

We Need Each Other

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[0 : 00] Well, I'm excited about the passage of Scripture we're going to look at today, Matthew 18. Open your Bibles if you would, and we'll read that passage. And I want you to write down in the margin of the Bible, if you do that sort of thing, write down beside verse 15, we need each other.

We need each other. Matthew chapter 18 and verse 15, if you would. And I will read that to you. The Bible says in Matthew 18, 15, Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone.

If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church. But if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Again, I say unto you that if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For if two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

[1 : 13] Father, again, we ask you to work today. And God, help me not to hinder your passage of Scripture from getting into our hearts and exciting us about what a wonderful God you are and what a wonderful thing it is that we are a part of this great assembly, this congregation that you put together, the church, and help us understand our great need for each other and how sin only breaks that relationship.

God, I love you, and I pray that your name will be glorified today, and I pray you'll be with every song, every song that's sung. Be with Miguel as he preaches in Spanish. Be with the preachers up in the children's churches. And God, just bring honor to your name in every way.

We give you praise. In Jesus' name, amen. All right, take your Bibles. If you want to turn with me to Matthew chapter 18, and excited about sharing with you this wonderful passage of Scripture, we're blessed today to have Alicia Calkin with us.

Hold your hand up, Alicia. She's a member of our church, and they've moved up to the Carolinas, and glad to have her here today. Be sure and shake hands with her. All right, take your Bibles. Go with me to Matthew chapter 18. And I want you to write somewhere in the margin of your Bible, we need each other.

You know, the Lord put all this together. Church isn't an accident. It's exactly what he wanted. And so I want you to look at verse 20, and I want you to work your way through this passage of Scripture with me about church discipline.

[2 : 29] And I don't think it's near as harsh as you might think it is. So read with me, if you would, first, verse 20. The Bible says in verse 20, for where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

And so I want you to make a note there beside that. God's people live in community. God's people live in community. He made a special promise about meeting with us when we get together.

Look at there, where two or three are gathered in my name. I'm there, guys. You get together. I love it that you get together. I love it that you're together talking about me. I love it that you're together worshipping me. And so I want you to know we're going to talk about church discipline, but it all revolves around this passage of Scripture.

The next passage for next Sunday is about us forgiving each other and forgiving other people and learning to forgive. We've learned we're not going to be a stumbling block. We've learned we're not going to hurt other people, younger Christians.

We're not going to hurt them. And so I want you to get this thing about the church. It's community. It's being together. It's family. Look, if you would, at Hebrews chapter 10 and verse 24. Hebrews chapter 10 and verse 24, the Bible said, Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works.

[3 : 36] Would you underline consider one another? You can't consider each other if you're not together. You've got to be together so you can think about each other and you can provoke each other unto love and good works.

Verse 25, don't quit assembling, not forsaking the assembling together of ourselves, assembling of ourselves together as a manner of some is. Let's get together. Don't be like those that quit coming.

And let's exhort one another. The Bible is full of one another. Read your Bible. It is full of one another's. We've talked about that before. We get together and we encourage each other.

We motivate each other to live for Jesus, to make Jesus the point of our daily lives. We challenge each other and our families and everything to be more and do more for the cause of Christ.

We're a community. We're a body of believers. We love each other. That may sound weird to you. I remember in Mexico, this fellow that taught me the language more than anybody, I had learned that I was supposed to love my Christian brothers and Alberto Romero was there.

[4 : 36] And I said to him one day, I said, brother, I just want you to know I love you. And he said, please don't say that to a Mexican. Do not say that to a Mexican. If you say anything, say, I love you and Jesus. But man, it looks really bad for you to love me.

And I said, okay. He said, you can love me in Christian love. And I said, okay, I love you in Christian love, but I love you. And he was like, please don't do that. But look what the Bible says for us, if you would. Hebrews 13.1, let brotherly love continue.

John 13.35, they will know that we're his disciples because we love one another. The very word church means together, getting together. It's an assembly.

