

## MORNING SERMON OUTLINE

### **CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

#### **Matthew 18:15-17 (A)**

In Matthew 18:15-17 our Lord prescribes a process commonly seen as the steps to be followed in church discipline. That is not a wrong view, and our OPC Book of Discipline references this passage and its prescriptions.  
BUT ...

#### **1. The aim is restoration, not expulsion.**

NOT "These are the steps to follow to get someone out of the church."

Review the context of the chapter -

Jesus' concern is for the spiritual /moral well-being of the "little ones who believe in Me" (vs.6),

we must be careful not to trip each other into sin (vv.6,7),

when a sheep wanders from the fold, we are to seek to find and recover that sheep (vv.12-13), so that not one of Father's "little ones" perish.

Our Lord concludes with a demand to forgive those who repent.

So, yes, the steps our Lord outlines *may* result in excommunication (17), BUT the overall concern is rescue, recovery, restoration.

Vs.15: We are to seek to "win [our] brother", not condemn him.

Galatians 6:1,2 – the Law of Christ is the law of love.

**Who** is instructing us?

Jesus, the Lord of the church, whom we must obey.

Jesus, the Savior of sinners who died for *our sins*.

#### **2. In vs.15 our Lord refers to "sin."**

Sin = breaking God's commands (WSC 14), not "social norms."

Ephesians 4:2 – patiently bear with people's annoying actions, in love.

Sin is SIN, not because it hurts you, but because it is against God.

Learn to see the danger a person's sin puts him in with God.

Sin, when it gets a grip, if unrepented, leads to ...death (Js.1:15).

The law of love should move you to seek to rescue from its grip.

#### **3. Options – two bad & one right.**

a. Anger or disgust -> want nothing more to do with X\_\_\_\_\_.

b. Gossip. "Do you know ...?" Pious gossip – "We should pray..."

c. Go – privately to confront & seek to win your brother.

Why? The Lord Jesus says so!

The Golden Rule

Disarm defensiveness

You owe every person their good name.

You might be wrong!

#### **4. Three Hinderances**

Your sins .... Your fear ..... Your lack of love or anger ...

#### **5. Beware of legalistically misusing vs.15**

Do not require defenseless victims of abuse to confront the abuser!

Public acts of sin & crimes do not require private confrontation.