

## Matthew 18:20

*For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.*

We are all familiar with today's devotional verse, and have even prayed it or heard others praying it. The only problem is that 99 percent of the time it is prayed out of context. What do I mean? Well, usually it's prayed when people are asking for a healing of someone who is sick, or praying for a need that someone has or other such things. And it has always bothered me when people prayed it, because it makes one wonder; if you are alone, is Jesus not with you because you are alone? Think about it, we pray when we are together *for where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.* Kind of reminding the Lord that He needs to be there according to scripture, because there are at least two if not more of us agreeing in prayer together.

I know it sounds kind of crazy, but that's exactly what we are saying when we pray that. Yet we should know that even when we are alone and praying by ourselves that the Lord is still with us.

But let's go back to my first statement, and that is that 99 percent of the time it is prayed out of context. How so? Well if you read it in the context of what it's talking about, it's talking about when a brother or sister sins against you, which is a far cry from joining together in prayer for the sick or someone in need.

Let's check it out, so you can see what the context of the statement is all about.

† **Matthew 18:15-20** *"Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."*

So, am I bashing those who pray such a prayer when they are praying for the needs of others. No, not really, because I understand where people's hearts are when they pray that, but the thing we need to understand is that we can't quote the word of God out of context. Why? Well one good reason is that Satan did when he tempted Jesus.

† **Matthew 4:6** *and said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'* "

And Jesus' response was not that He said to Satan that he quoted God's word out of context, but rather he spoke God's word in its proper context.

† **Matthew 4:7** *Jesus said to him, 'It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the LORD your God.' "*

Another statement Jesus made in this paragraph is: *Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.*

Once again you can take that out of context and say something as crazy as, “*Me and my girlfriend or boyfriend agree that it’s ok for us to live together, therefore God has to get us an apartment to live together in, because Jesus even you said that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.*”

You may think that sounds crazy and wrong, because it is, yet as Satan twisted scripture, we need to be cautious that we are not doing the same thing.

How do we know if we are doing that are not? Usually the reason God’s word is twisted out of context is because the person doing the twisting of God’s word wants to please their flesh to get what he or she wants, which is outside of God’s word and will.

Jesus makes it very clear why we are to ask, and it’s not for our own fleshly pleasure, but rather that the Father would be glorified.

† **John 14:13** *And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*

Simply, pray God’s word, but make sure when you do that you are praying it in the context that it was spoken or written in and don’t use it to try and get your way, but rather to be in tune with God’s way!

† **Psalm 25:4-5** *Show me Your ways, O LORD; Teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation; On You I wait all the day.*