

## GOSPEL MEDITATION - ENCOURAGE DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF SCRIPTURE

**September 6, 2026**

**Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Matthew 18:15-20**

A few summers ago, my family had a big reunion. It included my parents, my four siblings, and all their many children. One of my favorite moments was simply watching my parents' contented faces as they took in all of us together, laughing, sharing food, singing, telling stories. They loved seeing their children happily *together* with each other.

That is something like the heart of God we see in today's Gospel message about Christian reconciliation. These verses come right after Jesus' parable of the lost sheep. He is not giving the disciples a cold formula for dealing with conflict. He is revealing the Father's longing for children who love and reconcile with each other. His heart aches when his children are divided and isolated.

So when Jesus says, **"Go and tell your brother his fault,"** He is not deputizing us as morality police. He is inviting us into his mission of reconciliation. When he adds, **"If he listens to you, you have won over your brother,"** we glimpse the real goal. Not winning arguments, but reuniting a divided family.

These days, we often think religion is just between God and me. But the Father's dream is about a lively family, one in which His children forgive, gather, and rejoice together.

*Lord Jesus, give me the courage to seek reconciliation where it is needed. Make my heart resemble the Father's heart, longing and working for unity among His children. Amen.*

— *Father John Muir*