


Two-Gather (together series wk1

02/05/23 #1 in the series Together -Two-Gather Outline by Andrew Pitts

Welcome again to Rock of Grace, I'm Pastor Jordan and I'm the Lead Pastor over our campuses and I'm so glad you're worshipping with us! We are leading people to follow Jesus together! Speaking of "together" we're starting our series on the power of the church/ the togetherness and community that God created and today, our subtitle is Two Gather, a little play on words. Jesus said in ...

 **Matthew 18:20 - ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.” – there is great significance & power when Gods people gather TOGETHER.**

Comment

I want you give you context for this verse - this promise Jesus gave. When Jesus said this in the context of hurt and reconciliation. The context was offense and forgiveness. Let's look; it won't be on the screen but I just want to read this to you so we fully grasp what Jesus was teaching here.


Matthew 18:15–35 (ESV): Your Brother Sins Against You

15 “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. 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. 17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. 18 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. 19 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. 20 For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

21 Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” 22 Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.

23 “Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. 24 When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. 25 And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. 26 So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ 27 And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. 28 But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay what you owe.’ 29 So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ 30 He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. 31 When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. 32 Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. 33 And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ 34 And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. 35 So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

 **Jesus indicates that there’s a special manifestation of HIM only when we are gathered together; in other words, a revelation of His beauty & power that can’t be experienced alone.**

And when you refuse to forgive someone and get over yourself, you are missing out on what Jesus wants to do in your midst!

I wonder how many Christians not just at Rock of Grace but around the United States that entered a Life Group / Small Group at their church, got slightly offended at something the Leader said or another member said, then didn’t go back? Then because they didn’t go back, they missed out on TRUE, MEANINGFUL friendships and things that JESUS wanted to do that ONLY He can do “when two or three are gathered in my name”

There are things that God wants to teach me through other people that I allow to be my friends. People that I CHOOSE to spend time with. Instead of isolating myself, when I CHOOSE to spend time with friends that are also following Jesus

and I allow them to speak into my life, God can teach me what He wants to teach me and grow me in the areas of my faith where I'm lacking!

STORY: This last week, I personally witnessed two guys who have allowed themselves to become friends and disciples of Jesus in one of our Groups. I watched as one of them quietly, respectfully told the other "hey bro, if your wife told you that bothers her I would truly try to stop. If my wife told me something really bothered her, according to scripture, I need to prefer her and serve her and even respect her so I would try to honor what she's asking."

The other man humbly received the correction better yet SUGGESTION of a Jesus-following friend.

This is rare ok. 99% of the time, you're not giving hard truth right? You're not. That's like 1% of the time. But guess what, that 1% matters. That moment matters. That's where "die to self" comes in. That's where "sanctification" comes in.

-  **God uses Gods people to bring about Gods purposes**

You see God, according to Scripture, speaks to us in 4 ways:

The WORD

The LEADERS (Eph 4)


The SPIRIT (John 10 - Shepherd... Acts.. He speaks, we listen)

The PEOPLE

The problems is most Christians want ONLY the first 3.


- Show me the 5 most dominate voices in your life and I'll show you the trajectory of your life in any area.
 - Work – 5 closest co-workers – What are they saying? What do they value, what are their priorities?
 - Marriage – 5 closest married friends – What are they saying? What do they value, what are their priorities?
 - Relationship w/ God – 5 closest Christian friends – What are they saying? What do they value, what are


their priorities?

- Emphasis on the importance of Godly relationships in all areas of our lives. –  **When the right people gather TOGETHER for the right reasons God is there and does the right things.**
- **Story of that ...**

You will never do what God wants you to do w/o the right people in your life.

Do you have anyone in your life who asks you a question like this: What is God teaching you lately? That's the one I ask most guys in our church.

 // Main Point #1 – The right people help us navigate obstacles & temptations.

- What do they need to know? Is this progressive in the roadmap of the message? – **God brings the right people into our lives to help us get over, under, through the obstacles & temptations sent to stop, slow, or derail us. -**
- **Yes, the right people are essential to you accomplishing what God has called you to do.**
-  1 Samuel 14:1-4 – emphasis on V4 - 4Within the passes, by which Jonathan sought to go over to the Philistine garrison, there was a rocky crag on the one side and a rocky crag on the other side. The name of the one was **Bozez**, and the name of the other **Seneh**. – **Bozez means slippery, Seneh**


means thorny.

- Story Summary:
 - Saul had messed up offering sacrifices ...
 - The Philistines had done economic warfare against God's people but removing all their tradesmen for weaponry. No blacksmiths were in Israel anymore; only in the Philistine army.
 - Jonathan had this nudge of courage from the H Spirit
 - His armor bearer said "let's go!" They risked their lives, start war
 - God favored them and Jonathan killed 20 men in 1 moment!
 - Confusion & panic took place Philistine army; Killed EACH OTHER
 - This gave courage to all the Israelites who were hiding in fear
 - They WON their freedom back!



20 Then Saul and all his men assembled and went to the battle. They found the Philistines in total confusion, striking each other with their swords. **21** Those Hebrews who had previously been with the Philistines and had gone up with them to their camp went over to the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan. **22** When all the Israelites who had hidden in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were on the run, they joined the battle in hot pursuit.

23 So on that day the Lord saved Israel, and the battle moved on beyond Beth Aven.

- Let's reverse engineer this!
- Israel won the battle!
- Because the philistines started killing each other in the confusion of night and/or the confusion the Holy Spirit brought upon them
- Because 20 of their men were killed by 2 guys
- Because...
- Jonny and his buddy went down to battle AGAINST ALL THE ODDS.
- BECAUSE Jonny's buddy was "with him heart and soul" b
- Your small act of courage can be the catalyst for a whole group of people to be saved from their sin, to find hope again! Dont despise small beginnings" scripture says!

- Jonathan could've been filled with fear. But his armor-bearer filled his mind and heart with faith! Temptation is to FEAR to not trust God to REMAIN A VICTIM.
- Temptation is a slippery slope & thorny obstacles come from our enemy. - **Push into these thoughts.**
-  **Having the right people in our life can keep us from falling when things get slippery and help us navigate the obstacles the enemy uses to slow us down.**
- I have absolutely had times when I wasn't quite thinking correctly about a certain issue and my dad or Ed Homer or Will Collens or someone in my life who is a trusted friend and Jesus-follower who is FILLED with the Spirit of God therefore wisdom from God - has given me a better way to view the situation!
- I need that kind of friend. YOU need that kind of friend!
- Personal Story -
- **The ANOINTING that breaks the yoke of FEAR can come through a godly man or woman but you wont receive the influence of that anointing if you are in isolation.**
- All of us face obstacles, all of us will face temptations. No matter how long you have been a Christian no one is immune or exempt – Godly friends, community will lift you up, love on you, encourage you, challenge you, minister to you. That's why GROUPS are so vital to our lives. – It's time to get connected. In a GROUP (like ours that met last night) we have these friends who can help us navigate the temptations we're facing and build the friendships we need - I need - you need - to avoid addictive habits that don't give God glory - actions or habits that don't honor our spouse - things that other people aren't going to talk to us about. BUT, a good friend
- Proverbs 27:6 “Wounds from a friend are better than kisses from an enemy.”

// Main Point #2- The right people help us overcome fear & take risks.

- What do they need to know? – Fear is often present even when we are full of faith. – **The right people can nudge us through your fear and into faith.**
- Godly friends **push us past our natural limitations and shortcomings into a place of faith that enables us to take risks and do the impossible.**
-  Find people that produce faith and minimize fear
-  1 Samuel 14:6-7 ⁶Jonathan said to the young man who carried his armor, “Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised. **It may be that the Lord will work for us**, for nothing can hinder the Lord from saving by many or by few.” ⁷And his armor-bearer said to him, “Do all that is in your heart. – **Jonathan speaks in faith – Come let us go over & attack the Philistine camp – but he also has a measure of fear – (it may be that the Lord will work for us, other translations say PERHAPS) – the armor bearer pushes him past his fear in V7 “Do all that is in your heart” – meaning trust God regardless of what the practical, natural mind says.**
- Illustration TIGHT-ROPE

Can you imagine a tightrope stretched over a quarter of a mile and spanning the breadth of Niagara Falls? The thundering sound of the pounding water drowning out all other sounds as you watch a man step onto the rope and walk across!

