

Letters to the church in...



Corinth

Focus: 1 Corinthians 5:1-13

Lesson 5-Dealing with Sin in the Camp

- **A terrible sin of fornication had been reported as happening among the church (v.1-5)**
 - (v.2) many were “proud” and not caring that this matter be dealt with directly or in such a way to save the offender from his evil ways. The church should have been most sorrowful to hear about this matter, and have taken a **PROMPT ACTION** to deal with the matter in a straight forward way.
 - (v.3) **Paul makes a judgment call about it while being at a distance from the situation.** “absent in body, but present in spirit” (Paul’s heart and mind were upon this matter!—to deal with it).
 - (v.5) This one evil doer should be **cast out from among the open church fellowship.** It should be known to all, that this kind of open and wicked sin is **NOT** allowable in the slightest!! **The Punishment here is redemptive in its nature.** “...to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved...”.—**The hope is that** as the person suffers this kind of physical action and consequence for their wicked sin, that they would see their lost condition and perhaps repent from their sin and be saved. (some people in the Middle Ages misapplied the idea of this verse to say that if they tortured someone’s flesh for their sin, then perhaps their soul would be delivered and saved after they were tortured and punished by inflicted pain—that’s wrong!)
 - **What does Jesus say about dealing with offenses and open sin problems among the church? (Matthew 18:15-20)** Problems of open and known sin need to be dealt with directly, wisely, and in an orderly fashion. Efforts should be made in a humble and redemptive from the start so that a soul would not perish in his or her sin. Stronger measures must be taken if one does not listen to the godly counsel of those involved. If the problem cannot be solved in private, then the matter must be taken openly to the church. If a corporate decision must be made to put this person out of fellowship with the church, then the Lord promises this matter will be understood and stood by, by heaven (v.17-19).—these verses refer to a matter of church judgment (it does not give men the right to try and change God’s laws and precepts as some have falsely interpreted these last few verses—no one has any right to tamper with God’s laws!).
- **The leavening effect (or influence) of sin among us is very corrupting and demoralizing—It must be dealt in an effective and prompt way (v.6-8)**
 - **Leaven—a little bit goes a long way to affect the rest of the material surrounding it.** Sin affects others, not just yourself—this was clearly seen in the matter of Achan’s sin (ref. Joshua 7:1, 18-20,24,25; 22:20—this man’s sin caused all Israel to suffer), and also in the idolatrous sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat who led Israel to Idolatrous sin—ref. 1 Kings 14:16).

- **Christ Jesus—our Passover—died to pay for our sins. Therefore, we should “henceforth...not serve sin”** (ref. Romans 6:6). We cannot live in that wicked kind of lifestyle anymore (nor should a truly converted heart ever desire to live in such a way). Closely connected with the Feast of the Passover was the feast of “unleavened bread.” No leaven or yeast, means no corruption or sin! (ref. Leviticus 23:4-8).
- (v.8) We should “keep the feast” without the sinful leaven of sin, hatred, ill-will, malice, and other evils! Worship God (“keep the feast”) in true Christian fellowship of “sincerity and truth,” obeying the Lord’s will from the heart, faithfully!! Purge out and get rid of the obviously bad stuff (the sin and any who insist in clinging to it)!! Seek to redeem them if possible, but do not allow open sin to go unrebuked and to flourish within the church which should be an example of godliness, and Christ-likeness to all the world!
- **People must make a Judgment call about open sin among the church and act accordingly (v.9-13)**
 - (v.9,10) Paul mentions a letter here that we do not have a copy of in the Bible (only a reference is here made to it). **The old saying holds true that we must “choose our friends carefully.”** We cannot go along with sin and sinners to do evil. We certainly will be influenced the conduct which we allow to be carried on around us. **That being said, Paul makes a delineation here** (showing a difference between two groups—the sinners of the world, and the other of professed Christians living in an openly sinful lifestyle). **Jesus himself said, “It is not those who are well that need a doctor, but those who are sick.”** Jesus was accused of “eating with publicans and sinners” (Matthew 9:10-13). We can (and must be) social to save those who are lost from Christ. But we should never allow ourselves to be made partakers or supporters of anyone’s sin. “Brothers” living in open sin is unacceptable and must be dealt with!
 - (v.11-13) **Judging in a matter like this is perfectly acceptable and even required!** Don’t let anyone fool you by misquoting some other Bible text and saying, “Don’t judge.”
- **Some final principles and instructions to consider about this matter:**
 - Open sin stubbornly clung to by one should cause them to be put out of the regularly accepted church fellowship. However, this is also to be a measure of redemptive punishment. If the person will see the seriousness of their sin and their condition, and then later repent and desire Christ’s forgiveness, then wonderful. This, the Lord would have (See Ezekiel 18 and **33:11**; 2 Thessalonians 3:14,15).
 - **“We have fellowship one with another...”** only as **“we walk in the light** as He is in the light” (1 John 1:7). And then the **“blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanses us from all sin.”** But, if any will live in open and continual sin, then they are no longer covered by the blood of Jesus Christ—they are lost (therefore we put them out) (Hebrews 10:26).
 - **Dealing humbly, lovingly, mercifully, and faithfully with a matter of sin can save a soul from certain death** and deliver our own souls from joint-guiltiness (James 5:19,20; Ezekiel 33:8; **Galatians 6:1**) **Be praying for these souls to be delivered as well, and for our own** (1 John 5:16).

Question (s) for the Heart:

Would you like to live, by God’s grace, a life that honors Jesus Christ and His perfect commands? _____
Is it your desire to be faithful to God, and to lovingly encourage others to be faithful as well? _____