

SBC – June 19, 2022
Matt. 18:15-20 (NKJV)
“Dealing With A Sinning Brother”

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Prayer:

Slide # 1

Theme: *Christ the King*

Outline:

- Chps. 1-2 The Advent of the King. (Proving His LEGAL right to the throne by His genealogy.)
- Chp. 3 The Forerunner of the King and the King’s baptism.
- Chp. 4 The Test of the King. (Proving His MORAL right to the throne by not yielding to temptation; and exhibiting His kingdom resume.)
- Chps. 5-7 The Pronouncements of the King. (Proving His JUDICIAL right to the throne as seen in the wisdom of His kingdom teaching.)
- Chps. 8-10 The Power of the King. (Proving His PROPHETICAL right to the throne by fulfilling prophecy.)
- Chps. 11-12 The Rejection of the King.
- Chp. 13 The Parables of the King.
- Chps. 14-16 The Revelations of the King.
- Chps. 17-20 The Instructions of the King.**
- Chps. 21-23 Formal Rejection of the King.
- Chps. 24-25 The Predictions of the King.
- Chps. 26-27 The Passion of the King.
- Chp. 28 The Resurrection of the King.

Matthew 18 is the fourth of five discourses in the book. This discourse emphasizes how Christ’s kingdom people should then live with an emphasis on HUMILITY.

The disciples had been arguing over who would be the greatest in the kingdom. Jesus then emphasized that kingdom values were really all about humility. The way into the kingdom is through humbling yourself in saving faith and the key to kingdom greatest is in HUMILITY that thinks of others instead of promoting self.

Jesus then warned of the seriousness of being a stumbling block to believers and then went on to emphasize the importance of seeking to restore those of His sheep who wander.

In Matt. 18:12-14 He told a parable to illustrate this very thing.

As we now come to the section dealing with Church discipline, we need to keep in mind that it should be understood in light of the preceding parable that emphasized seeking out the one sheep that had gone astray with the point being it is not the Father's will that even one believer should be given over to spiritual destruction.

God wants every effort to be made to keep His children from spiritual harm. And part of that effort involves loving people enough to hold them accountable and seek to restore them when they wander off track spiritually.

God seeks to carry out His will largely through people. And this is true even in the matter of correction. The matter of Church Discipline if properly applied is "dealing with the human counterpart of divine love in action." This passage in Matthew 18:15-20 deals with how a wayward believer is to be brought back into the fold.

Discipline is not my favorite topic in the world and as far as dealing with Church discipline it is my least favorite part of being in the ministry – but it is necessary. The goal in discipline is always restoration. It is always about the spiritual good of the errant believer and also the good of the entire flock. But it is never fun.

Slide # 2

Hebrews 12:11 (NKJV)

11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Discipline, properly motivated and properly carried out is a manifestation of love. Isn't it crazy how sinful rebellion calls tough love hate. The world is quick to call God-loving Christian's haters simply because they insist on living according to God's standards. We live in a world where good is called evil and where evil is called good. The bible word for that is perversion!

Slide # 3

Isaiah 5:20–21 (NKJV)

20 Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, And prudent in their own sight!

That's where our whole society is at. Everything is backwards and inside out which is where they are certainly at on the matter of love and discipline. And the more we coddle people from the cradle to the grave with no discipline the worse it gets. I wonder why?

Slide # 4

Proverbs 3:11–12 (NKJV)

11 My son, **do not despise the chastening of the LORD**, Nor detest His correction;

12 For **whom the LORD loves He corrects, Just as a father the son in whom he delights.**

If we really love people, if we really care about them, then we will seek to graciously but firmly correct them. It is for their ultimate good. But it is also for the good of the entire body. Corinth had some serious sin going on in the body and gloried in the fact that they were such a gracious and tolerant church. Paul in correction said this:

Slide # 5

1 Corinthians 5:6 (NKJV)

6 Your glorying is not good. **Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?**

Sin not dealt with in the body does not get better – it just spreads. It is like a cancer that must be dealt with or it will kill the body. Nobody likes to deal with cancer, but it must be dealt with.

