

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

FEBRUARY 12TH-13TH, 2022 // BOOK OF 1 CORINTHIANS

A DISTURBING REPORT (1 CORINTHIANS 5:1-5)

After addressing the church's attachment to **human leaders, cliquish & divisive behavior, secular wisdom, and pride** in the first 4 chapters, Paul now moves onto the 2nd issue at hand.

- "It is actually reported that there is "sexual immorality" (porneia) among you..." (vs. 1).
- Even though this church had a tremendous amount of pride at their supposed spiritual insight and giftedness, their reputation in the community at large was that they were **sexually immoral**.

"SEXUAL IMMORALITY"

Any sexual practice that occurs outside of the God-given boundaries of sex between a husband and wife.

- Extra-marital sex (adultery) (Ex. 20:14, Deut. 22:22) / Pre-marital sex (fornication) (Exodus 22:16-17, Deut. 22:20-21) / Homosexuality (Lev. 18:22, Romans 1:26-28, 1 Tim. 1:10, Lev. 20:13 / Pornography (Matt. 5:28, Job 31:1)
- In Corinth, **sexual purity, abstinence, chastity, honor, and self-control were unknown virtues** "**anything goes**" was the cry of the day.
- But the kind of sexual immorality that was being tolerated and openly celebrated within this church was so wicked it was considered taboo even among the unbelieving pagans.
- "**A man has his father's wife**" (vs. 1b)- a man within the church was having an on-going sexual relationship with his own stepmother.
- Apparently, the woman involved **wasn't a Christian**, because she isn't even addressed.
- **The Bible clearly defines this as a sin** (Lev. 18:8, Deut. 22:30, Deut. 27:20), and this kind of incest was a crime in the Roman empire (Cicero).
- But rather than being **ashamed, disgusted, saddened, or even bothered** by it at all, the Corinthian church was "arrogant" about the situation (vs. 2a).

WHY WERE THE CORINTHIANS ALLOWING SUCH A THING?

Perhaps they allowed this in the name of "tolerance", and open-mindedness.

- Maybe they were **so influenced by the culture around them** that they thought one could act any way they pleased when it came to sex.
- Perhaps they had **become so obsessed with worldly wisdom that they had allowed a talented or wealthy member of the church** to set aside even the most basic moral guidelines.
- Paul's instruction to this church is crystal clear- "**let him who has done this be removed from among you**" (vs. 2).
- Even though Paul wasn't with them in person, he **was represented by his letter** which made him, "present in spirit" (vs. 3).
- Paul had already **pronounced judgment on this situation**, declaring this man to be in sin and in need of discipline from the church.

WAIT...JESUS SAID NOT TO JUDGE! (MATTHEW 7:1-5)

Jesus actually said that we're not to judge with **hypocritical judgment**- judging others by a standard that we don't want to be judged by.

- That certainly doesn't mean that we can't make **moral evaluations about right or wrong** or that we aren't to be honest with each other about conduct or behavior that's blatantly sinful.
- We have a **responsibility to judge rightly**.
- Paul's **instruction to this church** and its leaders is to "deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh" (vs. 4) - to put him outside the church and **back into the world** (Satan's domain).
- This discipline is the **removal of the spiritual protection** and social comfort of the church.
- This is done out of love with the **intention of restoration**, not condemnation ("So that his spirit may be saved...", vs. 5)
- The goal for **church discipline is always forgiveness and loving restoration**.
- Yet sin, stubborn pride, and hardheartedness are forces to be reckoned with in the church.
- Most Christians are **more offended by the idea of any church** practicing discipline than they are of sin **wreaking havoc within the church**.
- Jesus gave His disciples very specific instructions on how to practice **church discipline** (Matt. 18).
- 1. **Private Correction** (Matthew 18:15)
- 2. **Small Group Clarification** (Matthew 18:16)
- 3. **Church Admonition** (Matthew 18:17A)
- 4. **Church Disfellowship** (Matthew 18:17B)

LEAVEN IN THE LUMP (1 CORINTHIANS 5:6-8)

The Corinthians were proud and were boasting of their **tolerance, love, and open-mindedness** at allowing this unrepentant sin to go on.

