

# *Alêtheia Christian Fellowship*

*January 20, 2019*

## *“Our Church”*

*9:00 ~ Fellowship.*

*10:00 ~ Service with the King's Kid's*

*11:45 Meeting Q&A*

### *NEWS*

**15<sup>th</sup> Annual Church Meeting Today**

**Manly Men, Doing Manly Things, in a Manly Manner, January 26<sup>th</sup> 6pm**

**Potluck on Superbowl Sunday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>**

**Valentine's Party, February 9<sup>th</sup> 5:30pm**

330 N. Somers Rd. (Mail: PO Box 10626) Kalispell, MT 59904~ (406) 755-1776

Visit the website ~ [www.myaletheia.com](http://www.myaletheia.com) ~ Hear a sermon at [aletheiachristianfellowship.podomatic.com](http://aletheiachristianfellowship.podomatic.com)

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1) Mother Teresa said, “If you judge people, you have no time to love them.” If done Biblically, is that true?

2) Do you believe we should sacrifice to accommodate more people?

3) Are you personally willing to sacrifice for what are now strangers?

**MATTHEW 7:6 ~ <sup>6NASB</sup>**“Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

Just because you act under the impulse of the Holy Spirit and humbly, gently, lovingly try to help, it does not mean that they will receive it \_\_\_\_\_.

When that happens \_\_\_\_\_.

Even when it goes better than expected, the person you help, will almost always remember you as the person who pointed out their \_\_\_\_\_.

Why in the world would anyone ever try to help?

The walking away isn't for your comfort - it is to \_\_\_\_\_ a tense situation!

While we can reasonably extrapolate this principle as a general axiom... It was primarily about church \_\_\_\_\_.

It is impossible for me to overstate the importance that Jesus places on us getting along with each other.

Acts 20:28, Ephesians 5:25

The Bible is very clear that Christianity is a \_\_\_\_\_.

It is difficult to navigate being serious about Christianity and simultaneously humble about living it with others.

**MATTHEW 7:7 ~ <sup>7NASB</sup>**“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

Most of the church things that we feel very strongly about are nothing more than opinion and \_\_\_\_\_.

The Elders are Rob Keller, Jerry Fredericks, Andy Klein, Derek Dalton, Jerry Kinniburgh and Craig Mackey.

The Deacons are John Fredenberg, Thad Clock, Tim Conner, Jon Oostra, Todd Weigum, Nate Modderman, Dave Preble, Bryan Sawyer and Todd Sundt.

1)

*Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.*

*God Bless You!*

2)

3)

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Check all that apply – detach and place in the offering or the prayer box

\_\_\_\_\_ I want to talk with the pastor about \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I want prayer for \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I want to volunteer to \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I want more information about \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Alêtheia ~ Matthew 7b ~ 012019

*Welcome Friends*

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO  
**MATTHEW**  
A CLASH OF KINGDOMS

*Alêtheia Christian Fellowship*

Blend the sermon into the annual church meeting a small recess with refreshments and then a Q & A time all with childcare provided.

Last week we talked about judging. Jesus categorically prohibits usurping God's position as Judge. We are never to judge a person's internal condition or eternal destination. We cannot judge the value a person has in the eyes of God.



We must, however, judge situations, events, words and behaviors on a daily basis in order to thrive and sometimes just to survive.

I judge the oncoming truck is too close to merge in front of it. I judge the policeman means I should put my hands where she can see them, when she says, “Put your hands where I can see them.” I judge the dude that pulls a knife on me didn’t realize it was a gunfight.

We are constantly making judgments. What the passage last week tells us is that when we do, particularly when it comes to other people, and even more particularly, when it comes to our siblings in



Christ, we must only judge them with, and because of, the unconditional and altruistic love that God has lavished upon us.

