

# 1 Corinthians

## Chapter 5:1-13

March 17, 1996

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- **1 Corinthians Outline:**

- Chapter 1 Ungodly divisions result from man's wisdom.
- Chapter 2 Carnal man cannot understand our Spiritual God.
- Chapter 3 All Christians will have their labors tried by fire.
- Chapter 4 Boasting in our leaders puffs up and destroys fellowship.
- Chapter 5 Maintain the purity of the Church.

- **1 Corinthians 5:1-13**

- **Introduction & Review**

Having admonished the Corinthians for their divisions and for their worldly wisdom, Paul moves on to another problem area in the church.

- **Exposition**

*It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles-that a man has his father's wife!*

- Paul moves on to another bad report that he received regarding the progress of the church. The grammar of the verse implies that Paul can hardly believe what he has heard.
- It is likely, but not certain, that the man and woman in this scenario were married. It is also unclear as to whether this is the man's mother or stepmother. But what is clear is that there is an incestuous relationship between these two people.
- When we did our study on divorce, we considered the use of the word porneia. In that study we discovered that the word is a broad one referring to sexual immorality in general. Here Paul uses this word twice to describe a particular kind of porneia-such a kind as was not even named among the Gentiles. This is not that this sin did not occur anywhere else but that it was not a common sin.

<sup>2</sup> *And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.*

- This situation probably wasn't that the church approved of the actions of the brother in sin but rather they boasted in their tolerance. Tolerance has become a solitary virtue. But in reality tolerance is only a virtue if a person has the ability to discriminate right from wrong; truth from falsehood. Otherwise we have the discernment of a vacuum cleaner and we take in or tolerate everything. Toleration of sin is not the same as longsuffering.
- If a brother is in sin, those who are spiritual are to go to them to restore them. If we are not willing to go to someone in sin and pursue the complete church discipline process (should it become necessary) then we should allow love to cover the sin and forgive the person.

<sup>3</sup> *For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed.*<sup>4</sup> *In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,*<sup>5</sup> *deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

- Paul here states that he need not know the man or the circumstances because in no circumstances should this sin be tolerated. Although there must be clear evidence that the sin exists, Paul does not need to hear the man's story to decide whether action should be taken. The fact that the response to the situation was such a clear or obvious one further adds to the heinousness of the Corinthians lack of action.
- Jesus left us with very detailed, step by step instructions on what we should do to correct a in sin. In Matthew 18, Christ said that wherever two or three were gathered (required by law) to carry out this church discipline (not just prayer meetings in general) that He would be in our midst affirming our actions. How much more confidence do we need? Clearly we cannot gather in His

name with malice, revenge or bitterness in our hearts but if those who are spiritual will gather in His name, Christ promises to oversee and affirm what we do in church discipline.

- Some translations use the term sinful nature when describing the turning the people over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. It would appear from these verses that this man was probably a true believer who was in sin. If so, then his sinful nature would have been put to death in Christ just as his spirit would be saved in the day of the Lord. Satan cannot take away our sinful natures otherwise we would have another means of justification. Rather, Paul here is referring to the putting the man in sin outside of the Church. Here he is no longer under the protection of the church and very well might experience the same kinds of afflictions that Job did (although Job was not in sin).
- The important thing to remember is that we desire to see the man restored and Christ has given us explicit instruction on how a restoration would occur. If we are not willing to follow this process then we are not desirous of seeing our brother restored.

***<sup>6</sup> Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?<sup>7</sup> Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.<sup>8</sup> Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.***

- This is one of the most difficult concepts for modern Christians to grasp. When one part of the body is in sin, the whole body is in sin. The whole body is affected by the sin of its members. Although we are not concerned about losing our respective salvation because of the sin of another, we do know that true fellowship with one another is not possible when we are out of fellowship with God.
- Here Paul hearkens back to the Passover feast that was a long standing tradition in the Jewish community. He instructs the Corinthians to be obedient in their church discipline so that they may partake of the Passover appropriately. As Christians, we keep the feast of Passover continuously because Christ is our paschal lamb and we are in Him. We commemorate and proclaim the death of this Lamb in our communion celebration.

***<sup>9</sup> I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people.<sup>10</sup> Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.***

- This is one of the strongest places that we learn about other epistles to the church at Corinth that God has not seen to preserve for us. Paul goes on to clarify his meaning regarding his command not to associate with those who are sexually immoral (a variant of the word porneia) and clearly the church had (and frequently still does) have the commands exactly backwards; we separate ourselves from the sinners in the world and we tolerate those sinners within the church!

***<sup>11</sup> But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner-not even to eat with such a person.<sup>12</sup> For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside?<sup>13</sup> But those who are outside God judges. Therefore "put away from yourselves the evil person." NKJV***

- When one who names Christ as Lord and Savior is in unrepentant sin, it is not the same thing as an unbeliever in sin. The brother in sin situation is far more heinous and with him we cannot even eat. The point is that we cannot act towards him in such a way that we ignore the sin in the man's life. Although we can't experience true fellowship, we are encouraged to be hospitable and gracious with those who are outside the church and take opportunity to share the good news of the Gospel. But to a brother in sin even these pleasantries should not be extended. This does not mean that we are rude or mean to him but it does mean that we must not extend table fellowship or act in such a way as to ignore the sin.
- It is wonderful to see the balance of scriptures. Earlier in the prior chapter, Paul tells the church not judge too quickly and here Paul rebukes the church for having not judged this man quickly enough! There is such a wonderful balance in the scriptures and thankfully we have *all* of the scriptures.
- The primary point of the instruction is for us to strive to maintain the purity of the church. The blood of Christ purchased the justification of the church. The purity of the church should be a public proclamation of the efficacious work of cleansing the church that Christ accomplished. Therefore, in faith we carry out church discipline-not because we like to-but because it brings glory to Christ and is the means by which a brother can be restored.