It's a congregation. We get together. Psalm 133.1 said, Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. God wants us to get along.

You're going to find out about this passage. God wants us to get along. 1 Corinthians 1.10, he said, Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you speak the same thing, that there be no divisions among you, that you be perfectly joined together.

[5 : 35] You have the same mind and the same judgment, same decision making. We are to work at being friends. In Ephesians 4.3, he said, Endeavoring, trying, working at, keeping the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace.

Did you know that a good way to know if you're born again is if you like the rest of the brothers? Did you know that a good way to know if you're in the family is you like the family? Because birds of a feather flock together.

Spanish people say, Tell me who you walk with and I'll tell you who you are. And here's what it says in 1 John 3.14. We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren.

He that loves not his brother abides in death. Now this passage of Scripture is about us working together and solving our problems and being together as a family. It's about us forgiving other people that have hurt us.

It's about us not causing each other to stumble. Matthew's put all these things together so we can learn how we get along in the body of Christians. You need to know that sin separates us from our family.

[6 : 39] Sin isolates us. Sin hates light. Sin poisons the entire person. But sin confessed brings us back into fellowship. We admit our sin.

We humble ourselves. And now the family together will work together and bear that sin. So two or three are together together. There I'm in the midst of you. It's a community thing. We need each other.

How many of you can agree? Say that with me. Would you say that? We need. Come on, say it again. We need each other. In the Bible, it's never about the Lone Ranger Christian.

It's about brothers and sisters getting together, working out their problems, solving everything, and honoring Jesus Christ. Now go back up with me to Matthew 18, 15. We're going to work our way through the little passage of Scripture here.

See, you've got to understand, though, this church discipline is because we need each other. This church discipline is because we are a body. This church discipline is so you don't get mad and take your baseball and go home.

[7 : 38] You know, if you don't want to let me play on a team, I'll take my basketball and I'll go home. We don't do that. We've made up our mind. We're serving Jesus. We're in this together. And we're going to have the right attitude. So look, if you would, at the instructions we have about conflict among us.

Look at 15 with me. 18, 15. Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone.

If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. Now, if you've got your ink pen, I wish you'd circle the word if. There's several ifs here. So it's not like, hey, you're not supposed to walk around saying, hey, I'm just in the offending business.

And I'm the guy that's in the church that likes to offend people. No, hopefully that's not our goal. And hopefully that's not going to happen. And it's not like, hey, when this happens, it's if this happens, since it happens. So here's what we're going to do.

If, if. Now look at this. Trespass against thee. If you get offended, if somebody sins against you, if something's wrong. And see, that fits the passage. Because if you recall, we're talking about, hey, I'll cut my hand off before it gets me out of heaven.

[8 : 39] And I won't cause my brother to stumble. And I won't mess anybody up. So if there's a sin against you, now what do you do? What do you do if there's a sin against you? Or a sin against Christ? Or a sin against the body?

What do you do? Underline it in your Bible. It says, go tell him his fault. Go talk to him. But you talk to him alone. Circle the word alone.

Circle the word alone. There's something going on. You don't gossip about it. You don't run your mouth about it. You don't spread things. You don't get the deacons to pray with you about it. You go talk to him alone.

And if you can get that fixed, underline you gain your brother. Underline that in verse 15. Thou hast gained thy brother. I got him back. We're friends again. Things are great. Verse 16.

But if, what if he won't hear you? Then you take one or two more that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word will be established. So now I'm going to go back to him. But the goal is I want to gain my brother.

[9 : 36] You might ought to draw an arrow to that. I want to gain my brother. I want to have a happy family. I want to enjoy being with my brother. And so now I go back with one, two, or whatever witnesses.

And we go back and talk to him. You're not going back there so you can rip him a new one. You're not going back there to team up and buddy up on him and beat him up. You're going back to gain your brother. All right. Did you hear that? You're going back to what?

Gain your brother. And so you're going to go back to him. And so these other guys are going with you to help him understand Bible truth. By the way, if you're in any kind of disciplinary thing or if you're in any kind of this, maybe the brothers are going to tell you you're the one that's wrong.

Because they're going to say the Bible, you want to get some wise men? You want to get some wise ladies? You want to get someone who knows the Bible enough to say, well, really, you know, you're just about as mean as he is. We're wanting to get this thing resolved, but we don't need a team of people to go beat up people.

We need to work on getting things fixed. So then verse 17, but if he neglect to hear thee, then tell it to the church. But if he neglect to hear the church, then let him be as a publican, a heathen man and a publican.

[10 : 37] So next step is we bring him to the church and the collective leadership wisdom of our church would help him say this that you've done is not right. First Corinthians, he's going to talk to them about learning how to judge this stuff out.

But if he won't listen, then you treat him like he's a lost guy. He's not part of the family. People who spend lots of time together will eventually have some issues. Sin and conflict are not to be welcomed in the church, though.

Sin and conflict are not to be welcomed in the church. No church ought to say, well, to keep the peace, we'll just overlook sin. That's what happened in first Corinthians chapter five. We'll look at it in just a second. They were like puffed up. They were just like, we're so proud.

We're tolerant of sin and everything's okay with us. This is a grace church. And so you can sleep with your daddy's wife. Not a problem at our church. And Paul writes, what in the world is wrong with you people?

Judge that sin. That's not going to happen. Man, that doesn't go. That's not right. That shouldn't be going on. So it should be taken care of. When I was a boy growing up on the farm, there would be places on the farm.

[11 : 36] You've probably never seen this, but they called them devil's alleys when I was a kid. And you'd go up to a farm and there'd be a farm line fence right here. And there'd be another farm line fence right here. And there'd be weeds and briars and trees and everything else growing right there.

And I used to say, daddy, why didn't they put one fence? He said they couldn't agree to where to put the fence. So each of them put their own fence and that's kind of like no man's land. I thought it'd be a good thing if I could go collect all that no man's land and have me some land.

Amen. But see, that was caused, probably churches get into that. But we're a community. We need each other. And that's not our goal. We're brothers and sisters. We love each other.

The goal is to restore your brother. You should write that down. Your goal always in church is to restore your brother. Now, you've been in some churches that were mean.

Well, they were wrong. It's never the goal of the church to be mean. But it is the goal of the church to do right. But the goal is when you're working with somebody, and I want you to underline it. Please underline it. Verse 15.

[12 : 32] To gain your brother. Would you underline that? To gain your brother. We're going to have this. We're going to do this because I want you to walk with Jesus. I want us to walk together serving Jesus. And that's the goal.

It's never to kick somebody out of the church. It's never to punish him for punishment's sake. It's to see our brother serving Jesus with all of his heart. Our goal is not to throw him away, but to take him on to maturity in Christ.

Here's a while when I tell the guys at the training center all the time. I want you to get this. People aren't disposable. When I was a kid, you had Coca-Cola bottles that were deposit bottles.

You had deposit and returnable. So, you know, in other words, you paid a dime for the coat and three cents for the bottle. And people tossed those bottles out to win. And us poor boys, we walked down the street picking him up. We'd get enough money to buy us another coat because it didn't take about three or four of them bottles.

You could buy you a coat. Just take them in. Well, people aren't throwaways. And you live in a society where no deposit, no return, just throw them away. But that's never been our God's way.

[13 : 31] By the way, it starts in private and personal. Sin ought to be discussed privately and personally. The trespass ought to. Look, if you would, in verse 15. It says, tell him his fault between thee and him alone.

Did you mark that word? Alone. The more people you involve in the discussion, the more you will embarrass him. You will harden instead of help if you're not careful. You've got to go speak humbly to your brother in Christ.

Because we want to fix things. It's not a matter of I don't like him anyway. I'm mad at him anyway. And I'm going to see if I can destroy him. That's never the Christian attitude.

