

1 Corinthians 5:1-13

“A Situation Demanding Confrontation”

There was definitely some confusion running rampant in the church at Corinth. I mean, these people had some real problems. It's interesting that often times as we take a look at the church today and then we sort of hold it up in the balance as compared to the early church in the book of Acts; so often the common thought is, “Look how far we've fallen.” “The early church was full of power, full of purity, making giant strides and global impact. and Here we are today with so much corruption, so much perversity, sort of spinning our wheels finding it difficult to impact our local *community*, much less having an influence on this planet *globally*.” But it's important to bear in mind that the book of Acts is only a partial record, and it's not that it's untrue, but it's difficult to get an accurate perspective of the big picture solely from the book of Acts. If you want to get a more accurate panoramic view of what was going on in the church in the days in which Paul, and Peter, James and John ministered, you have to read the entire N.T. and As you begin to take in the big picture you start to realize that maybe we're not as far off from the early church as perhaps we thought we were because many of the problems that *they* had and were dealing with; we have today.

Because although times change, cultures and customs change, human nature never does. That's why the Word of God transcends time, trends, cultures and customs, because those things aren't the focus, the Word of God deals with the human heart. and It doesn't matter what era one may live in, or on what part of the planet you find yourself, what language one speaks, or what customs people have, human nature remains the same. We've all sinned and fall short of the glory of God, therefore we all need a Savior, and there's only one mediator, one go between, between God and man and that's the Man Christ Jesus. Jesus said, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*” John 14:6 and So the message of Jesus Christ and Him crucified is for all people, in all places, everywhere throughout all time. Jesus said, “*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*” Matt 28:19-20 and One of the places Paul went was to the city of Corinth, perhaps you remember from our 1st study in this book that Corinth was the “sin city” of Paul's day. Pagan temples everywhere, 1,000 temple prostitutes in that would descend on the city every night seeking to solicit sex in the name of the worship of Aphrodite, it was a port city that was known for its loose life style, homosexuality, drunkenness and debauchery were all just common place. and It was into this environment that Paul brought the gospel of Jesus Christ and He planted a church, stayed there over 1½ yrs and sought to establish a solid root system. But he's been gone for a while now and some major problems have arisen, and the question is really, “Who's been influencing who? Has the church been impacting the city, or has the city been impacting the church?” and So He writes them this letter, and so far he's been dealing with division, but now we learn that not only was the Corinthian church a divided church, it was a disgraced and disorderly church as well.

As we follow the flow Paul goes from dealing with *mental* issues (a wrong way of thinking) to dealing with *moral* issues (a wrong way of living). How often we hear that what we believe will determine how we behave, and that my doctrine will determine my duty. **and That's true, that's why it's so critical that we study to show ourselves approved unto God, workmen that need not be ashamed *rightly dividing the Word of truth*, because my perception of God's Word will determine the practice of my life.**

As we closed out last time Paul gave them a choice, he was going to come to them and he was prepared to administer godly affection, or godly correction, the choice was theirs. and What would determine which way he came would be how they dealt with the things he was drawing to their attention. and Ch 5 is a situation demanding confrontation.

Vs1

Or another way to understand that last phrase there is that he's have ongoing sexual relations with his step mom. That's why she's referred to as his "father's wife" as opposed to his mother. and We don't know if his dad had died, or they'd been divorced or what the deal was there, but the bottom line is that he was having an incestuous relationship with his step mom. Something expressly forbidden by both the scriptures and common Roman law (that's why he says this is something that not even the Gentiles will hear of!). Lev 18, Lev 20, Duet 22 and 27 expressly forbid the act of a man taking his father's wife, it's just wrong.

Now there are few things we want to take note of here. #1 When Paul says, "It's actually reported," he's not saying, "This is what people are saying." As if to say, "Hey rumor has it..." Because the bible is clear that we don't entertain hearsay and/or gossip. Unsubstantiated claims are just that, and as believers we don't receive rumors, or hearsay, or gossip, we reject it, we shut it down, we expose it for the sin that it is. God has a real problem with people that have no regard for the integrity or character of another individual and are willing to be character assassins spreading slander and contention through bitterness or whatever. **Those people are called "revilers" who Paul will draw to our attention in Vs 11. But where it says, "It is *actually* reported," we can understand that as saying, "It has been *factually* reported," the idea here is that it's common knowledge, it's not something that's just been tossed around for the sake of spreading rumors, its substantiated fact, something they're not trying to be discreet about.**

2 This word that's been translated, "Sexual immorality" is the Greek Word, "Porneia" from which we obviously get our English word, "Pornography" or "Pornographic." and It's a word that encompasses really any and all illicit sexual behavior be it fornication, adultery, homosexuality, if it's outside the confines of the union of marriage it falls under this category. So from that we need to conclude that immorality of *any* kind is in fact sin in the sight of God, this isn't limiting the scope of sinful behavior to incestuous adultery. If there's sexual activity of any kind going on between to two people outside of marriage, its sin and there's no "if's" "ands" or "buts" about it, it's simply sin. You're familiar with Gal 5, "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." Gal 5:19-21 Eph 5 says this, "But *fornication and all uncleanness* or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints;" Eph 5:3

So though the specific targeted classification of this particular case was incestuous adultery, don't think that the scope of sin is limited to that when it comes to sexual activity. The reality is that its sin to engage in *any* type of sexual activity outside, or beyond the borders of marriage.

