

Matthew 18—The Kingdom Community

- **Intro**
 - Main Idea: The Kingdom Community of faith, the local church, loves and humbly serves one another in the same way Christ has humbly loved and served us.
- **We Enter the Kingdom Community as Children (v.1-4)**
 - v.3—unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven”
 - There is a humility and dependence requirement that means PRIDE prohibits faith
 - Hard—we want to have Jesus but keep a posture toward God as though we were still the father.
 - **Childlikeness is about HUMILITY, not IMMATURITY**
 - We love and serve one another in humility
 - We embrace humble love and service as the ethic of the kingdom.
 - The King came not to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many.
 - **Our default posture is OUTWARD, toward one another to serve and give.**
 - This is OPPOSITE of inward, self-seeking, defending ourselves/territory
- **We edify one another, not tempt one another (v.5-9)**
 - We are SELFLESSLY concerned about one another’s holiness.
 - We aren’t leading people TOWARD sin but protecting one another FROM sin
 - Temptation and sin are INEVITABLE in a broken world; temptation and sin are UNACCEPTABLE in the kingdom community
 - We are ZEALOUSLY committed to our own holiness
 - v.8-9—“cut it off...throw it away...tear it out...throw it away”—Humbled by our own weakness and tendencies to sin, we make absolute WAR on our sin/temptation, etc.
 - We are a people marked by holiness!
 - May we find all our happiness in holiness! This is gospel-driven obedience!
 - Most of the time, our moments of sin are tied directly to PRIDE—in that moment, we have pridefully rejected humble submission to Jesus and pridefully asserted Self-Reign!
- **We rescue one another (v.10-14)**
 - v.14—Our pursuit of others in a heart of gracious rescue MIRRORS God’s heart to rescue
 - God sends angels to protect and serve; how much more should we go to protect/serve!?
 - NEWS FLASH—in God’s good providence and care, he made us to NEED ONE ANOTHER!!! It is impossible to accurately receive/experience the loving care of the Father in a life of isolation from one another! He delivers his heart of care to us through each other!
 - Oftentimes, God’s pastoral care OF his little ones is extended TO his little ones THROUGH his little ones!!
 - We accept corporate responsibility for one another—sin is destructive and when we see it in one another, we engage the rescue operation!
 - When even ONE of us goes astray, we ENGAGE for the sake of restoration!
 - In a gospel family, with close relationships, there will be opportunities to harm/hurt people and opportunities to care for, love and serve people
 - We engage in rescue missions for the sake of reconciliation and restoration not rogue crusades for the sake of destruction and division
 - We fight FOR each other, not WITH each other!
- **We restore one another (15-20)**
 - “you” = singular—this is not a manual to church leaders but a word of direction to EACH OF US! This is how we live together when someone is caught in unrepentant sin.
 - v.15-1st—come to speak to the unrepentant person directly

- Gossip is the OPPOSITE of restoration! Where there is offense, concern, sin, go DIRECTLY to the source.
- Keep the circle as small as possible for as long as possible, rather than talking about the sin with someone else!
 - Ephesians 4:29—let no unwholesome talk come out of your mouths
 - This is 1:1 and where MOST ALL church discipline is intended to happen!
 - This kind of relational, spiritual work ought to be happening all the time among us!!
 - “gained a brother”—the motivation is RESTORATION not RETALIATION!
- v.16—2nd—correct unrepentant sin in community
 - Loving correction in the context of community is a massive means of grace
- v.17—confront unrepentant sin as a faith family
 - May seem embarrassing/unloving. In truth, this is the whole church saying, “we love you! Come back to Christ and his people!”
- v.18-20—4th—cast out unrepentant sinners as an act of judgment
 - v.18—“You” = plural—act of judgement given by the local church with authority of God
 - v.20—“two or 3”—not about corporate worship but about God’s presence with us in church discipline!
- We forgive one another (21-35)
 - We receive extravagant grace in the gospel
 - Popular teaching—forgive up to 3 times (so Peter thought he was super spiritual!)
 - “could not pay”—our sin mounts a debt before God that we are HOPELESS to pay!
 - We extend extravagant grace in the gospel community
 - “that same servant”—unforgiveness is a failure to understand and apply the gospel!
 - We are not marked by ACCOUNT KEEPING but RADICAL FORGIVENESS!
 - Francis Schaeffer—“And if we are surrounded by a world which no longer believes in the concept of truth, certainly we cannot expect people to have any interest in whether a man's doctrine is correct or not. But Jesus did give the mark that will arrest the attention of the world, even the attention of the modern man... Because every man is made in the image of God and has therefore aspirations for love. There is something that can be in every geographical climate, in every point of time, which cannot fail to arrest his attention. What is it? The love that true Christians show for each other, and not just their own party”
- Corporate Accountability:
 - We elevate and value church membership
 - Prioritizing our covenant and fulfilling our commitments
 - We engage in active pastoral care
 - Knowing the body; feeding to the body; protecting the body; leading the body
 - We equip Community Group leaders
 - Within Community Group we know, love, serve and spur one another toward godliness
 - Within Community Group we actively step into one another’s lives to rescue from sin
 - Within Community Group we work to maintain unity, seek reconciliation and confront, repent from and forgive sin.
- Personal Accountability:
 - Are you oriented outward toward others in love and service or oriented inward, looking only to be served and given to?
 - Are you fighting zealously for your own personal holiness and obedience to Jesus?
 - How could you intentionally and clearly love the church around you as God has loved you?
 - Is there anyone you need to lovingly engage for the sake of confronting sin/offense for the glory of God and the good of their soul?
 - Is there any way in which you are participating in gossip or unhelpful talk rather than engaging a brother or sister directly for reconciliation?

- Are you harboring any bitterness, anger or unforgiveness in your heart toward someone else?