

2 Cor. 6:14-18 (WCF 29:7-8) “Unworthy Partaking”

For the Children: Imagine going to a party with a whole lot of young people who don't believe in the Lord. They start talking and joking about horrible, sinful things, evil movies they have watched and so on. Their language is bad. Their manners are disgusting. Soon, you either feel that you don't belong there. Or, you start to behave a bit like they do. The truth is, we should not become too close to those who do not love God. We should try to tell others about the Lord. But we can only really be close to those who love Him as we do. If we are attracted to those who do not love God, it may be that we do not love Him as we should! **Questions:** Give some examples of getting too close to unbelievers. What is wrong with doing so? What has this to do with the Lord's Supper?

Introduction:

First Point: Not Bound Together

- **The Problem in Corinth:** There had been some restraint in the Corinthians' relationship with the apostle Paul (vss 11-12). He had had to admonish them previously over their relationships (1 Cor. 5; 6:13f; 10; 11:27-32). Their relationships had threatened to lead them to idolatry, immorality and tolerance of evil in the church. It even threatened the sanctity of their Lord's Supper services (1 Cor. 11:27-32)
- **There Is No Unity:** Against that background, the apostle argues that there is no actual unity between the believer and the unbeliever – so they shouldn't act as if there were. He uses 6 “unity” words to show how little spiritual commonality there is with unbelievers: there is no true bond, partnership, fellowship, harmony, commonality or agreement. On the contrary, there is a stark contrast between righteousness/lawlessness, light/darkness, Christ/the devil, Temple of God/idols – all involved in the contrast between the believer and the unbeliever. Their goals, nature and philosophy are totally different
- **He Dwells in Us:** That fundamental spiritual incompatibility is due to the fact that we are indwelt by the Holy One – both as church and individuals (Ex. 25:8, 29:45, Lev. 26:11-12, Ezk. 37:27 etc). This is God's spiritual evaluation. We should not let our emotions override it. There is, of course, contact with unbelievers in the “market-place” and in evangelism. But the degree of closeness needs to be tailored to this spiritual evaluation, not the other way round!

Second Point: Come Out from Their Midst!

- **Don't be Bound Together:** Consequently, the apostle commands us not to be “bound together” with unbelievers (lit., “other-yoked”). See Dt. 22:10. This applies not just to marriage, but any close relationship. The believer cannot “plough a straight line” through life with an unbeliever!
- **Be Separate:** For the same reason, the apostle commands the readers to come out from their midst and be separate. This is taken from Is. 52:11, concerning the call to God's people to leave Babylon and return to Jerusalem. See also Rev. 17-18. We are to be different than the world, holy, set apart for service to the Lord. The OT ceremonial laws concerning clean/unclean things taught this spiritual principle. The laws against mixing different kinds of things warned that close contact with the world would undermine that holy separation
- **Maintain Covenant-Relationship with the Lord:** At stake is our covenant-relationship with the Lord. He has us in a Father/son relationship only when we uphold these things. See 2 Sam. 7;14. To get too close to unbelievers jeopardizes this relationship
- **Guard the Table:** Although unrepentant sinners and hypocrites within the church may attend the Lord's Supper, they do not receive what the elements signify – union with Christ and with other believers. They eat and drink judgement upon themselves. Therefore they should not partake. The church should not admit them to the Table. The Table must therefore be “guarded” by discipline (1 Cor. 5:12, 11:31). When fellowship is broken by unrepentant sinning, even our weekly contact with the sinner is affected (2 Thess. 3:6 and 14; Pss. 26:4, 141:4; 1 Cor. 5:11; 2 Jn. 1:10-11). This is for the Lord's reputation, and the welfare of both the church and the sinner. It also requires that we start from the Lord's evaluation of the unbeliever and the unrepentant member of the church – not our own emotions

Conclusion: