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Church and Discipline Part 06

Matthew 18:15-20, ¹⁵ *“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.¹⁷ And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.¹⁸ “Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.¹⁹ “Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.²⁰ For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”*

God’s desire for His children here on earth is purity of life.

1 Peter 1:16, “You shall be holy, for I am holy” (quoting from the old Testament to the New covenant church Leviticus 11:44).

I hope you get this clear in your mind as what the Lord Jesus is teaching the church.

- **Step 1:** Go and meet with him one to one and try to win him/her for Christ.
- **Step 2:** Take two or three witnesses so that he can be convicted and convinced to amend his/her ways so that person can be won over.
- **Step 3:** Tell the church and if he listens then accept him/her
- **Step 4:** If the person does not accept the correction and does not change then throw the person out of the church.
- **Step 5:** Excommunicate the sinner from the fellowship if he repents then accept him as a brother, if not treat him as heathen

Today let us look at why the church must do this?

What is the church/ our authority?

What power do church have to do this? By what right do we do this?

V 18-20, ¹⁸ “Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.¹⁹ “Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that

they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.²⁰ For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."

All the effort is got to be for renewal and revival of the church which cannot be achieved without ever confronting sin, and without ever proclaiming the holiness and the fear of God.

V18, says that, "whatever you bind on earth - "

Simply it means that, when on earth you say to someone, "You are still bound with sin." When you say that on earth, it'll already have been bound in heaven.

When you say to someone on earth that, "Your sins are loosed -" you're freed from your sins then, heaven will already have done that, as well.

The church says that your sins are bound on you or your sins are loosed from you with the God given authority then the church is acting accord with the Heavenly Father. Because the Father in Heaven has already said either they are loosed or bound whether the person obeys the correction by the conviction brought by church.

Heaven ratifies what is done on earth when the church follows this process of discipline revealed in the word of God.

The church is acting in the will of God and the Father in heaven is acting with the church.

In the other way if the person does repent and grieve in his heart then we in the church say, “your sins are loosed” welcome to the fellowship then we are just following the will of God and Father in Heaven what already been done.

What is our authority?

1. God the Father in heaven works with us!

V19, says that whatever you ask touching anything then Father in Heaven does that for us.

What things the verses are talking about here?

Discipline of a sinner.

Well, why two are needed here?

That’s the lowest number of people who can confirm a person in a sin. Remember two or three witnesses??

When you have gone to see the person one to one then two or three witnesses. Then you have confirmed to the person that you seek God's will on it. It will be done for them by the Father who is in heaven.

The two here are the two witnesses who confirm the unrepentant heart or confirm the repentant heart.

He starts with the lowest possible number. If two of you on up agree. In other words, you confirm the fact that this indeed is true, then God is acting in heaven in accord with that.

We are the ambassadors of Christ with tremendous amount of authority to expand His Glorious Kingdom.

I would like to emphasise the word agree, ***sumphōneō***, from which we get the word "symphony." It means "to produce a sound together."

When all of you who are looking into this person's life agreed that his sin is still there or his sin is repented of, whatever it is, the Father will be in agreement with you.

I don't think this verse is talking about a blank check for prayer and it's been completely misused in the churches today.

Taken out of its context these two people are not just any two people as most Christians misuse it. As this verse is often used in the context that whatever you ask when two people agree God would do it.

The two here are the two witnesses when correcting a sinning brother in the church. Those two witnesses who really want the will of God to be done on the sinning brother and they want what is right in his life.

If they agree over this issue and they follow the biblical pattern expressed in the scripture then they can be confident that they are seeking the will of God. Then they will receive the will of God and He will fulfil them in his life.

No need to doubt or question your ability but if you have taken every step according to the word of God, with agreement with witnesses then you can be confident that you are fulfilling the will of God. That will set the church in the path of holiness.

2. Jesus the Son of God works with us on the Earth!

The Father in heaven act with us is one side of the authority and the other side is that the Son on earth works with us.

This is a dual divine authority.

V 20, The Son on earth works with us.

These passages are most abused and misunderstood scripture in the churches today.

For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."

You go to any prayer meetings you would have heard this prayer ... maybe you yourself have prayed numerous times.

Have you ever wondered what if you pray alone? Will God be with you if you are all alone praying?

Please I request you my dear brothers and sisters to look at this verse in its context.

What is this two or three?

They were the witness to bring this charge about the sinning brother in the church.

When you gather in my name along with two or three witnesses to do My works then Jesus says I will be there.

What is the work of Christ?

Correcting a sinning brother.

So, when you are correcting one of the sinning brother in the church then I am moving among yourself in the church. So, in effect what Jesus says is this “when you gather together in My name to reflect My character and My will, there am I in the midst of that”.

This is why I always insist read the scriptures in its context.

Let me once again give you the flow of this chapter.

- V 1-4, you will be able to enter the kingdom of God as children
- V 5-9, you will be protected like children in the Kingdom of God
- V10-14, you will be cared like a child in the Kingdom of God
- V15-20, you will be disciplined like a child in the Kingdom of God
- V 21-35, you will be forgiven like a child in the kingdom of God

From the above we can know that this passage is talking about correction in the churches.

Father acting in heaven with us and the Son is there on earth with us. When we correct a sinning brother, we are just fulfilling the will of God and the work of the Son by part in the purging and the purifying of His own church. We all must be a part of ministers of holiness.

What about the victim in this?

We really need to bring that brother back or that sister back. They need to be brought back.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German theologian, in his book called *Life Together* says,

“Sin demands to have a man by himself. It withdraws him from the community. The more isolated a person is, the more destructive will be the power of sin over him. And the more deeply he becomes involved in it, the more disastrous is his isolation. Sin wants to remain unknown. It shuns the light.

“In confession, the light of the gospel breaks into the darkness and seclusion of the heart. The sin is brought into the light. The unexpressed is openly spoken and acknowledged. All that is secret and hidden is made manifest.

“Since the confession of sin is made the presence of a Christian brother, the last stronghold of self-justification is abandoned. The sinner surrenders. He gives up all his evil. He gives his heart to God. He finds the forgiveness of all his sin and the fellowship of Jesus Christ and his brother. The expressed acknowledged sin has lost all its power. It has been revealed and judged as sin. It can no longer tear the fellowship asunder.

“Now the fellowship bears the sin of the brother. He is no longer alone with his evil for he has cast off his sin in confession and it handed it over to God. It has been taken away from him. Now he stands in the fellowship of sinners who live by the grace of God and the cross of Jesus Christ. The sin concealed separated him from the fellowship, made all his apparent fellowship a sham. The sin confessed has helped him to find true fellowship with the brethren in Jesus Christ.”

The ministry of restoring the sinning brother.

It is the key for,

- Purity of the church
- Revival of the church,
- Renewal of the church, and
- Reaching of the world through a renewed church.

