

## The Blessing of What They Didn't Do

### Scripture Reading — Matthew 18:15-20

*"If a brother or sister sins, go and point out the fault, just between the two of you."*  
Matthew 18:15 —

It wasn't the kind of meeting I had thought it would be. When the young couple first sat down across from me, I had thought they were going to talk about their baby, who had recently been born with a congenital heart defect. But, no, they had come to tell me that in the emotional crisis of dealing with their baby's multiple surgeries they had felt ignored and unsupported by me, their pastor. They were not saying I had sinned against them—which is the situation described in our text from Matthew 18. It was more that I had repeatedly let them down.

But the guidelines Jesus gives in Matthew 18 were still to the point. Instead of fuming silently, this couple had come to express themselves openly and in person. Instead of talking about me, they had come to talk with me. Instead of leaving the church and finding a "better" pastor, they hoped to help me become a better pastor. The anticipation behind Matthew 18, the hope for restoration, was alive in the combination of their difficult words, warm hearts, and refusal to fume, gossip, or just depart.

Sometimes life in the church is marked by those last three, ugly things. I'm thankful for the many times it has been marked instead by difficult words lovingly spoken.

### Prayer

*Father, may your peace fill our relationships today. May our communities of faith be places of love in both good and difficult times. Give us large hearts for one another—and a forgiving spirit. In Jesus's name, Amen.*

**Devotion topics:** [Unity](#), [Christianity](#), [The Church](#)

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