

1 Corinthians 5

Paul goes on to the next problem at Corinth: the lack of church discipline. Remember that the city of Corinth in the first century was known for its wickedness (maybe like Las Vegas today)

1 Corinthians 5.1-5

V1 – Did the heathen world consider fornication to be bad? No – See *Romans 1.29*

But having relations with your step-mother was terrible, even in the eyes of the Romans

-In fact, it was against Roman law to have relations with one's step-mother

-*Genesis 35.22, 49.4* – Reuben lay with Bilhah, concubine of Jacob – he was therefore denied leadership in Israel – Reuben's birthright was given to the sons of Joseph (*1 Chron. 5.1*)

-*2 Sam. 12.11, 16.22, 20.3* – Nathan prophesied about Absalom laying with David's concubines in public – the women were celibate after that act (David never had relations with them again)

-**Why is the woman not discussed?** She must not have been a Christian

V2 – How had the church at Corinth treated this incident? With pride!

-**Why pride?** Because it showed how tolerant they were (sounds modern, doesn't it?)

-They didn't want to be mean to anybody; they wanted to be "politically correct"

-In other words, "We don't judge other people, but we want to love everybody"

-**How should they have treated this incident?** By mourning

V3 – What was Paul's attitude? Very angry

-*"present in spirit"* – Paul knew it was a difficult case to deal with, and he wanted to be there, but he was firm, and he decided that it had to be dealt with and dealt with quickly

-In other words, it should have been dealt with a long time ago

V4 – "Call a special assembly" – *Matt. 18.17* – Tell it to the church

-Declare him "persona non grata" (out of fellowship with the people of God)

Optional from *Wikipedia*:

Persona non grata (Latin, plural: *personae non gratae*), literally meaning "an unwelcome person", is a legal term used in diplomacy that indicates a proscription against a person entering the country. It is the most serious form of censure which one country can apply to foreign diplomats, who are otherwise protected by diplomatic immunity from arrest and other normal kinds of prosecution.

-**Did they actually take it before the church?** Read *2 Cor. 2.5-8*

V5 – What is the first goal of church discipline? To save the soul of the person caught up in sin

-**Is it possible to actually save a person who has received church discipline?** It worked in this man's case

-*"for the destruction of his flesh"*? He has gone to the limit of his sin, and maybe this is the moment in his life when he will come to his senses

1 Corinthians 5.6-8

V 6-8 – A reference to the Old Testament and the Feast of Passover

-See *Exod. 12.6-15, 20, 39, 13.7, 23.15, 34.18, Deut. 16.3* – they had to put away all their yeast before the Feast of Passover

-**Why was leaven (yeast) a symbol for evil?** – It is a substance that spreads very easily, even though it is almost invisible

-**When do we use unleavened bread today?** Communion today is with unleavened bread

The second reason for church discipline therefore? To keep the sin from spreading throughout the church

-**What effect does one person have who regularly misses the assembly or who commits other unchristian acts?** If nothing is done about that one person, it discourages others from remaining faithful to the church

1 Corinthians 5.9-13

V 9 – Another reference to the previous letter between Paul and the Corinthians

V 10 – **How had the Corinthians misunderstood the earlier letter of Paul?** They thought he meant that they had to cut themselves completely off from the rest of the world

-**Have people literally tried to go out of the world?** Yes, we have various monasteries around the world

-They get no news from the outside world and have no knowledge of World War II, etc.

-There are also cults that have their "compounds" with no contact with the outside world

V 11 – Types which must be disciplined by the church – **What is included in this list?** See p. 3 of these notes

V 12 – **Are we responsible for judging the world?** No – God will take care of that, and he has not asked for our advice

-**But whom are we responsible for judging?** People within the church (maintaining church standards, according to the New Testament)

-What a great responsibility we have!

Who had more guilt in this chapter: the church or this man? Most of the chapter is directed toward the church!

Optional material:

One difficult question from this chapter: **What do we do about close family members who have been disciplined by the church?**

2 sets of God's laws here:

1. Church discipline

-1 *Cor. 5.11*

-2 *Thess. 3.6* (to stay away from them)

-2 *Thess. 3.14* (not to associate with them)

2. Family relationships

- 1 *Timothy* 5.8 (to provide for our family)
- Eph.* 6.2 (To honor our father and mother)
- 1 *Cor.* 7 (physical relationship between husband and wife)

The laws of God do not contradict each other; so we have to harmonize these laws on church discipline and the family

There are two possible ways to deal with this situation:

1. We should explain to the guilty person that we do not agree with his behavior and if he continues in that behavior and if he remains out of fellowship with the people of God, he will be in very, very serious trouble on the Day of Judgment
2. We can literally remove that person from the family and not associate with him until he repents.

Conclusions on the subject of church discipline:

Definitions:

- to mark and avoid (*Rom.* 16.17)
- to have no company with (*2 Thess.* 3.14)
- to reject that person (*Titus* 3.10)

Reasons for withdrawal of fellowship:

- to keep the church pure (*1 Cor.* 5.6-8)
- to bring the person to repentance (*2 Thess.* 3.14)
- to keep the name of Christ honorable (*Titus* 2.6-10)

People who must be withdrawn from:

- 1 *Cor.* 5.11 –
 - immoral person (fornicator and adulterer)
 - covetous
 - idolater
 - reviler
 - drunkard
 - swindler
- Romans* 16.17 – the false teacher
- 1 *Timothy* 1.20 - blasphemy
- Titus* 3.10 – factious person
- 1 *Thess.* 5.14, 2 *Thess.* 3.6 – the disorderly
- Hebrews* 10.23-26 – willful sin (as in intentionally missing the assembly on a regular basis)
- 2 *John* 9-11 – one who brings false doctrine (by either adding to the Scriptures or subtracting from the Scripture and one who shows hospitality to such a person)

Procedure for withdrawal

- Gal.* 6.1 – spirit of gentleness
- Matt.* 18.15-18 – specific instructions (under the oversight of the elders)

Result of withdrawal

-James 5.19-20

Notes from *Gospel Minutes* (no date):

"When they have been shown their wrong, by the Scriptures, they are to be encouraged to obey God's teaching. When they persist in their sinful course, they must be warned (admonished). If they still persist, then the church is commanded to withdraw from them. Because souls hang in the balance, utmost care and concern must mark every action of the concerned brethren who seek to restore an erring member of Christ's body. Notice that Paul wrote that we admonish "*with all longsuffering.*" Not impatiently, but lovingly, we are to seek to bring one back to faithfulness to the Lord."

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