

Session 6:

“Challenges for the Church”-A Wake-UP Call!

1 Corinthians 5

One of the strongest influences Satan has on we human beings is a physical need to satisfy our sexual appetites.

That need can be met:

- Biblically and with God’s blessing...or
- It can be met selfishly and ungodly by doing it Satan’s way.

Normally, one of the two methods of sexual necessity will be met....whether you are male or female.

(1) It can be met in a beautiful, spontaneously delightful, exciting way...

- ✓ It can be met with charm, delight, and passion approved by God....even to the point of pure, unadulterated joy.
Nothing to be ashamed; it can be “recreation with excitement, fun, and exhilarating pleasure.”
- ✓ Remember.....all sexual pleasures approved by God are between husband and wife.

Our bodies, sexually, are for our spouse’s pleasure and, in this sense, it is considered good, wholesome and without restraint. “Without restraint” meaning, without “bridling; holding back” our desire for each other.

(2) It can be very demeaning, demoralizing, and depressing.

Sexual relations with any other person is not approved by God....and is specifically forbidden by the Word of God.

- ✓ It is always a selfish, rebellious act that is an act by God’s creation to say, “the fruit is good, why can’t I have it even if God says I should not eat thereof.”

Eve’s sin has been passed on through Adam right down to the man and woman of today. This rebellious act is a cancer that is fed by selfishness, ungodly pride, and unrestrained passion for the forbidden fruit.

- ✓ This type of ungodly desire, lust for what is not yours, can sink to the lowest of all degrading factors for our personality.

Sinking to the point of going against our body, mind, and spirit. Without going into detail of some of the acts committed by well-known people in our society today, I will let you know that we are a sick society.

- ✓ Our sick society’s “stinking thinking” has crept into our churches today because “someone, even preachers, do not want to judge another person...nor embarrass or hurt feelings”....

Instead, they will say, “Gerald, let God convict and discipline. Our job is to ‘reach out’ to the lost sheep of Israel” (Burleson).

Our responsibilities as Christians go beyond our own borders. “What does not involve me want hurt me” is a cop out....an “Ostrich type” Christianity...Hiding under the covers. (No pun!)

1 Corinthians 5:1-8, “It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that even pagans do not tolerate: A man is sleeping with his father’s wife. ² And you are proud! Shouldn’t you rather have gone into mourning and have put out of your fellowship the man who has been doing this? ³ For my part, even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. As one who is present with you in this way, I have already passed judgment in the name of our Lord Jesus on the one who has been doing this. ⁴ So when you are assembled and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, ⁵ hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, ^{a/b} so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord.

⁶ Your boasting is not good. Don’t you know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough? ⁷ Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new unleavened batch—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. ⁸ Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old bread leavened with malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Paul is dealing with what, for him, was an ever-recurring problem.

- **The church was unwilling to discipline a church member who had fallen into a gross sin.**
- **The church had tolerated this degrading sexual sin (adultery/fornication) without dealing with it.**
- **Letting this go on for a period of time without challenging the person or his action.**

The church could be quoting the scripture, “judge not lest you be judged.”

Is that relevant in this situation?

Why is it true in one sense and not the other?

Why do we challenge sin in our church?

What is going to happen if we recognize it and tolerate it in lieu of rebuking and removing it from our midst?

When should we challenge sin in our church?

What should have been done immediately upon learning of the sin (incest/fornication...man being sexually involved with his stepmother)?

Read 2 Corinthians 13...Paul lays it on the line...but, in love!

Paul was shocked at the sin....but even more shocked that the Church at Corinth had tolerated it and the attitude they took about this man who was still in their fellowship. There was apathy in the Church.

Paul stated that they should be “grieved” about this despicable sin. Greek word (penthein)... meaning “mourning for the dead.”

An "easy going" attitude toward sin is always dangerous.

It has been said that our one security against sin lies in our being shocked at it.

This gross sin (sexual relations with stepmother) was not even accepted by the heathen...and was a forbidden by the Jewish Law (Leviticus 18:8).

The work of God in Christ for man extends beyond the redemption of his soul to the salvation of his body.

- ✓ **Some religions, both ancient and modern, disregard the body and attempt to repress it, but not so Christianity.**

"The body is....for the Lord; and the Lord for the body" (1 Corinthians 6:13)

- ✓ **Several columns of the temple of Apollo stand today amid the ruins of Corinth. But there is another temple about which Paul wrote—the human body as the residence of God's Spirit.**

Some Christians, by their emphasis on the power of God available to secure physical healing, know of God's interest in the body.

