

## How Should We Respond to the Sins of Others?

1 Corinthians 5

(black Bible page 954; Children's Bible page 1423)

Here are several difficult situations...

Before we turn to 1 Corinthians 5 today, **let's read Matthew 18:15-20** to get us started.

- Go to the person in sin *alone*
  - This is wise—you could be wrong about the supposed sin!
- Only add people as necessary (= those *who are part of the solution*)
- Let's admit it – this process takes tremendous *courage*
  - You are vulnerable. It would be easier to gossip and recruit a bunch of people to your side, right? But the intent is to *win him/her over*, to restore them.
  - This reflects the gospel: Jesus came to sinners, vulnerable, and we crucified him. He could have called 12 legions of angels instead! (Matt 26:53) His intent? *To win us over*.

What if the sin is already publicly known within the church? **Let's read 1 Corinthians 5.**

5:1-2:

- A scandalous sin: a man is sleeping with his (step-?)mom.
- Let him *be removed*? [5:2] This is the power of "the keys": the power to loose and bind, to open up the church and its fellowship with God, or to close it.

An excursus: "Spheres" of Authority Instituted by God: Country, Family, Church [see slides]

- Country/Nation
  - Authority: The government. Extent of Power: "the sword" (see Romans 13:1-7)
- Family
  - Authority: Parents. Extent of Power: "the rod" (see Prov 29:15)

- Church
  - Authority: Apostles and Elders. Extent of Power: "the keys" (see Matt 16:19).

5:3-5:

- The church's court-like activity is unmistakable
- The purpose? "So that his spirit may be saved" (5:5) Rehabilitation, redemption, restoration, repentance! -- and *not retribution*.

5:6-8:

- Once again, the Corinthians have problems, and **Paul takes them back to the death and/or resurrection of Christ**. This is the theme of our sermon series.
- Christ fulfills the Passover (5:7). God's wrath has passed over us! And because of this, "You really are unleavened." (5:7)
- *Therefore*, let us get rid of all "leaven" (fulfilling the Feast of Unleavened Bread). Not in wrath towards the sinner, yet decisively if restoration fails.

5:9-13:

- One final clarification: this is *church* discipline (for Christians in a church)
  - Also: the issue is not 'the really, really big sins,' but a *lack of repentance where there is obvious sin*.
- We are *not* to be taken out of the world—even if it is dangerously immoral

How Should We Respond to the Sins of Others? Some main points:

1. Jesus said to go to them *alone*. Courage needed!
2. Include others only as needed—and only those who can be *part of the solution*.
3. Note what authority structure might be relevant. (i.e. government, parents, church)
4. If inside the church, the matter could result in excommunication (the power of the keys), but only as a last resort, and for the purpose of rehabilitation/restoration, and this through repentance.