So, with the background warning not to be a stumbling block and the importance of restoring a fellow believer, with that background we now come to Matthew 18:15-20.

Matthew 18:15–20 (NKJV)

15 **“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.**

In view here is a brother – a fellow professing Christ. This is an “in-family” matter. We would like to think brothers would never sin against each other – but alas they do. In fact, in the context of body life Peter says, ***“love will cover a multitude of sins”*** (1 Pet. 4:8).

Some manuscripts have “sins against you” emphasizing a personal sin committed against someone, and some manuscripts just say “if your brother sins” leaving it generic – meaning any sin.

Peter’s follow up question in verse 21 would indicate that indeed “personal sin” against someone is probably in view in this context.

Slide # 6

Matthew 18:21 (NKJV)

21 Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother **sin against me**, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?”

The word “sin” (Gk. hamartano) means “***to miss the mark***”. It means to miss the mark of God’s standards. This refers to something that is clearly wrong according to God’s word such as lying or stealing.

It is not simply a matter of getting your feelings hurt or having a disagreement over personal preferences, etc. No, this is something that clearly violates the Word of God in the sinfully wronging of another person. This is objective reality not merely subjective.

In the immediate context Jesus has just emphasized that it is wrong to “despise” any believer – no matter their status (18:10). To despise someone is to belittle them and treat them with contempt. In the eyes of God that is a very serious sin and in context a potential stumbling block. So in context sinning against a brother would certainly include despising a brother and thus being a stumbling block.

Note it is the person who has been wronged that should take the initiative to confront the wrongdoer (cf. Lev. 19:11). He should not get someone else to do it. We need to love enough to personally confront when necessary. Again, this is not easy – but it is according to Christ’s instructions – it is according to true love and for the ultimate good of the other person.

Jesus says, “***if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone.***” Deal with this in private. Don’t call the prayer warriors, don’t tell anyone else – just go privately to the person. It starts there! Remember the goal is to restore the brother with the least amount of trauma possible as seen through the lens of the parable in verses 12-14.

It is amazing how much extra trouble we can cause by involving a whole bunch of other people instead of just going directly to the person and dealing with it on a private level.

Volumes of trouble would be spared if we would just follow this simple guideline as outlined by Christ.

Sometimes people have a critical spirit, and they talk to everyone but the person they are critical of – always in confidence of course. One pastor came up with an ingenious way of dealing with this.

This pastor kept on his desk what he called a complaint book. When a member of the body would come to him with the faults of another he would open up this book and say, “***Well, here is my complaint book. I’ll write down what you say, and you can sign your name to it. Then I’ll take it up with our brother.***”

Invariably the critic would stammer, back track, and insist that nothing be written or signed. In his forty-year ministry that preacher opened his complaint book hundreds of times – BUT NEVER made a single entry. – (Story shared by Joe R. Barnett)

That makes the point that it is much easier to go and complain to someone else rather than going directly to the person.

Jesus doesn’t say first go and talk to the pastor – even one with a complaint book – rather He says to go directly to the person privately. And if a person refuses to do that he shouldn’t go anywhere.

What Jesus says here assumes that indeed the person has legitimately been sinned against.

If upon confronting him he hears – that is he responds positively and appropriately by admitting it and getting right – well then you have gained your brother!

This is the goal – it is to gain your brother back.

To gain means “to prevent the loss of” (cf. Acts 27:21). The sense is to keep him in the fellowship and not lose him in that sense. Restoration is always the goal!

Step one is to confront in private. If the brother refuses to repent you proceed to step two as seen in verse 16.

16 But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.'

If the sinning brother won't listen, then take one or two witnesses with you to again confront him with his sin. The purpose for this is to officially establish the case.

In the OT any serious case was established in the mouth of two or three witnesses and that precedent then carried over into the NT.

Slide # 7

Deuteronomy 19:15 (NKJV)

15 "One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; **by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established.**

2 Corinthians 13:1 (NKJV)

1 This will be the third time I am coming to you. "**By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established.**"

The bringing in of witnesses further establishes the case. Now, again, it is here assumed that the sinning brother is guilty. But the use of witnesses would serve to establish either guilt or innocence. If one does not have witnesses to carry the case forward, then it should not proceed. These witnesses would have opportunity to hear the case out firsthand and either confirm innocence or guilt.

