.

Because you know what? It's not easy. It's hard. He is there with the two or three who've gathered together to call a sinning brother or sister to repent.

He's there. He promises His presence. He promises He'll answer and the Father promises He has, we have His approval.

When our goal is to gently and graciously restore an erring brother or sister, the faith community that is gathered in the name of Jesus have the promise and confidence of His very presence.

[36:21] which is especially comforting when there can be backlash. When you have a lawsuit against you now.

When that person starts gossiping in the community. When you as a church start getting slandered. it's good to know Jesus is with you.

During this whole process verses 1 through 14 is in mind. Specifically verses 10 through 14 of chapter 18. Because we are the Father's agents who seek out strange sheep.

We don't despise them. We love them like the Father loves them. We go after those strange sheep out of love.

The title to a book is The Love of God. God will do whatever it takes to make you holy. That's how much He loves His sheep. This whole section one writer put it like this is quote permeated with humility familial love and a passion for forgiveness and restoration.

[37:43] All because that is the exact way the Father and the Son treated us in the gospel. God showed humility. God welcomed us. God welcomes you. If you're not a Christian today God welcomes you.

You should respond to Jesus. He is calling you to repent. He is calling you and you can have forgiveness of your sins. The call is to you.

The welcome is to you. You should respond to Jesus. You should trust Christ. All these merciful gracious procedures are necessary since sins and offenses they're inevitable friends.

But the goal is total restoration so the overriding response and top rule within the faith community is forgiveness. It's all wrapped in the tortilla of forgiveness.

Can't go without the tortilla. And that's going to be what we're looking at next week. Because Peter automatically brings up the question what about forgiveness?

[38:53] And Jesus says you can't go without it. The humility service and love for the little ones is the foundational basis of this whole section.

It is. As hard as it is as difficult as it is to go through this process is what undergirds it. It permeates it like yeast. Procedures promises all with humility all with hospitality forgiveness and restoration is the goal.

It worked out perfect to go through this text and then we celebrate the Lord's Supper. Because it's just a tangible way where we celebrate the gospel.

how God should have condemned us and yet he shows us great humility. Jesus was humble becoming obedient to the point of death and he welcomes us.

That's what we're going to celebrate in the Lord's Supper right? So this is for you. If you're not a Christian it's not for you. You can watch us. If you're a Christian you might say hey look I'm not a member of this church.

[40:22] If you come from a church of like faith and practice and for us as Baptists we believe you've been baptized by immersion as would be our preference. Prefer that. Partake of this with us.

You don't have to be a member here. But we do also ask though if you are a Christian and you have something against someone else another Christian or non-Christian for that matter we think it would be wise for you to not partake of the Lord's Supper.

Wait. Go. Try and reconcile with that brother or sister in Christ or brother or person non-Christian. You can only do what you can do right?

You can't force it. But try to reconcile and then next time we have the Lord's Supper partake with us. Here's tangible physical reminders of the gospel for you.

These don't do anything. It's juice and it's bread. It's not even unleavened bread. Is that even is that okay? I mean are we like in sin not doing that?

[41:29] It's okay. But the idea is the bread the sharing of the body of Christ and the juice represents his blood. Tangible ways where we see the gospel displayed.

the means of grace is not in the elements the means of grace is in the gospel itself what it points to. It points to Jesus. You're forgiven. You're shown grace.

So I want to encourage you at this time a few moments of silence where you can reflect and respond and let your mind dwell on the things from the word of God and recite the gospel to yourself and then in a few moments we'll have the men pass out the bread to you okay?

Okay. wildlife publish and thedest ==eral responses and image of beauty of Godorte and■■■ all spirit and in have come anytime a tom a room■■■ feeling whatever the everyone can don't just have to hear you