

Intro: We have a crisis on our hands, O Church. The cultural god of “Tolerance” has pervaded our holy community and is destroying people in its wake. All the permissiveness of Dr. Spock in the building up of children’s “self-esteem” has not produced the generation of self-assured and relationally upright adults that it promised. Rather, we have a generation of children who have no firm boundaries and no solid footing, and as a result feel about as worthwhile as trash. Why? Because love does the hard work of discipline amidst the tears of sorrow over sin and brokenness. To set boundaries is to show your care and concern for the welfare of your brother, even if they don’t see it now. This is even more true in the Church, who ought to desire holiness because we love our Savior.

Today we look at what the Lord reveals that we are to do when we have an unrepentant brother or sister among us. This is the Word of the Lord revealing *how* to deal with those who want to continue pursuing their sin and are self-deceived into thinking that the Lord blesses it. It is severe and hopeful, sorrowful and humble. May we hear the Word of the Lord.

1. Unrepentant Sinning is Revealed (v1)

- a. The existence of continual sexual immorality shocked Paul
 - i. Sexual immorality is *porneia*, a word that encapsulates all kinds of sexuality that is out of line with God’s revealed pattern
 - ii. Prostitution, adultery, incest, homosexuality, sexual relationship outside of marriage between one man and one woman, revealed in OT as well
- b. This sexual immorality was ongoing
 - i. It was not a “one-night stand” or a sexual slip up
 - ii. It was an ongoing relationship, “has his father’s wife”
 1. Present tense of “to have”
 2. Infinitive, stating a constant “having”
 3. He was living in a sexual relationship with her
 - iii. This is *unrepentant* sexual sin
 1. This man wasn’t hating this sin, struggling against it with a desire for obedience
 2. He made peace with this sin and *continued to pursue it and live in it*
 - a. This is NOT the same as being tempted, or even failing into sin
 - b. It is failing and loving the sin more than loving holiness
 - c. Living in it by choice and not struggling against our fleshly desires by the Spirit
- c. This kind of immorality wasn’t even tolerated by the Gentiles
 - i. Cicero and Gaius (Institutes) both condemned a son and father sleeping with the same woman
 1. Not necessarily incest, but father/son having a sexual relationship with same woman
 2. Other types of incest were not considered taboo
 3. Demosthenes is quoted in his *orations* as saying, “Mistresses we keep for the sake for pleasure, concubines for the daily care of the body, but wives to bear us legitimate children,”
 - ii. Following Christ meant a vast break from the sexual norm of Paul’s day just like it does for us today.
 1. This is why *porneia* (sexual immorality) is mentioned so often in Scripture, usually at the top of the lists of vices. The cultural sexual norm clashed strongly with the calling of holiness for the Christian.
 2. We see that sexual immorality was a large problem in the Corinthian believers’ lives before (see 5:9; 6:12-20; 7:2, 10:8) their conversion.

2. Tolerance of a Lifestyle of Sin Within the Church is Arrogant. (v2)

- a. What really shocked Paul was not the sin, but the church’s tolerance of sexual immorality

- i. “There is sexual immorality among you and you do not mourn nor do anything about it!”
 - ii. They had not removed the man from their midst (this phrase is repeated with force at least four times!)
- b. They tolerated it rather than mourned over its evil & their brother’s spiritual condition moving away from Christ
 - i. This is the biggest sin that Paul admonishes here, not particularly the man (whom he does not name) and his present continual sin
 - ii. Paul calls this tolerance “arrogant” or “boasting”
 - iii. Apparently, their present stand on “wisdom” and the “spirit of this age” (1:29-2:7) led them to boast in this
- c. Sorrowful removal from the community is the humble action
 - i. We usually think the opposite
 - 1. Our culture says that it is arrogant to judge and humble to be tolerant
 - a. Much of the Church’s judgments in the past have been arrogant and self-righteous, desiring condemnation and self-exaltation rather than restoration
 - b. We must admit the Church’s failures in the past: judging the world as if it were the Church (see vv12-13), and in excommunicating someone without mourning.
 - c. However, we must follow how the LORD has said to be loving toward an unrepentant person who calls himself, “Christian”
 - 2. “Who are we to pass judgment? Who are we to cast the first stone?”
 - a. The Scripture clearly teaches we not to *hypocritically* judge another (Matt 7:1-5; Gal 6:1; Rom 2:1), not to condemn self-righteously
 - b. However, *real biblical* love does judge. This is what we are told to do here (1 Cor 5:9-13).
 - i. Would you judge your drunken neighbor and take away his keys when he wants to drive his kids home?
 - ii. Would you judge your drug addicted daughter and take away her drugs, her money, and her privileges?
 - iii. Should the Confessing Church of Germany judged those among them who sided with Hitler, or the church of Jim Jones judged his arrogance and self-centeredness?
 - c. If we truly love a brother, we *hate* in him the liar, drunk, traitor, schemer, and manipulator. When we love another, we want what is best for them, not what is easiest for us, nor *nice*.
 - i. God doesn’t call us to be *nice*. Niceness works under the premise that people must be happy with me.
 - ii. God does call us to be *kind*. Kindness works under the premise that I will do what is best for my brother
 - d. If we would act in the case of drug addictions, have we forgotten that persistent pursuit of evil in unbelief leads to fall away from the living God, no matter what the words of the mouth may say? (Heb 3:12-14; 10:24-27)
 - ii. Boasting in this sin was most likely what Paul condemns in Romans 3:8 and 6:1, “...are we to continue in sin so that grace may abound? Definitely not!!”
 - 1. There seems to be a tolerance that belittles the severity of sin under the word of “grace”, which is really not humble grace at all, but sinful tolerance of unrepentant sin
 - 2. A theology that turns freedom into license and uses grace as “an opportunity for the flesh” (Gal 5:13). So they were most likely boasting in their freedom and the tolerance of grace. It was their pride that was behind this, not coming under the authority of the Word of God (Paul had even specifically written them earlier

about sexual immorality, and they were not submitting to his apostleship, see 1 Cor 5:9)

