

## Sermon Discussion

### 26 July 2020

Read Matthew 18:10-35 together.

#### Dig Deeper

The theme that binds this entire chapter together is God's concern for the spiritually needy. Whether they are the powerless, those victimized by sin, and sinners who have victimized others.

The kingdom of heaven is a place where everyone recognizes their dependence on God, just as children know they are dependent on loving adults to care for them. It is a place where the powerless are cared for (18:5, 12-14), and abuse of them is not tolerated (v. 6-10). The kingdom of heaven is a place where sinners are mercifully restored (v. 15-20), and where people are quick to forgive and to seek reconciliation, knowing that God in his grace has forgiven them (v. 21-35).

1. Have you ever used Matthew 18:20 as proof that God is present in a meeting with other believers? Do you believe you used it appropriately and in its original context? How has this sermon helped you to understand what Jesus was saying?
2. Does the concept of "church discipline conjure up in your mind loving and pleasant thoughts? Why or why not? Have you ever witnessed the practice of church discipline in any church of which you have been a part? If yes, explain how discipline was carried out. If no, give reasons why there may be a failure in some churches to practice discipline.
3. What is the purpose of church discipline?
4. Assuming that you have been sinned against by a fellow Christian, what are the two verbs in verse 15 that sets before you your responsibility? If the Bible were written today, do you think that Jesus would/could have said, "If your brother sins against you, go and text or Facebook or email or phone or write him?" Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each method of communication listed above.
5. Is it more loving, kind, gracious, or even more Christian to just forget it when someone sins against you? Why or why not? Why did Jesus not say, "If your brother sins against you, just forgive him and forget it?" According to verse 15, what is the purpose of going and telling "your brother" his sin?
6. In verse 17, the text teaches that if the sinner "refuses to listen to" the witnesses, who have apparently agreed with the one bringing the charge, the third step in the disciplinary process is to "tell it to the church." What exactly should be told to the

church? How should it be told to the church- an email to the pastor/elders, a personal visit with the pastor/elders, an announcement during prayer time at home group, an announcement in church on Sunday morning, or just solely and quietly tell everybody in the church as you meet them individually? What is your preference and why?

### **Application & Prayer**

- This series is designed to encourage us to spend time reading the Bible. How has this sermon encouraged you to spend more time in the Bible? What one thing can you do differently this week?
- Instead of Matthew 18:20, what Bible verses would you use to encourage people that God is present with us? Rejoice in those truths and pray them back to God in gratefulness.
- Pray that our church community (its leaders, members, and attenders) would follow God's command to love and discipline each other to God's glory. Ask the Lord to help you to keep short accounts with people and live in reconciled relationships.