

How Do We View Unrepentant Sin?

I Cor. 5

INTRODUCTION: We began our study with an introduction to Paul the Apostle. We saw how he was radically changed by meeting the risen Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus.

Then we followed his progress to the city of Corinth, where he led others to faith in Christ, organized them into a church, appointed leaders... then continued his journey to Ephesus.

We saw how the men of Chloe's household visited Paul with questions regarding a significant disruption in the life and ministry of the Church of Corinth.

Last week - we saw that the first question was addressed in the first 4 chapters of the letter. The Church at Corinth had been heavily influenced that the Worldly Philosophies of Athens, 40 miles away. They had begun to view doctrine, preachers, each other, through a very worldly lens.

Paul called them to seek TRUE wisdom - by realigning themselves with the Word of God, allowing TRUTH to be the supreme influence in their lives.

This week, Paul moves into the second area of concern that the men of Chloe's household raised.

TEXT: Corinthians 5:1 (ESV)

¹ It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you...

So last week we saw that the worldly influence of Athenian Philosophy had begun to influence them. This week, we see that the local pagan religion had also begun to creep in.

Remember, each Greek city would have its own Patron god or goddess and a Temple in their honor. The Patron Deity of Corinth was the goddess, **Aphrodite**. Her temple sat high above the city.

The temple of Aphrodite employed more than 1,000 temple prostitutes both male and female. ¹

The poet and playwright, **Euripides** writes, '...having left AcroCorinth whitewashed on all sides, upon the sacred hill-city of Aphrodite...where a multitude of outsiders resorted in great numbers and kept holiday. And all the merchants and soldiers who went there squandered all their money so that the following proverb arose in reference to them: "The voyage to Corinth is not for everyman"

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_of_Aphrodite_at_Acrocorinth

The worship of Aphrodite was performed by consorting with the temple prostitutes in the most lude and lascivious manner. In return for faithful worship, Aphrodite would provide the city with material prosperity, calm seas for the sailors, and protection against their enemies.

So this blatant sexual immorality was not viewed and immoral, but rather as Patriotic.

You see, if all of those things were promised provided you worshipped Aphrodite and consorted with the temple prostitutes. How do you think the Corinthians viewed this news religion of Christianity that believed that one worships Jesus by being faithful to one's spouse, just as Christ was to His church?

Christianity was viewed as a very **UNPATRIOTIC** religion to the Corinthians. If there was trouble in Corinth, who got the blame? Those Christians who failed to worship the patron goddess.

So some of the members of the Church began to espouse a more "open minded", "progressive" form of Christianity, that allowed them to both engage in the sexual immorality of the city and still be at church every Sunday as if it were no problem at all.

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Here is how this new doctrine of "sexual openness" may have developed - They would ask...

- A. Did Christ die for ALL sin? Yes...
- B. Was the sin of sexual immorality covered by the Gospel? Yes...
- C. So when someone sins, God's grace covers the sin right? Right...
- D. So if someone sins sexually God's grace is poured out and magnified. So perhaps, sexual immorality does two things - it keeps us in good standing with the locals and also, causes more of God's grace to be poured out.

Even Paul writes in **Romans 5:20 (ESV)**

²⁰ ...where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,

So, do you see how the thought processed worked? That's the danger of the perverted mind, it can excuse any desired behavior.

So now, not only had Worldly Philosophy invaded the church... now Sexual Perversion had also invaded.

Let me show you something interesting... when we begin to interpret scripture according to our fleshly desires... our belief system is radically and tragically effected. Notice what had happened at Corinth...

Corinthians 5:1 (ESV)

¹ It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, **and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans...**

So this idea that GRACE is magnified in the practice of sexual sin had caused them to out Corinthianize Corinth.

The sailors were blushing by what was happening in the church.

Aphrodites most fervent worshippers are gossiping about the sin in the church. Even they thought it too far.

What was this sin?

