UNITED WE STAND, BUT DIVIDED WE FAIL AND FALL

Bible passages are from the International Standard Version (ISV).

WE WILL DISCUSS MATHEW 18:15-20 AND HOW IT RELATES TO CHRISTIAN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

UNITY IN DIVERSITY:
1. No one is an Island
2. There is strength in diversity, because we all share our talents, ideas, etc.
3. THERE CAN BE Unity in Diversity
4. When we are together in Christ, we are stronger and He lives in us!
5. We are one because we share ONE BLOOD - The Blood of Jesus that flows through us and the Presence of the Holy Spirit inside of us.
6. There are many things that Unite Us—more than those that divide us!
7. However, because we come from various countries, communities, and because we have different upbringing and backgrounds, we’re bound to step on each other’s feet from time to time. Our Champion, the Lord Jesus, knows that and in order to make sure such situations don’t overwhelm and divide us, He provided us with a Christian Solution called One Stop Conflict Resolution and Counseling Center.

A DISCUSSION OF CHRISTIAN CONFLICT RESOLUTION:

Mathew 18:15-17 clearly tells us that We Christians, which is His Church and forms The Body of Christ, is the ONLY WAY TO EFFECTIVELY RESOLVE CONFLICTS AND/OR DISPUTES.

Note: Sisters in Christ, please don’t be offended by the Bible mentioning man or men or brother. These terms are used to indicate Human Kind, which means all of us, men and women.

Let’s look at the Bible passage, Matthew 18:15-17, keep in mind that it’s Jesus talking:

Dealing with a Brother (or sister) who Sins

“If your brother (or sister) sins against you, go and confront him (or her) while the two of you are alone. If he (or she) listens to you, you have won back your brother (or sister). But if he (or she) doesn’t listen, take one or two others with you so that ‘every word may be confirmed by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ If, however, he (or she) ignores them, tell it to the congregation (the church). If he (or she) also ignores the congregation, regard him (or her) as an unbeliever and a tax collector.
“Breakdown of Matthew 18:15-20:

If your brother or your sister offends you, (in any way):
1. Go to him/her and show them their fault [please note that this does not recommend picking up the phone and gossiping or telling other people about the offense and who committed it].

2. If that brother/or sister, has the spirit of God in them, they will apologize and the Relationship is restored. But if he/she will not Listen to you, verse 16, try having two or three friends listen to the reason for the problem. If that doesn’t work take your matter to the church. That’s where we come in. We are ordained ministers dedicated to helping people resolve issues at our One Stop Conflict Resolution and Counseling Center.

3. For those who refuse to settle their disputes, Jesus tells us in verses 18 to 20 that God’s love is unconditional and He is with us.

Here is the Scripture reading, Matthew 18:18-20: "I tell all of you with certainty, whatever you prohibit on earth will have been prohibited in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will have been permitted in heaven. Furthermore, I tell all of you with certainty that if two of you agree on earth about anything you request, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven, because where two or three have come together in my name, I am there among them."

THE REALITY:

The devil is always threatened in a place with Unity and Brotherly/Sisterly love. He does everything within his power to create dissention, conflict and misunderstanding in the Church, in our homes and in our work place. If we allow him to, he will accomplish his assignment, which is outlined by Jesus in John 10:10, "The thief comes only to steal, slaughter, and destroy. I’ve come that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

The thief is a reference to the devil, but in the same passage our Champion Jesus announced that He has come to give us Life and more abundantly! So, this poses a couple of questions,

WHOSE SIDE ARE WE ON, SATAN OR JESUS? WHOSE REPORT SHALL WE BELIEVE?

The answer is easy for a Christian, we believe and follow Jesus and we know that when Jesus is in our hearts and in our thoughts, Satan has no rule over us. When we feel that Satan is trying to get control of us, all we need to do is close our eyes and say, with meaning and strong commitment, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus drive Satan out. Thank you Lord for always watching over me, Amen.
A Church United in Christ, Jesus, is a Powerful Church. It is a Church full of signs and wonders, a Church where the Name of the Lord Jesus is highly lifted up because He is the founder of the Church, and we are is United in Him. We, the people of His Church, make up the Body of Christ here on earth, which is evident in John 12:32, where Jesus states, “As for me, if I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself.”

It is when we Christians, who make up the Church are working in One Accord and in Unity, that we can declare what is stated in verse 18 of Matthew 18; “What you bind on Earth will be bound in Heaven.” But, we must not forget what Jesus tells us in Matthew 7:1-5, “Stop judging, so that you won’t be judged, because the way that you judge others will be the way that you will be judged, and you will be evaluated by the standard with which you evaluate others.

Why do you see the speck in your brother’s eye but fail to notice the beam in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when the beam is in your own eye? You hypocrite! First remove the beam from your own eye, and then you will see clearly enough to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.”

Explanation of Matthew 7:1-5:

We are told by Jesus in 7:1 not to judge other people. Because of our nature, we all do this at times, but the Christian will realize the error of their ways and strive to correct it. When we tell someone else what we think of a person we might not even know, this is called GOSSIP. We must ask Jesus to guide our thoughts and stop using “stinkin’ thinkin’” because it will cause us to be judged by God when we get to heaven in the same way we judge others here on earth. I point this out because of what Jesus tells us in verse 2, “because the way that you judge others will be the way that you will be judged, and you will be evaluated by the standard with which you evaluate others.” Jesus tells us that whatever judgement we put on another person will come back on us by the power of God. He also tells us that whatever punishment we give another person will be used to punish us, by the power of God.