Again, the assumption here is that the brother is guilty of sin and the case is being established in a very credible way in keeping with biblical jurisprudence (cf. Num. 35:30; Deut. 17:6; 19:15; Jn. 8:17; 1 Tim. 5:19).

17 And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

If the sinning brother refuses to listen to the witnesses the next step, step 3 is to bring it before the church. At this point the entire church becomes involved in an effort to restore the sinning brother. This is God seeking to restore a fallen brother through the agency of His people.

Only the gospel of Matthew directly mentions the church.

The first mention of the church is found in Matt. 16:18 where Christ said He would build His church (future tense) on the rock truth that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God. This refers to the universal church consisting of all believers in the Church age from the day of Pentecost until the Rapture of the Church.

The second reference to the church is found right here in Matthew 18:17 where it refers to a local church context. Thus, these two references to the church in Matthew form a pair – the first referring to the universal aspect of the church and the second to the aspect of the local church.

As we proceed beyond the gospels the CHURCH becomes the big idea. It is what God is doing in the world today during this the Church Age. The word “church” is found 114 times in the NT with 90 of those occurrences being in reference to the local church. It is essentially in the context of the local church that God carries out the work of His Church.

It is in the local church that we have God-ordained leadership. It is in the local church that we have accountability as seen here in Matthew 18:17. It is in the local church that we have the use of spiritual gifts. It is in conjunction with the local church that we are not to neglect the assembling and the stirring up of love and good works (Heb. 10:25). It is in relation to the local church that we have the host of “one another” emphases in the NT.

I cannot imagine God saying, “Well done” to anyone on judgment day who in the church age was not totally sold out to the local church. It’s what God is doing! To miss out on the local church is to completely miss the point of God’s activity in the world today. And yet for so many the local church is not a priority – it is merely an optional add on if it happens to be convenient.

It is true that the Greek word *ekklesia* (meaning church) by itself simply means “called out ones” referring to an assembly. However, there are strong reasons to believe Jesus here has the future local church in view.

As the thought continues on into verses 18-20 it becomes clear that what Jesus is saying applies to the time in the future when He will be absent from them. In verse 20 Jesus says where two or three are gathered in His name there He is present with them in their midst. That clearly refers to a spiritual reality which would be in place after He would be physically gone – after the inauguration of the Church Age.

That brings us to the 4th step of church discipline as outlined by Christ. If the sinning brother won't listen to the church then he is to be treated like a heathen or a tax collector. The idea of a heathen is a Gentile.

Understand the historical context at this point. Matthew is written to Jews with the Jewish frame of mind in view. The Jews had no social dealings with the Gentiles or the tax collectors. If at all possible, they would avoid them.

Slide # 8

John 4:9 (NKJV)

9 Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" **For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.**

If there was anyone more despised in the eyes of the average Jew than a Gentile, it would have been a tax collector. They were considered traitors and apostates with whom they had nothing to do.

Jesus is illustrating His point with this language – emphasizing at this point the action of excommunication – the breaking of fellowship. This is the last resort! This is the final step of tough love.

Slide # 9

The Four Steps of Church Discipline

1. Confront privately.
2. Confront with one or two other witnesses.
3. Bring it before the church.
4. A complete break in fellowship.

That fourth step seems severe – especially in today's Christian world where discipline is pretty rare. It seems like the Christian world wants "no accountability" which goes right along with "they will not endure sound doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:3). It seems severe until you look at what Jesus said about how serious it is to be a stumbling block to one of His "little ones" who are believers (cf. Mt. 18:6-10). Then it seems to be very consistent! (cf. 2 Thess. 3:6, 14;

And this is not the only place this level of discipline is called for in the NT. Paul spoke in these same terms in 1 Cor. 5.

Slide # 10

1 Corinthians 5:9–11 (NKJV)

9 I wrote to you in my epistle **not to keep company with sexually immoral people.**

10 Yet I certainly did **not mean** with the sexually immoral people **of this world**, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.