- ✓ **Whenever a supernatural healing occurs, God's concern for the body is illustrated.**
- ✓ **Not only the cure of physical ills falls within the concern of the whole gospel...for the daily use of healthy bodies—and particularly their use within the partnership of marriage are also the subject of Biblical controls.**

This includes its immoral counterfeits!

Immoral counterfeits....homosexual relationships, live-in relationships, and common law marriages. Even to the one night stands that many think are understandable and permissible in today's society. However, God does not tolerate the statement, "it depends on what the definition of 'is' is." God says that, "it IS SIN...and I hate sin!"

In sexual matters the heathen did not know the meaning of chastity. They took their pleasure when and where they wanted it.

And,

It was so hard for the Christian Church to escape the infection.

- ✓ **The Christians at Corinth were like a little island surrounded on every side by a sea of paganism.**
- ✓ **The Corinthian Christians had come so newly into Christianity that it was difficult to unlearn the practices which generations of loose-living had made part of their lives.**

Conclusion: If the Church is to be kept pure they must say a final good-bye to the old heathen ways.

There is no remedy for sin...except forgiveness through the blood of Jesus. There is no forgiveness of sin, except through repentance.

There is no repentance unless there is a turning away from sin...

There is not turning away from sin....unless the heart is changed by the power of God through the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:9b, “.....if anyone has not the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.”

A great practical truth is found in the above lesson.

Discipline has to sometimes be exercised for the sake of the Church. To shut our eyes to offences is not always a kind thing to do; it may be damaging.

- ✓ **A poison must be eliminated before it spreads;**
- ✓ **A weed must be plucked out before it pollutes the whole ground.**

Discipline should never be exercised for the satisfaction of the person who exercises it, but always for the mending of the person who has sinned and for the sake of the Church.

1 Corinthians 5:9-13, “I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—¹⁰ not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. ¹¹ But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler. Do not even eat with such people.¹² What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? ¹³ God will judge those outside. “Expel the wicked person from among you.”

Paul mentions that he wrote a previous letter to the Corinthian Church members....In which we don't have.

However, maybe this is why it is not available to us; because he must have stated to the Church that they were to not associate with fornicators....and it was easy to misinterpret.

- ✓ **Some of the Corinthian Church members took the statement as absolute prohibition.**
- ✓ **Paul, however, would never recommend a kind of Christianity which withdrew from the world.**

To Paul, Christianity was something that had to be lived out in the world.

We see three (3) sins Paul mentions as typical of the world (he names three classes of people):

(1) The Fornicators...those guilty of lax morality.

Christianity alone cannot guarantee purity. What Christianity does, however, regards man as a child of God, and, just because of that regards man:

- ✓ As a creature who lives in the world but...who always looks beyond it,
- ✓ As a person who will not dictate his life by purely physical needs and desires,
- ✓ As one who has a body and a spirit.

(2) The greedy...for this world's goods.

- ✓ *Only a Christian conversion can banish this type of spirit...*
- ✓ *Christianity introduces a spirit which looks outwards and not inwards.*
- ✓ *It makes love the highest value in life and service the greatest honor.*

When the love of God is in a man's heart, he will find his joy in giving, not getting!

(3) The idolaters...a basic rule of life is that man must worship something.

- ✓ *Unless he worships the true God he will worship the gods of luck.*
- ✓ *Whenever the Christian religion grows weak, superstition grows strong!*

It is to be noted that the three (3) basic sins are representative of the three (3) directions in which a man sins:

(1) FORNICATION IS A SIN AGAINST MAN'S OWN SELF.

By falling, man has reduced himself to the level of an animal.

(2) GREEDINESS IS A SIN AGAINST OUR NEIGHBORS AND OUR FELLOW MEN.

- ✓ *It regards human beings as persons to be exploited rather than as brothers to be helped.*
- ✓ *It forgets that the only proof that we do love God must be the fact that we love our neighbors as ourselves.*

(3) IDOLATRY IS A SIN AGAINST GOD.

- ✓ *It allows things to usurp God's place.*
- ✓ *It is the failure to give God the first and only place in life.*

It is Paul's principle that we are not to judge those outside the Church. We must leave their judgment to God who alone knows the hearts of men.

But the man within the Church has special privileges and therefore special responsibilities.

He is a man who has taken an oath to Christ and can therefore be called in question for how he keeps that oath.

Paul comes to an end of the chapter with a definite command, "Put away the wicked man from amongst you.".....NIV states, "Expel the wicked man from among you."

This is a quotation from Deuteronomy 17:7 and 24:7.

Fact:

- ✓ **There are times when a cancer must be cut out;**
- ✓ **There are times when drastic measures must be taken to avoid infection.**

It is not the desire to hurt or the wish to show his power that moves Paul; it is the pastor's desire to protect his infant Church from the ever-threatening infection of the world.