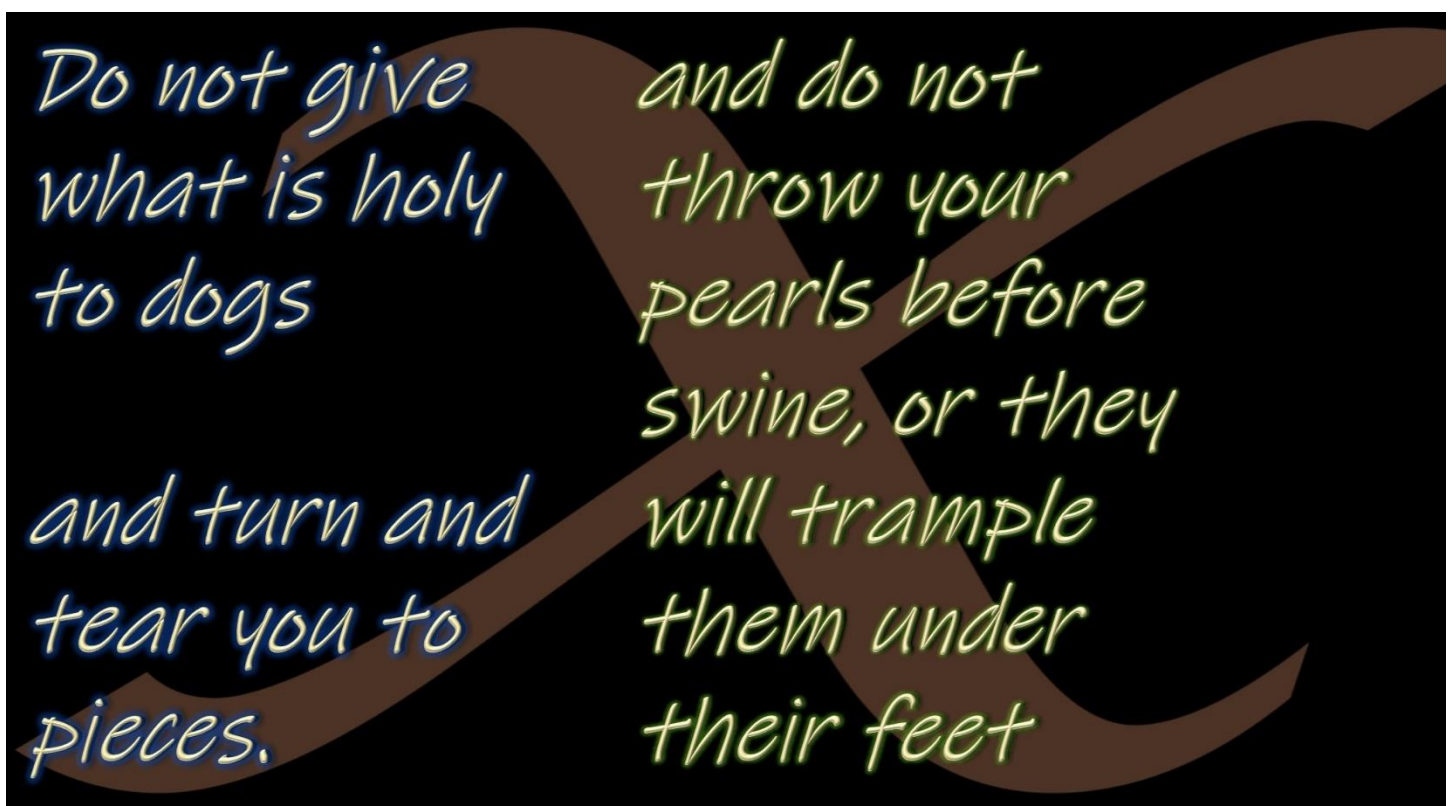


You must be acting in accordance with the Will of our Heavenly Father, in the Love of Christ and by the Wisdom of the Holy Spirit. And it's important, because the manner in which you judge others, Almighty God will judge you.

So, I'm going to make the principle very simple... If that reality of commensurate and corresponding judgment doesn't fill you with humble trepidation, if it doesn't cause you to pause and to question your motives and

your methods... You are not mature enough to judge anyone.

In verse 5, Jesus last said, with self and un-love removed from the equation, you may be of assistance to another. Then He follows that with this...



6“Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

Just because you act under the impulse of the Holy Spirit and humbly, gently, lovingly try to help another, does not mean that they will receive it well.



In fact, it has been my experience that very few do. Mostly, it is poorly received to say the least - especially, at first.

What Jesus is saying here, in the context of His sermon, is when that happens walk away.



You can try to teach a pig to sing, but it will only frustrate you and annoy the pig. It's a shocking way to make a point, which Jesus made an art form. It's how our Savior rolled.

He was trying to get people to see things in an entirely new way and He frequently used startling and, at times, outrageous examples and figures of speech, to shock the folks into thinking differently.

This is the same. I could talk about the chiastic structure of the verse and the history of interpretation and the meaning of “What is holy,” but it all distracts from the glaring principle... Most people, will react poorly to this kind of help.

Here’s an example. You’re having lunch with someone in a crowded restaurant. The other person leans in and says, “Don’t touch your face, but you should use the mirror in the bathroom.” You ask, “What’s the problem?” They say, “You have a juicy booger visibly hanging out of your nostril.” On one level you are thankful they told you, but let’s be honest... You’re embarrassed, wishing it had never happened, you’re grumpy, not thankful.

I can’t tell you how many times I have struggled with correcting someone - prayed, examined my motives, worked out how to approach it, weighed the options, tried to postpone or even get out of it, and ultimately

been as generous and as gentle with them as possible, and yet it went poorly.

I'm telling you, even when it goes better than expected, the person you help will almost always remember you as the person who pointed out their fault. You almost always suffer because of your assistance.