This stunning feat made Charles Blondin famous in the summer of 1859. He walked 160 feet above the falls several times back and forth between Canada and the United States as huge crowds on both sides looked on with shock and awe. Once he crossed in a sack, once on stilts, another time on a bicycle, and once he even carried a stove and cooked an omelet! On July 15, Blondin walked backward across the tightrope to Canada and returned pushing a wheelbarrow.

The Blondin story is told that it was after pushing a wheelbarrow across while blindfolded that Blondin asked for some audience participation. The crowds had watched and "Oooooohed" and "Aaaaahed!" He had proven that he could do it; of that, there was no doubt. But now he was asking for a volunteer to get into the wheelbarrow and take a ride across the Falls with him!


It is said that he asked his audience, "Do you believe I can carry a person across in this wheelbarrow?" Of course the crowd shouted that yes, they believed!


It was then that Blondin posed the question - "Who will get in the wheelbarrow?"

Of course...none did.

This paints a real life picture of what faith actually is. The crowd had watched his daring feats. They said they believed, but their actions proved they truly didn't.


- Do you have people in your life that will get into the Wheel Barrel with you? This is a METHAPHOR btw. I'm not suggesting anyone hook up a cable over a river gorge!
- If you're about to trust God in a HUGE WAY, who do you call? DO you have that friend?
- If you're about to trust God by starting a ministry, starting a business, starting a Group at your house (life group) starting to tithe your first 10% to God or some big act of faith for you - who do you call? WHO is your friend that pushes you into the unknown with God!?! You need one!

 // Main Point #3- The right people are w/ you heart & soul. They got your back no matter what.

- These are not the casual friends you only connect w/ on Facebook or a few times a year around the holidays, these are the people who are in the trenches with you day in and day out – These are your fans, these are your cheerleaders but more importantly these are the people who are willing to step onto the field w/ you to help make the dream/vision a reality. They'll get in the wheel barrel with you if need be! =)
-  1 Samuel 14:7-8 7 And his armor-bearer said to him, "**Do all that is in your heart. Do as you wish.^[a] Behold, I am with you *heart and soul.*"⁸ Then Jonathan said, "Behold, we will cross over to the men, and we will show ourselves to them.**

- These are the people who walk with you through tragedies, through failure, through the storms, these are the people who sit with you when you are waiting to hear the diagnosis – if your marriage ever gets on shaky ground – people that are for your marriage – for staying together and determined to not let the enemy win. **You will never do what God wants you to do w/o the right people in your life.**

// Conclusion/Response

- Practical Application – **Groups ministry** – The health of being in a group – the longevity of becoming a disciple of Jesus and a productive person in the church drastically increases when we do life in community. Highlight 1 or 2 GROUPS and make sure to put the  Groups slide up.
- In-Service Response – **Time to reflect** on the kind of people (friends) we want to have, reasons why we isolate & the courage to get connected. **Prayer Together in small group** Get in a group of 5 or less people praying for one another in their row or section. (Worship team or soft music playing) Find people who can help you produce faith and minimize your fear. The right people are more than just the casual connections we make – they are the people wholly invested in seeing you achieve the dream/vision God has placed in your heart. Not only are they your cheerleaders & supporters they are willing to step onto the field and get in the game with you.

// Discussion Questions

1. What is your definition of a “True” friend?
2. Has there ever been a time in your life where God has used someone to help you through a tough season or temptation? – How did you feel knowing you had someone in your life to help get you through?
3. Was there ever a time in your life where fear paralyzed you from achieving Gods purpose for your life?
4. Name someone in your life you would consider a Heart & Soul friend and tell us why they hold that place in your life.
5. How can you be more like the armor bearer we read about in 1 Samuel 14? How can you be that kind of person in someone else’s life?
6. Since hearing this message have you felt more encouraged/ convicted about joining a GROUP at ROG? If not, what is holding you back from getting plugged into community?