

Week 11 Community September 21-27, 2026: *Dealing with Sin*

(written by Pastor Melissa Pickering)

Gathering Song [*Less Like Me*](#) by Zach Williams

Daily Prayer *Jesus, Jesus you are with me as I step into this day.*

Let me hear you gently calling, "Precious child, walk this way."

Jesus, Jesus when I hear you, calling me to follow you,

In that hour, give me grace to love my neighbor like you do. Amen.

Scripture: Matthew 18:20 **Context: 15-20 Dealing with Sin**

"For wherever two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."

Devotional Thoughts My mom is a habitual pray-er. She is so much better at remembering to pray than most people I know. When I am struggling with someone or something, she will inevitably ask me if I have prayed about it. I used to wonder what good that would do, but the more I did it, the more I realized that praying helps motivate my heart through humility and love, rather than revenge, bitterness or resentment.

Dealing with sin is incredibly uncomfortable, and oftentimes we avoid it at all costs. We are afraid of conflict, afraid of rejection and afraid of being misunderstood. But Jesus' instruction for all of us in these verses from Matthew aren't about being punished for our sin, or how we feel about others who sin. **It is about restoration of relationships.**

Sin can be hurtful in so many ways. At its core, sin damages our relationships. It is harmful to our relationship with God, with one another, and with the unity of our church. But when we come at sin with love and grace in our hearts and minds, we come seeking healing.

Jesus reminds us in scripture that He is present with us always, in the tough conversations and in the muck and dirt of our everyday lives. His presence gives us the courage to speak the truth, the humility to examine our own lives and hearts, and the hope for a reconciliation of peace.

This Week's Challenge? We all need and want the grace of Jesus Christ. When we acknowledge our sinful nature, and we face sin and temptation with Jesus in our hearts, we are trusting in Christ's presence in the most difficult of times. When we go to Jesus in prayer, we live a little more like Jesus, and a little less like who the world tells us to be.

We are able to face obstacles in our relationships with mercy, grace, and kindness because the Lord is there to help us. As Matthew tells us, Jesus said, *"there I am with them."* Any time you are gathered with more than two this week, remember that Jesus is there with you.

Affirmation of Christian Vocation: Make the sign of the cross on your forehead (or if you are doing this devotion with others, make the sign on the forehead of another) while saying...

All that we do belongs to God—our work and our rest.

We follow Jesus with thankful hearts and open hands, serving our neighbor in love.

Morning and evening, at work and at play, our life is in Christ Jesus our Lord. AMEN