Matthew 18:15-35

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Date: 14 August 2022

[0:00] The Gospel of Matthew, Matthew 18, Matthew 18, just continuing where we left off this past week. So we'll be picking up in the 15th verse, Matthew 18, verse 15 through verse 35.

Matthew 18, verses 15 through 35 will be our text this morning. As we're turning to it, I will go ahead and let you know that this is the second mentioning of the church in the Gospels.
The very first mentioning of the church in the Gospels is Matthew 16, immediately following the great confession of Peter, accessory of Philippi there of who Christ is.
And upon this rock, I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. And we've seen that as we were making our way through. And we're not going to go back there and kind of rehash that back out.
We understand the church is on the offensive and it's pushing forward. And Christ is the builder and the originator. The original word there is ecclesia, the called out ones. And that's something that was very prominent even in Jewish thought.
[1:02] They understood what ecclesia meant. Because much like what you would have being called to jury duty, they would call out individuals and set them apart in society to be those who would judge specific cases.

There would be solemn assemblies or gathering together of individuals who were called out for a purpose. So when Christ said, I'm going to build my ecclesia, my called out ones, the people he was speaking to exactly knew what he was talking about.
Those who were called out from society and set apart for a specific purpose to accomplish certain tasks. Right. So they understood that. And here we have the second and only other mentioning of the church and the Gospels found for us in Matthew 18.
And we're just continuing to follow this course because things have completely changed since the 16th chapter in the Gospel of Matthew. And now we're setting our face literally towards Jerusalem. And Christ is pointing towards the cross. And he has already validated who he is and his claims to being the king of kings and lord of lords. And all those things have been displayed through signs and wonders. And now the confession is being made.
[2:03] And now we're going to the cross and suffering from man. There's a promise of the resurrection. All these things are packed into this. The last couple of weeks we've taken the time to look at how we treat one another in humility and humbleness.

And how we maintain peace with those even that oppose us. If you remember at the end of the 17th chapter, living peaceably or unoffensively even to our enemies. Though we don't have to do something, we do it.
Though it's not necessarily an expectation out of love. And so that we do not offend them. We see that in the person of Christ. And then we came and we looked last week at living just a little bit lower standard and all humility and living in such a way that we do not offend even the weaker brother or sister in Christ.
And we're just continuing that theme as we move to now the 15th verse of this chapter. But now it's going to move from being just a personal issue. The personal issue will be introduced to us.
And it goes from being a personal matter to a church matter to a corporate matter. So how we're living personally now all of a sudden begins to affect the corporate body. This shouldn't surprise us.
[3:10] Those that have been with us on Sunday nights or Wednesday nights when we're just making our way through scripture. We are currently in the book of Joshua. We'll be finishing up the book of Joshua in the next couple of weeks. And then, hey, we get to the book of Judges.

You ever want to see a book that is hard to preach through chapter by chapter? It's the book of Judges, right? And we're not, but just a couple of weeks. The Lord allows us to. We'll stay in Joshua tonight. We'll be looking at the 23rd chapter tonight.

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And we'll be looking at Joshua chapter 24 on Wednesday. And then that means next Sunday evening. If so, he so allows us to continue to be here, we'll be in Judges chapter 1. And wow, what a book is the book of Judges, right?
Anyway, we can say that about any book of scripture, by the way, when we look at it. So if you know in the book of Joshua, one thing that we have found out is the sins of an individual can affect an entire corporate body.
We've seen that very quickly. That happens, you know. This past week, we just looked at that one admonition. And Achan did not die alone in his own sin, right? That man did not die alone in his sin.
[4:09] Others paid consequences for the sin of Achan. And we see the reminder. So personal matters very quickly spill over into corporate matters. And we see that here in Matthew 18.

So if you're physically able and desire to do so, I'm going to ask if you would join with me as we stand together. And we read the word of God. Found in Matthew 18, starting in verse 15. We'll go to the end of the chapter, which will get us to verse 35.
If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private. If he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses, every fact may be confirmed.
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. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.
Again, I say to you that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by my Father who is in heaven. For where two or three have gathered together in my name, I am there in their midst.
[5:19] Then Peter came and said to him, Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times? Jesus said to him, I do not say to you up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

For this reason, the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he had begun to settle them, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him.
But since he did not have the means to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold along with his wife and his children and all that he had in repayment to be made. So the slave fell to the ground and prostrated himself before him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will repay you everything.
And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii. And he seized him and began to choke him, saying, Pay back what you owe.
So his fellow slave fell to the ground and began to plead with him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will repay you. But he was unwilling and went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what he was owed. So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened.
[6:26] Then summoning him, his lord said to him, You wicked slave, I forgave you all the debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave in the same way that I had mercy on you?

