

Title of the message, “Should the Church Address My Sin?” We’re back in our verse by verse study of 1 Corinthians. We’re in Chapter 5, the entire chapter.

If you are a member of the Corinthian church that Paul is writing to here, so far this letter has not been pleasant.

Our last four messages have had these titles:

Carnal Christians In Diapers
Immaturity Leads To Division
Is My Work Fuel For The Fire
Big Talk – Little Walk

And I hope you’ve been able to watch or listen to each of those messages, either here in person, on the WordByMail phone app, or online at WordByMail.com. Because now, after those four “lead-up” messages, today Paul is going to start to get really serious. And the question on the table today – for us – is “Should the Church Address My Sin?”

Let’s pray. Lord, Jesus, please do what you do. You are the Word and your Word is living and active and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword. It divides; it discerns the thoughts and intents of our hearts. And Lord, we already are laid out; open, naked before the One to Whom we must Give Account. You know all things, Lord. And so we pray, God, that you would use your Word as the scalpel you created it to be, that you would use it to heal, that you would use it to restore, that you would use it to do the work that you desire to do in each one of us, today. We give you the right to do it, Lord; we pray that you would, for your glory and in your name, amen.

In our “revolving door” church culture people get mad and leave a church very easily. But I would have to say the number one way to make a Christian mad and likely have them leave the Church is to address the sin in their lives.

Maybe I’m just not good at it (even though I’m really trying to get better). But for me often even when the person knows I’m right, it seems like it’s still easier for them to get mad and leave than it is for them to stay and overcome the sin. But today, Paul is going to tell us that sometimes *sin must be addressed by the church.*

Paul is going to use an extreme example of sin in our text today. But, if you don’t happen to be living in this exact sin today, please don’t think you’re “off the hook.” Because

Jesus – in the Gospels – teaches the same principle and really all through the New Testament the Bible clearly teaches that sometimes *sin must be addressed by the church*.

Paul kicks us off in 1 Corinthians 5:1.

1 Corinthians 5:1 (NLT)

I I can hardly believe the report about the sexual immorality going on among you—something that even pagans don't do . . .

The culture in Corinth was extremely lax and accepting of sexual immorality (Greek word = *Pornia*). That's why Paul was so shocked that the sin that was going on in the church was something that even the unbelieving pagans wouldn't tolerate.

And verse 1(b) tells us what the sin is.

1 Corinthians 5:1(b) (NLT)

*1(b) . . . I am told that a man in your church is living in sin (sleeping with) *with his stepmother*.*

But Paul never really addresses the *specifics* surrounding this sin.

One, because it's pretty obvious and the details are not really necessary.

Two, because the fact this is happening in the church is actually a symptom of bigger problem. Paul is more concerned about the sickness in the church, not the sin of the individual. And that underlying problem is spelled out in just six words at the beginning of verse 2.

1 Corinthians 5:2 (NLT)

2You are so proud of yourselves, but you should be mourning in sorrow and shame . . .

You are SO PROUD of yourselves (so often the problem comes to *pride*) but you should be in mourning.

There is serious sin in your church and instead of being in mourning – you are full of PRIDE.

Is that a statement about the Corinthian church? Or the church of our culture today?

What kind of pride causes us to not address sin in our churches today? Is it the Pastor's pride of wanting a bigger church? Or is it our pride of wanting to be accepted by the

culture? Or are we proud of the fact that we *mistakenly think* it is loving to support everyone doing –

WHATEVER they **WANT**
WHENEVER they **WANT**
HOWEVER they **WANT**?

Well, Paul’s response may be offensive to churches that pride themselves in never addressing sin. In the second half of verse 2 Paul matter-of-factly tells the church exactly what they need to do.

1 Corinthians 5:2(b) (NLT)

2(b) . . . And you should remove this man from your fellowship.

Isn’t it funny what we have come to think of as “Christian” behavior?

But how God responds – his “behavior” if you will – is right here in verse 2... ***you should be mourning – in sorrow and shame*** because of the seriousness of this sin in your church – but instead ***you are proud of yourselves.***

Man, could God be talking to our church culture today, right? And then God says through Paul ***you should remove this [person] from your fellowship***

WHAAT...

“Hey, GOD, that doesn’t sound very ‘Christian’ of you!”

Am I saying there are people we should remove from the church? No, *I am* absolutely NOT saying that... but *God absolutely IS* saying that.

But what if God is saying that for that person’s OWN good... as well as for the good of the Church.

What if God’s discipline of our sin is actually a crucial part of God’s grace in our lives?

What if God’s discipline of our sin is actually a crucial part of God’s grace in our lives?

What if God’s discipline is actually for our good, both for our “life in Christ” now and for our eternity later?

Just last Wednesday night we studied Genesis 42 (incredible study) and we considered WHY did God have Joseph (who was a “type” of Christ) put his brothers through such pressure and turmoil in response to their sin against him.

