

TakeAway Lesson - 9/6/26

Matthew 18:15-20 - Reconciliation in Christ: Speaking Truth in Love

Scripture Focus

Jesus teaches His disciples how to respond when sin damages a relationship. Instead of gossiping, avoiding the problem, or seeking revenge, He calls His people to speak directly, seek repentance, and work toward restoration. The goal is not to win an argument but to "regain" a brother or sister. The other readings reinforce this theme: Ezekiel calls God's people to warn so that sinners may turn and live, and Paul teaches that love fulfills the law.

Read Matthew 18:15-20 aloud - NRSVue

Memorable quotes/notes:

Historical / Lutheran Context

- Matthew 18 focuses on life together among Jesus' followers - humility, care, reconciliation, and forgiveness.
- In verse 15 the NRSVue says, "you have regained that one." The purpose of confronting sin is restoration, not embarrassment or victory over another person.
- Jesus begins with a private conversation: "when the two of you are alone." This protects the neighbor's reputation and limits unnecessary gossip.
- If the person will not listen, one or two others are brought in, echoing Deuteronomy 19:15 and providing fairness and accountability.
- Lutherans can hear both **Law and Gospel** in this passage. The Law names sin honestly; the Gospel seeks the sinner, announces forgiveness for Christ's sake, and works toward restored fellowship.
- Ezekiel 33:11 shows God's purpose behind correction: God desires that sinners turn and live. Romans 13:10 adds, "Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law."

Discussion Questions

1. Why is going directly to someone who has hurt us often harder than talking about the situation with someone else first?
2. Jesus says the goal is to "regain" the other person. How does that change the way we approach confrontation or disagreement?
3. Read Ezekiel 33:7-11. How should God's desire that sinners "turn and live" shape the attitude we bring to correcting someone?
4. Read Romans 13:8-14. Can love sometimes require saying something difficult? How can we speak truth without using it as a weapon?
5. How do confession, forgiveness, and Christ's promise to be present "where two or three are gathered" help a congregation handle conflict differently from the world?

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, You call Your church to speak truth in love and to seek reconciliation. Forgive us when we avoid difficult conversations, gossip about our neighbors, or care more about being right than restoring a relationship. Give us courage to speak honestly, humility to listen, and grace to forgive as we have been forgiven. Be present among us and lead us in repentance, mercy, and peace. Amen.

Scripture wording and brief quotations are aligned with the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition (NRSVue).