

September 10, 2017

Pastoral Notes

Reverend Dr. Brigitte A. Black

Ministry of Encouragement

Care-Front

Matthew 18:15-20

Life can be messy. In this messy life you will have disagreements, conflicts, and sins committed against you. Gossip is a sin that can cause so much harm and we engage in it so lightly. It can rip a person's world apart and sometimes they are unable or unwilling to put their life back together. Next time you listen to, start, or spread gossip think about the harm it can cause. They never make a front-page headline retraction when a story is not true. How do you work through these situations? Do you handle family different from others? Do you deal with church folks a certain way? First, you pray. Once you say something in anger you cannot take it back-it's out there. You can apologize, but it was probably better not said. Our text can teach us how to process these circumstances.

Jesus tells how to discipline another Christian who has sinned against you. This is what the community of faith should do when one of the family members sins. Our goal is to restore our brothers and sisters back into community. The first step is care-front. I use the term care-front because you care enough about the relationship and about the person to risk dealing with the situation head on. Most of the time we either fight or flight. The caring way to deal with conflict is to go to the person and have a conversation. Talk about how they sinned against you and how to repair the situation. If they hear you that is a good thing. The goal is to restore the relationship. If that does not work, then take two or three witnesses. They are to eyewitness the conversation and response. The witnesses can help mediate the situation or hear the person not repent of their sin. If that does not work, the third step is to tell it to the church. Bring the complaint before the church. They want to help the person acknowledge their sin and restore them back into community. The fourth step is to treat the sinning unrepentant brother or sister as pagan or tax collector. So, what does that look like today? Are they not allowed to participate in church stuff? We must deal with each situation on an individual basis.

Finally, as a church community we should come together and pray about the situation. We are to pray the prayer of authority. Whatever we bind on earth will be bound in heaven and whatever we loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. In Matthew 16:19, we learn these are the keys to the kingdom of heaven. And where two or three are together seeking the will of God, God will be there in your midst. This how you care-front a conflictual situation.

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Prayer

Almighty and awesome God, we praise and magnify Your name. You are kind, caring, and compassionate. Have mercy of the people in the path of the hurricanes and earthquakes. Give them the resources to rebuild their lives, homes, and businesses. Grant our leaders' wisdom in dismantling the racial divide. May we be more loving and tolerant of others. Help us to unite and be instruments of peace. May we be willing to build community through conversation and friendships. You said, we should love our neighbor, teach us how to love our neighbor. We pray for justice, fairness, and equity in all our interactions with one another. Help us to restore the outsiders, those who have broken laws, and those who have been marginalized by life's circumstances. Grant our college students' wisdom in time management. May we be willing to care-front those who have done wrong to us. Help us to reconcile with those who have sinned against us knowingly and unknowingly. Shower wisdom on the leaders of Illinois Annual Conference. Enlarge the territory of Wayman AMEC and grant us increase in laborers for this I vineyard. This we pray in the name and power of Jesus Christ our lord and savior. Amen!

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Stewardship Moment

Our stewardship is worship. How we use and manage what God has given us is our worship. It says a lot about how we feel about God and what we think of God. When someone gives you something do you cherish it or do you mistreat it and kick it around? Or every time you see it you think about who gave it to you and you take good care of it. All that we have is because God gave it to us, how will we manage it? We are to worship the Lord in gladness! Be grateful for what you have and take care of it. Our giving is done in a spirit of worship and thanksgiving. Be glad about what God has done in your life. Our giving is a spiritual matter that we should celebrate. Celebrate that you have something to give. Celebrate that God trusted you with.

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Sermon Scripture

[Matthew 18:15-20](#)

Dealing With Sin in the Church

¹⁵ "If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. ¹⁶ But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' ¹⁷ If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector. ¹⁸ "Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ "Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."