

truth

in



love.

A Church without *love or truth*

I Corinthians 5:1-13

Word reached the apostle Paul about
a serious problem in the
Church in Corinth.

I Corinthians 5:1-2

- 1 - It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that even pagans do not tolerate: A man is sleeping with his father's wife.
- 2 - And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have gone into mourning and have put out of your fellowship the man who has been doing this?" (I Corinthians 5:1-2).

- Here is a Church guilty of tolerating a kind of sin that even the world rejects.
- A man is sleeping with his stepmother (his father's wife).
- Perhaps the Church said, "What he does behind closed doors is his business, not ours."
- But there was more to the issue because the Church was guilty of some kind of corporate pride in relation to this situation.
- They went beyond tolerance to celebration.

Repeated call to action

v. 2 – “put out of your fellowship”

v. 5 - “hand this man over to Satan”

v. 7 - “Get rid of the old yeast”

v. 13 – “Expel the wicked man from among you.”

- It's not optional for the local church of Corinth.
- To keep this man *among them* would infect the purity of the church
- And allowing him to continue in good fellowship with God's people would perpetuate *a deadly deception in his own life* that might put him among the crowd on judgment day who say, "Lord, Lord..."

Big Question

Is it possible to be so casual about what it means to belong to a Church that *belonging* loses its effectiveness and *removal* becomes irrelevant?

The primary purpose of church discipline is redemptive and restorative (to “win your brother” (Matt. 18:15); to “restore him in a spirit of meekness” (Gal. 6:1).

Yet there is also a judicial side to church discipline aimed at protecting the purity and unity of the church.

But even the judicial purpose remains open to forgiving and restoring a repentant person (II Corinthians 2:6-8).

I Corinthians 5:3-5

3 For my part, even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. As one who is present with you in this way, I have already passed judgment in the name of our Lord Jesus on the one who has been doing this.

4 So when you are assembled and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present,

5 *hand this man over* to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord. (NIV)

I Corinthians 5:6-8

- 6** Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough?
- 7** Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new unleavened batch—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed
- 8** Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old bread leavened with malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

I Corinthians 5:9-11

9 I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—

10 not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world.

11 But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler. Do not even eat with such people.

I Corinthians 5:12-13

- 12** What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside?
- 13** God will judge those outside. “Expel the wicked person from among you.”

II Corinthians 7:8-10

“Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while— yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance.

For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

II Corinthians 7:11

See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter.”

II Corinthians 2:6-8

“The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient. Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him.”

Evidently, the punishment was effective and sufficient because verses 7-8 call for the church to restore this man to the assembly.

And verse 8, uses a legal term that would have called for images of a public hearing and a verdict: “reaffirm (κυρωσαι) your love for him”



“Maybe the most significant thing we can learn from such a text is how far many of us are removed from a view of the church in which the dynamic of the Spirit was so real that exclusion could be a genuinely redemptive action.”

(Gordon Fee, First Corinthians, N.I.C.N.T. p. 214)

Big Question

Is it possible to be so casual about what it means to belong to a Church that *belonging* loses its effectiveness and *removal* becomes irrelevant?

How we should convey to people what it means to be members of one another in the body of Christ?

Romans 12:5

“In Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.”

What should this teach us about Church membership?

It should be a meaningful process that emphasizes a need for one another and a connection that involves inter-accountability.

Accountability offers protection with positive and corrective reinforcements based on loving relationships of mutual care and encouragement.



In verse 5, the word used for “deliver” (paradidomi) is a strong term which indicates judicial sentencing.

But, even in this call to judicial action, there is a redemptive purpose (a beneficial aim).

It is for the man’s good — his eternal good —that this action is carried out.

It is, therefore, the most loving thing they can do for him. Failure to act would be to disregard this man’s eternal good.

- **“Hand him over to Satan for/or/toward (unto) the destruction of his flesh.”**
- **The construction of the sentence makes this phrase the anticipated result, not the purpose.**
- **(The purpose is his eternal salvation.)**

Q. What does “the destruction of his flesh” mean?

The translators of the 1984 N.I.V. apply a little more interpretation here and simply say “that the sinful nature may be destroyed.”

