

It's all about the FOREVER FAMILY!

Please pray and reread the text for this week: Matt. 18: 15-20.

All too often we see this text as a little threatening because it challenges us to give up gossiping for loving, specific steps to reconcile and settle differences. But it's much more. It's a refreshingly concrete and specific formula to "keep the family together". As I said Sunday, "*it ain't rocket science*" 😊, its four clearly described steps. If you feel you've been wronged by anyone in some way:

- 1. Go to them directly** and in private -- DON'T go to ANYONE ELSE. Pray before you go. *Seek to reconcile, not to get revenge or prove "you were right"*. Remember Vs 20 of this text!
- If that doesn't work, **ask them to meet with you and a NEUTRAL third party**. If needed, "each one bring one" (friend) to meet together and the four of you attempt to sort things out.
- If that doesn't work, ask your pastor what he wants to do about "**bringing it to the church**". If it's a family matter, maybe call a meeting of the family.
- If the church or the family have consensus that the brother has indeed wronged you and is unrepentant, let your church leadership decide how to go about **setting them aside**" because, in fact, they have already set themselves apart from the church family and God through unrepentance.

No one is exempt from Jesus' words, regardless of your position, administrative or otherwise.

The whole point of this is to resolve conflict/hurt feelings and RECONCILE --win back the brother or sister and create an *even better relationship*.

Here's the deal: IF you cannot bring yourself to follow Jesus' instructions here, then your only option is to ask for healing and go about your business and NOT bringing the matter up again.

I have found, in 40 years of dealing with people and churches, that the first two steps eliminate about 90% of problems! **DO IT!**

The text closes with the wonderful words of assurance that where we gather in His name **HE SHOWS UP!!** That means every time you are with a brother or sister, God is right there alongside you. This is why we need to live in and **DO** forgiveness and reconciliation.

This week, take a long hard look at your life and relationships. Any unresolved differences, hurt feelings, etc? Reread the above and **GET BUSY** with a healing/restoration process!! Ask God to be in the midst of it all.

Quick updates:

--Pastor Steve Bergeson will be our guest speaker Sept 27th while myself and some of our LW men are on retreat.

--WOW is gearing up for the **REALLY REALLY BIG YARD SALE** Oct. 2 & 3.--watch for more info coming.

--The voting members of the congregation voted unanimously to leave the LCMC and seek new church relationships.

--Small Group Coordinator, Pat Toth, will continue to assist anyone interested in creating a Fall group (neighbors? family? friends?)

May the Lord bless and keep each and everyone of you in the week to come!!

Pastor

Rev. Michael W. Birnbaum