

GDG | Loving Those Who Reject Jesus | Matthew 18:15-18

With a heavy and sober heart, this morning's sermon was on church discipline and how to love those who have been disciplined out of the church. And appropriately, such a significant undertaking should not be done at the behest of a single person, or a small group of people – and the Bible teaches as much.

Church discipline done by the entire church, which means every single member of the church has a responsibility to (1) pursue the unrepentant member, to (2) pursue them via church discipline if they refuse to repent, and (3) love and care for the unrepentant in the way Jesus describes as loving and caring – even if it seems different than what we think should be done.

Let's take some time to dig deeper into the text from this morning and think consider the responsibilities that Jesus gives the church and how we love people who have turned from him.

Discussion Questions

- 1) What is something the Lord highlighted to you in His Word this morning?
- 2) ***The History of Church Discipline.*** What are your thoughts and regarding the statistics and history of church discipline? In your whole life – how many times have you voted on church discipline? What do you think about that? Should that number be greater or smaller? Why?
- 3) ***Read Prov 18:13, 17.*** What is the assessment of a person if they speak to a matter before fully hearing both sides? How does this inform church members to approach a matter of church discipline?
- 4) ***Read Matt 18: 17; 1 Cor 5:11; 2 Thess 3:14.*** In light of these verses, how do you think someone married to an ex-communicated member should interact with their spouse? Or parents if their child has been ex-communicated? Or a person who you school with or work with? *In other words – your day-to-day interaction regularly continues with the person – so what changes?*
- 5) ***Read 1 Cor 5:4-5.*** What does Paul mean that the ex-communicated individual should be delivered over to Satan for the “destruction of his flesh?” Does this mean physical death? Is it possible that God can even use Satan as a means to bring people back to himself (see 2 Cor 2:6-11)?
- 6) ***Let's pray for one another.*** Pray that we can (1) do our best to pursue members of Fireside who are straying into sin, that (2) that we trust Jesus words and the church discipline process, and (3) that we follow Jesus' commands regarding how to love someone after they've been excommunicated from the church.

Wayne's Thoughts

Question 5. The apostle Paul's vocabulary is consistent when he uses the two words "flesh" and "body." When Paul is talking about someone's body, he uses the word (σῶμα) sōma. When he is referring to the indwelling desires for sin, he uses the word (σάρκος) sarkos. Flesh is referring to the indwelling sinful desires – not the physical body.

Second, it says something that someone who is being removed from the church is being "delivered over to Satan." That's a serious statement – and it also speaks to God using Satan to punish the unrepentant.

Just think of that – God may use Satan, who is under the control of God, as a means of punishment to try and restore this person to fellowship with himself and the body of Christ.

Just think of Job. Satan was used to afflict Job, but not because Job was sinning – but to vindicate God's own character to the rest of the world through the book of Job. God can also use Satan as a means to inflict the unrepentant – with the goal of restoring them back to himself and the church.