And we realized

It was for the **brother's own GOOD**
It was for the GOOD of **God's people Israel**
and **ultimately** it was for **God's glory in their lives.**

But while it was happening the brothers didn't feel any of that "good", they only felt the pressure and the turmoil.

I suppose if it were a church that was putting that pressure on those brothers in *response to their sin* they most likely would've quickly left the church, blaming it on the church and moved to a bigger and better church down the road that didn't know about their sin.

Would you please write down Hebrews 12:11 on your hand, your neighbor's hand or somewhere?

Hebrews 12:11 (NLT)

11 No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.

So, with that verse in mind (especially the end) look closely at how Paul addresses this sin in the church of Corinth.

1 Corinthians 5:3-5 (NLT)

3 Even though I am not with you in person, I am with you in the Spirit. And as though I were there, I have already passed judgment on this man

4 in the name of the Lord Jesus. You must call a meeting of the church. I will be present with you in spirit, and so will the power of our Lord Jesus.

5 Then you must throw this man out and hand him over to Satan so that his sinful nature(his flesh) will be destroyed and he himself will be saved on the day the Lord returns.

SO much of what Paul writes is about us *crucifying the flesh* (the "sin nature") and *walking in the Spirit* – with Christ. And so, in verse 5 Paul is NOT saying he wants this man to be destroyed. He's saying he wants this man's "sin nature" to be destroyed (referred to as "the flesh") so that the man *himself* will be *saved*. (Do you see that?)

Paul says remove this man from the church. Let him experience the *consequences of his sin* in hopes that his desire to sin will be crushed and that he himself would repent and be saved.

Can I make a *really serious request* of you today? If we are led to address a sin in your life in order to help you *out* of that sin, please don't make us out to be the enemy so that you can blame it all on us and run to another church that doesn't know about your sin.

Please do not do that.

Instead, desire to be *transformed by God*.

Desire to be *changed by God*.

Isn't that what you CAME to Jesus Christ FOR?

We've got to allow God to work out of us all that he needs to work out of us. We must learn to fight against your *own* flesh (sin nature) *instead* of against the church leaders who must address our sin.

Your Sin

is **Grieving** the **Holy Spirit**

is **Preventing** you from **WALKING** in God's Presence

AND it **MAY** be effecting the **Spiritual Health** of the CHURCH

Please don't get angry if God uses us to point that out to you.

There is a *spiritual principle* here that Jesus also made clear in Matthew 18:15.

Matthew 18:15 (NLT)

15 "If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back.

It's interesting, four of the major Bible translations (including NASB and NIV) leave out the words "*against you*" and say simply "*if your brother sins, go privately and show him his fault*"

So Jesus could be referring to an offense "*against you*" or just a *serious sin*. And Jesus goes on to say in Matthew 18 if that person refuses to listen to you privately, take one or two people back with you and if that person still refuses to listen take it to the church (leaders) and if that person refuses to accept the church's counsel then you should refuse to *associate* with them.

Why is sin in the Church such a *serious matter*? First of all, it's strange that we would ask that questions but the answer is ONE because sin brings death and God calls the church to bring life in Jesus Christ not death in sin. And TWO because of what the next verse in our text says.

1 Corinthians 5:6 (NLT)

6Your boasting about this (their acceptance of the sin) ***is terrible. Don't you realize that this sin is like a little yeast***(Leaven) ***that spreads through the whole batch of dough?***

The word YEAST is referring to the “starter dough” that has the yeast (leaven) in it. Like when sourdough bread is made (see it at Disneyland). A pinch of the dough (with leaven in it) from the “starter” is kneaded into the new dough and that little pinch of leaven spreads leaven through the entire batch of the new dough.

And SOMETIMES - Un-Addressed Sin in the church

is like a little pinch of leaven that spreads through the whole batch of dough

That is the picture Paul is painting here.

But listen, guys, this does not mean we are called to be “sin hunters.” We are not to go on any search and destroy missions to find any sin in the church.

But God *IS the sin hunter* and he is on a search and destroy mission to crucify the sin of our flesh so that we can walk in the power of his Spirit and be his witness to a dying world.

So an obvious question this brings up is – *which sins* should the church *deal with*? And sometimes that can be a difficult question. We know we're *all* sinners, and certainly we can't address *every* sin. But sometimes God makes certain sins “known” to us.

And at times we believe the Holy Spirit is *calling us* to deal with that sin for the *good* of that person and the good of the church. And it is also *true* that the more visible you are in the church, the more you serve and especially if you LEAD, you are held to a higher standard because God has called you to be an *example* or a *leader*.

Now, Paul is going to continue with this leaven metaphor (from verse 6) and he is going to tie it in to the Passover celebration. The Passover feast (Festival) was to remember the tenth plague and the exodus of God's people from Egypt. At the beginning of the Passover Festival, the Jewish families would completely remove all leaven (representing sin) from their homes. *Then* the Passover Lamb would be sacrificed.

