

JESUS IS IN THE MESSY MIDDLE

¹⁵*If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back.*

¹⁶*But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two others with you and go back again, so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses.*

¹⁷*If the person still refuses to listen, take your case to the church. Then if he or she won't accept the church's decision, treat that person as a pagan or a corrupt tax collector.*

¹⁸*I tell you the truth, whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven.*

¹⁹*I also tell you this: If two of you agree here on earth concerning anything you ask, My Father in Heaven will do it for you.*

²⁰*For where two or three gather together as My followers, I am there among them.” Matthew 18:15–20 (NLT)*

HOW DO WE HANDLE HARD THINGS IN A WAY THAT LEADS TO RESTORATION?

1) Restoration starts with **HUMILITY**.

- ◆ Before I enter a hard situation/conversation, I need to let God **DEAL WITH ME FIRST**.

“Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? ...first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.” Matthew 7:3-5 (ESV)

- ◆ Humility slows down **ANGER**.

“Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.” James 1:19–20 (NIV)

2) Restoration is different **INSIDE** the family of Christ than **OUTSIDE** it.

“What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside.” 1 Corinthians 5:12–13 (NIV)

“Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.” Galatians 6:10 (NIV)

- ◆ Our faith family should include **CELEBRATING** when people are doing well, **HELPING** them when they are hurting, and **LOVING** them enough to have the hard conversations.

3) Restoration **PROTECTS** us.

“See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.” Hebrews 12:15 (NIV)

4) Jesus is with us in the **MESSY MIDDLE**.