And his lord moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. My heavenly father will also do the same to you if each of you does not forgive his brother from your hearts.
Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for this day, and we thank you for the great opportunity of gathering together to read your word. We thank you for the privilege it is to praise you in song and to fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ.
We pray now as we have read your word, you would give us a heart and a mind to understand it and a life willing to live it for your glory. Lord, just be glorified and honored in all that takes place, and we ask it all in Jesus' name.
Amen. You may be seated. Amen. We come to this morning in Matthew 18, verses 15 through 35, a very important passage of Scripture as it pertains to the church.
[7:31] Important in light of the reality that this is the only second mentioning of the church in particular, and the only other mentioning of the church in the Gospels. The things that we see discussed for us in Matthew 16, we can see being played out through history, the reality that the church is continuously to be on the offensive.

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And no matter how much hell has opposed it and the defensive efforts of hell have tried to stop the progression and the spread of the Gospel, as has been said in the past, the blood of the martyrs is actually the water of the seeds of the Gospel, and it continues to push forward.
We have seen over and over and over again that when Christ is building the church, nothing will ever be able to stop the spread of the church. We can read it historically, we can see it personally, and we can be involved in that application of it.
But yet when we come to the 18th chapter, we see a matter which pertains to the church that we see even being fleshed out through the rest of the Gospels, and not just the Gospels, but the rest of the New Testament. Many of the matters which Paul discusses in his Pauline epistles or his letters to the church point back to this.
One in particular would be the book of Colossians. We'll look at it in just a little bit, not necessarily turn to it, but we'll allude to it so you'll understand what I'm talking about. You need to understand that these matters pertain not just to what some would call the universal church, but to the local church.
[8:45] I have said over and over again, and I really believe it, that every promise that we find in the Scriptures finds its connection to a local body of believers referred to as the church. Paul, writing many of his letters, was writing to specific, particular bodies of believers known as the church.

The only ones that we can say were not written to a church were those who are the pastoral ones, 1 and 2 Timothy in the book of Titus. The book of Revelations, which was written to a number of churches, seven churches in particular, and is written to those local churches to be circulated among them and then to be spread out.
So every promise, every admonition, every challenge that we have recorded for us in Scripture goes to a church in the New Testament. The Gospels themselves were penned so that people who were being connected to a church would have a fuller understanding, not necessarily just word of mouth as it was being spread in those days, but would have an accurate reading of what took place during the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.
These things were an answer to questions that were going on within the body of believers known as the church. Now, the reality is this. I love the church.
From the very moment that Christ called me to himself, when I was 20 years of age on 201 Canova Drive in Shelbyville, Tennessee, where I finally reached the end of my efforts and the end of my walk and the end of my tryings and the end of my doings, and when I had a son asleep in one room and my wife was asleep in the same room in which I was in, and I was trying my best to make things work, and it wasn't happening because while it looked good on the outside, everything on the inside was really just tearing me up, and while I finally came to the end of that, and Christ put me on my knees, and I gave him everything I have, and I said, Lord, take it all.
[10:31] I don't care what you do with it, but just take it all. From that very moment, he instilled within me a love for the church, and I never have been able to get away from that.

It is just a love for the church, and you say, well, sure you love the church. You're a pastor of a church. You're supposed to love the church. Listen, I loved the church long before I became a pastor. I loved the church long before I ever thought that God would ever call me to pastoral ministry.
As a matter of fact, the one thing that I thought he would never call me to was pastoral ministry. The one pursuit that I never desired to follow was pastoral ministry, primarily because I loved the church so much, and I understood what we as a church would do to pastors, and I said, I'm never going to be there.
I don't want to be that guy, but I just have a love for the church. Now, the truth is, things you love, you stick with. Things you like, you can leave, because there can come a moment where you don't like it anymore.
Likes can soon become dislikes. It's kind of like taste buds. They say your taste buds change every seven years. That means you ought to try foods you used to not like. All of a sudden, you might like them again.
[11:38] Someone told my wife that, and since we've been married now for going on 24 years, she's constantly just introducing new things to me, but all of a sudden, now I can eat Brussels sprouts, and I don't know why. Of course, that Brussels sprouts is soaked in bacon grease, and all that other good stuff that makes it real healthy for you, and I can eat broccoli, and I eat raw

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vegetables, and all these things that I used to would never eat, and these things that I used to like, all of a sudden, I don't like them anymore, because our taste buds change, right?

