

1 Corinthians 5

Verses 1-2:

--Paul had been challenging this church on their division and pride and now he is led to address their pride on another level—what it has produced! It was wise of Paul to first show that their wisdom and philosophy was foolish by itself and then focus on the direct sins attached to it.

--There are three issues here:

--First, we see that there is a man in the church who is in an open sexual relationship with his step-mother. ***His father's wife*** is a term that refers to that. This was the sin of Reuben and Absalom and the sin of incest was clearly addressed in Leviticus 18.

--Now, as the woman is not addressed through the issue, it seems that she was unsaved and not a part of the believing community.

--Second, the attitude of the church is all wrong. Paul says that it is ***actually reported*** or *widely known* that this man is in this relationship. *World always blasts Christian hypocrisy!*

--And what is the church's response to their ruined testimony? Humility and mourning? No! They are proud of the sin. There is some discussion as to whether they are actually proud *in the middle* of this situation or literally *of the* situation. Either is wrong.

--Paul makes the point that even the unsaved world wasn't accepting of this expression of sexuality. They couldn't even use cultural norms as a defense.

Ephesians 4:17: This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind.

--It was a true shame to them that they were embracing morals so unclean that even the unsaved world around them didn't live that way.

--Third, what are they supposed to do about it? Paul says clearly: ***he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.*** He states the same idea a number of times here in the passage: **2, 4, 5, 7, 13.**

Verses 3-5:

--Paul makes it clear what he expects from them as a church.

--This is really one sentence in the Greek so it must all be seen together.

--Paul had just exhorted them to imitate him and to remember what he taught in churches everywhere. So this is something not just for Corinth. It is also for us today!

--Paul says, I may not be with you in body, but I am with you in spirit, and consider me to have actually decided upon and begun this action of church discipline. And this was to be done in the presence, power, and Name of Jesus Christ.

--(5) Now, what does it mean to be delivered over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh?

1 Timothy 1:19-20: Having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.

--It is not bodily death because Paul anticipates salvation here and has to warn them not to have Christian fellowship with them.

--The world is Satan's dominion but the church is not. So the man is being placed out of the fellowship of the church and back into the fellowship of the world that he was called out of.

Big in that day because there wasn't another church down the street he could sneak off to.

--What is really happening here? Paul is not just trying to get rid of difficult or annoying or even bad people. It is a matter of salvation! ***That his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.***

--There is something spiritual, powerful, and in the very presence of Jesus Christ that is happening in the process of church discipline. Church discipline is simply an outward picture of an inward reality.

--The man who is living in open and unrepentant sin—saved or unsaved—is already in broken fellowship with Jesus Christ. They might deceive others or be happy living in self-deception but God is not! So the assembly of God is to physically show this person what is already true spiritually—that he or she is out of fellowship with the living God.

****Isaiah 1:13: I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting!****

--May I please plead with you if you are living in unrepentant sin and not under church discipline—or under discipline in one church and simply moving down the street to another. Please, wake up, and realize the physical act of the church is nothing compared to the spiritual reality! God will have you repentant, mourning, and broken in your sin. But He will resist the proud, unrepentant, disobedient sinner.

--Church discipline is spiritually real between the unrepentant sinner and the Lord whether the visible church physically enacts it or not. The physical act is an act of love because it forces the sinning person to realize that.

Verses 6-8:

--Paul now seeks to illustrate this spiritual reality through the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread (**Exodus 12**). He will use the same basic idea in relation to bad doctrine when he speaks with the Galatians.

****Galatians 5:9: A little leaven leavens the whole lump.****

--They thought that having an open sinner in their company and fellowship in Christ wouldn't matter. Paul says it does! The latent sin and moral laxity would spread. The danger touches more than just the life of this man but the life of the entire church.

--Instead, they were to purge any old leaven—the old life or old unredeemed nature—as the Israelite of old was to make sure their home was free of all leaven. If not, they were not killed by the angel of death but they were to be removed from the fellowship of Israel.

--Again, Paul is careful here. This is not working for salvation but working from salvation. ***For indeed, Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore. . .***

--The death of Christ has freed us and cleansed us from sin. So we should live that way! In the same manner, this was a sacrifice to a feast and not a feast to a sacrifice. The bond of salvation is sure in Christ Jesus but the bond of fellowship can be broken at any time. *Father and Prodigal*

--I think the festival here is simply the portion of time consecrated in gathering to the Lord in the name of Jesus Christ not necessarily only the taking of communion.

