

The Value of a Brother and Sister

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[0 : 00] Matthew 18. Didn't realize there's been a pattern to some of the sermons. They might have seemed like they've been all over the place, but Dave and I have been spending time the last couple of months talking about certain aspects of ministry and certain aspects of the Christian life.

And there's been certain themes that we've wanted to land on. If you don't remember, Dave talked about this love that Jesus had for this Samaritan woman back in John 4 and John chapter 5.

And through that, he taught us what are some of the ways that we can respond to one another and love to difficult situations, times that are hard.

And we looked at in Mark chapter 7, we looked at the story of this Syrophenician woman, as commentators and scholars said, probably the most unclean person that could have ever approached Jesus Christ.

And through that, through her shame, she was loved and God responded and healed her. And last week, we met this man in Mark chapter 9 who had this son that was demon-possessed and lived in this gray zone as he brought his son to be healed to the apostles and they could not heal him.

[1 : 29] Just the fear and the discouragement he would have faced. And here, we have this teaching that Jesus gives us on what is the value of a brother and sister in Christ.

You'll notice that is my title, the value of a brother and sister in Christ. For you who might know this, I have brought up Matthew 18 verses 15.

This is the classical passage that churches use for church discipline. It's kind of hard sometimes to understand that we would read in a passage of that many throughout the ages have considered a passage for church discipline.

It's entitled, The Value of a Brother and Sister. But I wanted us to talk about how do we respond, not to Syrophenician Gentile people or to Samaritan women that we meet in the places where the Gentiles are, but how do we treat those of our own who are willingly falling into sin?

Those who are purposely desiring to disobey. And here in this passage, Jesus Christ gives us a wonderful message on what we are to do.

[3 : 06] Father, I just ask as we get into this subject, may you bring clarity to my words. May you bring strength to your words.

May we indeed see the great glorious God you are. May we see the love that you have for this church. And may you give us, some of us perhaps, a different understanding so that we may rightfully understand your purposes in these things.

It's a tough subject, right? This is a subject that a lot of churches do not want to talk about. It's uncomfortable. Perhaps when you hear the word church discipline, you might think it is ridiculous.

It's unloving. It's counter-evangelistic. It's controlling. Perhaps even legalistic, judgmental.

And the reality is I can understand all those things. However, as we go to God's word, the Bible actually talks about these things. And I'm hoping that you may understand along with me what God really desires and what Jesus Christ himself taught on this subject.

[4 : 27] The predication upon this subject that Jesus Christ is talking about. And he's actually mentioning this word church.

He's entering into this idea of church. And the church was to be a group of people called out, out of this world, to represent him. We saw an early vision of the church in Israel as it was pulled out to the society and to be a group which was supposed to demonstrate who God was.

We know and understand the failings of that. And then Jesus Christ calls this group of people who were renewed in heart and in spirit. As Ezekiel and Isaiah both speak about, a new heart, I will give you a new spirit.

I will give you a new covenant. So he's talking to this group of people. And this group of people, a healthy church, is basically identified by five different categories.

And I'm going to give these to you quickly. First, it is Christ-centered. The church is about Jesus Christ, not about man. Did you know that? It's about him. We come here to worship him, not to make ourselves great.

[5 : 41] How great, yes, is our love for our great God. Amen? Amen? That's what we're coming here together. It is to be biblical, right?

What we know and what we learn about God and his church comes from God's written word. Not from our preferences, not from our desires, or not from some man's vision, but this book of love.

This book, this creator on high has given to us to understand him and his will. The third aspect of a church is it's to be intentional. It's to be intentional in teaching the love of Jesus, but also discipling, teaching others all that he has said.

If you've been with me through Ephesians, you will know that the church is relational. That true spiritual growth grows in relational. As we accumulate our biblical knowledge together, we live together, living out that knowledge, loving one another, serving one another.

And then fifth, it's to be missional. And our mindset has to be on reaching others and introducing others to the truth of Jesus Christ.

[6 : 53] Healthy church produces a healthy, mature disciple. And a healthy, mature disciple simply worships Jesus Christ, walks with Jesus Christ and with fellowship with others, and works for Jesus Christ.

And by works means they have an understanding that they've been given this gift, this opportunity, and this life, and they are stewards of this life to work to see the goals of Jesus Christ accomplished.

Our lives are not to do simply what we want, but to follow him. Next week, we're actually going to be getting back into Ephesians 5.

And Paul gives us this incredible contrast between what it is to live in the church and what it is to live in the world. He simply says, But immediately, he contrasts this with the world, where he says, But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you as is proper among saints.

What he's saying is, you belong to God. If you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you have the seal of the Holy Spirit on you.

[8 : 33] You belong to him. That's who you will forever be recognized as. And as Paul reminds us so clearly, he says, Imitate me as I imitate Christ.

And one of the things that the church has been called to is to be holy. Holy. Holy.

Now there's a lot of confusion about what this word holy means. Holy. Allow me to define it here. Theologians will sometimes begin with an understanding that holiness means God is so unlike us.

It means to be separate. It conveys, as one author says, God is transcendently separate from us.

He is so far above and beyond us that he seems almost foreign to us. And in its actual meaning, we sometimes believe that it's to be pure, to be perfect.

[9 : 46] So when people say we need to be more holy, they immediately start thinking about, what are the actions that I need to do in myself? And we start thinking about, oh man, I got to cut off this sin.

I got to pursue this holiness. And it starts to, you start to live your life in this little cocoon of your life. Looking at all these things that you're trying to perfect in yourself.

But that's actually not the biblical understanding of holiness. Yes, purity is involved, but it's much greater than that. The Bible speaks of holiness in many ways.

He calls, there's certain phrases, there's holy ground, holy bread, holy place, holy nation. And what he's calling it, it's these things are to be separated or consecrated to be over to God.

So someone can actually be dirty, but called to be holy. Right? And we know there's these two things that happen theologically in a believer's life.

[10 : 47] We are both justified, which means that Christ has declared us clean, perfect, innocent because of the work on the cross. And because of that, when 1 Peter talks as be holy for I am holy, he's simply saying, be what you are.

You're holy now because you've been set apart by God, and now you need to live a life separated from the world. You need to live unto God, not unto this world.

And that is forever our battle, right? Fighting the world, fighting the influence, fighting the culture, evaluating everything. Is this glorifying God or is this glorifying man?

Again, it's interesting in Ephesians 6, Paul calls himself an ambassador. What does an ambassador mean? Right?

We all know an ambassador, when he comes to this country, is to be a, he actually represents the country that he represents, right?

[11 : 54] Whether it be Ghana, the United States, Japan, it doesn't matter. But it's not any individual from that country represents them.

It's the one who's been given this title of an ambassador. And even the home that they live on in this country is considered their ground.

Now, one of you guys, I've shared a little bit of my background. For some of you who don't know me, I used to work for CSIS, Canadian Security Intelligence Services.

And one of my roles was actually to convince foreign ambassadors to defect from their countries and come work for Canada. Right? That's what I had to do.

I had to convince them somehow that they, now, most ambassadors don't want to do that. Right? They represent their country.

[12 : 50] So I have to figure out a way in which to get them to turn their back on everything that they are and come represent good Canada.

Right? Because we're the greatest nation on the earth. Right? Right? So that is a very difficult task. And I'll tell you, there was two really good easy ways to get guys.

Right? One, if we found out there was a change in government and they were going to go back home and be killed, they were the easiest guys to recruit. It was really easy to do.

The other easy way was when their country did something that they radically hated. So we would know. We would know whoever's in that embassy what they're thinking.

Do you guys remember Tiananmen Square? When that happened? That was before my time in CSIS. But one of my bosses worked then. He said when Tiananmen Square showed up, he pulled up to the Chinese embassy and he just opened up, brought a bus, opened the door and people just ran into the bus.

[13 : 52] Like they were that desperate to leave their country because of what they did. Right? Right? So because the reality is nobody, even on our point, someone who just walks in and wants to defect on everything they are, is a hypocrite.

They're not really that trustworthy. So when someone comes over from another country, he says, hey, he just shows up at my door. I'm going to be suspicious of him. I'm going to be suspicious that he wants to be a part of Canada and no longer represent his country.

And sometimes it's the same way with the Christian faith. There will come a time in our lives when believers in Christ will no longer want to represent their rightful home.