Corinthians 5:1 (ESV)

¹ It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, **for a man has his father's wife.**

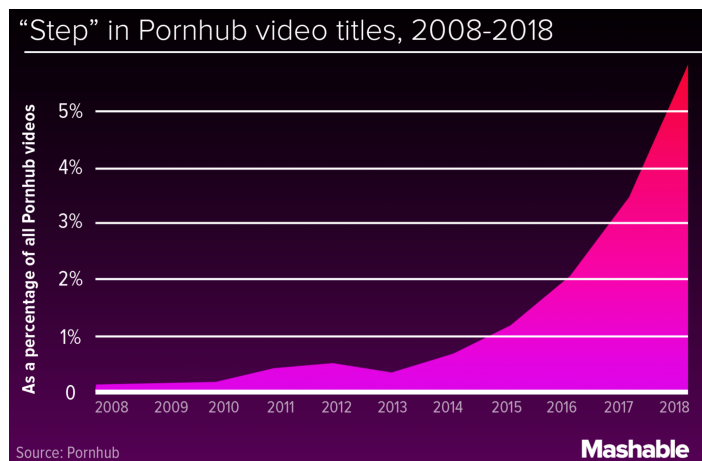
Apparently, a member of the Corinthian church was having a sexual relationship with his step-mother.

Lest you think this is one of those weird things the ancients were into...

ILLUSTRATION: In a look at 218,000 Pornhub titles from 2008 to 2018, data-driven site Components found a sharp spike in "step" porn. ²

The same article mentioned the series, "Game of Thrones" as a possible reason for the spike. These websites argue that they are seeking to produce more, "ETHICAL" porn ensuring concerned people that while some actors look very young they are all indeed over the age of 18.

The next major trend that is coming at Generation Z like a sexual tsunami is the development of VR, VIRTUAL REALITY porn. Parents, please be engaged and see this coming.



² <https://mashable.com/article/step-porn-incest-videos-pornhub>

You see, it's not just about getting involved in the sexual desires of teens or adults... the GOAL is to SHAPE YOUR WORLDVIEW. Nothing is off limits... they don't want you out of the Church, they want you to simply modify your doctrine, embrace a more "progressive" view of truth.

You do and you will take you family to hell with you.

1 Corinthians 5:2 (ESV)

² And you are arrogant!

Now, why would the church consider this something to be arrogant and prideful about? Well likely they were thinking - our church is sooooo tolerant, we are the grace people!

ILLUSTRATION: I was told that during one of the PRIDE parades in town that one of the churches got involved and celebrated, marched, right there with the LGBTQ++ community. A few bible believing Christians were handing out copies of the new testament to those present. But the Pastor of this progressive, woke church made it very clear that those were not their people and sincerely apologized for that happening.

Give me a break! If the Church looks exactly like the world, why does the world need a church?

1 Corinthians 5:2 (ESV)

² And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn?

Get that - blatant sin is something we should mourn. It was effecting the person committing the sin, it obviously would wreak havoc on this family, it was reshaping the churches doctrine and the reputation of the church in the community was dead! They should have MOURNED these things Paul says...

ILLUSTRATION: How do you mourn? When you loose someone you love... I searched the **Hospice Foundations of America's Website** and here were some thoughts to consider:

Some people feel emotions that don't always make sense to them - anger, guilt, loneliness, sadness, or longing for the person who died. Your expression of grief may mirror these inner feelings through crying, rage, or withdrawal, and many people find it helpful to express and explore these emotions.

Others may grieve with less intense emotions. You or someone you love may express grief in a more cognitive way, thinking about the person often.

These different ways or patterns of grief are just that; they are different. No pattern is better or worse. They are simply expressions of the fact that each person copes with loss in a personal way.

NOW Paul says, that is exactly how it should be for you when a brother or sister is giving themselves over to gross immorality.

2b. Let him who has done this be removed from among you.

Ok, now consider the implications of this verse.