--So Paul exhorts them to put away all malice and wickedness as they gather. Instead, come to the Lord together with **sincerity and truth**—which is what those living in unrepentant sin lack.

--God knows the sincerity and truth of motives. We are to know the sincerity and truth of actions. *This is what people don't like. Bring forth fruits meet for repentance!*

Verses 9-10:

--Here Paul references an earlier letter that seems to have been misunderstood.

--Paul is simply saying he never told them not to having any dealings with sinners in the world because then they would have to leave the world.

*Harold St. John (Writings): *"You see the sanity of Paul as well as his sanctity."**

--It is calling to see the world presented with the message of the Gospel which is the power of God to salvation—not to complain about the world being sinners. We are supposed to be in the world and with the world as salt and light—as much as we are able.

John 17:15-16+18: I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. . . As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

--We can easily get this backwards and hide from the world and fellowship with worldly believers. God sees is a difference between those **inside** and those **outside** the church. And we need to know how to relate correctly in each arena.

1 Timothy 3:7: Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

Verse 11:

--Here Paul makes what he is saying clear. Sin inside the church is to be judged differently than sin outside the church. Inside the church there is temporary chastening but outside the church there is eternal wrath.

11:32: But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

--The apostle Peter would say something similar:

1 Peter 4:17: For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

--So how are those **inside** the fellowship to be judged? As Christians!

--Based on a person's *profession* to be a Christian—not my infallible knowledge of their personal salvation. Paul is commanding these Corinthian believers to hold themselves accountable in doctrine and morals to the life and commands of Christ.

--And if the person, who claims to be a Christian, refuses to follow the clear commands of Christ they are not to be recognized in their Christian character but are to be seen and treated like an unsaved person.

--***Not to keep company*** doesn't mean act like you don't know them. It means they are to be removed from their place in the Christian community that gathers in the name of Christ and on the ground of truth. ***These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves (Jude 12).*** *Service, communion, gathering in general, etc.*

--If that seems harsh then people need to realize that—God is not playing games!

Matthew 18:15-20; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; 1 Timothy 6:5; Titus 3:9-11

--God is not into playing religious games with eternal souls. Coming to a church and making a profession while listening to the Word of God and totally ignoring what He says is foolishness that God will not tolerate. He will not play the game. Nor will any church that wants to be a church in sincerity and truth and obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verses 12-13:

--We are to judge the doctrine and morals of those within the body of Christ and leave the judgment of the unsaved world to God. If there is not standard for church doctrine or practice by which we can judge—do we even have a church? Not the Church of God!

2 Timothy 2:19: *Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity."*

--We can weep for others but we don't need to lie to them. We are to be as broad and narrow—as tolerant and intolerant—as gracious and holy as the Word of God.

--So Paul quotes from the book of Deuteronomy (**17:7; 24:7**) where the people of God were told to put away evil from them by means of godly judgment. So too, the house of God today also has order, but instead of stoning or killing a sinner, we live out what their reality is spiritually between them and God—distance.

--Our church practices this type of church discipline. And God willing, we always will.

Psalm 89:7: *God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be held in reverence by all those around Him.*

Robert Murray McChyene (A Basket of Fragments): "I remember well when I first entered upon the ministry among you. I had very inadequate views of the duty of ruling well the house of God. I thought that my great and almost only work was to pray and preach. I saw your souls to be so precious, and the time so short, that I devoted all my time, and care, and strength to labor in word and doctrine. When cases of discipline were brought before me and the elders, I regarded them with something like abhorrence. It was a duty I shrank from: and I may truly say it nearly drove me from the work of the ministry among you altogether. But it pleased God, who teaches his servants in another way than man teaches, to bless some of the cases of discipline to the manifest and undeniable conversion of the souls of those under our care; and from that hour a new light broke in upon my mind, and I saw that if preaching be an ordinance of Christ, so is church discipline. I now feel very deeply persuaded, that both are of God—that two keys are committed to us by Christ; the one key of doctrine, by means of which we unlock the treasures of the Bible, and the other, the key of discipline, by which we open or shut the way to the sealing of ordinances of the faith. Both are Christ's gift, and neither are to be resigned without sin. And I am deeply persuaded that that Church will flourish best, that is ruled best."