They do not want to imitate Christ anymore. The world will tempt them. Perhaps they will become selfish.

They will give in to despair. Perhaps they will begin to revert to old habits. So what happens when we as believers in Christ who are to be ambassadors, when we see other ambassadors who act more like immature, unquality disciples rather than maturity, quality disciples?

[15 : 19] In the government vernacular, we knew and understood if we knew an ambassador was really dangerous and we knew we couldn't recruit him, we would try to make him look as bad as possible.

We would. We would almost like put him in certain positions that made him look like he wasn't doing his job. You know why? The home country would call him home.

We would hope for a new person to come over that might not be as diligent. Sometimes God has to do this. Sometimes we have to deal with these type of situations.

Sometimes. So what does God's word say on this matter? So just look with me here at Matthew 18. We're going to be starting in verse 15.

But this passage gives us two questions for those who worship Jesus Christ. And the first question is, as believers in Jesus Christ, do we actually have an obligation to one another that involves something more than just encouraging one another positively?

[16 : 32] All right? Or question number two, as believers in Christ, do we have a responsibility to speak honestly to one another about our faults or shortcomings, our departure from biblical instructions, and to deal with specific sins?

Those are two big questions. And I believe this passage will answer these questions. So take a look at me at verse 15. This is Jesus simply stating, if your brother sins against you.

And remember, when we talk about sin, it's like a barrier, right? We know what relationships are. When some people sins against us, we're not talking about, you know what, I was shopping over at the grocery store the other day, and someone from the church kind of cut in on me, right?

Before I got to the till. We're not talking about that kind of sin. We're talking about doing something that is so specifically hurtful that when they say, hey, can I come over for lunch tomorrow?

You're like, yeah, sure. But when they show up, you don't talk to them. Right? Like, there's hurt there. Something needs to remove this barrier. Right? So we've got this barrier. So if your brother sins, causes you offense, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone.

[17 : 54] If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses.

Now, what he's saying here, and this is one of the things that always gets people awry, is I'm not going to, something might have happened. Marty might have done something to me. So you know what? I'm going to go tell Dustin about it, and I'm going to go tell Cam about it, and I'm going to tell Jeff about it.

We're all going to talk about, you know what Marty did? It was really bad. So we're all going to come over, and we're going to confront Marty on it. But the fact of the matter is, I'm the only one who saw it. Right? So what I've now done is I've gossiped to Jeff, Cam, and Dustin about what Marty did.

What I need is other people who have witnessed the same event, because we're not talking just sometimes a one-time event. We're looking at a pattern of behavior that other people have seen have concerns about.

So they're the ones that are coming to that. So that's what that verse means. I just want to remove that idea. So it's not an idea of, I'm just getting people on my side, and I know more people will believe me than Marty, and we're going to get him to bend.

[19 : 07] That's not what it is. All right? These are mature believers understanding the reality of what's going on. If he listens to them, if he refuses to listen to them, and know that it says, notice it says evidence.

That means there's proof. It's undisputed. Tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again, I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.

For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among you. So, who here has had ever experienced someone sinning against them?

Right? We've all had it, right? It happens. This is a reality of life. So this is why there's an important aspect to this teaching.

[20 : 15] So here we have this teaching of Jesus Christ himself that admonishes us. Rather, it instructs us to confront one another over our sin.

Now, we have some questions. BK, isn't it? Doesn't it say in the Bible we're not supposed to judge? You know, if I bring up this sin with my friend, he will no longer be my friend.

As a church, you know, if we bring this up, we will lose members. Isn't it just easier to accept them and kind of live around their sin, right?

We'll still say hi in the morning and be loving. And we will do our best to accommodate their sin. Or perhaps we think, I'm going to follow the evolution policy.

You know, evolution's theory that with enough time, change will happen, right? We're just going to let it go until they figure it out on their own. These are all things that happen at the elder level that we talk about.

[21 : 26] These are all thoughts. We ask these things, you know, this is going to cause pain. This might cause division. But we know how to read these verses.

We understand these verses. The question that we have to ask ourselves of this church is, are we willing to follow Jesus's teaching? It's easy to think of the consequences.

People will feel hurt. People will feel offended. Relationships may be damaged. People won't stand for just having their sin confronted with. Different accusations may arise.

Sadly, just this past week, talking to a friend, there was an abusive situation in the church. They confronted the situation, but it turns out one of the individuals has 12 other siblings in the church.

And all there, and boom, everyone gone. When really everybody knew that the person was abusive in the relationship, right? It's tough. If you read any church growth expert on the subject, they will simply say, don't do it.

[22 : 35] But here's this man, this son of God, who says do it. So this is what we're bound to. Now I know when we say this word discipline, it is a strong word.

And for some of us, it carries baggage. Perhaps we had a harsh parent, legalistic upbringing. Perhaps you saw very sad examples in your past churches.

But one man brings this understanding to light. He says it's easy to get over the stigma of discipline when we finally admit to ourselves that we all need it, right?

Anybody an athlete here? You train. You discipline. Who's had braces? Who's had braces here? Do you realize you were disciplining your teeth?

You were training your teeth to grow straight. How many people here who've planted a tree and it's kind of like this young sapling? So you put in this stake next to it and you tie some loose rope to help it grow straight, right?

[23 : 44] That is actually the biblical understanding of what discipline is. It's not harsh words of punishment, but it's to help them grow properly.

Like children, we all need to be inspired. We all need to be nurtured. We all need to be corrected. We all need to be challenged.

Anybody knows that an undisciplined child is a neglected child. In fact, it wasn't until I got married that I learned that I'm not supposed to eat with my mouth open, right?

You know? Just simple things of life that we need to know. But the reality is all the basic shaping of our lives happens in relationships, marriages, right?

Our extended family. And it also happens in church. There's going to be people of various maturities. They're going to come in and people love you, want to help you grow into the believer of Christ that God desires of you.

[24 : 49] When we first had our dog, Zeus, who you all know is now a perfect dog at this point. But when he was a puppy, it was kind of hard. So what was really funny is we would have friends sit for us and they had five dogs.

And whenever he'd be, Danielle and I'd be away for the week and we'd come back, Zeus was back acting like a dog. Because when a dog is around people, it starts to act like people.

And let's be honest, people have problems, right? And that is how they train dogs. Put them back with other dogs and he learns to be a dog. It's actually the same way when we want to grow in Christ, put someone around other people that are growing in Christ.

This is all done in a context of love. The reality is God wants something very different for his church. Take a look with me at Acts chapter 5.

Acts chapter 5. This is a scary passage. Acts chapter 5. Do you remember the story of Ananias and Sapphira? This is where we're going.

[25 : 54] What's interesting is that they came to the leaders of the church and said, Hey, we've sold all our land and we're going to give you all our money.

But it turns out they were holding something back. So the one died on the spot because they were lying to the Holy Spirit. So then the spouse came back, said the whole story, not knowing what had happened.

Same thing. Now look at verse 11. And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard these things.

Now for some of you I recognize in this church and there's some new people here at this church. If you had heard that if you came to Squamish Baptist Church and you'd be guilty of a lie, you would die here.

Is this the church that you'd check out in the neighborhood? Right? I think I'm going to go down to the other church where they only kill people for murder or something.

[27 : 00] Right? You know, I know I'm not that. But a lie? That's something entirely different. You'd think it would have destroyed the church.

Take a look at verse 12. Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles and they were all together in Solomon's portico.

And there's this interesting couple of verses here. None of the rest is dared join them. But the people held them in high esteem.

So here's this group of people that you know you go into. If you lie, you die. Right? If you sin against the Holy Spirit. So there's this great fear of this group.

But you're still seeing God's power being lived out in this group of people. But you respected them.

[27 : 59] Right? We respect people who believe some. But then we go to this next verse. And more than ever, believers were added to the Lord.

If there was anything that you would think would disparage people from joining your church, would people dying for their sins. Right? But people understood that you knew that these people really believed.

They really loved. They really desired to obey Jesus. These people at this time would have heard about these deaths. They would have been fearful. You see, one of the objectives of the church is to make the church's commitment to holiness so clear.

That if you weren't going to live a holy life, you'd stay away from them. If we are going to represent Jesus Christ. And his call to be separated for his own work.

And you knew in your life, even if you were a believer and they were about holiness, you don't even want to go near there. Verse 13. Held in high esteem.