1. **The man committing this sin was clearly a member of the Church.** Therefore, they must have had some form of membership. It is becoming increasingly popular for a church to dissolve its membership roles. Let people come and go as they please. But you see here...if Paul said remove him, there must have been something to remove him from. You see?
2. **The right of membership was granted or retracted by the congregation.** Even Paul couldn't remove this man from the Corinthian church. How would they remove him? It seems they would come together and vote. In order to have a vote, they had to know who were actually members, they had to have some amount of democracy within the church as well. Pastors couldn't remove him, the church had to.

I point these things out, because I want you to see how church Polity develops. It's not that we have verse that says, "you shall therefore have a membership roll" or "thou shall vote on certain matters as a church". No, it's a mathematical, logical, approach.

If this is commanded, and this is commanded, therefore we are going to need a record of who are actually members of our church. You see?

1 Corinthians 5:3–13 (ESV)

³ For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing.

Paul says, "I have already cast my vote" and as he has said before, "follow me as I follow Christ"

⁴ When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, ⁵ you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

So there you see it, the assembly makes this decision corporately. Notice what Paul says is happening by removing such a man from church membership.. Satan's kingdom is given access to this man.

ILLUSTRATION: Goethe observed in the classic work, "Faust" that even the Kingdom of Satan is subject to certain rules. Apparently, according to this text, the attacks of Satan and Demons are limited by the covering of the local church.

Do you see that? To remove this man from membership they are handing him over to Satan without restraint.

Do you see why we make such a big deal over membership here? It's not a nonchalant thing. It means something. Every Sunday we call you to unite with us. Two extremes you should avoid.

1. **Don't rush that decision.** Find out what we are all about, ask questions, learn what you are saying, "yes" to.
2. **Don't neglect that decision.** Don't say, "Oh well I guess I'll do that one day".

⁵ you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

THE SIN UNTO DEATH - 1 John 5:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ ...There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that.

John is saying that there is a sin that a person commits when it does not good to pray for them, they are going to die. What is it Pastor? It is what theologians call, "contending with God". In other words, God says stop it... only so many times. Then he says, "you are causing more damage than good, come on home".

⁶ Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?

So this behavior will spread if it is not addressed.

⁷ Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. ⁸ Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Paul is showing that those OT rituals were a shadow and a type of our worship in the NT. It would have been unthinkable not to take the cleansing of the leaven seriously, and it would be a mistake for a church to tolerate unrepentant sin.

⁹ I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— ¹⁰ not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.

So, he is saying don't OVERLY apply this command. Don't become the Amish who so separates themselves that they don't reach anybody. But rather, be in the world, not of the world. Be a missionary that lives different.

¹¹ But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone **who bears the name of brother** if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one.

That needs very little interpretation... it means what it says. If someone simultaneously claims to be a Christian and has an unbroken, unrepentant pattern of sin... you better keep your distance.

¹² For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? ¹³ God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.”

The most familiar verse in the Bible is not longer **John 3:16** but it is now **Matthew 7:1 (ESV)** ¹ “Judge not, that you be not judged.

The point of that passage was made clear by the next verse - Matthew 7:2 (ESV)

² For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.

Don't judge someone in a way you do not wish to be judged. But if you are honest, there are some areas where you DO want to be held accountable.

Do you want us to turn a blind eye if you are doing something that will kill you? Destroy you family? Wreck your reputation?

Or do you want us to love you enough to get involved and try to rescue you?

If you want that - love others enough to judge. Not talking about lost people, i'm talking about members of the church. Specifically, this church. Not talking about Journey, not talking about celebrations, I'm talking about THIS family of faith.

CONCLUSION/INVITATION:

Several years ago went to the Dr. About some stomach issues. They ran a series of test and diagnosed me with acid reflux, a fairly simple thing to correct. But the Dr. Warned me if I didn't treat it... it could lead to throat cancer.

Now if I had throat cancer I would not say, “My throat has cancer... I would say, I have cancer” Why? When one part of our body is in serious danger, our whole body is in danger. It's the same way in the Church. Cancer in one, can destroy the whole.

May we take sin in our lives seriously and may we love each other enough to have some hard conversations and, “Rescue the perishing”