#3 We need to realize that this wasn't a 1 time isolated incident by which this man stumbled and is heart broken, desperate to be right with God and repentant of his sin. This speaks of an ongoing unrepentant practice and activity. This last phrase in Vs 1, "That a man *has* his father's wife," the word, "has" is in the present tense and the active voice meaning that he is personally persistent and ongoing in this activity even to the present time that Paul wrote the letter, something that's in the present tense means that it's ongoing in the present.

This would be altogether different if it were an isolated incident whereby the man was grievously heart-broken and repentant, or even if a situation occurred whereby he was struggling, but abhorred it and was begging his brother's and sisters for help with it, and prayer and accountability for him *in* it. Hey, Paul would've, I would and any of us would go to the mat for the bro or sister who's longing to be right with God but struggling with sin in their life. But when there's a blatant disregard for *holiness*, or a scoffing (be it in attitude or action) of the word and ways of God in *righteousness*, then we have a problem. and That situation demands confrontation, church discipline. But instead we read with the Corinthian church

Vs2

The body of Christ is to function in purity, not perversity, and you can't set the standards of purity on one end of the spectrum while allowing or turning a blind eye to non-repentant perversity on the other end of the spectrum. You're only quenching the work of the Spirit in your midst.

and He says, "You're puffed up," remember he's been speaking to them about arrogant pride, and the problem that that is. and There's a little debate here as to the context of their pride. Is he saying that they're acting like they're super spiritual, the spiritual elite with position and pomp, platform, and power as he spoke in Vs 6-13 of Ch 4, yet all the while this is going on in full disclosure right in their midst. If so he's saying, "How can you act like you're so right on when something so sinful as this is going on in your fellowship and you know it full well and refuse to do anything about it? You're acting like you're so right with God when you won't even honor His Word." Or (and most people lean this way) he may be saying, "You know this is going on, and yet you accept it in the name of tolerance, you're puffed up about it, rather than being broken, you're bragging about your political correctness, your open mindedness, your accepting of his lifestyle in the name of 'love.'" This should be breaking your heart, but instead you're bragging of your tolerance, how you accept him just as he is and all of that.

and This same thing goes on in the "church" today, ordaining homosexual ministers, performing homosexual marriage ceremonies, no real concern for live in couples who call themselves Christians who aren't married. Things that fly blatantly in the face of the Word of God, but hey "we're open minded," you need to "broaden" your perspective. Listen Jesus said, "*Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.*" Matt 7:13-14

So if you want to label me “narrow minded” because I believe in and stand by the principles and precepts of God’s Word, than I stand guilty as charged. and I will not broaden my perspective on these clear cut issues that God speaks to.

It doesn’t do anybody any good to coddle and cater to sin in a person’s life, and we should be ashamed of the mentality that seeks to justify it saying, “Well, that’s just who they are so we need to accept them as they are.” Well, if you want to coddle someone on their heading for hell I guess you can do that, but as for me I want to see that person in heaven, so I’ve got to stand for and share the truth with them. It should break our hearts when a bro or a sister is caught up in the snare of sin and refuses to repent. But when such is the case, church discipline is in order.

Vs3-5

Now there’s obviously some things we need to talk about here in these few Vs 1st of all as strange as it might sound I need to clarify that Paul was not speaking of astral projection when he said that though he was absent in body he was present with them in spirit. All he was saying is that his heart was with them and that he was represented before them in his letter.

and He says, “I don’t know what the problem is here, I’m not even there but knowing what I know I’ve already judged this guy as if I were there.” and At this point people are shocked, they’re chagrined, “Did he just say he ‘judged’ him?” “I thought he bible said we’re not to judge lest we be judged?” It does, “Well, than what give Paul or anyone else the right to judge another person?” There are 3 words that are always critical to keep in mind when we study the scriptures. and They are #1 Context, #2 Context, and #3 (Any guesses) Context, and there in Matt Ch 7 Jesus isn’t expressly forbidding any and all judgment. What He forbids is hypocritical judgment and applying standards to someone else that you yourself aren’t willing to abide by. There’s no standard here that Paul isn’t willing to subject himself to. and 2^{ndly} while it’s true that we can’t judge another man’s motive the bible never tells us not to be honest regarding each other’s conduct be it acceptable or non-acceptable, godly or ungodly according to the context of God’s Word. A bad tree won’t bear good fruit and a good tree won’t bear bad fruit.