All it takes is one stomach virus hitting you at the wrong time, and all of a sudden, what you used to like, you don't like anymore. I remember many, many years ago, the one time I went to Applebee's, and I ate baby back ribs for the first time.
Now, some of you may love those things, and that's okay, and I remember that, in particular, that was a Sunday. The next day was a Sunday, so Carrie and I had went out on a Saturday night, and this was a long time ago. We're still at Canova Drive.
I couldn't go to church that next day. The stomach virus hit me so bad. It was just bad. I'm going to spare you the details, even though people feel the need to tell pastor all the details. I don't have to tell you all the details, right? You know what happens when you have a stomach virus.
I have never eaten baby back ribs since. I don't like them anymore. I don't want anything to do with them because they don't taste the same the other way because our likes can change, right? So I say all of that for the reality that if I had just liked the church, there had been plenty occurrences and reasons.
[12:55] Let me just be honest with you for me to not like it anymore, to say I've had enough of that. My taste buds can change, but it is the love for the church that continues to push us.

And it is a love for something that continues to drive us. And we have to say these things because the matters before us are particular church matters.
It is connected to the ecclesia or the body. Now, sure, they have application in our personal life as well, but when we read in the text of a brother offending another brother and then witnesses and then bringing it to the church and then all of these things, we see the connection here that no longer are we talking about those on the outside.
We're talking about those on the inside. And it's okay to admit right here because Scripture admits it to us and Scripture even commands us that this thing happens. It's okay to nod your head and you can even say a little bit amen that if you're in church long enough, somebody within the church, a brother or sister in Christ, in the church is going to make you mad and offend you and sin against you.
That is just a reality that Christ tells us, right? He doesn't say that these things may happen or it could happen. He tells you what to do when it happens. And I love that.
[14:15] Before the church is really ever established, we have the birth of the church recorded for us in Acts chapter 2. It's just in a moment that thing is born and the church just begins in all glory and splendor. And it doesn't take us very long before we get to the point where people who are part of the church are sinning against one another because the great battle of the church started on the outside, but when the outside couldn't do anything about it, Satan started working on the inside.

And the battles that raised in many of the churches really were internal battles. Go read the letters of Paul again. Most of your New Testament books are written in response to the internal battles within the church, not to the external pressure against the church.
Because Jesus says the gates of hell will not prevail against the church as it moves forward. But what happens, and you'll have to pardon me if it sounds bad, is that when we're no longer pushing against hell's gates, but we've allowed hell's members to come inside of us and to have its way within the walls of our church.
And Jesus tells us now how to handle those issues. So I want you to see the restorative mission of church fellowship. The restorative mission of church fellowship.
The church fellowship is important. And while the church is to be on missions with the declaration and the proclamation of the gospel, there are a lot of things that we are called to do, to proclaim the gospel, to spread the good news of Jesus Christ, to minister to the poor, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to reach out to the outcasts, and to change society because we're a direct member of it.
[15:55] One of the most strategic missions of the church body is an internal mission in which it is restoring one another through its fellowship. These are why matters of fellowship are so important.

This is why fellowship meals are so important. This is why it is absolutely essential that the church breaks bread from house to house with one another. That wasn't just talking about in the book of Acts, by the way, that they were taking communion.

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It means they were actually eating meals from house to house. This is why so often in scripture we are commended to be hospitable to one another. We are commended to fellowship with one another because things take place around the table meal.
And table fellowship is so important. This is why matters even like the church fellowship that we have planned coming up with a retreat is so important. Listen, I know there is nothing fun, and really it's not very likable to many people to think of a thought of going away on a weekend with people that you only know on their Sunday best, right?
And all of a sudden you show up with them, and they wake up in the morning, and they're not wearing shirts and ties anymore. They don't look like they should. I remember in particular I became someone's pastor. She's not here.
[17:00] I'm not going to call her out, but she had married someone. I had officiated their wedding, and she knew me by way of being pastor. All she knew me as is pastor. Now her husband had known me all my life, and he knew me as Billy Joe.

She knew me as pastor, and she was bringing one of their kids over for my wife to watch one time, and I was mowing the yard, and it blew her away that I wasn't mowing the yard in a pair of khakis with a button-up shirt on.
And I said, what's wrong with you? I only have so many of those. She said, well, my grandfather was a pastor, and I never saw him doing anything except for in khakis and a button-up shirt. That's how he mowed his yard. I was wearing shorts with a pair of cowboy boots because I was weed-eating, and I didn't want my shins to bleed, and I had probably a cut-off-sleeved T-shirt, and I said, well, I'm not your grandfather, and I'm not messing up my khakis, right?
I said, I just got those things at Goodwill. I'm not going to mess them up anymore. I said, I'm sorry. I don't mean to offend you. And so sometimes our mind gets blown when we see people outside of this realm, and just to be honest, that's why we don't want to go to those retreats because we like what we have, this beautiful picture.
This is the way people are supposed to look. But on the other side of that, I love those retreats because now all of a sudden, we begin to see us as we really are, and now we begin the restorative mission of church fellowship because we begin to understand none of us are perfect, and we see this reality being played out here.
[18:17] And so Jesus introduces this concept of someone sinning against another believer. And I want you to see just a number of things.