Matthew 7 goes on in verse 3 to ask us why we would concentrate so hard on the flaw of another person when we have flaws that are much greater than the other person. The way Scripture states this is, “Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when the beam is in your own eye?”

By the guiles of Satan, we all fall into this judging, but by the power of Jesus, we must stop and ask forgiveness in the name of Jesus, which will make Satan run. A person has no control over how they look or even how they talk, so we must not let that bother us for one second. I found that when I see a person I don’t know, I introduce myself to them and that let’s me see the Christ inside of them. Let’s make an effort to see Jesus Christ inside of everyone.
Let’s face it, since the dawn of human kind, we have been jealous of others, which prompted the caveman to kill his neighbor to take something of his. This behavior has moved through our world, and is evident in all the wars and country takeovers. It’s also evident right here in our community with gang violence and murders. We Christians are not immune to prejudging, jealousy, or dislike of another’s dress or look. This kind of judging is going to come back on us by the power of God, as it states in Matthew 7:2 and it will happen when we come face to face with Jesus in heaven. We must work hard every day to keep from doing the things that will cause us grief in heaven.

Thoughts On Matthew 7:3-5:

Jesus reminds us that we often pass judgment on others to keep from examining ourselves. It may be something as innocent as noticing someone’s action or the way they’re dressed, but this is wrong. In fact, it is obnoxiously and hypocritically wrong in God's eyes. Before we start noticing someone else's differences, we had better get our own house in order. It's ridiculous for us to spend so much time finding all the little things that we think are wrong with others while we ignore our own huge problems. Let's address our own problems, weaknesses, sins, and inconsistencies before we start trying to "fix" anybody else!

The last verse I want to discuss is Matthew 7:6, "Never give what is holy to dogs or throw your pearls before pigs. Otherwise, they will trample them with their feet and then turn around and attack you."

What this means is unless God is opening someone’s mind to spiritual understanding, they will treat God’s truths in the same manner that pigs would treat pearls—as nothing but dirt. We are all called by God, but if we chose to ignore the call, the truths of God will be figuratively, “trampled under their feet.”

Unity of Church (Gathered People of Christ—Christians)

In Mathew 18:19, Jesus says, 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." This requires us to be united in Christ. If we do not agree amongst ourselves, this breeds chaos and agreement cannot be accomplished in chaos. How can two people Hold Hands and Pray together in light of what Amos 3:3, states, “Will a couple walk in unity without having met?” As Christians, we must meet every Christian with the love that God has given us, then we won’t be strangers to each other or to Jesus.
Jesus Seals it up with verse 20: \textit{For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.}” At ONE STOP CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND COUNSELING CENTER, we pray, worship and bless all who come to worship with us, so rest assured that Jesus is with us.

If there is division in the Church, if there is no unity, if the spirit of God is not present in any Church, that Church is a Social gathering, [Peoples Club]. That can be compared to what happened to King Saul after the presence of God left Him in [I Samuel 16:14]: \textit{”The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him.”}

**In Conclusion:** We must learn to follow Biblical Principles in all that we do. Without Christ in control of our lives, we are bound to malfunction and even the best tune-up cannot restore the unrepentant sinner.

As the Body of Christ, we are called to Evangelize and bring souls to the Kingdom. The Word of God declares in Luke 10:2 & Mathew 9:37, \textit{”The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few”}\n
Harvest speaks of increasing the Church by bringing the crops (people) into the Storehouse (the Church). By increasing membership in the Church, it strengthens the Body of Christ!

**FOUR IMPORTANT THINGS ABOUT CHURCH:**

1. The Church is the Body of Christ not a Place of Politics and rivalry - it will never belong to only a particular group or tribe. It is a Universal Church!

2. The Lord will always Build His Church “I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it,” Mathew 16:18.

3. There is Unity in diversity: As diverse as we people of earth are, we are bestowed with many talents, gifts, etc., which are given to us by God to be used for service to God and to one another. [I Corinthians 12:4-11].

   \textit{”There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same LORD. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.”}

   All these gifts are the work of one Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit. Christ, the Son of God, was instructing the disciples not to go about trying to convert the masses. Unless God is opening someone’s mind to spiritual understanding, they will treat God’s truth in the same manner that pigs would treat pearls—as nothing but dirt.
Just as a pig would neither understand nor appreciate the great beauty and worth of the pearls, neither would a person who refuses to acknowledge the call of God, because that person will not understand the great value of the truths of God. He or she would, figuratively, “trample it under their feet like the pigs would do to the pearls.

With God the Father and Jesus, His only Son, we have the power to lead others into eternal life in heaven. Just as Jesus told His disciples to make disciples of all nations, that commission is also passed to us through our Baptism. To do this, we only have to work together and God will do the rest.

Be blessed and know God’s love,

Pastor Joe Gauthier, DD, CNC, COG