- But Paul says their boasting is, "not good"- a little bit of yeast affects an entire lump of dough (vs. 6).
- Even a little bit of sin influences the entire church.
- The work of yeast illustrates the effects of sin and pride- it **grows, spreads, and causes** us to be "puffed up".
- Leaven in the Bible is a picture of sin- every Passover, **Jewish families were instructed to cleanse** their house of leaven.
- This memorialized the hasty Exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt, but this also symbolized the call of God to remove sin from our lives.
- The "old leaven" that this church is called to, "cleanse out" is "malice" & "evil"- **sin, the world's wisdom, the flesh, and the corrupting power of sin**.

- The church is called to be a, "new lump" (vs. 7).
- Christ is the true Passover lamb- we've been delivered from the power of death by the application of His blood over our lives (John 1:29, Ex. 12).
- In a sense, **the Church celebrates this festival every day by trusting in Jesus** as our Passover lamb, keeping our lives free from evil and malice, and **filling our lives with sincerity and truth** (vs. 8).

JUDGING RIGHTLY (1 CORINTHIANS 5:9-13)

Paul had apparently **written an earlier letter to this church** that we don't have (vs. 9).

- In it, he instructed these believers to, "not associate" with sexually immoral people within the church.
- They misunderstood his instruction and thought he meant they were to **stay away** from all the, "sinners" and "bad people" in the world (vs. 10).
- We're **never called to isolate ourselves**.
- We also **get this backwards!** We judge the unbelieving world so harshly for their lifestyles and seem to give a free pass to ourselves and other Christians as long as they claim the title.
- Paul says, "you can't expect someone who **isn't a Christian to behave like a Christian!**" (vs. 12a).
- But for someone who does **claim to know Christ**, they are to be held to a standard (vs. 12b).

PRINCIPLE #1- CHRISTIAN ACCOUNTABILITY (VS. 11,13B)

Anyone who **claims to be a Christian** and yet still is openly materialistic/greedy, sexually immoral, angry/abusive, gets drunk, or is dishonest in business is in unrepentant sin.

- We're not to connect our lives to them, fellowship with them, or form close friendships with them.
- We love them, pray for them, and speak tough truth to them- but intimately connecting our lives to them will **endorse their behavior and influence us**.

PRINCIPLE #2- EVANGELISTIC PRIORITY (VS. 12-13)

We can't expect someone who is **spiritually dead, conformed to the ways of the world**, and enslaved to their flesh and the Devil (Eph. 2:1-3) to act like Jesus.

- We are **not to judge those outside the church**.
- What someone who isn't a Christian needs is not a behavioral code- they need the Gospel!
- It's only after they've been born again that they even have the ability to **obey and please God**.

PRINCIPLE #3- JUDGING RIGHTLY (VS. 12-13)

These believers in Corinth were **winking at their own sin**, while feeling pride that they were better than the unbelieving world.

- God's job is to judge the unbelieving world- **our job is to pursue purity and holiness in our lives** within the Church.
- When are we obsessed with judging the sins of the unbelieving world, **we can't see clearly** to deal with our own sins.

GETTING IT BACKWARDS.

- Being more offended by a **church practicing loving, Biblical discipline** than sin **destroying the Body of Christ**.
- We're all **sinners in need of grace**- Jesus loves us, has forgiven us, and cleansed us, but He's also called us to walk in, "newness of life" (Rom. 6:4).
- But for those who claim Christ but don't wish to walk in newness of life...they can't be **allowed to corrupt and influence those who do!**
- Wanting **the benefits of the Christian life** (salvation, peace, redemption, community, spiritual protection) without the responsibilities of holiness.
- In Christ we are **positionally holy**, but we then have the responsibility to live by the Spirit, walk in obedience, and put to death the deeds of our flesh and sin (to, "**remove the leaven**").
- Judging harshly and without mercy **the sins of the unbelieving world** while at the same time turning a blind eye towards our own sin and the sins of others within our "camp".
- We can't **see ourselves and our own sin clearly** when we're obsessed with the sins of others who don't know their "right" from their "left" (Jonah 4:11).
- Why are we **so outraged that people who don't know Jesus don't act like Him?**
- **If I profess to know Jesus**, do I trust my church family to hold me accountable as I seek to walk in, "newness of life?"
- **Am I dealing with** the "yeast" of sin and pride in my own life?
- **Who am I judging more-** the unbelieving world or my own sin and those within my, "camp"?