Number one, I want you to see the initiative taken. Look at what the Word of God says. If your brother sins. Now, some of you are reading other translations.
There are King James, New King James, NIV, ESV. There are maybe NCV. I read from the New American Standard, NASV. There are other translations out there, and I know some of your other translations says, well, mine says, if your brother sins against you.
And that's okay. The New American Standard says, if your brother sins. Later manuscripts, ancient manuscripts, which are what we use to translate scriptures from their original language. Later manuscripts and the ones utilized and used by the translators of the New American Standard Bible contain the phrase to you, if your brother sins against you.
The earliest manuscripts only contain, if your brother sins. You say, well, which one is right? Well, judging from the context, and that's why I don't know that I always have to defend scripture. I'm not trying to defend it. I just want you to understand where our translations got this.
[19:28] Judging from the context of these verses, this sin, if your brother sins, is a sin against an individual. We see this in comparison with Luke. Luke's record of this same event found in Luke 17.

I'd have to go back and look at it. Not Luke 17. I'd have to go back and look at it, but it's also in Luke's version of this as well. So we see here that through the context, it seems that this, not if your brother sins, it is if your brother sins against you.
Now, this is important because when we're talking about what many people claim to be church discipline, and this is church discipline, we'll see it played out in just a moment. It does not begin with you just looking around the congregation trying to find out if someone is sinning.
Right? It's not this, I'm going to make sure, let me see, who can I find sinning? That way I can start this whole church discipline process. Because I'm just going to go ahead and tell you something. If you want to look around, you don't have to look very far. If you want to see if someone's sinning, you can start up here.

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Okay? I have sin in my life. It's like you have sin in your life. We can start by going and looking in the mirror. Let me see if I can find anybody in the church that has sin. Yes, I found him. He woke up with me this morning and he was there when I was brushing my teeth.
[20:33] He was in the mirror looking back at me. Now, is that something I'm proud of? No. That's just something I'm mindful of, right? Because Paul says, I'm the chief of sinners. So, in its context, I believe, the appropriate reading of this, if your brother sins and that sin is against you, then this is what you should do.

Right? If your brother sins, it's just implied by the text that this is a sin against you personally. Something going on inside the body, inside the church here, and all of a sudden, a brother sins against another brother.
Now, we're looking at the initiative taken. If your brother sins, now look at the initiative, go and show him his fault. Go and show him his fault in private.
Now, the first thing I want you to notice about this restorative mission of church fellowship, let's put ourselves in this proper text. You are just a member of a church and you're gathered together with other members of the church and you're, man, you're loving Jesus and you're praising God and you're growing in your faith and you're being nurtured in your faith and you're really sinning under it and you're breaking bread together, you're having fellowship together, you're taking the Lord's Supper together, you're watching believers get baptized, and all of a sudden, lo and behold, another brother in the church sins against you and offends you.
Does something maybe they don't even know about and it offends you, it hurts you. Now, the natural tendency is this.
[22:04] I'm going to sit right here and wait on them to come to me and ask my forgiveness because of what they did to me. That's just natural, right? But the initiative here is, if the sin is against me, it is me who takes the initiative and goes to my brother.

Now, stay with me throughout the text. The initiative is not that I take that knowledge and go to another brother or go to another church member and inform them of what they did to me is I go to the one who has offended me or sinned against me.
See, the initiative is with the one offended, not the offender. Stay the course. The one who is always making the first move is the one who has been sinned against, not the one who has done the sin.
This is important, by the way, not just to this passage. This is important for all of your scripture. So stay the course with me and just follow through. When I have been sinned against and that sin has caused an offense to me, it is now my responsibility to take the initiative and go to my brother and confront my brother in private and to inform my brother of what they have done.
It is not my responsibility to tell anybody else. And it's not anybody else's responsibility to go for me. It is my responsibility to go to him because I am the one who has been offended.
[23:35] There's no waiting on someone to come to me. There's no sulking about the fact that nobody's apologized to me. There's no getting mad because nobody's come to me. There's no leaving the fellowship because nobody's come to me.