[29 : 11] They were people that were faithful to their beliefs. As ambassadors, we are to represent our Father.

Who respects hypocrisy? Right? So let's take a look at this context of this passage. What's interesting, when Jesus spoke these words, it is believed he was back at his home base in Capernaum.

Which is they believe, scholars believe it was Peter's home. And the disciples begin with this interesting story. This question, who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? Jesus then has this child on his lap.

And he simply says, one must come like a child. What does that mean? It means he needs to be humble. Dependent.

When a child comes, there's no accomplishments, right? They're empty. They're void of them. There's no achievements. The child has done no wrong.

[30 : 19] And when they do, they're confronted, corrected, and restored. And that's how we are to come to Christ. So let's take a look at verse 15. So if your brother, and of course there's an implication of sister here in Christ, sins against you, you go and tell him his fault between you and him.

That's a very simple thing to understand. Now, the sin here that is understood, it's something that is shameful.

It is something that is disgraceful. And that sin brings dishonor on the group of people. Doesn't talk about does something that you dislike, does something that irritates you, does something that offends your sensibilities.

It's not talking about that. Do you guys remember, did I tell you about the story of, do you guys remember Starsky and Hutch? That old TV show? Most of you guys don't know, right? We're getting way too old, right?

There was this cop show back in the 70s, and they had this Gran Torino, and they were like two hip cops, and one guy had this leather jacket. Anyhow, he shows up at my church one day.

[31 : 26] Who knew? Starsky wants to know about Jesus Christ. And guess what? He's still wearing that leather jacket that he had from the TV show. So it's his trademark.

Anyway, someone in the church confronts him on wearing a leather jacket in the church. Do you think Starsky's coming back to church?

No, he's not. He didn't show up again. Heartbreaking, right? That was a person putting their own preferences, their own sensitivities above someone else.

What Jesus Christ is talking about is those actions that dishonor God, right? The reality is if we confronted everyone who did something against us, we would have no friends, right?

Matt, do you know those people? They want to confront you on everything? I have at certain times. You know, just get off my back, and don't call me again, right? So notice it doesn't say that it's also big sins.

[32 : 37] It doesn't say, hey, only in terms of adultery or embezzlement. But these sins that dishonor God can be gossip, lewd talk, improper attitudes.

Because we all know that little things grow into big things. Small sins sometimes grow into big sins. And sometimes we, as mature brothers and sisters in Christ, don't say that's just them immature.

We care enough to go have a talk with them. And notice the words that Jesus says, go speak to them in private. Don't go to your pastor. You don't need to go to your pastor. You don't need to tell your wife or your husband or your best friend, because all those things are just gossiping, right?

Can you believe Susan Dirks didn't pick me up on time? Right, you know? I know what you guys complain about. But, you know, there's this, we don't talk about it, right?

It just builds up this gossip. It's like we're not attacking Susan here. We want Susan to grow in her timeliness when she drives, right? Right? So, that's the whole goal.

[33 : 47] Now, notice what else it says. If he or she listens to you, you have gained your brother. And I want you to understand what this word gained means. First of all, when it says listen, if he listens to you, that means they understand, they regret, and they acknowledge.

But the key to understanding God's heart here is this word gain. First truth about gain is you cannot gain what isn't lost. So, what it's implying is that when someone is sinning against you, you are now losing something.

Something of value has now departed from you. Do you understand what I'm getting at? That sin has caused you to lose a richness that you once had.

That sin has caused this brokenness between you two. And Jesus Christ is telling us that there's this barrier.

The relationship is broken. And the sad reality is we can lose people right here within the church walls itself. But this word gain is a term used in the marketplace.

[34 : 58] It means to accumulate wealth. And the clear implication is this. You have value to me.

When I speak to you about your sin, I'm not there to disparage you or make you feel low. By being there, I'm saying, I value you.

You bring richness to my life. I gain you. So, now that you're in this sin, I have lost this value that I have in you, this treasure.

So, by winning your brother or sister in Christ in this fashion, we are gaining wealth. Their gifts, their talents. Everything that God has made them to be.

In fact, we know in a church, God brings different people with different gifts to build his kingdom. And when relationships break, the church breaks.