Even when it's okay over time, I don't think anyone has come back to me and thanked me for my sacrificial discipline. I doubt anyone has actually thought about how painful the whole thing was for me.

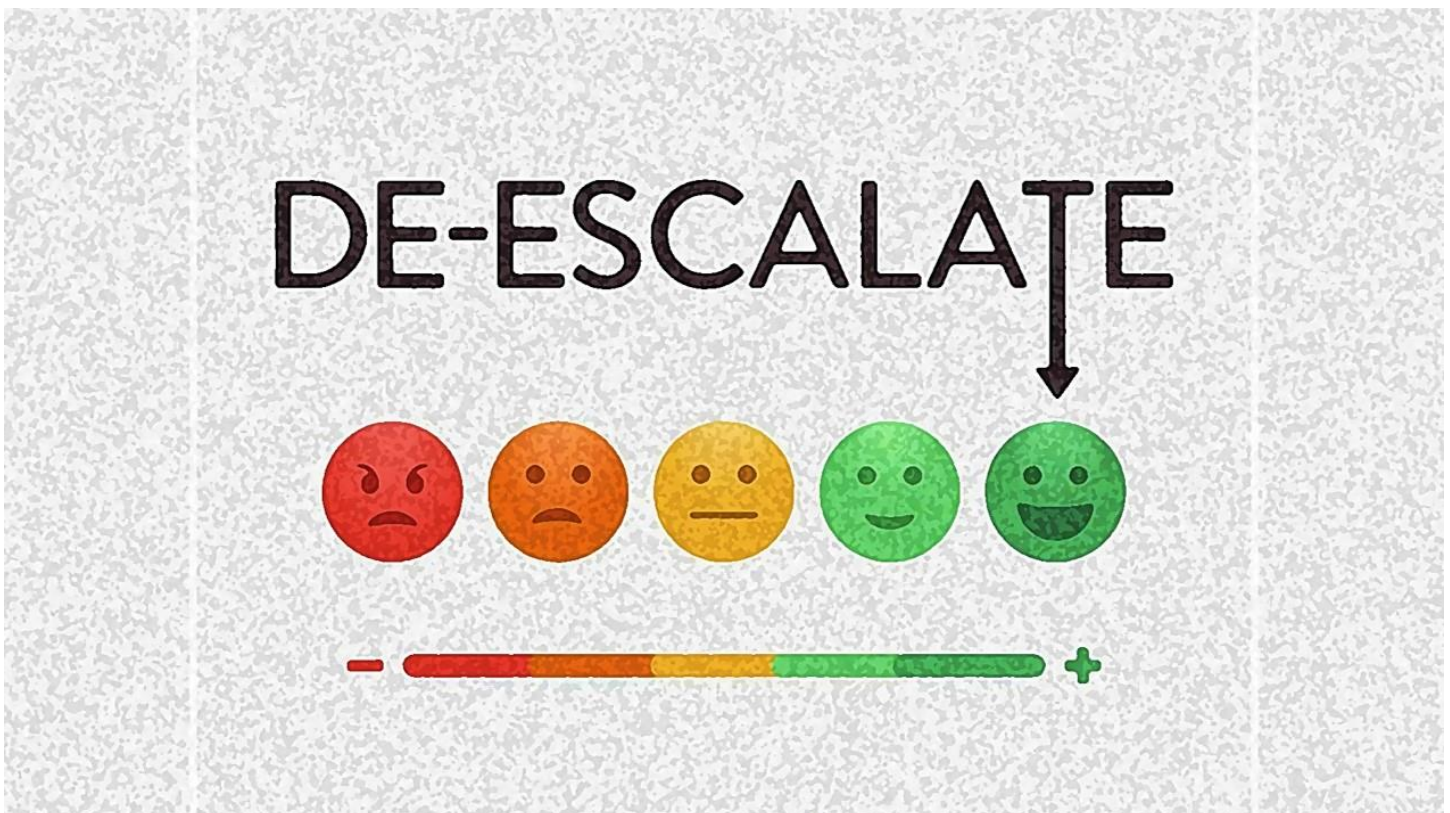
You might say, why in the world would anyone ever try to help. That's Agapê. It is a sacrificial love that is willing to lose in order to elevate someone else. If you truly love the other person and it isn't about you, you don't mind the sacrifice.

If that describes your motives and attitude, you just might be doing it right.

It isn't that everyone is a dog who will turn on you, or a pig that blithely ignores what you've offered... those are fairly extreme examples to demonstrate the point.

Because the extreme result could result in broken relationship or beyond to open hostility, we must be cautious.

So, when we offer our judgment in the right way and we are forced to walk away - it may be forever or it may be very temporary and that's the goal.



The walking away isn't for your safety or to keep you from suffering another person's wrath - it is to defuse a tense situation!