The blood of the Passover Lamb would be put as a “cover” over the doorway of the house and the Angel of Death would pass over the home because the blood of the Passover Lamb was “covering” the home.

And the Passover celebration is actually at the *very center* of our faith because Jesus Christ IS our Passover Lamb and we have been saved *out of* our old life of slavery to sin and given new life in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. And Paul is going to say here we cannot celebrate the Passover of our NEW LIFE in Christ *without* removing the *leaven of sin* of our old life.

1 Corinthians 5:7-8 (NLT)

NLT uses “Yeast” for “Leaven” here –I’m going to use “Leaven”

7 *Get rid of the old “[leaven]” by removing this wicked person from among you*(the unrepentant sinner). ***Then you will be like a fresh batch of dough made without [leaven], which is what you really are.*** (For)***Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed for us.*** (Jesus Christ has “paid for” and removed the sin of your old life)
8 *So let us celebrate the festival* (of Passover), ***not with the old bread of wickedness and evil***(with the Leaven of Sin in it), ***but with the new bread of sincerity and truth*** (which is the new life in Jesus Christ).

Isn't it interesting that Paul uses *sincerity and truth* to describe the New Life in Jesus Christ? Because the church is NOT living in *sincerity and truth* when it is not making any effort to remove the “leaven of sin” from its life as the Church.

But again, we're not talking about making the Church “sinless.” We're talking about addressing sin when it's clear that we need to.

To wrap up, Paul is going to clear up something he said on this same matter in a previous letter to the church. But in these final verses, Paul also summarizes this entire conversation in a way that really doesn't need much commentary.

So, what I'm going to do is read it from the NLT and then as the commentary, I'm going to re-read it from the paraphrase Bible called “The Message.”

1 Corinthians 5:9-13 (NLT)

9 *When I wrote to you before, I told you not to associate with people who indulge in sexual sin.*

10 *But I wasn't talking about unbelievers who indulge in sexual sin, or are greedy, or cheat people, or worship idols. You would have to leave this world to avoid people like that.*

11 *I meant that you are not to associate with anyone who claims to be a believer*(note those words [repeat]) ***yet indulges in sexual sin, or is greedy, or worships idols, or is abusive, or is a drunkard, or cheats people. Don't even eat with such people.***

(Again talking about people who CLAIM to be believers but are living in sins like these)

And then the Final wrap up in verses 12-13

12 It isn't my responsibility to judge outsiders (those outside the church), but it certainly is your responsibility to judge those inside the church who are sinning.

13 God will judge those on the outside; but as the Scriptures say, "You must remove the evil person from among you (Deut 17:7)."

Now, I know you don't really want to hear that again, but the paraphrase Bible called "The Message" treats this section really well. So – listen closely – to those same verses one more time.

1 Corinthians 5:9–13 (The Message)

9 I wrote you in my earlier letter that you shouldn't make yourselves at home among the sexually promiscuous.

10 I didn't mean that you should have nothing at all to do with outsiders of that sort (outside the church). Or with crooks, whether blue- or white-collar. Or with spiritual phonies, for that matter. You'd have to leave the world entirely to do that!

11 But I am saying that you shouldn't act as if everything is just fine when a friend who claims to be a Christian is promiscuous or crooked, is flip with God or rude to friends, gets drunk or becomes greedy and predatory. You can't just go along with this, treating it as acceptable behavior.

12 I'm not responsible for what the outsiders do, but don't we have some responsibility for those within our community of believers?

13 God decides on the outsiders, but we need to decide when our brothers and sisters are out of line and, if necessary, clean house.

I think that pretty much sums it up.

Let's pray. *Lord Jesus, we came to you to be transformed. How have we been so duped into thinking now that we've walked with you that we don't want our sin exposed or removed? We came to you for this reason. We came to you because sin was destroying our lives. If there is sin in our lives, and if you use the church to address it, Lord, may we thank you for it and not turn it, deflect it, defend it, or justify it, all the stuff that our flesh does, God. May we desire to have sin in our lives addressed and deal with it with you. Allow you to rip it from our lives, Lord, that we would be cleansed of it, that we would replace the death that sin brings with the life that you bring. Lord, don't allow us to protect our sin, to cover it, to shield it, to hide it, to justify it, and to defend it. Help us to just be laid open on the altar to allow you to be the great surgeon, Lord, to remove the blackness of sin in our lives. And Lord, we commit right now, to not shoot the messenger.*

That if you use a Nathan in our lives, if you bring church leadership to expose a sin in our lives, we'll get angry at the sin, but not the messenger. And we'll thank you for the healing, for the transformation, for the regeneration of our lives. We want to shine bright as your witnesses. We want to be a city on a hill. Lord there's enough darkness around us, we want to be the light. We pray that you would remove the leaven from our lives to allow that to happen. We are about to take communion and say Jesus we want your life to replace our life. And as we do that, apply your Word to the specific areas of our life that you would apply it, for your glory, and in your name, amen.