In reality when it comes to judgment in the Christian arena understand that we really aren’t the one’s making the call of right and wrong, acceptable or sinful. God is the One who’s made that call; all we’re doing is agreeing with *Him* and upholding *His* judgment. Paul didn’t put on a robe and say, “I judge incestuous adultery as sin!” God did that, Paul is simply enforcing or upholding God’s preordained judgment of such a scenario. and That’s really what takes place in any arena of church discipline; all we can do is uphold the standards that God has in place. We can do nothing more, but we definitely don’t want to do anything less. Nor is it something that we can do of our own accord, church discipline is to be implemented in the name and in the power of our Lord Jesus Christ What we do we do under His authority, and according to His character.

We also notice here what the motive behind any and all church discipline is to be. Notice there at the end of Vs 5, “...that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” The motive that’s to fuel church discipline, or the intent behind church discipline is not condemnation, but rather it’s to preserve the moral purity of the congregation (which we’ll see in a moment) and encourage the repentance of the one in violation.

The aim isn't simply the isolation of the unrepentant, but rather the salvation and restoration of the individual (that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.)

So he says, "Deliver such a one to Satan for he destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." Now what does this mean, "Deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh." Understand that he's not saying, "For the destruction of his body," though through the wages of sin that may occur, he's not saying that he needs to undergo some ascetic type of torture in order to punish his body. The implication behind the destruction of the flesh is that the sinful nature might be destroyed. and The idea here is to take away any sense of false security that he may have and give him over to the ramifications of his own ways. and The hope therein is that he might wake up to the reality what he's got himself into and repent. Remember the prodigal son? Man he thought if he were living in the world he could really have it all, so his dad said, "Fine go." and For awhile he thought, "This is where it's at," but ultimately he realized his depravity, found himself nosing up to the trough with pigs just to survive, and he woke up to reality and returned to his father's house. That's the idea we have here. Paul says, "Cast him out into the world, give him over to Satan." Meaning remove him from the social comfort and sense of security that surrounds him in the church community and let him feel the full force of his sin under Satan's domain, the world. Give him over to his desires, and the hope is that it will stir up repentance *in* him which will make for the restoration of him.

To the Thessalonians Paul put it like this, "And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." 2 Thess 3:14-15 He wrote in Rom 16, "Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly," Rom 16:17-18 (Or their own fleshly appetite). But the motive is always ultimately their restoration, and you can read Matt 18 for a more detailed outline of church discipline, going to the one who's at fault at 1st alone, if they don't respond take a couple church leaders, if they still don't respond then it's to be dealt with more dramatically, they're to be removed from the fellowship. But again those procedures don't apply in matters of personal opinion, but where there's been biblical violation, however by this time this incident was way beyond 1 or 2 people being aware of it, it was full on public information, so it had to be addressed in a public format.

Vs6-8

So in the one hand Paul is saying, "This sin is atrocious," but in the other hand he's saying, "But the way you guys are dealing with it is even worse." "Your glorying is not good, your tolerance of it is unbelievable." "Don't you know that only a little leaven leavens the whole lump?" and It's not a reference to yeast, but a pinch of dough that was left over from a previous batch (like sourdough) and they'd take just a pinch of that dough and place it into the new lump and that putrefying process would permeate and infiltrate the entire lump causing it to rise. and That's why the bible uses leaven to illustrate the nature of sin, because it can be introduced so *subtly*, but if not dealt with and purged out it'll infiltrate and permeate the body in its *entirety*.

So he says, “Purge out that old leaven, that you may be a new lump,” unrepentant sin in the midst of the congregation must be extracted if the moral purity, and collective integrity of the body is to be preserved. and He uses the imagery of the Passover (found in Ex 12), which was a foreshadowing of which the substance is of Christ. That’s why he says, “For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.” Remember Israel was to be delivered from Egypt, and the angel of the Lord was going to pass over the land, and they were to shed the blood of a lamb with out spot or blemish. and When the angel past over if he saw the blood covering that home (on the door posts and the lintel) his judgment would pass over, but if not death would visit that house. Of course John the Baptist seeing Jesus said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” John 1:29 and Jesus was sacrificed upon the cross during Passover, shedding His blood so that we might be delivered, not from the chains and bondage of Egypt, but from the chains and bondage of sin, so that when God passes over your heart, He’s looking to see if the blood of Christ has been applied that He might pass over you and me in judgment on that Day.