[36 : 09] See, the idea of winning a brother, it's not about we're going to make a decision to avoid them, we're no longer going to invite them, we're no longer going to visit them, we're going to settle for shallow conversation.

Sometimes even, and I've been in parts of those situations in churches where people are so difficult, when they finally leave, you're like, what I'm demonstrating in that, is I don't love them.

When I see my friend continue to act in a way that I don't even want to hang out with them, and I'm okay with that.

You see, the purpose of church discipline is to win your brother and sister to Christ, to add value to you and the church. It is never about keeping people out of the church.

We pursue our brothers in Christ and sisters in Christ to keep the church pure. And when our family continues in unrepentant sin, we lose their value.

[37 : 26] The reality is we want their fellowship, we want their gifting, we want their ministry. So the whole idea that Jesus is imparting on his followers is that as brothers are so valuable that we are to endeavor to win them, pursue them, gain them back.

Now that doesn't mean we do that at the cost of compromise or agree to come to terms. We'll accept you if you do this or if you do that.

That's not what we're talking about. You see, to do nothing and to continue to allow the relationship to deteriorate is to communicate to them, I don't love you.

See, a relationship is never going to get better unless someone addresses the other party. Let's be honest, we've all been there, right?

You know what my weapon is? Sarcasm. Believe it or not, I know that's a great surprise. Surprise! You know, Susan, I would have been on time for my dental appointment if you showed up on time. Or, you know, we just put these little cutting, snide remarks.

[38 : 38] We don't really confront the issue. You know, often we had to deal with this in this one area of the church before, in one of my past churches, and there was a tardiness that affected everything.

And what happens was the person was elevating themselves above all other important parts. In fact, one person had missed a very important appointment. They said they were going to pick him up, showed up an hour later.

Like, if you can't do it, just call and say you can't do it. But we noticed a pattern, which eventually led several of us to confront them on what was going on behind the scenes.

Because we knew more people, more people were thinking less of them. So sometimes we beat around the bush, we give hints, we might even write a nice letter to a group of people thinking what they think, just hoping, hey, let's pray.

Let's pray Murray's attitude changes. Rather than actually having the love for Murray to go speak to him personally, right? The reality is when we don't do anything, we're setting up that person to fail in life.

- [39 : 55] There was a tragedy in our last, there was one church I was involved with in the past, it was a young woman who got fired at every single teaching job she had. She was quite gifted, and I think she was on her sixth job by the time she was 28.
- And I had to ask this older man that knew her, and I said, do you love her enough to help her? Do you love her enough? She was like a bull in a china shop. And I said, do you love her enough to help her?
- He says, well, I'm not gonna say anything, I'm just gonna love her. I said, you're not loving her. And to this day, I know she still hasn't found a full-time job, right? Just is continuing to act.
- Anyway, what happens if they don't respond? Let's take a look at verse 16. And if he or she does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence or two or three witnesses.
- Right? They see the same thing, they want to pursue this, and you're gonna go and talk to them about it. Verse 17, if he refuses to listen, tell it to the church.
- [41 : 00] Now, we're not telling it to the church so as to say that that person is a bad person. What we're saying is, hey, we've got a brother or sister of the faith. We need all of you to recognize that we miss them.
- We love them. We need them to repent so they can be a part of our fellowship. Go get them. Right? Love on them. Call them. Hey, I miss you. You know what?
- You might need to leave that adulterous relationship. You might need to stop gossip. You need to rebuild trust back into this community.
- You might be asking me, where is the biblical model that I just quoted? Luke 15. It's the passage. We read, the lost sheep, the coin, the son.
- They were pursued. Right? They were accepted. And sometimes, church discipline works out exactly like the prodigal son, right?
- [42 : 10] Sometimes to the point, they don't want to hear you. They close their door, their takeoff, and you really can't do anything. But you're to have a heart, as the father does, that when they come back and they're willing to repent, you ingratiate them back.
- Hold the party. Notice what he says. You know, he says, if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile or tax collector.
- We know that the Gentile was considered an outsider and a tax collector was considered a rebel.
- How did Jesus treat them? Did he ignore them? Did he say bad words about them? No.
- He treated them who they were, but still called them to repent. Amen? He didn't act like anything was normal. He didn't hate them. He didn't treat them as they were outsiders.
- [43 : 15] But you guys know what it's like. You've had a relationship. It's broken by sin. They want to come over and you're just sitting there at the dinner table. You want to pour out your heart to them, but you know that there's this hurt, this pain that's there.
- And until that's removed, you cannot go on. The desire is that once that fellowship, that you've had, that if you continue to talk to them like Christians and understanding all those elements of the faith, even though they're in sin, you know it just doesn't fit.
- But we hope and we pray that they will miss our fellowship. They will desire it back. Galatians 1, 6-1, it echoes this command. It says, Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness.
- That word restore is like a shepherd setting a broken limb on a lamb to make it good again. It means to be kind, gracious, loving.