The only leaving that should take place is me leaving to go find my brother who has sinned against me. Because it's my responsibility to take the initiative.
Now you say, well, pastor, that doesn't make sense. I'm the one who has been hurt. I'm the one who has been offended. I'm the one who has had the harm cause towards them. I'm the one who has been wronged.
I'm the one who has been talked about. I'm the one who has been gossiped about. I'm the one who has been ridiculed. I'm the one who has been mocked. I understand that. Friend, listen to me. Go all the way back to the book of Genesis.
Some of you were here six and a half years ago in January 2016. Well, actually, it'll be February 2016 because it was the last Sunday in January 2016 which I preached in view of a calling. The first Sunday in February 2016 is when I began my pastoral responsibilities and I believe it was that Sunday night we opened up Genesis 1-1 and we started in the book of Genesis and it didn't take us very long until we got to where man fell and man sinned.
[24:46] It would have probably been about the third Sunday of February 2016. All of a sudden, we looked at this great truth. It's how God responds to sin and it's the law first mentioning, right?

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That how God responds to sin in Genesis 3 is how we can expect God to respond to sin throughout history because how he responds in his first occurrence is how he will always respond and if you remember, it was man who offended God but it was God who took the initiative to come to man. Man offended God but God sought out man. In the cool of the day, God was looking for Adam, calling him out. God was the one who was sinned against.
Man was the sinner but the one who had been sinned against took the initiative to pursue the sinner because see, then and only then do we begin to reflect Christ-like character.
All throughout Scripture, my friend, we need to understand this. The one who is sinned against is the one who takes the initiative to come after the one who has sinned and if it was not so, none of us would ever be saved because while we were yet sinners, he died for us and in our deprived condition, he sought us and he called us to himself.
[26:01] We are the sinners, he is the offended and the offended has taken the initiative to pursue the sinner to restore him to his rightful relationship with the Holy God.

The restorative mission of the church fellowship begins when those who have been sinned against take the initiative of restoring. Because it says when you go to him in private and he listens to you, you have won your brother.
Reconciliation starts with proper initiative. If we're waiting on sinners, let's just say it this way, we should never be amazed when sinners act like sinners.
Right? When man sins, it's just a natural outcome of who he is. What amazes us is when those who are believers are content to continue to act like sinners and allow those things to go on when the initiative is that we take that, that offense and we pursue for restoration.
Which leads us to the second thing, the outcome to be desired. The outcome desired. You say, oh, someone sins against me, I'm going to go talk to them, all right? I'm going to set things straight.
[27:26] Now listen, I got a little bit of that in me too, right? I have to take deep breaths. I have to walk away for a little while. I think I told you when I was growing up, I had a neighbor, he didn't have a problem with this because he used to call me over there to till his garden and his garden was the worst garden I've ever tilled.

I mean, I would never till a garden as bad as Mr. Sadler's garden was because Mr. Sadler's garden was nothing but bedrock and it had maybe an eighth of an inch of dirt on it and all of a sudden he wanted this stuff fluffy as it could be, you know?
And so I would work on it, work on it, work on it. He told me one time I heard his garden, I probably wasn't listening real well. I was probably a young teenager, really angry and mad at him because, you know, I was having to till it for him but anyway, he said, son, I want to tell you something.
I said, okay. He said, every man needs a rock to beat on. And in my mind, I was saying, you've got a lot of rocks to beat on and I'm beating on them. What are you doing about it, right? He said, every man needs a rock in his yard to beat on.
I didn't know what in the world he meant until I got older, until I realized that man has, sometimes just needs to go outside and beat on a rock because the initial feeling is, if I'm sinned against, my initial feeling is, okay, I'm going to make this right.
[28:32] It's only by beating on a rock every now and then and getting that stuff out of you that then all of a sudden you can be right. So before we take the initiative, let's make sure we have the right desired outcome.

And we see this, that if you go to him in private and he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not listen to you, then take with you one or two more witnesses so that to fulfill the scriptural promise on the testimony of two or three witnesses the matter shall be settled.
I want you to know this first of all. The very first desire is that this matter stays private. In our world today, we don't know anything about private anymore. We want to take what's private and make it public.
We want to put it out there on the web and wonder why everybody knows about it, right? We want to post things and put things out there and put everything out there and wonder why everybody knows everything about us. There are people who literally get mad because I don't post anything. There are people who get mad because they don't know a lot about me. There's a reason I live where you can't see my house and there's a reason why my driveway is so long. I know you're coming long before you get there, right? I don't mind privacy. Privacy is a good thing.
[29:38] As much as I like being around people, it's also nice to be somewhere where nobody knows I'm there. I don't know if you're home or not. Well, I know that's a pretty good thing, right?

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That's okay. That's nothing in the world wrong with that.

