

## Reconciling Rescue

Matthew 18:15-20

### Introductory Observations

1. This example not intended as a *universal, exact, or exhaustive* procedure, but rather an imaginative case study.\*
  - **\*Case study** = “a particular instance of something used or analyzed in order to illustrate a thesis or principle”
  - We see this demonstrated by way of **other examples** in the NT (i.e. Rom16:17-18; Gal 2:14; 1Cor1:1-5; Tit3:10-11)
2. This example assumes that the brother has *truly sinned* - but doesn't cover a case in which the approaching brother (or a church) *misjudges*.
3. This example is primarily about seeking *reconciliation and rescue*.

### A Personal Appeal (15)

If your brother *sins* [against you]<sup>iv</sup>,  
*go and tell* him his fault,  
between you and him *alone*.  
If he *listens* to you,  
you have *gained* your brother.

### A Small Group Appeal (16)

But if he *does not* listen,  
take one or two others along *with you*,  
that every charge may be established  
by the evidence of two or three witnesses.<sup>(Dt19:15-21)</sup>  
[If he listens to you,  
you have *gained* your brother.]

### A Community Appeal (17)

If he *refuses* to listen to them,  
tell it to *the church*.  
[If he listens to you,  
you have gained your brother.]  
And if he refuses to listen even to the church,  
*let him be to you* as a Gentile and a tax collector.

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### A Heavenly Connection (18-19)

Truly, I say to you,  
whatever you *bind* on **earth**  
shall be bound in **heaven**,  
and whatever you *loose* on **earth**  
shall be loosed in **heaven**.  
Again I say to you,  
if two of you agree *on earth*  
about anything they ask,  
it will be done for them  
by my Father *in heaven*.

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### An Earthly Presence (19-20)

*For* where two or three  
are gathered in my name,  
there am I among them.”

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### Application/Participation

- The **special presence of Jesus** promised in the midst of this kind of faithfulness.
- This is frequently noted as a mark of Christ's true church.
- Two major ways we can get this wrong:
  - **Non-obedience**: non-confrontation if sin is not an option.
  - **Unwise obedience**: this process takes two kinds of people - a wise reprover(s) and an obedient ear (Proverbs 25:11-12)
- To this we will return next week, to paint into this charcoal sketch a more nuanced picture of wise confrontation.

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