In the original it is just “flesh” but the 1984 N.I.V. interpreted that to be a “moral” rather than “physical” use of the word.

I believe this is correct , but let me at least point out that some have held this to be his flesh in the physical sense—i.e. his body.

Does Paul use flesh in another sense?

- Yes, in the moral or ethical sense (e.g. Galatians 5:19-20—the works of the flesh).
- The apostle uses “flesh” to speak of our sinful orientation away from God.
- In this sense, excluding him from the fellowship and protection of the Christian community, and handing him over to Satan’s realm is aimed at ruining what is carnal or fleshly in him so that he might be saved in the ultimate sense.
- Perhaps being put out into the world (like the prodigal son of Luke 15), he might feed the flesh and get his fill until he gets sick of the world and comes to his senses and returns to God in repentance.



2 Thessalonians 3:11-15

- 11** - We hear that some among you are idle and disruptive. They are not busy; they are busybodies.
- 12** - Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the food they eat.
- 13** - And as for you, brothers and sisters, never tire of doing what is good.
- 14** - Take special note of anyone who does not obey our instruction in this letter. Do not associate with them, in order that they may feel ashamed.
- 15** - Yet do not regard them as an enemy, but warn them as you would a fellow believer.

- Spiritual leaders have authority (Hebrews 13:17) and are to be honored by those under their charge. Sometimes their authority requires them to admonish, rebuke and warn people (I Thessalonians 5:12; Titus 1:13; 2:15; 3:10-11). As shepherds, leaders must protect and defend the flock (Acts 20:17, 28-31; Titus 1:9). They must engage ministries of discipline and restoration (I Corinthians 6:5; I Timothy 5:17-21; Galatians 6:1-2). But Church elders are also warned not to exercise their leadership in a way that is “lording it over those entrusted to you” (I Peter 5:3).
- There is only one Lord of the Church and He is the Chief Shepherd and overseer of the souls of the Church (I Peter 2:25; 5:4). All human leadership must be evident an extension of the will of the Lord of the Church. This means that while elders have authority, their leadership is always under and answerable to Jesus Christ.
- A Church with the right kind of accountability must guard against becoming legalistic. It will need to teach and re-teach texts like Romans 14-15 while practicing Hebrews 3:12-14. The leaders must be certain that the believers understand the difference between legalism and biblically based authority. Leaders will need to emphasize the difference between watching one another and watching out for one another.

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- “Fellowship is more than unconditional love that wraps its arms around someone who is hurting. It is also tough love that holds one fast to the truth and the pursuit of righteousness. For most Christians, the support side of the equation comes more easily than accountability and the subsequent discipline involved. Which is one reason the behavior of Christians is often little different from the behavior of non-Christians. Maybe it’s because we simply haven’t taught accountability. Or maybe it’s because, in today’s fiercely individualistic culture, people resent being told what to do, and since we don’t want to “scare them off,” we succumb to cultural pressures.”
- “But too often we confuse love with permissiveness. It is not love to fail to dissuade another believer from sin any more than it is love to fail to take a drink away from an alcoholic or matches away from a baby. True fellowship out of love for one another demands *accountability*.” (Chuck Colson, *The Body*, p. 130)
- “Christian community starts at the point of commitment and covenant. There is no genuine Christian community without a covenant... Christian community cannot exist without commitment to Jesus as Lord and to each other as sister and brother. And this must be more than a general mental commitment. It must be specific and explicit, involving our time, energy, and resources. Covenant is not just a nebulous commitment to each other; it takes specific shape in history” (Howard Snyder, *Liberating the Church*, p. 127).

I Corinthians 5:3-5 (NLT)

- 3** Even though I am not with you in person, I am with you in the Spirit. And as though I were there, I have already passed judgment on this man
- 4** in the name of the Lord Jesus. You must call a meeting of the church. I will be present with you in spirit, and so will the power of our Lord Jesus.
- 5** Then you must throw this man out and hand him over to Satan so that his sinful nature will be destroyed and he himself will be saved on the day the Lord returns.