

Matthew 18:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

Jesus promises corporate presence: 'For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them' (Greek: οὐ γάρ εἰσιν δύο ἢ τρεῖς συνηγμένοι εἰς τὸ ἔμὸν ὄνομα, ἐκεῖ εἰμι ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν, 'for where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them'). The context is church discipline (verses 15-20), but the principle extends to all corporate gathering. 'In my name' (εἰς τὸ ἔμὸν ὄνομα) means in His authority and for His purposes. Jesus promises real presence where believers gather, however small. 'I am' (ἐγώ εἰμι) echoes divine name. This transforms gathered believers into sacred space.

Historical Context

Jewish teaching required ten men (minyan) for official synagogue prayer. Jesus radically reduces the number - even two or three suffice when gathered in His name. This democratizes sacred space beyond temple and synagogue to any Christian gathering. Early Christians, often meeting in house churches during persecution, found comfort in this promise. Christ's presence didn't require buildings, priests, or institutions - just believers gathered in His name. This shaped Protestant ecclesiology emphasizing priesthood of believers.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does this promise transform our understanding of corporate worship?
2. What does it mean to gather 'in Jesus' name' versus merely being together?
3. How should Christ's promised presence shape church gatherings?

Interlinear Text

οὐ	γάρ	εἰσιν	δύο	ἢ	τρεῖς	συνηγμένοι	εἰς	τὸ
where	For	are	two	or	three	gathered together	in	G3588
G3757	G1063	G1526	G1417	G2228	G5140	G4863	G1519	
ἐμὸν	ὄνομα	ἐκεῖ	εἰμι	ἐν	μέσω	αὐτῶν		
my	name	there	am I	in	the midst	of them		
G1699	G3686	G1563	G1510	G1722	G3319	G846		

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 5:4 (Parallel theme): In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Revelation 21:3 (Parallel theme): And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

Matthew 28:20 (Parallel theme): Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Zechariah 2:5 (Parallel theme): For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.

John 20:26 (Parallel theme): And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.

Revelation 2:1 (Parallel theme): Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

John 20:19 (Parallel theme): Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

Genesis 49:10 (Parallel theme): The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

Exodus 20:24 (Parallel theme): An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.

Philemon 1:2 (Parallel theme): And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house: