

1 Corinthians 5 – “An Unleavened Church”

Introduction: Because sin harms the sinner and the church, we must lovingly remove the sinner from the fellowship of the church rather than ignoring it

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1. The Corinthians are Arrogant with Sin in their Midst (v.1-2)

- The Corinthians have a man in their congregation who is in a sexual relationship with his father's wife, his stepmother. This would have been offensive to the average Roman, but even more it was an offense to God's law (Leviticus 18:8, 20:11, Deut 22:30, 27:20).
- God made these laws regarding incest because of his love for the family. The close-knit nature of the family makes it imperative to make sexual considerations off limits – to prevent families being torn apart by adultery.
- The Corinthians, however, think they are kings. They are arrogant about their progress as a church. They act as a social club in Corinth, and social clubs don't do discipline. Churches today can feel the same pressure to avoid confronting sin.

2. Paul Commands them to Remove the Sin from their Midst (v.3-8)

- Paul commands the church in Corinth to remove this member. Jesus is the ruler of the church, and they are taking his name, therefore, Paul speaks in Jesus' name to remove him.
- A second reason is that he must be handed over to Satan, pushed out of Christ's kingdom, to make sure that he sees the gravity of his sin. This way his fleshly nature might be abandoned and he might turn to God in repentance and faith (Compare 1 Cor 3:1).
- Third, sin is like leaven, and it takes only a small amount to permeate the church. Thus, with Christ as our Passover lamb, we must get rid of the leaven and celebrate the feast together in sincerity and truth, washed in his blood. The life of a disciple is to confess and fight sin, and Church discipline helps us do that.

3. Paul Clarifies His Meaning about Removing the Sinner (v.9-13)

- The Corinthians have misunderstood Paul's meaning before, so he wants to make clear his intention. The Great Commission requires us to go into the sinful world and interact with them. For Paul we should not be hiding from the world.
- In contrast we cannot be casual in our interactions with those who have rejected Christ. Each situation will require a tailored response, and we should not fully restrict our interaction with people who have left the church (2 Thess 3:14-15).
- However, they must be aware that our family meets with Christ around his table and that they have broken that relationship. They need to feel that the relationship has changed, and that they need to be reconciled to Jesus if they want to enjoy full fellowship with us again.