And what we understand is, listen, there's enough public knowledge about the problems of the church that when we have a problem with a brother and sister, we ought to, to the best of our abilities, keep that matter private. There's enough public ridicule going on already.
Satan has enough fodder for his ammunition. He has enough tools at his disposal. He has enough people to use to put all of our dirty laundry and air it out there. He says the greatest effort ought to be to maintain the privacy of the matter.
If your brother offends you and you go to your brother and you reconcile your dude, I don't ever need to know. Nobody needs to know. If he doesn't listen to you, then you take one or two, which is the minimum that you can have to fulfill the scriptural responsibilities.
And if he listens, then nobody else needs to know. So at that point, now all of a sudden, we have, well, we got four people who are knowledgeable of it. Nobody else needs to know. Only through the greatest efforts, if he does not listen to you, and an offense has been made, then and only then do you bring it to the church.
[30:51] And friend, let's just be honest, when it's brought before the church, the world doesn't need to know. It's a church issue, not a world issue. It's a church matter.

Because, see, the desired outcome is not that the one who has offended gets things right. The desired outcome is that the one who offended is restored. It is to maintain the harmony of the fellowship, not to maintain my personal rights.
These matters are taken not so that my way could be heard or my side could be known or that everybody knows that I was offended. That is not the outcome that we desire. The outcome that we desire that in spite of having my feelings hurt and in spite of being sinned against, I desire that the harmony of the body would be maintained.
that this one who is living an offensive life will be restored in a proper manner to the church fellowship. When Paul hands an individual over to Satan from the church at Corinth, right?
I mean, that's church discipline at its biggest, right? Paul hears something that's going on. He's writing the church at Corinth in 1 Corinthians and he talks about all this matter and he's saying, you're letting this man just live among you and everybody in the church knows what he's doing and as for me, I've handed him over to Satan.
[32:09] Paul said, I've handed this man over to Satan. What does he say? He said, for the preservation of his soul. You say, well, there's some people I'd love to hand over to Satan. Well, before we say that, let's make sure we're going in the spirit of Paul.

Paul says, he didn't hand him over to Satan so that he would have Satan's way done to him. He handed him over to Satan so he would preserve his soul. His outcome that he desired was the preservation of the individual he was handing over.
Not the validation of the thoughts that he had in his mind. He was trying to ensure that that individual's soul would be preserved because sometimes the flesh is so wicked it just needs to be destroyed and Paul says, so I'm going to let him have his way so that what he professes internally will become a reality and then he will stand before his Lord and Savior.
And at that day he will give an account not me. See, he desired to restore him and to preserve him. So before we pursue these things we need to make sure that the outcome we desire is the restoration of the individual not the ratification of our rights.
I need to make sure I'm not just trying to prove my point but rather restore my brother. Big difference. Big difference. Because I can prove my point and destroy my brother.
[33:35] Or I could restore my brother and not worry about my point. We're going to be offended. We're going to be sinned against. We're going to have our feelings hurt. Things are going to go bad almost on a daily basis.

I don't want to offend you guys about this, okay? So nobody get mad at me. You want to be offended go hang out with a bunch of middle school boys. They'll offend you real quick. It takes them about five minutes.
That's all it takes. They get into high school may take them ten minutes. Right? Maybe when they grow up it becomes a little less defensive. It's okay.
It's okay. It happens. Now if you want a girl to offend you wait until she's in the middle of high school. Then she'll offend you real bad. And it's okay. She'll hurt you break your heart and all those good things.

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But it's okay because she's so honest. Dad are you really going to wear that? That looks terrible. I can't believe you're going to walk out of the house looking like that. Things happen. But the goal is to restore not to destroy.
[34:36] Now we get to the third thing. Now we've seen the initiative taken the outcome desire. Number three the standard forgotten. These last two will be very quick.

The standard forgotten. So Peter hears this and again I love Peter. So it says then Peter came and said to him talking to Jesus Lord how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him up to seven times?
That's the question we all want to ask right? If this is what I'm supposed to do then how long do I have to do it? How often should my brother sin against me and I still forgive him? Peter says up to seven times?
And the reason Peter said up to seven times is rabbinical tradition at that time the rabbis would teach you you forgive a brother up to three times. But after the third time you don't have to forgive him anymore.
Now the rabbis were the teachers and the professors of the Old Testament scripture and according to their tradition and their instruction you had to forgive him three times but the fourth time he sinned against you that was enough.
[35:37] So Peter says I'm going to elevate the standard a little bit right? Peter he's been fellowshipping with Jesus he's hanging out he's just come off the mountain transfiguration. I mean the man's even walked on water for a little bit so he says maybe my standard needs to be a little higher.