11 But now I have written to you **not to keep company with anyone named a brother**, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—**not even to eat with such a person.**

God's family is to be a holy family and open/flagrant sin is not to be tolerated. There is to be accountability. There are holy standards in God's family called the church. You can't just hang out here corrupting the whole group with sinful compromise.

It is interesting to note that in the phrase "let him be to you" the "you" is not plural but singular.

Slide # 11

Jesus was personalizing the instruction, making the responsibility for restoration and discipline binding upon every individual in Jesus' community (not just the leaders!). – ***The Moody Bible Commentary***

By their action the church shows they do not condone the sinful behavior and cannot have fellowship with it. However, the action is not punitive but rather corrective in nature. As soon as the person repents he should be received back into fellowship publicly, just as he has been excommunicated publicly.

When you look at all the NT has to say about breaking fellowship with a fellow believer who is in sin you could summarize the reasons for doing so in this way. There is a reason for the strong follow up message on forgiveness as seen at the end of the chapter!

Slide # 12

The Basis for Church Discipline...

- Christian love is violated by serious personal offenses. [Mt. 18]
 - Christian unity is violated by those who form factions and destroy the peace of the church. [Titus 3:10]
 - Christian law is violated by those living scandalous lives. [1 Cor. 5]
 - Christian truth is violated by those who reject essential doctrines of the faith. [1 Tim. 1:20]
- (Attributed to Don Whitney)

Slide # 13

2 Thessalonians 3:6 (NKJV)

6 But we **command** you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you **withdraw** from every brother who **walks disorderly and not according to the tradition** [truth handed down from God by the apostles] which he received from us.

2 Thessalonians 3:14 (NKJV)

14 And if anyone does **not obey our word in this epistle**, note that person and **do not keep company with him**, that he may be ashamed.

The early Church took the instructions of Christ about Church discipline seriously and we see the apostles applying them in their writings.

When discipline leaves a church, Christ goes with it. – **J.L. Dagg**

An unholy church is not pleasing to Christ. There must be discipline where there is flagrant sin. Someone has said that historically there are 3 marks to the true Church; 1) the preaching of the gospel; 2) the observance of the ordinances; and 3) the practice of church discipline. What does that say about the American church in general today?

Step 4 ends the Church's responsibility. At this point there is nothing more for the church to do. However, that is not the end of the story. When a person is excommunicated Paul indicates they in effect are put out into Satan's territory and the spiritual protection afforded them in the church family is removed.

We see in the book of Job that God had a hedge of protection around Job which Satan wanted God to remove so he could have his way with him (cf. Job 1:10).

I believe there is this kind of hedge in the fellowship of God's people. Even unbelievers who are closely connected with God's people are blessed in a close relationship with God's people (cf. 1 Cor. 7:14).

Slide # 14

1 Corinthians 5:4–5 (NKJV)

4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,

5 deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

The realm of Satan is the realm of pain and death. In this context the devil has special liberty to inflict this person in various ways that may end in death if the person does not repent.

Slide # 15

1 Timothy 1:20 (NKJV)

20 of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, **whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.**

1 John 5:16 (NKJV)

16 If anyone sees his **brother** sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. **There is sin leading to death.** I do not say that he should pray about that.

Slide # 16

James 5:19–20 (NKJV)

19 Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back,

20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will **save a soul from death** and cover a multitude of sins.

It is a serious matter to claim to belong to God and be a part of His holy family. It seems pretty consistent that at the start of every special era God drives the point home that to be in relationship with Him is a most serious matter – a matter of holiness and God must be revered in the life or you could be killed. Let me give you some examples.

In Moses' day when the children of Israel were just getting established as the covenant people of God we have the example of Nadab and Abihu.

Slide # 17

Leviticus 10:1–3 (NKJV)

1 Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered **profane** fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them.

2 So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.

3 And Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke, saying: '**By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy**; And before all the people I must be glorified.' " So Aaron held his peace.

In the days of Joshua when the people were just getting into the position of taking the land we have the example of Achan who took of the forbidden spoils contrary to the clear command of God.