Could you say amen right there? You see, we're supposed to love each other. We endeavor to love each other. We want to keep the peace. We want to remember that, hey, we want the world to be able to look at us and say, man, that's a place of love. That's a place where they love each other.

We do not want to live in bitterness and unforgiveness. We don't want to live in bitterness and unforgiveness. It doesn't say, go tell the pastor. It says, you go talk to them first.

[14 : 35] Over the years, I've been in the ministry a long time. And over the years, I've had tons of people come to me and say, you know what so-and-so's doing? And I say, I don't know. Have you talked to so-and-so? And I said to them, I said, you know what?

I'm going to have to go tell so-and-so you told me that. Because I'm going to find out what's going on, but I'm going to have to tell them. No, no, no, no, no. You can't tell them I said it. I said, then something's not quite right about your attitude here. It's not a biblical attitude.

You are not there to reprimand. You're there to help them see their error and get it right. You're there to help them see their error and get it right. You see, the passage of Scripture to Jesus is talking to us in Matthew chapter 18.

You've got to go through it all. In verse 4, we talk about being humble. In verse 6, we talk about not offending one of these little children. In verse 8, I'm going to cut my hand off before I would hurt me or you. I'm going to cut my hand off. In verse 10, I'm not going to look down on or despise or think less of other people, any little ones.

I'm just not going to do that. That's not who I am, and I'm not going to do that. I'm a child of God. So if they won't listen, then you get two or three, and you go help them again. You're going to go and talk to them. If the sinner won't listen, then you take witnesses.

[15 : 43] Then finally, the church, and if he doesn't see his way, then he's left alone. Sin separates. Sin separates. I believe every church ought to have church discipline.

But I believe church discipline ought to almost never get to the church. Almost never get to the church. I have practiced church discipline everywhere I've been in the ministry, and rarely has it ever gotten to the church because almost every time it gets solved with the right spirit and the right heart and the right way to talk to people.

That's what is going on in this verse. It's not a mean thing. It's I want you to continue to live for Jesus. It's not I want to hurt you thing. It's I want you to live for Jesus. But we're given an extreme example.

So write down in the margin of your Bible, 1 Corinthians 5. And you're given an extreme example of church discipline. And over here, we have instructions. Over here, we have the example of what happened and what goes on.

And I just got to tell you the story. That's all we got time for. We went through 1 Corinthians, and you can go back and listen to that, and you can read that passage. But here's what was going on. In 1 Corinthians 5, it was commonly known.

[16 : 44] And everybody knew that a guy that went down to the church was sleeping with his daddy's wife, his stepmom. And everybody knew that that was going on. It was such an unusual thing.

Not unusual that you commit fornication or adultery, but unusual that you'd sleep with your daddy's woman. That was a very unusual thing. And the church, instead of doing anything about it, the church kind of was like, well, you know, we got grace here, and we're just going to put up with it.

And Paul writes, and he said, I've already made a decision on this deal. That guy is wrong, and something ought to be done about it. That's in verse 3. So he said, when you get together in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, y'all are all together, and you're under his power or his authority, I want you to turn him over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh.

You're actually going to say we're putting him outside the church, away from the influence of godly people, because we're not going to let you continue to do that wicked sin and be a part of our church and feel like we agree.

We're not just not going to let that happen. And that might be terrible. You may say, well, that's mean. Well, that part, hey, when somebody's going to continually do what you know is wrong and they won't get it right, you're going to put them outside.

[17 : 53] But it says in verse 5, and I wish you'd understand this, even though Paul said, turn him over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, it said his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord. He's a saved guy. He'll go to heaven. But God's fixing to spank him.

Stop parentheses. Sin is not a joke. Sin is not a joke for the believer. It's not like we ought to lightly take, I can go do what I want to do. It's like this salvation by grace.

Sometimes you abuse it and you say, once saved, always saved, which is true, but the way you use that is, I got saved once, I'll live like the devil if I want to. That's not really what the Bible's talking about. Could you say amen right there?

When you get saved, hey, just because Betty and I have been married 41 years, years doesn't mean I go do what I want to. I can go do what I want to, but she might not be that happy with me. Amen? She might black the other eye. You never know.

So you want to be careful. So in verse 9, he said, I don't want you to accompany with fornicators. He said, now you couldn't, there's no way you can stay away from fornicators. They're everywhere. There's no way you can stay away from sinners.

[18 : 51] They're everywhere. But he says it real clear in verse 11. He said, what I'm writing to you about is if they call themselves a brother and they're a fornicator, don't hang around with them.

Fornicators, covetous, idolaters, railers, drunkards, extortioners, don't hang around with them. Because a church is supposed to, you're not going to like this, judge its own.

Look at verse 12. This is the Bible. Not the most popular message. Next week's forgiveness. Come back for part two. But in verse 12, he said, do you not judge them which are within?

You ought to take care of people in your church. You don't make them see where the man's fornicating with his daddy's wife. They were to turn him over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. His spirit would be saved. They're told not to hang out with him.

You don't hang out with people. You don't hang out. You don't do the Lord's Supper with them. You don't have company with them. That means you don't hang out with them when you know they're doing wrong. Birds of a feather flock together. So honestly, light and darkness shouldn't be getting along.

[19 : 50] Can you say amen right there? I mean, if your whole idea is I want to do what's wrong and my whole idea is I want to do what's right, we probably won't be the best of friends because you won't like what I'm doing and I won't like what you're doing. So let's go our separate ways.

I think 2 Corinthians chapter 2 tells you what happened to that guy. This is my opinion, but I think that guy got right. I think the church pulled back. And I think when the church said to him, what you're doing is not right, you know it's not right.

And no longer are you welcome at our church. You cannot be doing that and feel like that's okay. Our church is against that. And when he did that, I think he got really bothered and fixed his life.

2 Corinthians chapter 2 and verse 6, the Bible says, it's enough. Sufficient to the man is the punishment inflicted of many. Verse 7, forgive him. Would you underline that? Forgive him and comfort him.

Lest he be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. So when somebody does wrong, they're going to be welcomed back. Nobody ever preaches this stuff. If you go through the Bible verse by verse like we do, you've got to get stuck preaching everything.

[20 : 49] Amen? So here it is. He said, look, he's done wrong. He's got to be disciplined. But if he gets it right, forgive him and comfort him. In verse 8, confirm your love. In verse 8, confirm your love. Be obedient.

I'll forgive if you forgive. And just be careful because this bitterness and this not forgiving spirit that churches have is how Satan gets an advantage over us. Look, if you would, at verse 11.

Lest Satan should get an advantage over us. That's not talking about some style of music or dress. That's talking about not forgiving guys who get right with God. Sometimes people do wrong. They kind of get God spans their backside and God's people pull away from them.

Then they say, you know, I was wrong. I need to come back. And we're like, you ain't coming back. Once you've done something wrong, we don't ever like you again. That's not what we're supposed to do. It's about us being a company of brothers. It's community. It's family.

You're welcome back. Just know we want to walk together for Jesus' sake. We're not to judge the world, by the way. You know, it's none of our business what homosexuals do.

[21 : 50] Really? I know you're going to say, I don't agree with that, brother. But see, here's what it said in the verse. I'll take care of them on the outside. Y'all just take care of them on the inside. And that was in 1 Corinthians 5, the last of the chapter. We're to walk in holiness together, challenging each other.

We know that sin left alone will tempt others. So in our church, over the years, as we grow and as God blesses, we've got to be careful that we never have a flippant attitude towards sin. The beautiful thing is we do teach grace.

And God is a wonderful God. And grace is so abundant. And sometimes people go to bed on grace and forget that God said, whoa, whoa, whoa, I give grace. But that doesn't mean I give a license to sin.

I give liberty to serve. It's liberty to serve, not a license to sin. And when you got saved, your sins are washed away and you're a new creature. But don't you dare think that means I've got to do whatever I want to do.