What about up to seven times is that enough? See he said a high standard. If he sins against me seven times then seven times I'll forgive him but Lord on that eighth time surely I am free to just forget about it and move on.
And Jesus says I say not to you seven times but seventy times seven. Now he's not putting a numerical number there so that we can count it up right?
What he is putting an unattainable standard. He is setting a standard so high that you will never reach it. He is saying there is no end to this ministry.
No matter how many times your brother sins against you and you initiate that response and your brother repents of that. Now there's the ifs right? If your brother repents of that then you continue to offer that and extend that forgiveness because there was that clause that when it's brought to the church and the church confronts the brother who has sinned and if the brother refuses to repent of his sin now all of a sudden the church looks at him as a Gentile or tax collector that is an outcast.
[37:04] The church has not broken fellowship with the brother the brother has broken fellowship with the church as a result of his lack of repentance the church has now cast him outside the church. This is the church discipline right?

And he has put him out and now we better confront this or somebody is going to say pastor you glossed over it and you didn't mention it so we need to confront this because it's there after the church decides okay we're confronting you the matter has been brought to the church it's went through its steps of progression the individual went to you three witnesses went to you or two one or two witnesses went to you so a group of three went to you you have refused to repent you now it's being brought up before the church and by the time it gets to the church now the church is going to govern itself because the church is within its own body as as we find out New Testament epistles we don't need to seek the wisdom of the world we have the wisdom of the church here and the church governs itself and and it looks at these realities and says okay if you're not going to repent if you're not going to confess this sin and and make it right then we're going to put you outside the church you say whoa wait a minute we're getting serious here and outright because you know people were dropping down dead in the early church because of their sins Jesus takes these things pretty serious right maintaining the holiness of the body pretty serious just because the people who lie in church now don't drop down dead before it doesn't mean that God's standards any less which means his grace is being patient so we see this it's brought before the church the church not the individual not the pastor not the elders the church the ecclesia the body in its wisdom makes a decision if you're not going to repent they put you out and it says verse 18 truly I say to you whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven second mentioning of that also mentioned again in

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Matthew 16 he says and again I say to you if two of you two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask it shall be done for them by my father who's in heaven for where two or three have gathered together my name there I am in their midst now some people use these texts to just name it and claim it theology right if two of us agree and we ask God to do anything he has to do it because he promised we would do it take it in context within context it is talking about the gathering of the church together to deal with sin in its own body so what Jesus is saying here in context is the church is so governed that I am the head of the church so when these matters of disruption come up within the body and it escalates to the point that the sin has to be brought before the body because I am present within the body and its members two or more gathered together I am there as well then I will so guide the body that it will have the wisdom to know how to handle the situation and if the church so determines that the individual needs to be put outside the body it is only making that determination because that is already taking place in heaven what you bind on earth shall have already been bound in heaven is how it says in the Greek what you loose on earth shall have already been loosed in heaven is what the original in the Greek is so what happens is the church is the representation of the kingdom of heaven on earth and what the church is doing on earth is doing what has already been done in heaven so that is we are trusting the head of the church that is Christ to guide us in matters of removing individuals from the body and now we come down to Peter says so how long should that happen as long as he repents it continues to happen when he doesn't repent you don't have to worry about anymore because he's no longer part of the church and he says there is no standard because the reality is is we all fall we all stumble we all mess up as long as there's a repentance we continue to offer that again this should be encouraging to us because what takes place in the church is a demonstration of what is taking place in heaven this should encourage your hearts to see that there is no standard listen your Lord and Savior does not look at you and say hey after the seventh time I'm not forgiving you anymore he doesn't your Savior doesn't say I'm gonna give you seven tries and on seven tries if you sin against me one more time I'm not gonna take the initiative I'm not gonna come to you I'm not gonna try to restore you anymore because listen his standard has been forgotten there is no standard as long as there's repentance see what the church is doing is reflecting what Christ is always doing in heaven so we continue to mess up he continues to take the initiative he continues to come to us and to break us and to mold us and to confront us and he brings the witness of the Holy Spirit to bring conviction within our hearts and when the witness and the testimony of the Holy Spirit shows up all of a sudden our friend listen to me when Jesus comes to us in private and we don't listen he brings two more with him who is the Father and the Spirit and when the fullness of the Trinity of God gets within us and God the Father begins to testify and God the Holy Spirit begins to convict and God the Savior Jesus Christ begins to bring us to us if we do not repent then all of a sudden now we are called to accounts but as long as there is repentance there is no end to that measure which brings us to this last thing the example followed and he tells the account we're not going to read it again he says for so the kingdom of heaven is like or may be compared to and again he's speaking in reference to the church the church is to be a reflection of the kingdom of heaven on earth and in the kingdom of heaven it can be compared to a master who was calling his slaves to an account and he calls the first one to him and this first one owes him an insurmountable amount of money we can do the math but

