

Unified Together in God's Will

Matthew 18:18-35

Introduction:

- IMAGINE if there were no churches
 1. There would be no p_____, parishioners, no ministry by the body of Christ.
 2. Some believers see the church as unnecessary because they view their faith as ONLY p_____
 3. Anyone that neglects the church is living in dis_____ to their Lord.
- Jesus prayed for unity among believers so that the world would come to b_____ in Jesus (Jn 17:20,21)
 1. This cannot be done as an individual but only as a g_____.
 2. If a **group** is truly unified in God's w_____, they will experience Him in a way and do things in a way that an **individual** cannot.
- Our previous study of the first half of Matthew 18 leads into our current study of the last half.
 1. We can all be the g_____ in the kingdom of heaven at the same time (1-4)
 2. We must never cause a believer to s_____ into sin (v. 6)
 3. We are to maintain the purity of the church by encouraging believers to r_____ of sin and to not associate with believers who r_____ to repent (vv. 15-17).

If we are unified together in God's will....

God's supernatural p_____ will work through us (18,19)

- The binding and loosing on earth
 1. The loosing - the earthly action of r_____ a believer in sin so as to bring them out of that sin (v. 15)
 2. The binding - the earthly action of ex_____ a believer from the church who refuses to repent and so giving them over to their sin (v. 17)
- The binding and loosing in heaven
 1. Most versions translate "will be" but the Greek text is a future perfect and should be translated "will have been." There is a HUGE difference in meaning:

- a. This is not a promise of something that will happen in heaven, but a declaration of what has a _____ happened in heaven.
 - b. The action happened in heaven f_____, and was worked out on earth –
2. This meaning is verified by v. 19
- a. *Again I say to you...*
 - 1) How can Jesus say, *again I say to you*, when He has never before said the words that follow?
 - 2) Jesus is using the phrase, *again I say to you*, to mean that He is saying verse 18 in another way.
 - b. The parallel of binding and loosing on earth = asking on earth in u_____ with another (unity in God's will)
 - c. The parallel of it already happening in heaven = the Father in h_____ does the work (compare Jn 5:19; 14:10).

● Too many times churches focus on the wrong thing (e.g. numbers). Focus on His will:

1. Love the Lord our God with a_____ our hearts (Matt 22:37).
2. Love one another as C_____ loved us (unselfishly – Jn 13:34)
3. Unselfishly love all those a_____ us (Matt 22:39; 5:44).
4. Fulfilling the great commission of making d_____ of all the people groups, by going, baptizing, and teaching Jesus's words (Matt 28:18-20).
5. Gather together regularly to encourage one another to love and to do good works, which are # 1-4 (Heb 10:24,25).

Christ's special p_____ will be evident among us (20)

● To be gathered in Christ's name means:

1. We are not trying to make a name for ourselves but for Him
2. We are reflecting His c_____ in our gathering

● The gathering can be as small as two but not less than two.

So this promise is not for individuals but a g_____ of believers.

● What is this special presence?

1. Jn 13:34,35 – observers see that we are Christ's d_____ if we have unselfish love for one another.
2. Matt 5:16 – observers see our good works and g_____ God.
3. I Cor 14:24,25 – observers will see that God is a_____ us.

Therefore we must immediately f_____ each believer who has wronged us (21-35)

- The story that illustrates this point (21-34)
- The application of this story (35)
 1. Sinning against one another is inevitable. How often must we forgive each other? _____
 2. Forgive our fellow believer must be i_____ just as God in Christ forgives us immediately when we sin against Him.
 3. Refusing to forgive adds to dis_____.
 4. Refusing to forgive brings God's d_____ upon us.
 5. God cannot work in disunity!

Conclusion:

- IMAGINE if each church was unified in God's will
- IMAGINE if just our church was unified in God's will
- REALITY check – are you unified in God's will?
 1. Are you holding on to a sin? – now is the time to repent!
 2. Are you unwilling to forgive another believer for wronging you? – now is the time to forgive!

Let us not leave this to IMAGINATION

Resolve to be unified in God's will, making God's power through us and Christ's presence among us a REALITY every time we meet.