You want to do what the Lord's put in your heart because you're saved and you're born again. Now, here's some things to remember about church discipline, if you will. Number one, don't believe gossip or accusations.

[22 : 54] Would you write this stuff down somewhere? Because as we grow, and by the way, Christians are already judging. You can say, we don't judge. Oh, yes, you do. Man, there's more gossip that goes on among Christians than any other place.

Good night, we're good at it. So what's the Bible teach us about it? Well, we don't believe gossip. And we don't believe accusations. In 1 Timothy chapter 5 and verse 19, it's talking about when somebody talks about the pastor. And it says, against an elder, a pastor or a leader, against an elder, a deacon, somebody in our church, somebody in spiritual leadership, receive not an accusation unless you've got two or three witnesses.

That's pretty good. I was pastors. We got off the hook on that one. But he said the same thing about everybody else. In Deuteronomy chapter 17 and verse 6, he said, at the mouth of two or three witnesses. At the mouth of two or three witnesses.

In Israel law, in Israeli law, in the Old Testament, if they did wrong, you couldn't put anybody down to not at least two or three witnesses. In Deuteronomy chapter 19 and verse 15, it said, it said, one witness shall not rise up against a man for any sin.

He has to have at least two witnesses or three witnesses. And by the way, you're going to find in this verse of Scripture, it's talking about two or three. We'll see that in just a second. By the way, we don't spread gossip.

[24 : 00] We don't spread gossip. Number one, number one, we don't believe it. Number two, number two, we make sure there's enough witnesses. And number three, we don't spread the gossip.

Leviticus 19, 16 says, thou shall not go up and down as a talebearer. Talebearer. That means quit telling stories everywhere you go. You heard the latest on Brother So-and-So. You heard the latest on Deacon Jones.

You heard the latest about this guy or that guy. He said, don't you do that. Verse 17, he said, thou shalt not hate thy neighbor or thy brother in your heart. Don't you go around with hate in your heart, Christians.

Everybody's always so funny. The Old Testament was all law and mean and New Testament's all grace. But in the Old Testament, he said, don't be gossiping about each other. Don't be hating each other. And by the way, if there's a problem, go rebuke him. Go rebuke him.

Verse 17, don't you avenge yourself. Don't you bear grudges. Don't hold on to it. How many in this room are full of bitterness? Somebody in the past hurt you. Some Christian hurt you.

[25 : 01] Man, people don't go to church because some Christian did something. It's like the story of the church. And he says, hey, don't do that. You're to love your neighbor as yourself. By the way, in the Old Testament, he knew there would be false witnesses.

He knew there'd be people that would lie about it. And so in Deuteronomy chapter 19 and verse 18, it's exciting. We're studying that book. You need to be here on Sunday night and Thursday night. The judges shall make diligent inquisition. Man, you better check out every testimony because there are false witnesses that testify falsely.

And so if he does testify falsely, give him the punishment he was trying to get put on the other guy. That's what Deuteronomy 19, 18 says. Investigate. Never be vindictive. We don't want to get rid of the person.

We want to love the person. So Christians, are you ready? We always treat other brothers in Christ like we would like to be treated. You see, in Matthew chapter 18, he said, guys, if somebody sins, here's some steps you ought to take.

If somebody hurts you, here's some steps you ought to take. You're not just supposed to be gossiping. You're supposed to go talk to him alone. You and him alone. Your goal is to get things fixed with your brother. In Galatians chapter 6 and verse 1, the Bible says, if a man be overtaken in a fault.

[26 : 13] If you have your Bible over there, overtaken in a fault. See, I did. You didn't just jump into it. But we're going to mess up. We're going to mess up. If a man be overtaken in a fault, you which are spiritual, restore that guy and consider yourself.

Man, I could mess up tomorrow. I could mess up. But there was a college I used to work quite closely with, Trent, and some of the guys went there. And there was a young man there who they called him Deputy Fife.

