

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. We have been looking at the church.
2. We have looked at the leaders, their qualifications and their ministry.
3. We also have spent the last two weeks looking at a model church as we saw what the true church looks like.
4. As we begin our study in 1 Corinthians, I want us to see what the true church is not.
5. And I want to begin with this question, “When are we hidden from the world?”
6. What’s the answer?
7. “When we sin.”
8. When we sin we blur the lines between what is a Christian and a non-Christian.
9. That could very well be the case in Corinth.
10. The letter that we refer to as First Corinthians was actually the second letter to them.

11. In chapter 5, verse 9, Paul said, “I wrote you in my letter...”
12. In verse 11 he says it again, “But actually, I wrote to you...”
13. This letter was lost.
14. We only have the other two letters that are labeled First and Second Corinthians.
15. But as you examine 1 Corinthians, you find some very disturbing behaviors that existed in the church.
16. The church struggled with divisions (1:10), quarrels (1:11-12), jealousy and strife (3:3), passing judgment (4:5), arrogance (4:6, 18), sexual immorality (5:1), lack of church discipline (5:2, 13), lawsuits (6:1).
17. They were confused about marriage, divorce, and singleness (7), Christian liberty (8-9), idolatry (10), head coverings (11), the Lord’s Supper (11:17-34), spiritual gifts (12-14), the resurrection of the body (15), and giving (16).
18. So Paul addresses these issues.
19. The first 6 chapters is confrontive.
20. He’s confronting their sin.

21. The last 10 chapters is instructive.
22. He is answering questions they had.
23. Chapter 7, verse 1 says, “Now concerning the things about which you wrote...”
24. It is noted in the book of Acts that Paul went on 3 missionary journeys.
25. This letter was written during his 3rd journey.
26. This was during the first half of 55 A.D. and was written from Ephesus.
27. Corinth was a major city.
28. It was located in Southern Greece, which was the Roman Province of Achaia.
29. It was 45 miles west of Athens.
30. It was a major trade city not only for most of Greece but for much of the Mediterranean area, including North Africa, Italy, and Asia Minor.
31. It was also famous for hosting the Isthmian and Olympian games.

32. This would bring people from all over the world to Corinth.
33. Last but not least, Corinth was known for its worship of Aphrodite, the goddess of love.
34. At the temple of Aphrodite, there were some 1000 priestesses who were religious prostitutes.
35. Though the city was important in these ways, it was famous for its reputation for its drunkenness, immorality, and its idolatry.
36. In fact there was a famous phrase called “to corinthianize.”
37. This came to represent [that] gross immorality and drunken debauchery.
38. Now as we consider what the true church does not look like, we must remember, as Christians, everytime we sin we are not representing or looking like the true church.
39. That’s doesn’t mean we never sin but it does mean that sin is no longer the habit of our lives.
40. And there is the danger that a life full of sin is a life that reflects no salvation.
41. So in saying what the true church DOES NOT look like, let’s rephrase it and say “What the False Church Looks Like.”

## **LESSON**

The false church is filled with...

### **I. Unbelief**

#### **A. Unbelief is Sin**

John 16:8-9 - “And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me.”

The word “Sin” (harmatia), is used here in the singular to indicate “that a specific sin is in view, i.e., that of not believing in Jesus as Messiah and Son of God” (The MacArthur Study Bible).

#### **1. This is the state of every person**

##### **a) They have the nature of Adam**

(1) David said, “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me” (Ps.51:5).

(2) Paul said in Rom.5:19, “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners.”

(3) Earlier in chapter 3:10-18 he paints this ugly picture

of the human depraved heart

b) They have the sentence of death

Rom.5:12 - "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned."

c) Therefore in this state they do not believe God

(1) Paul refers to this state as being "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph.2:1).

(2) The psalmist gives an apt description in Psalm 10:4-11 when he says, "The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God; God is in none of his thoughts. 5 His ways are always prospering; Your judgments are far above, out of his sight; As for all his enemies, he sneers at them. 6 He has said in his heart, "I shall not be moved; I shall never be in adversity." 7 His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and oppression; Under his tongue is trouble and iniquity. 8 He sits in the lurking places of the villages; In the secret places he murders the innocent; His eyes are secretly fixed on the helpless. 9 He lies in wait secretly, as a lion in his den; He lies in wait to catch the poor; He catches the poor when he draws him into his net. 10 So he crouches, he lies

low, That the helpless may fall by his strength. 11 He has said in his heart, "God has forgotten; He hides His face; He will never see."

(3) In Psalm 36:1-4 he says, "An oracle within my heart concerning the transgression of the wicked: There is no fear of God before his eyes. 2 For he flatters himself in his own eyes, When he finds out his iniquity and when he hates. 3 The words of his mouth are wickedness and deceit; He has ceased to be wise and to do good. 4 He devises wickedness on his bed; He sets himself in a way that is not good; He does not abhor evil."

(4) When you consider the people who led in the criminal trial against Jesus, Luke records in Luke 22:66-71 that "As soon as it was day, the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, came together and led Him into their council, saying, 67 "If You are the Christ, tell us." But He said to them, "If I tell you, you will by no means believe. 68 And if I also ask you, you will by no means answer Me or let Me go. 69 Hereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God." 70 Then they all said, "Are You then the Son of God?" So He said to them, "You rightly say that I am." 71 And they said, "What further testimony do we need? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth."

(5) In John 5:36-40, Jesus said to the Jews who wanted to kill Him:

“But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish--the very works that I do--bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me. 37 And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. 38 But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. 39 You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. 40 But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.”

2. Everyone is affected by unbelief

a) From an infant to an adult no one is exempt from it

b) After Jesus saves a person and grants them the faith to believe, unbelief still affects his life but not in the same way

(1) He no longer rejects Jesus and the Gospel as before

(2) His heart now desires to obey but there will be lapses of disobedience



c) Notice the examples the Scriptures give:

(1) The Spies Report - Numbers 13:25-33; 14:11

(2) Judas Iscariot - John 13:21-30 (v.27 - Satan then entered him)

## B. Unbelief is An Offense to God

### 1. God chastens His children for it

a) In Matthew 17:17, Jesus rebuked the disciples for it when He said, “O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me.”

b) In John 20:27, when Jesus told Thomas, “Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.” —That was a rebuke of his unbelief!

### 2. To those who remain in their unbelief

Ps.7:11 says, “God is a just judge, And God is angry with the wicked every day.”

Because of this:

## C. Unbelief Brings Judgment

I am referring to those who reject Christ not those who are genuine believers, Romans 8:1 says, “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”

1. Mark 16:16 says, “He who does not believe will be condemned.”
2. John 3:18-21
3. John 8:23-24
4. Romans 1:18; 2:5, 8
5. 2 Chron.34:24-25 - “Thus says the Lord: 'Behold, I will bring calamity on this place and on its inhabitants, all the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Judah, 25 because they have forsaken Me and burned incense to other gods, that they might provoke Me to anger with all the works of their hands. Therefore My wrath will be poured out on this place, and not be quenched.':
5. Prior to Jesus' return, Revelation 6:15-17 says, “And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free

man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, 16 and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! 17 For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

So *unbelief identifies the false church* regardless of its form:

#### D. Unbelief Destroys the Church

1. Because unbelievers are against God
2. They do not seek after God
3. They walk contrary to God's commands
4. They follow Satan

This is why the “seeker-sensitive church” is so dangerous.

John MacArthur, in his book, *Ashamed of the Gospel*, writes:

“Church ministry is being completely revamped in an attempt to make it more appealing to unbelievers. The experts are now telling us that pastors and church leaders who want to be successful must concentrate their energies in this new direction. Provide non-Christians with an

agreeable, inoffensive environment. Give them freedom, tolerance, and anonymity. Always be positive and benevolent. If you must have a sermon, keep it brief and amusing. Don't be preachy or authoritative. Above all, keep everyone entertained" (45).

On page 64, he asks, "Where is User-Friendliness Taking the Church?"

He gives the following example:

"I am convinced that the downgrading of worship, Scripture, and theology will ultimately usher in serious doctrinal compromise. In fact, that may already be happening. Christian leaders who identify themselves as evangelical are beginning to question cardinal doctrines such as hell and human depravity. One of the most popular movements afoot today embraces a doctrine known as "conditional immortality," similar to annihilationism. It is the idea that unredeemed sinners are simply eradicated rather than spending eternity in hell. A perfect fit for the user-friendly philosophy, this view teaches that a merciful God could not possibly consign created beings to eternal torment. Instead, he obliterates them completely."

"Spurgeon attacked conditional immortality as one of the great errors of the nineteenth-century down-grade. He said that those who deny the eternality of hell "have pretty

nearly obliterated the hope of such a heaven as we have all along expected. Of course, the reward of the righteous is to be of no longer continuance than the punishment of the wicked. Both are described as 'everlasting' in the same verse [Matt. 25:46], spoken by the same sacred lips; and as the 'punishment' is made out to be only 'age-lasting,' so must the 'life' be."

- a) What's the remedy to this? Paul gives the answer in 2 Timothy 4:1-5.
  - b) Paul warned the elders at Ephesus in Acts 20 of unbelievers creeping in.
  - c) Unbelievers need to be told to "repent" not how to meet their felt needs.
5. Believers play a part in hindering the work of the church when they are fleshly
- a) Paul told the Corinthians that they were "carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?" (1 Cor.3:3).

In their carnality they had problems with their:

(1) Unity (1:10-3:23)

- (2) Servanthood (4:1-21)
- (3) Morality (5:1-6:20)
- (4) Marriage (7:1-40)
- (5) Liberty (8:1-11:1)
- (6) Men and women in the church (11:2-16)
- (7) The Lord's Supper (11:17-34)
- (8) Spiritual gifts (12-14)
- (9) The resurrection (15)
- (10) Stewardship (16:1-4)

- b) A majority of the letters written to the churches address some problem of unbelief or disobedience

Don't think you will never again have a problem with unbelief. Yes, you no longer reject Christ and His Gospel but when you sin what are you doing? Not believing God or His Word!

The second identifying mark of the false church is...

## **II. Unteachableness**

### **A. When You Are Disobedient You're Unteachable**

- 1. 1 Timothy 3:2 says that an elder is to be "able to teach," that means, he is "skilled in teaching" and he is teachable.
  - a) Paul uses the same word in 2 Timothy 2:24 when he

says, “A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach.”

- b) Titus 1:9 says he holds “fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.”
- 2. In Philippians 1:15-16, Paul said that there were some who were preaching Christ from “envy and strife...selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains.”
- 3. When Paul confronted the Corinthians he asked “What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?” (1 Cor.4:21).

## B. Unteachableness Destroys Christ’s Church

- 1. What if the elders were unteachable?
  - a) One there would be no learning on their part
  - b) That would be pride because they would be acting as if they had arrived and could not be taught anything else. They knew it all.
- 2. Unteachableness manifests itself by:

a) Bitterness - Heb.12:14-15

“Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled.”

b) Lying, unrighteous anger, stealing, corrupt communication - Eph.4:25-31

c) Unforgiveness - Col.3:12-13

“Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.”

## **CONCLUSION**

1. So which church describes you?
2. Are you an unbeliever or a disobedient, carnal, unteachable believer?



3. The remedy for both situations is the same.
4. Repent!
5. Let's pray.