

## Love Like Jesus (Mt. 18:15-20) - 9/19/21

**15 “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. 16 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. 17 If he refuses to listen to them, 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. 18 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. 19 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. 20 For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”**

Examples of difficult questions facing some churches:

- What should happen if a member abandons the faith and no longer considers himself a Christian?
- Should a church no longer associate with someone who has been excommunicated?
- Should the church discipline teenagers who are member of the local church when they commit serious sin?
- When should the church welcome an excommunicated person back into fellowship and how is this to be done?
- What should the church do with a member who never attends, yet stirs up strife or creates division?

What you believe about Jesus, specifically the gospel of Jesus Christ, will shape how you look at church discipline.

How is church discipline loving? It shows... (Jonathan Leeman)

- love for the individual, that he or she might be warned & brought to repentance;
- love for the church, that weaker sheep might be protected;
- love for the watching world, that it might see Christ's transforming power;
- love for Christ, that churches might uphold his holy name and obey him.

Church discipline is done out of love with the goal of restoration.

How does church discipline promotes a healthy church? It “preserves our witness before the nations, warns sinners of an even greater judgment to come, and it protects the name and reputation of Jesus Christ on earth.” (J. Leeman)

Church Discipline process (Mt. 18:15-20)

- One-on-one approach
- Two/Three-on one approach (if necessary)
- Church approach (if necessary)

“...the entire church is saying together, ‘We love you, and we want you to come back to Christ.’ God loves us so much that if we are caught in sin, He will send an entire army of believers to us as a demonstration of His love and mercy.” (D. Platt)

Verse 20 is often misunderstood. Proper meaning - When two or three come together to confront a brother in sin, God is with us.

Church Discipline process (1 Cor. 5 & 6): Excommunication Immediately

Reason for different approaches to discipline by Jesus (Mt. 18) and Paul (1 Cor. 5&6):

Jesus - to correct and determine whether repentant; Paul - The offender is obviously unrepentant - Discipline with urgency. 1 Cor. 5 & 6 begin where Mt. 18 ends.