

Friday, January 30, 2026

This week's devotions are written by Rev. James Lee. Born in Orange County, raised in the San Gabriel Valley, James desperately holds onto his SoCal roots while currently serving on the opposite coast as the lead pastor of Christ Community CRC on Long Island (about 60 miles east of NYC). He has also had the privilege to serve in various capacities for the Christian Reformed Church denomination. James is married to his better half Jin-Young and together, they have three beautiful children.

Matthew 18:19-20

*19 "Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."*

Do you like confrontation? I don't. I have trouble confronting folks because I don't want them to dislike me. I also have trouble confronting folks because I don't want them to be hurt by me.

Our devotion today leads us to Matthew 18:15-20 that talks about dealing with the sins of the church. This passage talks about how we as believers should live with one another especially as we deal with humility, sin, forgiveness, and caring for those in need around us. And it's here that we see a balanced approach of truth and grace.

Confrontation should never begin publicly when you run into the danger of dehumanizing someone. Confrontation should always begin privately and gently. The goal and purpose should never be about correction, but more so restoration. Now obviously, the temptation is there to not have the hard conversations - but biblically, it's our high calling to ensure that accountability happens especially as God's covenant children and people.

If you look at how this step-by-step process is lined out in regard to correction and reproach, this further emphasizes the importance of God's covenant promises in the covenant community. That's why when we have at least "two or three" gathered in His name - especially for this work of restoration and discipline, God moves powerfully in unity. His presence is felt and ultimately becomes the main source and guide.

That's why cooperative leadership is important for the sake of the church, in the life of the church. That's why pastors should never be by themselves in these hard conversations making decisions on their own. That's why it's so important for leadership to be united in communication, purpose, and goals. And that is why we should never take away Jesus in all of this - and lose the unity that only Jesus can provide and give.

How can union in Christ be experienced in tough love? How can union in Christ be experienced in hard confrontations? How can we exemplify Christ in that unity?