I've already read great people who've already done the math so I'll make it easy for it it equates to about 20 years wages at that time which brings it in comparison to about 12 million dollars 12 to 14 million dollars in today's money you say I make that much money in 20 years no but at that time all right I don't make that much money in 20 years I tried I did the math it don't work right so the equivalent would be about 12 to 14 million dollars of today's time this servant was called and the reality is he had been embezzling this money from his master right he had embezzled about 12 million dollars and his master said I want my money back pay me 12 million dollars and he falls down on the seat and this servant he says I can pay it back yeah right for some reason he had needed it now he thinks he can pay back just give me time right and he begs and he asks for forgiveness because the master was justly going to cast him and his wife and his children in prison that's a common practice of that day right the father gets in debt the husband gets in debt the whole family has to pay that debt off right so so we see this this is a just action he was justified in doing it he would have been ratified through the courts allowed to take place this man falls on his face and begs mercy oh and 12 million dollars and he says okay I'll forgive it and mercy on you're forgiven you don't have to pay any of it back and he lets him go and that man gets up and he is free from his

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debt he says and then he walks out the door and when he walks out the door he runs into a fellow slave now that slave owed him a hundred denarii that's a hundred days wages that's a pretty good amount of money too right but it's not 12 million dollars this is in the thousands of dollars not 12 million he owed him a hundred days wages the one who had just been forgiven so much grabs him by the neck and begins to choke him said I want my money and this man falls on his face much like the other one had begged mercy said I'll pay it back just give me time he says I'm not giving you time I'm giving you prison and he throws him in prison I put this picture in your mind this man had just been forgiven 12 million dollars he's throwing a fit over about ten thousand dollars he throws him in prison now he was justified in doing that that was legal you could do it but the other servants went and reported to his master what had taken place so he calls him and he says I forgave you so much but you could not forgive your fellow servant so little note this even though he had stolen 12 million dollars he was not called wicked until he forgave he was not called wicked until he failed to offer forgiveness he wasn't called a wicked servant when he owed 12 million dollars he was called a wicked servant because he didn't forgive his fellow man in the initial response he was going to be thrown in prison with his wife and his children in the end because of his wickedness and the hardness of his heart he was handed over to the torturers not to prison so that he would be brought out and tortured repeatedly and then put back and then brought out and tortured repeatedly and then Jesus makes this great declaration in that 35th verse my heavenly father will also do the same to you if each of you does not forgive his brother from your hearts because the sad reality is the great destruction that is taking place in the church is that there are church members who've been forgiven 12 million dollars and they raised Cain over 10,000 we've been forgiven so much our master has been graciously merciful to us this is why the longer Paul lived he wrote I am the chief of sinners because the longer he did the worse men treated him but the less he saw of himself I alluded to the
[46:35] book of Colossians the beginning of the message and I'll end with it here the book of Colossians Paul is writing because there are internal struggles within the church of Colossae there are bickerings and fighting over festivals and feasts and what they should and should not eat and how they should and should not behave and all these things it's not a big book it's just a small book just four chapters but he tells them in chapter 3 that the believers in Colossae have a positional responsibility to lovingly forgive their brothers now that's important a positional responsibility because it says in Colossians 3 verse 12 so I like it when you stop so as those who have been called it always says chosen so as those who have been chosen of God that's your position right if you're a believer you've been chosen you say wait a minute pastor we get now let's just say this the Bible says if you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior you are chosen it says it right there that words there you can't change it you can't move it you may not understand it but it's there I don't know why he chose me let alone why he chose you

I don't know why he chose any of us but he did so as those who have been chosen of God holy and beloved he calls us holy and beloved now here's your responsibility that's your position here's your responsibility put on a heart of compassion kindness humility gentleness and man I wish this word wasn't here and patience that's my responsibility because I am chosen I am to put on these things a heart of compassion kindness humility gentleness and patience look at verse 13 bearing with one another and forgiving each other whoever has a complaint against anyone just as the Lord forgave you so also should you you say why should I forgive them and try to restore them because he did it to us let's pray Lord thank you for this day Lord I thank you for your word and Lord we pray that you would help us to live according to it Lord may you be glorified and honored in the way we live may we be a church of restorative mission and fellowship Lord may we maintain the unity of the body for your glory we ask it all in
Jesus name amen so so so so so so so so so so so so so so so so so so so Thank you.
Thank you.
Thank you.
[50:54] Thank you.

Thank you.
Thank you.
Thank you.
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