And he would stand at the entrance of the dorm area when they would drive their cars up there. And he could give demerits. And he just loved standing there. When it got close to time for people to be, are they supposed to be in the dorm?

He stood there with his little pad like a ticket. And he'd write tickets to everybody. All right, that's demerits for you and demerits for you and demerits for you. That's typically the way we act. I'm here to give you a ticket. But I really don't want one myself.

You've got to understand where I come from. I got here late because of, this happened because of. But somehow we forget, hey, I better think about how I would want to be treated if this were going on. You need to know that God's people mess up.

[27 : 14] In Proverbs 24, 16, the Bible said a just man falls seven times and rises up again. So we're going to mess up, but we're going to get right with God and do what we ought to. And don't you ever get happy when you see a brother mess up.

The Bible says in Proverbs 24, 17, Don't rejoice when your enemy falls. Don't rejoice when he falls. Don't be glad when he stumbles. You always remember it could be you. Wherefore, let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

Now go back with me to Matthew 18. Matthew 18, 15. Here's what we got. If my brother does something wrong, how do I handle it? You see, he didn't leave that to chance.

He didn't say, well, y'all figure that out for yourself. He said, I know y'all going to have some problems. And if you have some problems, I got a way to handle it. And you've read it. We've walked our way through it. We're going to talk to him alone. Alone. You're not going to slander him.

You're not going to go around the church. Don't be asking prayer. Y'all pray for so and so. She hurt me. That's a way of accusing under spiritual pretense. So alone, you go talk to them.

[28 : 12] And if they don't, and you're trying to win the back. And if they don't hear, you take witnesses with you. If they don't hear, you take it to the church. If they don't hear, eventually they'd be taken and removed from the church membership. Removed from that place.

And then Jesus said in verse 18, and I give you authority to do that. And I give you authority to do that. Go with me to chapter 18 and verse 18. Verily I say unto you, whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.

Whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. And if two of you agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them. For two or three are gathered together. I'm in the midst of them. Now all that's the same passage.

Look this way just a second. I'm almost finished, but watch this. Remember how we're not supposed to be offending our little brothers? Remember how we're going to be careful about letting sin in our life? We'll chop it off and throw it away if we have to.

Remember how it'd be wrong for us to teach somebody else? In just a few verses, the next verse after this, he's going to start talking about how you forgive. And he's going to say, hearing that, Peter's going to go, Well, now that you said that, I'd like to know how many times I've got to forgive a guy.

[29 : 18] And he said, I'll tell you what, Lord, I'll be good. How about seven times? And the Lord's going to say, I'll tell you, how about this? Seventy times seven. And then he said, let me explain how that works. And then he goes into the whole thing we'll look at next Sunday morning.

But see, here's the goal. Here's the deal. We're a community. We need each other. We're going to solve the problems. And the Lord gave us specific instructions. And he said, what you guys bind will be bound.

And what you guys lose will be loose. When you make a decision, I'm going to respect that because you're going to follow my instructions. It's not about trying to get God to do what you want. It's about us doing what God wants us to do. We obey him in disciplining biblically.

He authorizes it. He gives us instruction on discipline, but with a promise. With a promise. I'm there in the middle of you while you're doing this. Do you remember what 1 Corinthians chapter 5 said?

It was kind of interesting. In 1 Corinthians chapter 5, he said, When you're all together in the name of the Lord and with his power. You don't just do this on your own. You're together. You're doing right. You're serving Jesus. You're trying to respect what he wants.

[30 : 14] You're doing the right thing. I'll be there with you. He will honor it because we're doing what he wants. There are two of them agreeing. The same guy as mentioned in the story. If you go back up through, you got, who went to see the guy?

One or two, two or three witnesses. Now there are two or three agreeing. And there are two or three together. The Lord's with them. 1 Corinthians chapter 5. In other words, it's really about us being a community. It's about us working out our problems.

He's in the middle of us. We're not making heaven do something. But instead of allowing, instead of that, we're allowing heaven to tell us how to handle things. Let me just show you real quickly. This verse is kind of twisted.

