

Weekly Devotion – Christ's Presence

February 8, 2023

Scripture: Matthew 18:18-20

¹⁸ Remember this: whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ And this: if two *or three* of you come together as a community *and discern clearly* about anything, My Father in heaven will bless that discernment. ²⁰ For when two or three gather together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.

Quote from Leonard Sweet

"If Christ's presence is at work between members of the church, then the outcome will advance the health of the Body of Christ."

Reflection

Over the past four weeks, we focused on forgiveness and the need for it in our lives as Christians. For forgiveness to be real, Christ needs to be a part of it. That's why I appreciate this scripture so much! It strikes me that in the middle of Jesus' teaching about forgiveness, he reminds us that "when two or three gather together in my name, I am there in the midst of them." It reminds us how we need to invite God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit into all our interactions. The conversations are more powerful, meaningful, and effective with God's presence.

Awareness of God's presence is vital when dealing with conflict. Too often, we let our anger or anxiety overwhelm the confrontation and forget our need for the Holy Spirit's wisdom and grace. Without the Spirit's guidance, we often cannot find patience, compassion, and the ability to compromise. In difficult conversations, I realized there's no way forward without asking for God's help. Pausing for prayer has transformed the interaction during a church meeting, with my family, or with friends. These moments of transformation illustrate how working together with God; we can advance the health of the Body of Christ. No matter the situation, remember God's peace and hope is available when we intentionally wrap our conversations in prayer.

Questions

- What are areas of conflict in your life you need to wrap in prayer?
- When have you experienced a conversation transformed by God's wisdom?

Songs

Traditional Hymn: I Need Thee Every Hour

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=58e9meQDbSg>

Contemporary Song: The Lord's Prayer (It's Yours) by Matt Maher

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36hBIBGVFSs>

Prayer

Everpresent God, thank you for being present, even if we forget to invite you into a conversation. Remind us to invite you into every encounter. May your Spirit help us start each day with "Dear God" and end the day with "Amen" as a reminder to live each day in prayer. In the Holy Spirit's power, amen.