

Being the Church in an Unbelieving World

REMOVING EVIL FROM THE CHURCH

TEXT: 1 Corinthians 5:1-13

INTRO: Do you know that being a genuine, NT church in an unbelieving world is not an easy task? The true church is to be

- A city set on a hill, the light of which shines to all around.
- A lamp set high on a lampstand that gives light to all in the house.
- A station where the gospel is preached.
- A classroom where the whole counsel of God's Word is taught.
- A training center for disciples, equipping them to follow Christ and do the work of the ministry.

So what do you do when the grossest sin the community has heard about in years is committed by a member of the church? You might be asking, "Oh no! Is this happening right now in our church?" The best time to preach/teach on this is when it is not happening. That is the exact question Paul is addressing in 1 Corinthians 5. Let's read the text.

1 Corinthians 5:1–13 NKJV 1 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!* 2 And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. 3 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. 4 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, 5 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. 6 Your glorying *is* not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? 7 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. 8 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. 9 I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. 10 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. 11 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. 12 For what *have I to do* with judging

those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? 13 But those who are outside God judges. Therefore *“put away from yourselves the evil person.”*

The questions answered by the Holy Spirit:

- **What kind of sin are we talking about?**
- **When such sin is revealed to be in the church, what should our attitude be?**
- **What should we do?**
- **What is our goal?**

WHAT KIND OF SIN ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

1 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!**

sexual immorality – Corinth/Athens was the most immoral place, even more than Rome – porneia – sex outside of marriage – against God, David, against You, OT – death penalty, NT – God’s standard for purity not lessened. Sex is sacred.

a man has his father’s wife – a man was having sex with his stepmother

not even named among the Gentiles - even worse than pagans of Corinth practiced

9 I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people.

I wrote to you in my epistle – the previous letter

10 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.**

did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world – the sin was in the church!

11 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.

sexually immoral, greedy, covetous, idolater, reviler (abusive), or a drunkard, or an extortioner

A - **Unrepented serious sin that causes lost people to reject Christ and ridicule the church**, not a decline in LCG attendance. Pours gas on the fire breath by scoffers, “They are all just a bunch of hypocrites.”

WHEN SUCH SIN IS REVEALED TO BE IN THE CHURCH, WHAT SHOULD OUR ATTITUDE BE?

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

puffed up – haughty, arrogant – claiming they were great church, wise, gifted, yet tolerating gross sin, giving lost people reason to turn from Christ and His church!

mourned – as in grieving for death of a loved one, wailing in sadness

6 Your **glorying** is not good. Do you not know that **a little leaven leavens the whole lump?**

Glorying – rejoicing, boasting – boasting about Christian lives and church instead of weeping over grievous sin that had captured a member and was turning people away

a little leaven leavens the whole lump – toleration of grievous sin causes sin to spread

A - When unrepented serious sin is discovered inside the church, it should cause the church to grieve and cry.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

4 **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, 5 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.**

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ – **in accord with the will of Christ**

when you are gathered together – **in an official meeting**

deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh – **remove him from the protection and fellowship of the church** – so Satan can do with him like others in world

that his spirit may be saved – if indeed he is saved, Satan cannot hurt his spirit. If saved, bring back to purity. If lost, be genuinely saved.

11 **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.**

not to keep company –

- **Do not keep socializing with them.**
- **Use contact to urge repentance.**

- **Do not even eat with such a person.**

13 But those who are outside God judges. Therefore “**put away from yourselves the evil person.**”

Now, we should note: **While this is what we should do, it is the last thing we should do.**

Jesus told us the first three steps.

- 1 **Matthew 18:15–17 NKJV 15** “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.
- 2 **16** But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’
- 3 **17** And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church.
- 4 **But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.** This is what the Holy Spirit is talking about in 1 Cor. 5.

When we are courageous and obedient enough to obey Mt. 18, we do not have to do 1 Cor. 5 very often.

The last time I was a part of doing Mt. 18 with people in serious sin, the sinning parties, repented, forsook their sin, and a marriage and family were preserved.

Mt. 18 works!

1 Cor. 5 works too. In 2 Cor. 2:3-11, Paul urges the church to restore the sinning man to membership because he has repented and forsaken his sin.

WHAT IS OUR GOAL?

For the sinner:

5b - that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus – Save the sinner.

For the church:

7 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.

8 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.

purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump – **Purify the church.**

CONCLUSION – The Spirit’s call to us is to exercise genuine love for our brothers and sisters in our own church.

- When a brother or sister heads down a path of sin that will be detrimental to themselves and others, to have the courage to go to them privately to persuade them to repent and forsake the destructive sin.
- And to love them enough that if they will not repent, to take another brother or sister with us and plead some more.
- If they still will not, and the sin is serious enough so as to turn people away from Christ or the church, to ask the church to appeal to the sinner.
- Finally, if the sinner is putting Christ’s reputation and the church’s testimony in jeopardy, to support the church’s removing fellowship until the sinner comes to repentance.

Alternate title for this sermon:

A Strange Act of Love

If we love, we will obey Matt. 18 and 1 Cor. 5.

If we love our brother and sister when they fall away into sin.

If we love Christ’s bride, the church, we will want to keep her pure.

If we love Christ Himself, we will obey Him, for He said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.”