

13 April

 Break the ice

Write down what God is saying to you in today's message:

TOPIC: 1 Corinthians – week 9

 Let's hear your story

1. Tell of a time when you had to explain to a friend or family member the importance of church discipline towards an unrepentant believer?
2. What sin was reported in the church of Corinth and known by those outside the church in v.1? (**A man is sleeping with his father's wife.**)
3. What did the law of Moses command in Leviticus 18:8? (**Do not have sexual relations with your father's wife, that would dishonour your father.**)
4. What are Paul's words in v.2? (**Shouldn't you rather have gone into mourning and put out of your fellowship the man who has been doing this?**)

 Let's go deeper

5. What does v.5 tell us? (**Hand this man over to satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved...**)
6. Did Paul warn this unrepentant believer previously? (**v.9; I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people.**)
7. How does Paul remind the church in v.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...**)
8. What was Paul's final instruction to the church in v.13b? (**Expel the wicked person from among you.**)

 Let's apply this

- 9. 1 Corinthians 5:1 – 2;** 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. 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?
- How should the church have responded to this unrepentant believer? (Boast or mourn)?
 - What should the church have done to this unrepentant believer? (Tolerate or judge)?
 - What would happen to the church if they did not exercise discipline?

SUMMARY:

Week 9 – Church Discipline

Read: 1 Corinthians 5:1 – 13

The church at Corinth was not only a divided church, but it was also a sinful church. There was sin in the church and, everybody knew about it. But the church was slow to do anything about it. No church is perfect, but human imperfection must never be an excuse for sin. Paul gave **three specific instructions** for the church to follow.

vv.1 – 2; The church is to mourn over the sin

This word to mourn is used for mourning over the dead, which is the deepest and most painful kind of personal sorrow possible. Instead of mourning, the people at Corinth were puffed up. The sin in question was a form of incest: a believer and member of the church was sleeping with his father's wife (v.1) and showed no signs of repentance over his sin. Since Paul does not pass judgment on the woman, we assume that she was not a member of the church, and not a believer.

This kind of sin was condemned by the Old Testament law (Leviticus 18:6 – 8; 20:11) as well as by the laws of the Gentile nations. Whenever a Christian brother or sister sins with no signs of repentance it is time for the family to mourn and to seek help. This unrepented brother was "dead" to the things of the Lord and God's people.

vv.3 – 5; The church should judge the sin

Paul described a church meeting at which the unrepentant brother was dealt with. Public sin must be publicly judged and condemned, according to Jesus' instruction on discipline, in Matthew 18:15–20. The sin was not to be swept under the floor as it was known far and wide even among the unsaved who were outside the church.

We assume that first the spiritual leaders of the church sought to restore the man personally. This was to be done by the authority of Jesus Christ—in His name. Church membership is a serious thing and must not be treated carelessly or lightly.

What does it mean to deliver a believer "unto Satan"? When a believer is in fellowship with the Lord and with the local church, he enjoys a special protection from Satan. But when he is out of fellowship with God and excommunicated from the church, he is outside this protection and becomes an easy target for the enemy.

vv.6 – 13; The church should get rid of the sin

Yeast is a picture of sin. It is small but powerful; it works secretly; it "puffs up" the dough and spreads. The sinning church member in Corinth was like a piece of yeast: he was defiling the entire loaf of bread (the congregation). It was like a cancer in the body that needed to be removed by drastic surgery. Paul highlights the importance of separation from the world. Christians are not to be isolated but separated. We cannot avoid contact with sinners, but we can avoid contamination by sinners.