In Matthew chapter 18, the idea is basically, so many times we say in verse 19, Again, I say unto you that if two of you shall agree on earth as such and anything, they shall ask, It'll be done of my Father which is in heaven.

And we all know that don't work. We tried it, to be honest. You got with somebody and said, Let's pray and ask God to give us a Mercedes. And you prayed and it didn't happen. You said, We agreed. Well, that's not what it was talking about.

[31 : 11] Its context is the body. Its context is discipline. Its context is forgiving. Its context is bringing a brother back into fellowship. That's what the context is.

So they said, Hey, you guys agree. You guys ask me and I'll be there with you and I'll help you. Because our goal as a church is always to bring people back. Chapter 18 is talking about humility in verses 1 through 4.

We went over that. It's talking about us being responsible about how we live and how we teach. It's talking about us denying ourselves. It's showing us that God loves the individual. It taught us how to practice church discipline, work together in fellowship, and have an atmosphere of forgiveness.

So the scriptures are saying, Hey, we need each other. There's never the idea that you got saved in one way to heaven. I don't need other Christians. Christians want to be around other Christians.

Christians love other Christians. We seek out each other. We want to get together. Not just when we have preaching. That's a good time. But you might be going down to play a football game down at another church that we started.

[32 : 11] And the guys are going down there and having a football game. But we enjoy being with other people that love Jesus and live holy lives. We're not looking to go down to the place where we can all get drunk together or smoke dope together. We're looking to be together with godly people who like God's stuff.

That's really what's going on here. So the promise to bind things in heaven is not so we can make things happen. It's so that we can handle sin and wrong and not trying to get God to do something.

We need each other. So we will live in humility. I'll esteem you better than me. I'll respect your wishes and desires more than me all through the Bible.

We will get sin out of the body as quickly as we can. Please know this. We teach and preach grace. It is God saving us when we don't deserve it.

But there is never in the scriptures the idea that sin ought to just be okay. There is never the idea in the Bible. You know we are just a grace church man.

[33 : 14] You can do anything you want. No if you see a church is not about the lost people. They can do anything they want. But we love Jesus. And we are a bunch of committed believers gathered together to honor Jesus Christ.

So we won't sin against each other. And we won't allow sin here. We will treat each other as our brother and sister in Christ. No matter who they are, no matter how much money they have, we won't offend one of the little ones.

We will treat each other like real brothers and sisters. And we will deal with sin and not hold grudges. Be bitter and judgmental. Can I just tell you that something is really bad wrong in us?

When we are walking around the church in the grace of God being saved and we hate somebody? Something bad wrong somewhere? That's not God's attitude. I know we have been done wrong. I know somebody hurt us.

I know your ex-husband, your ex-wife, your dad, your mom, your brother, your sister, another Christian, another lost person. Somebody did you wrong. But hey, we're the forgiven. And the forgiven?

[34 : 14] We are the forgiven. And the forgiven? Forgive. And we work at living together. We work at loving each other. We endeavor, the scripture said. That means we work at it.

We're a body of Christ. It ought to be something so special. A friend, a brother, sitting in this room told me years ago, probably doesn't even remember it, that when he pulled in, he felt the spirit of the Lord and love right out there in the parking lot.

I have no idea how that's true, but I know this. It ought to be true. It ought to be true. It ought to be that when people get around here, they're like, I don't know what's going on here, but that's the sweetest bunch of people I've ever been around in my life.

And they love people. Hey, they might have some differences, but they forgive each other. There's something special there. And it's not you. It is not me. And it's not my preaching.

It's Jesus. He's in the middle of us. And that makes us different. We are to forgive. Because we are the forgiven. And the forgiven, what? So I hope that becomes a real truth in your life.

[35 : 16] Amazing. Amazing. Get to the next verse. Next Sunday, he's going to say this. Well, how much have you got to forgive? So it's about forgiveness.

Study chapter 18.