We all know human frailty. We all know our temptations. But that doesn't mean we excuse it. If we remain indifferent to a person's sin, we don't care.

[44 : 44] My question to you is, if there's a brother or sister in sin and you do not want to deal with it and you don't care to deal with it, I simply ask the question, what kind of relationship was that in the first place?

Let me give you some pastoral advice on this. And I know most of you don't get this, but believe me when I say this. People are complicated. They are.

Trust me. If someone has been in sin for a long time, usually their spirit is so distorted and broken that they can't tell truth anymore.

They've given themselves over to worldly thinking and they're hard to deal with. That situation I was telling you about my friend's church, the families are basically saying that it was the church that destroyed this couple's marriage.

Church had nothing to do with the couple's marriage. They just don't want to. Either parties want to deal with their own sin in that area. I mean, sometimes you have to be patient.

[46 : 00] You have to be understanding. They have been in a pattern for a very long, long time. And even when you go to a friend and tell them the sin and they don't agree with you, give them time.

Be patient with them. and then bring it back again. Then, start bringing other people who know about the sin to come in a gracious, in loving ways.

Often, some people will deflect. They will lie. They will make excuses. Don't hate them. One of the things that I learned when I was in the spy work was when I confronted someone, I caught them doing something illegal.

I would have video cameras, I would have pictures taken, I would have other witnesses, and I would go in nine times, 99 times out of 100, they will deny it. Oh, that wasn't me.

Right? Well, I got two cameras here taking, here's a picture of my guy. We've traced your cell phone to that exact location. It's you. But that's how most people respond when they're confronted with sin.

[47 : 17] Why? We talked on this a couple weeks ago. Shame. I feel shame before you. I don't want to admit this sin. But I want us to understand this point.

To not confront is demonstrating that we do not love them and we do not value them.

Four reasons, I'll just give you these briefly, why God commands this. One, discipline promotes God's holiness. Discipline promotes God's holiness in each and every one of us.

Two, discipline protects the church from infection. Church protects the church from infection. It's pretty interesting, just this, today on my Twitter feed and a few of my friends that are in different parts of the world, they are told that they can't meet as a church because of the new coronavirus that's out there, right?

Because it'll spread. And it's the same thing when we don't deal with sin. And sometimes it doesn't have to be gross sin, but poor attitude, complaining attitudes, gossip, those things can infect a church and really kill it.

[48 : 40] The third reason we do it is it restores the rebellious because some people are going to keep going farther and farther away and we need to bring them back before they go too far.

And obviously the fourth reason is it makes clear the seriousness of the resistance to Christ's word and the truth. we'd be hypocrites if we didn't do it.

So what's really interesting today of all days is we have communion. This communion table is meant for those who follow the Lord Jesus Christ, who are walking with Jesus Christ, who have relationships with others who know Jesus Christ, right?

when he was with his disciples, they had to deal with Judas, right? Judas, who betrayed him.

Jesus reached out to him with this piece of bread and he dipped it and he actually had Judas at the place of honor. Do you guys know that? Judas was at the place of honor.

[49 : 53] God was still calling him when he offered him that bread. repent, my brother. Repent. And Judas took off. So as we come here, think about the mockery of this table.

If we did not practice church discipline, if we just said, oh, come and live however you are and whatever you represent, what would it say to the world? What would it say about this? grace. It's more than a symbol, but it's a means of grace of us accepting what God is calling to.

It's for us to commemorate this cross that allows him to come to him. that to ■■■■■ to