This is all about deescalating - preventing a fight in the church. If, really when, the other person reacts with



what won't pass for gratitude... Don't be offended - it's not about you, remember? Don't allow it to get worse by trying to overexplain, reiterate, or especially by trying to defend yourself.

Take the pot off the burner - let things cool down.

Most of you probably thought this verse was about evangelism. Most Christians assume that because they take the verse out of context.

While we can reasonably extrapolate this principle to cover a lot of things like sharing the Gospel Message with a nonbeliever, as a general axiom... It was not the intended meaning that day and so it can't be the primary meaning today.



As I've shown, this is primarily about our brothers and sisters in Christ, this is about our interaction with one another in the family. As I said, last week, this is about church unity.

Again, Jesus is talking about the Kingdom of Heaven as a present reality. Incomplete and imperfect, sure, but nevertheless, a supernaturally lived life in Christian community, within this fallen world, right now, for His glory.

It is impossible for me to overstate the importance that Jesus places on us getting along with each other. So many Christians have a negative view of church - a

small view of the importance of church - I have heard people say things like, "I love Jesus, but I hate church."

It is pure stupidity. Jesus loved the church so much He laid down His life for her. If you love Jesus, you better love His church. We do that by doing everything in His power to get along. That's how the world will know that He is real and that the Holy Spirit is present.

Some people would say, Jesus didn't give His life for the church - He gave His life for me. That's the common notion alright. The postmodern, everything is about super-special me, mentality that has ruined our society.

Acts 20:28 tells us that Jesus "Purchased" the "Church of God" with "His own blood." Ephesians 5:25 tells us that "Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her." That's what Jesus thinks about His church.



Church unity is difficult. It requires humble effort - it requires selfless sacrifice.

It comes from the ability to perceive the true behind the façade and the vital through the trivial. To have an eternal perspective. To see with a “Clear eye” as God Himself sees things. It is allowing His Holy Spirit enabled Light of Truth, to open us to an entirely different way of relating.

Of course, relating to the world and the unbelievers who fill it, but in this place, the emphasis is firstly on relating to God, and secondly on relating to our fellow



Christian. The first empowers the second and the second become the proof of the first.

According to the Bible, according to Jesus Himself, the thing that demonstrates a person's true spiritual health, is their unconditional love for the Christians they associate with most... Which implies that they associate frequently.

The Bible is very clear that Christianity is a team sport - it is a family affair.

There are times when in the family, we must judge a fellow family member. Sometimes it needs to be entrusted to the pastor alone, sometimes to the Elders, sometimes to the whole church, sometimes it is best handled personally between two individuals.



How do you know which way to go? Agapê. Let the love of God guide you. Pray, and as Matthew 7:7 goes on... 7NASB“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you” (Matthew 7:7).

In order to function together, there must be guidelines, a plan and way of doing church. Some of them are spelled out in the Bible, some are alluded to obliquely, some are only descriptive, not prescriptive and some are completely undefined, leaving it to each individual group.

Almost all Christians believe that the Bible mandates certain church related guidelines that it simply does not, and that's where strife enters.

Most of the church things that we feel very strongly about are nothing more than opinion and preference.

We have opinions and preferences based on our past, based on our experiences and based on our proclivities. There's nothing wrong with that... Unless we insist on our way at the expense of unity.

Usually, when church people insist on their way - they convince themselves that it is Biblical, it's how Jesus would do it, it's the way God wants it done.

We here are not perfect. We are a group of Christians who really desire to do Christianity right and we try. We make mistakes, we apologize, and we try again.

I will tell you that in 15 years there have been many, many people come and go. I have never once talked to anyone who left our fellowship because of theology, doctrine or Biblical teaching. I don't know of anyone who has ever left us because of our lack of devotion to God, our sincerity in trying to honor the Father, to

proclaim the Christ, to yield to the Spirit. To my knowledge, no one has ever left because of any impropriety in the pastor, any scandal, or any financial shenanigans.

As far as I can tell, everyone who has ever left us did so because they moved out of the area or because of trivial disagreements over the way we do inconsequential things, their personal embarrassment as sin comes to light, or just wanting to try something fresh and new.

As I said, we freely admit that we are imperfect and that we make mistakes. I'm not putting our church on a pedestal and I'm not bashing folks who have moved on... What I'm trying to help us see is that other than leaving the area, everyone I know who has left this church over the last 15 years has done so due to personal discomfort.

It could have been resolved, worked through, fixed. If they cared more about Christ's reputation than they did about their opinions, preferences and pride.

Disunity in Christ's Body, because I don't like the guidelines - I don't agree with the decisions - I think



things could be managed better, I think the church should do what I think the church should do is a grievous sin against Christ.

Some of you have been Alêtheians for well over a decade - you are not immune. We must all be ever vigilant against self - against thinking that my preferences are God's preferences.