Slide # 18

Joshua 7:25 (NKJV)

25 And Joshua said, "**Why have you troubled us? The LORD will trouble you this day.**" So all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones.

You say that was just the OT. No, actually at the very start of the Church Age we have the example of Ananias and his wife Sapphira who lied about their giving.

Slide # 19

Acts 5:3–5 (NKJV)

3 But Peter said, "Ananias, **why has Satan filled your heart** to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself?

4 While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? **Why have you conceived this thing in your heart?** You have not lied to men but to God."

5 Then **Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last.** So great fear came upon all those who heard these things.

That has a way of purifying the church. No one wants to join that kind of a church lest they get killed outright (see Acts 5:11).

Someone says, “Well, we don’t see that today”. That may be to some extent. Remember, in every era it seems that God makes the point at the beginning but then intends for that to be a reference point going forward. The deadly seriousness of it remains.

God may not kill every hypocrite in the church today, but hypocrisy certainly helps to kill the church. – **Warren Wiersbe**

Peter says we as God’s children should be “**obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts**” (1 Pet. 1:14). But there is such a thing as being a disobedient child and it can have deadly consequences.

I believe that Church Discipline is a form of grace in which God uses His people to seek to turn an errant child of God from sin. But if the sinning believer refuses to repent it can really get ugly as they are put out into the realm of Satan which may very well end in death if they don’t repent.

It is deadly serious this matter of holiness. A believer may try to run from God (sort of like Jonah) – running from church to church, but in truth one cannot outrun God. Running from proper Church discipline is like running from the mercy of God that is afforded through the Church.

In Hebrews 12 it says that God disciplines all of His children. If a person is without discipline, it just proves that they are illegitimate and not truly saved. God is a responsible heavenly Father, and He does not let His children get away with sin. If a sinning believer won’t submit to properly ordained church discipline, then God directly gets involved and that can get deadly serious in a hurry.

Footnote: Sometime ago D.A. Carson publicly rebuked the compromised emergent church movement and some of their leaders. He was resoundingly criticized for doing so saying he should first have dealt with these people privately. His response was that very public sin by very public people needs to be addressed publicly (Titus 1:11). Public error calls for public correction. I think he is right in this. I think we see this for example in Paul dealing with very public sin at Corinth without going through all the steps of formal church discipline (cf. 1 Cor. 5:1).

18 “Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

As a freshman in Bible College, I one time asked a visiting speaker at a local church what verses 18-20 meant. He told me he thought it had to do with Church discipline and I looked at him like, “***Where did that come from?***” What I failed to realize, and what he failed to tell me, is that he was looking at the immediate context which is KEY to proper interpretation and understanding.

This was before I learned to think about every verse in context. This was before I learned that a text without a context is a pretext. In the matter of proper interpretation CONTEXT is king.

This verse is not just an open name it and claim it check on whatever you want. No! Verse 18 is linked with the previous context related to Church Discipline. A very literal translation is found in the NASB.

Slide # 20

Matthew 18:18 (NASB95)

18 “Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.

The sense here is that the binding and loosing on earth is what has already been determined in heaven. What happens on earth is simply the affirmation of heaven’s decree. The action on earth aligns with heaven and therefore it is binding.

God works through His people in so far as they align with His will.

Slide # 21

1 John 5:14–15 (NKJV)

14 Now this is the **confidence** that we have in Him, that if we ask **anything according to His will**, He hears us.

15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

When the prayers and actions of God's people align with heaven it is binding. And the same truth applies to loosing if the person repents. This too is ratified by God.

The Church has no authority on its own to decide what is sin or its consequences. We simply act in accord with positions already established in heaven.

Note the verse says "**whatever**" and not "**whoever**" you shall bind or lose. This shows we are holding people accountable for their actions, but we are not the ultimate judge of the person's heart. This is God's domain and His alone.

What the church does is simply ratify what heaven has determined in keeping with the revealed will of God through the Word.

19 "Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.

Again, this is not talking about two believers claiming just anything. Rather, this is two believers agreeing on a matter of discipline in accordance with God's will as revealed in the Word. When that aligns God answers prayer because it is His will.