- iii. It is humility that does the hard work of severe love through discipline
 1. And humility, as Paul presented it, was the basis of removal not toleration. ". . . You have not mourned instead, in order that the one who had done this deed might be removed from your midst."
 - a. "Blessed are those who mourn," Jesus said.
 - b. Blessed are the meek and broken hearted who know the horror of sin and their own vulnerabilities and failures and offenses against God.
 - c. These are the ones, Paul says, who will remove the unrepentant one from the church. True brokenness and sorrow is the basis of excommunication.
 2. True Biblical brokenness does not say, "I could never judge a brother like that." True Biblical brokenness believes verses 9-13 and submits to the authority of the apostle.
 3. Humility does not tell God *how* to be gracious, it listens and submits to His Word with fear and trembling due to the severity of sin and its consequences in a brother's life.
 4. Discipline is not something that brothers *long* to do, nor even *want* to do, but we do *long* for what is best for our brothers and that is what Scripture has revealed that God desires and commands.

3. Humility does the hard work of discipline

- a. Paul states that they are already holy because Jesus had been sacrificed for them, so they are to actively be holy by removing leaven (sin) from their midst. (v7)
 - i. Paul alludes to the Passover celebration in which leaven was removed from the house following the sacrifice of the Lamb. (v7)
 - ii. We are to get rid of the sin of malice and wickedness (v8)
 1. The totality of all sin against God, as revealed in His Word
 2. The pride at Corinth said, "Christ has been sacrificed for our sins, so we can sin and grace will abound to cover it. Sin isn't that big of a deal!"
 3. Paul states, "Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed, so cleanse out the old leaven of sin among us!"
 - a. Titus 2:14 – the purpose of the cross is forgiveness AND purity!
 - b. Every chosen act of unrepentant sin is like thrusting the spear in the side of Christ, mocking His sacrifice and trampling upon His blood (Heb 10:29-31)
 - iii. We are to celebrate this life with pure motives (sincerity) and truth. (v8)
 1. We HAVE been sanctified by the blood of Christ, so let us walk in that truth of sanctity.
 2. The Corinthians tried to cut Christ in two, desiring a Savior who pardons but does not purify. You cannot cut Christ in two! The proof of our pardon is in our passion for purity!

4. Loving discipline removes the unrepentant sinner from the community of the church.

- a. Paul wrote to them earlier not to "intermingle" with sexually immoral people who call themselves "brother". (vv9-11)
 - i. Not talking about the world (v10)
 - ii. Talking about "so-called" Christians who are sexually immoral (v11)
 1. This term, "so-called," is in the middle form, indicating that one has named themselves

2. It refers to those who have claimed to be a brother and live in the community of the Church under the name “Christian,” considering themselves in the Family
- iii. Not only the sexually immoral, but also greedy, violent robbers, idolators, drunks, or contentious haters (v11) as well as divisive and rebellious (Titus 3:10; Romans 16:17)
- iv. They are told not to even eat with such a person. (v11)
- b. Removal of the sinning (presently, unrepentantly) person is to be done when the church is assembled together. (v4)
 - i. This is not the mere decision of a few or an individual. It is the requirement of the entire church together.
 1. The discipline must be carried out by the entire community because sin affects the entire community (v7)
 2. Paul judged the sinning man though he was absent, to show the severity and by example (v3)
- c. The discipline is to hand him over to Satan under the power of Jesus (v5)
 - i. The purpose of handing him over to Satan is the destruction of his flesh
 1. The best example of one being handed over to Satan is in the book of Job (2:6, “And the Lord said to the Devil, ‘Behold, I hand him over to you. Only spare his life.’”
 2. Job suffered greatly under the hand of Satan, but all was under the authority and purpose of God for the purification of Job’s soul
 - a. Job 42:5-7, “I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; therefore I despise myself, and repent¹ in dust and ashes.”⁷ After the LORD had spoken these words to Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite: “My anger burns against you and against your two friends, for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has.
 - b. Job was purified by his suffering under Satan’s hand, in order to see the Lord as He really was and to humbly worship.
 - ii. The desired outcome of the destruction of his flesh is the salvation of his soul on the day of the Lord's judgment
 1. To feel the weight of the reality of choosing sin: distance from the Lord and His people
 2. Until a person comes undone, they do not *functionally nor presently* see their need for Jesus
 3. It could be immense suffering: AIDS, job loss, death of family (look at Job), but it would be as nothing if a person returns to the Lord.
 - iii. Removal of a sinner is done in the authority of the Lordship of Jesus and with His power. (v4)
 1. Christ is in control of the discipline of the unrepentant
 2. Christ, the Lord, is in power over Satan, and uses Satan’s desire for destruction to bring about His sovereign will of salvation through repentance and faith
 3. Our hope is sure that Satan can go no farther than what Christ has allotted him to go for the purpose of the salvation of the brother.

Conclusion:

The Word of the LORD is clear that sin is not to be tolerated among us because we have been made holy by the blood of Jesus Christ. Through His sacrifice we have been cleansed, forgiven, and freed to live to God and for God.

Though our culture does not adhere to the importance of holy living, or can see how removal from the community can actually accomplish restoration, let us press forward toward the worship of Jesus as our Savior AND as our Lord, fully recognizing and praising Him for our wondrous salvation from sin, following the apostle in his instruction when we have unrepentance among us. To the praise and the glory of the living and holy God.