But here’s the deal, in conjunction with Passover was the feast of Unleavened bread, all leaven was to be thoroughly purged from their homes. and If any leaven was found in their midst that person was to be cut off. and The picture that’s painted through all of that is that having partaken of the Passover, having been found under the blood of the Lamb, there was a purging and a purifying that took place in conjunction with that. and Christ was sacrificed once, for all. There’s no longer a need for ritualistic animal sacrifice, those things again were only a foreshadow, the substance was fulfilled in Christ. and Since His sacrifice covers us continually, we’re to keep (continually) the feast, that is we’re lead our lives in a unleavened manner, we’re to lead our lives in the purity that reflects accurately the work of God on your and my behalf personally in Christ. In the book of Galatians Paul put it like this, “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” Gal 5:25 and So the Christian life isn’t one that’s represented by the habits and practices of the old life, the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

Vs9-10

It bothers some people that Paul wrote a letter that we don’t have, he no doubt wrote lots of letters we don’t have. The one’s God felt needed to be preserved, were. But there was apparently some confusion here. Paul says, “Hey, the call isn’t to lead a life in a Christian bubble, you’re not called to lead your life in a monastery whereby you’re never around people in the world.” Jesus said, “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” Matt 5:14-16 How are people supposed to hear the gospel or come to Christ if you’re never there to be salt and light. Now you don’t have to make provision for the flesh, hang out in the bars to be around worldly people, you work with plenty of them, or go to school with all kinds of people in the world. Share Christ *with* them, show Christ *to* them.

Vs11-13

You see he's saying, "Don't worry about judging the non-believer, you can expect he's going to act like a non-believer, God will take care of that. But if someone says they're a Christian (named a brother) and yet there's a habitual practice of immorality, or covetousness, idolatry (having a master passion above Jesus Christ) or a reviler, or a drunkard, or someone who's always ripping people off. **Then you need to disassociate yourself from them and put them out of the fellowship. Don't even eat with them, don't affiliate yourself with them, or else it'll destroy your witness as well, people will perceive you in the same context. Not only that you want them to feel the full force of the choices they're making so that they might repent.** Too often we do just the opposite, we shield ourselves from people in the world, and make excuses for the sinful behavior from people in the body. When in reality we shouldn't concern ourselves so much with the fact that worldly people act like worldly people, and we should be quick to safeguard the moral purity and the sanctity of the body of Christ.

and There are some subtle sins in there, most of us will readily admit that sexual immorality, or drunkenness needs to be dealt with. But we don't place a lot of thought towards insatiable greed, (covetousness), or being party to someone with loose lips (reviler) someone who's constantly talking trash about people, taking no consideration of their reputation or integrity, and they undermine, devastate and destroy them. That's why I liked the way Ironside referred to them, "Character assassins." These are situations that demand confrontation if there's persistence in them or no repentance from them. He'll worry about those outside, but He's commended into our trust the *purity* and the *integrity* of the inside. Church discipline isn't easy, it's not popular, and it's never fun. **But we have a responsibility to uphold the balanced understanding of the Word of God, but beyond the moral purity of the body corporately, remember that the ultimate intent of church discipline is never that of condemnation, but that of the salvation and restoration of a brother or sister who's left their 1st love. That they might come back to Jesus, remember from where they've fallen, repent before the Lord, and repeat those 1st works. (Rev 2:4-5).**

Prayer Points:

God we want to be a pure and holy people who find themselves more and more in love with You everyday. Help us that we lead lives set apart to You, unencumbered by the cares and lusts of this world. and Since we live in the Spirit help us that we also walk in the Spirit having crucified the flesh along with it's passions and desires. I pray for anyone here who may be ensnared in some area of sin, perhaps it's a relatively unknown thing at this point, may they turn from it now before You out of Your love for them begin to deal with them in a more austere manner. If in Your mercy You're allowing that window of repentance may they seize it. Perhaps they've wanted to seize it but they find themselves enslaved, God break the chains in the name of Jesus Christ by the power of Your Holy Spirit. May we keep the feast, not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

We serve a God of forgiveness and mercy, maybe you've never been a recipient of His mercy, of His forgiveness. Christ (our Passover) was sacrificed for us, for you. Because He wants to purge you of your sin, forgive you of your transgression, make you white like snow before His eyes. He's looking to see if the blood of Jesus Christ has been applied to the door of your heart. [and If it hasn't you can receive it today, Jesus was crucified for our transgressions, He was raised for our justification, we can stand justified before God. But not in our own efforts, only by the blood of Jesus Christ God wants to cast your sin as far as the east is from the west, but you have to let Him. A lot of people think they're Ok, don't really need Jesus. The bible says if you lust on another person in your heart you've committed adultery in your heart, if you've ever been dishonest it makes you a liar in the sight of God, to hate someone or be unjustly angry is to murder them in your heart.](#) If you've ever taken something regardless of its insignificance that doesn't belong to you, you're a thief. You see, we're not ok, we need Jesus. and Jesus said that if anyone comes to Me I'll by no means cast them out...come to Christ, open your heart and He'll give you new life.