A common but mistaken interpretation holds that these verses [19-20] promise that God will do whatever two or more believers ask. This violates the context. There is a clear connection with the immediate preceding discussion about restoring a sinning disciple. Verses 18 and 19 relate the restoration/disciplinary actions of Jesus' disciples **on earth** to the decisions of the Father **in heaven**. The word **again** at the beginning of verse 19 suggests that this verse restates the principle of verse 18. - **HCSB**

God works through His people as they pray. God works through prayer, but it is prayer that aligns with His will. As has often been said: ***The purpose of prayer is not to get our will done in heaven, but to get God's will done on earth.***

Slide # 22

Anything literally is “any matter” or “any affair”, i.e., any circumstance requiring church discipline. – ***The Moody Bible Commentary***

20 For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”

It doesn't matter how small the church is. There are many places in the world where the assembly of believers is very small.

Jewish tradition requires at least 10 men (a minyan) to constitute a synagogue or even hold public prayer. Here Christ promised to be present in the midst of an even smaller flock – “two or three witnesses” gathered in His name for the purpose of discipline.

– ***John MacArthur***

The sense is that when discipline is properly carried out in conjunction with two or three bonafide witnesses that Christ is there involved in the action which makes it binding. We do this in conjunction with Christ and His presence. We see the sense of this in 1 Cor. 5:4-5.

Slide # 23

1 Corinthians 5:4–5 (NKJV)

4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,

5 deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

This is all done in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and enacted by His power. To do something in Jesus Name means it is done according to His will, and for His purposes and benefit.

The gathering in Matthew 18:20 is for the purpose of Christ and the discipline being dealt with is according to His will. In such a case Christ promises to be present saying, “***I am there in the midst of them.***” Revelation says that Christ walks in the midst of the churches (cf. Rev. 1:13; 2:1). His spiritual presence is here and any official binding and loosing is according to His directive. We do this in conjunction with Christ. We do not act alone.

God alone is the ultimate judge. Part of being God is that He is the Judge of all. In Psalm 82 God calls the judges “god” with a small “g”. And the reason for this is because judging is a God-like activity. Oh, human judges are not God but they act for God in judicial matters.

This is a solemn God-like responsibility that God’s people now share in – the judging of sin in the midst of His people.

Slide # 24

1 Corinthians 5:12–13 (NKJV)

12 For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not **judge those who are inside?**

13 But those who are outside God judges. Therefore “put away from yourselves the evil person.”

We don’t hold the world accountable, but in the holy family of God we are to hold each other accountable in keeping with love and holiness. And in that judging responsibility Christ stands with His people as seen in Matt. 18:20.

So often when it comes to the issue of sin God’s people don’t want to deal with it. It is easier just to sweep it under the carpet, pretend it isn’t a problem, or just hope it goes away. But that is not true love. It doesn’t help the person and it is not healthy for the body.

A visitor to Switzerland went hiking and stumbled onto a shepherd’s fold. The shepherd and his flock seemed content except for one sheep, which was resting on a pile of straw. This animal seemed to be in pain. The hiker quickly saw that its leg was broken and asked, “How did it happen?” [The shepherd said] “I broke that sheep’s leg.” A look of pain and puzzlement etched the visitor’s face.

[The shepherd said,] “Of all the sheep in my flock, this one was the most wayward. It never would obey my voice. It never would follow where I was leading the flock. It wandered to edges of cliffs. And not only was it disobedient itself, it was always leading the other sheep of my flock astray. I’ve had experience before with sheep of this kind, so I broke its leg. When I first went to it with food, it tried to bite me. I left it alone for a couple of days. Then I went back to it, and it not only took the food, it licked my hand and showed every sign of submission and even affection.

And now let me tell you something. When this sheep is well, as it soon will be, it will be the model sheep of my flock. No sheep will hear my voice as quickly. None will follow me as closely. Instead of leading the other sheep astray, it will now be an example and a guide for the wayward ones. It will lead them to obey my call. Actually, a complete transformation will have come into the life of this wayward sheep. It will have learned obedience through its suffering.”

– *James H. McConkey*

Hebrews 12:11 (NKJV)

11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

God help us to understand and respond accordingly.