

Church Matters

“The Church and Its Most Neglected Love Language - Discipline”

Pastor Brad Bigney / May 31, 2015 / Grace Fellowship Church

We need to be plugged into an organized local church that has chosen leaders to exercise God-given authority- to help each of us to truly love each other the way God calls us to love others in His family.

Even the very first Christians had to deal with the sin that was already there making a mess of things.

Look at **Acts 4:32 – 5:5**.

God's Word gives us clear principles to follow that can keep us from destroying ourselves and other people around us by refusing to deal with sin.

1. **Matthew 18:15-18**

In the Gospels we only have two explicit, direct references to the church:

Matthew 16:16-18 – Jesus says His church will be a triumphant church. It will triumph, because He's the One building it!

Matthew 18:15-20 – Jesus says that as long as the church exists, there will be sin to deal with because the church is made up of sinners saved by grace – but sinners nonetheless!

The church is going to be triumphant, but until Christ (the Head of the Church) returns, there's going to be sin that has to be dealt with.

There's never been a church that was free from sin, because churches are made up of people, so there's never been a church that didn't need to practice church discipline!

Observations from **Matthew 18**:

a. **We're Talking about a "Brother"**

- **v. 15** makes that clear that we're talking about a Christian. Also see the fact that the last step involves "telling it to the church."

b. **We're Talking about a Clear Act of Sin...**

- "if your brother sins"
- We're not talking about the fact that he doesn't conform to your preferences. We're talking about a clear act of sin.
- These are clear acts of disobedience to the teaching of the Bible.

c. **The Process is Very Clear**

- You go alone, take 1 or 2 others with you, tell it to the church, then you put him out, then you pray for him to be restored!
- You can stay in any one of those steps and repeat it as often as you like before you move on.

d. The Steps Continue Only if there is No Repentance...

- A person does not reach the final step of church discipline unless he refuses to repent and change.
- Concerning timing of all of this: the Bible doesn't give us a specific timeline for these situations, so we try to always err on the side of grace.

e. Finally Make Sure You Understand the Goal is Restoration

2. I Corinthians 5:1-13

a. The Sin was Specifically Mentioned – v. 1

b. Paul's Greatest Concern was Not The Behavior of the Incestuous Man, but the Corinthian church that would not deal with it – v. 2

c. This Process is Referred to as "Delivering To Satan for the destruction of the flesh" v. 5

- So that the fleshly habits will be destroyed
- Not "for the destruction of the body" but for destruction of the "flesh"

Paul was referring to the power of sin in his life. It was the 'flesh' that had mastered this man. He's saying "hand him over to Satan before whose authority he's been surrendering. Cut him off from Christian fellowship; expose him to the dreadfulness, loneliness, and awfulness of the sin of which he is guilty; let the world see that sin like this cannot and will not be tolerated in the body of Christ."

d. Failing to Handle this Matter Would Risk Harm to the Rest of the Body v. 7

e. This Process is Reserved for those Who Claim to be Christians and are in Our Church Family v. 1

3. Galatians 6:1-5

a. The Process Involves All of Us v. 1 "you who are spiritual"

b. The Process is to be Carried Out with Gentleness and Humility v. 1

c. The Process Fulfills the 'Law of Christ'

Gal. 5:14 "love your neighbor" as opposed to v. 15 "bite and devour one another"

John 13:34-35 “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

- d. What we are discussing is not harsh or legalistic---when done properly, it can be one of the most spiritual and loving things a group of believers can do**

Notice the fact that it follows the discussion about walking in the spirit, and the fruit of the spirit in contrast to the works of the flesh.

4. Summary

- a. God Calls Church Leaders to Shepherd the Flock of God**

- I Peter 5:2-11

- b. God Calls His People to Make it a Joy for The Leaders to Do What God’s Called Them to Do**

- Hebrews 13:12-17

- I Thessalonians 5:12-22

- c. God Calls Every Believer to be Involved at Some Level**

- Galatians 6:1-2

- d. God Gave Us Church Discipline as a Tool for Restoring Someone Caught in Sin**

- It’s redemptive not punitive

- 2 Cor. 2:6-11 shows Paul’s exhortation to the Corinthian church to forgive the man that they disciplined – and bring him back in

- e. God Gave Us Church Discipline as a Way to Protect the Rest of the Body**

- I Cor. 5:6 “... a little leaven leavens the whole lump”

- f. God Gave Us Church Discipline as a Way to Guard the Honor of God’s Name**