

1. It is a Horror to Make Peace With Sin (v1)

- a. The existence of continual sexual immorality shocked Paul
 - i. *porneia* - a term which originally meant "prostitution", but in the Hellenistic Judean tradition had come to be used as a broad term encompassing all types of sexual sin, including adultery and homosexual behavior.
 - ii. There was a specific type of sexual immorality existing in the Corinthian church: a form of incest which was not even acceptable to the pagan world.
 - iii. "a man has his father's wife"
 1. Paul's phrase is a direct allusion to Leviticus 18:7-8
 2. It is apparent that this was not his mother, but a step-mother, most likely
 3. It is also not apparent if his father is living or dead, but that does not matter to the apostle
- 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"- Infinitive, stating a constant "having"
 2. 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 genetic incest, but father/son having a sexual relationship with same woman
 2. Other types of incest were not considered as taboo
 3. Demosthenes is quoted in his *orations* as saying, "Mistresses we keep for the sake of 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.
 - a. 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. Making Peace With Sin in the Church is Arrogance Towards God. (v2)

- a. This is the main point which horrified Paul: under the name "grace" the Corinthians *approved as good and acceptable the very things for which Christ Jesus came to die* to redeem us! (note the Passover analogy, i.e. redemption/freedom from slavery by blood)
 - i. Thus, they went even farther in their lawlessness than the pagan world around them.
 1. "All things are lawful" – making peace with sin

- ii. The point isn't merely that they exceeded the pagan law, but rather that they were accepting of sin in their midst under the phrase "in the name of Jesus" (v2), thus indicating and proclaiming that Christ approved of their behavior and sexual immorality as redeemed relationships.
 - 1. The phrase, "in the name of Jesus", seems textually linked to "the one who did such a thing" (which precedes the phrase, as is the normal syntactical place) rather than "when you are gathered" (which is textually following and would be an abnormal placement)
 - 2. 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

"To be Christians under the law of grace does not mean to wander unbridled outside the law, but to be engrafted in Christ, by whose grace we are free from the curse of the law, and by whose Spirit we have the law engraved upon our hearts." - John Calvin

 - i. This is the biggest problem that Paul admonishes here, not primarily the man (whom he does not name) and his present continual sin (although he surely has done this already)
 - ii. Paul calls this *tolerance* "arrogant" and "boasting"
 - 1. Apparently, their present stand on "wisdom" and the "spirit of this age" (1:29-2:7) led them to boast in this cheap grace and "realized eschatology" (all things are redeemed and can now be called good)
- c. Sorrowful removal from the community is the humble action
 - i. When a brother or sister is walking in sin, the Church should be crushed with grief *at the dishonoring of God*, the deceitful imaging of Him, *and the danger it poses to the beloved brother or sister*.
 - 1. Grief over sin's presence is the humble response which is prepared to take action for the sake of Christ, His Church, and our brother
 - 2. Tolerance of sin is arrogant – Intolerance of sin is humility
 - ii. 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 would act in the case of drug interventions, 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)

3. Humility is Intolerant of That Which Dishonors Christ and Destroys a Brother

a. It is humility that does the hard work of love

- i. 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."
 - 1. True Biblical brokenness does not say, "I could never judge a brother like that."
 - 2. True Biblical brokenness believes verses 9-13 and submits to the authority of the apostle.
- ii. 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.
- iii. 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.

b. **The Real Example: Passover**

- i. 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)
- ii. Paul alludes to the Passover celebration in which leaven was removed from the house following the sacrifice of the Lamb. (v7)
 - 1. The festival of the Passover was to celebrate *freedom* from sin which oppresses, having been rescued by God through the waters of death (Red Sea) and brought into the land where God forms for Himself a people who know Him and relate to Him rightly
 - 2. To continue to walk in sin is like returning to Egypt to live in slavery, denying the God who rescued us *for the purpose of our purity and relationship with Him*
 - 3. It is to deny the blood on the doorposts, and so lose our firstborn!
- iii. 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. That's Old Testament stuff!"
 - 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)
- iv. We are to celebrate this new life with pure judgment (sincerity) and God's truth. (v8)
 - 1. We HAVE been sanctified by the blood of Christ, so let us walk in that truth of sanctity. Let us remove the leaven of the bread to remember the purity to which He has rescued us from the chains of sin and death.

And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment,¹⁰ so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ,¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. (Phi 1:9 -11)

2. The Corinthians tried to cut Christ in two, desiring a Savior who pardons but does not purify. You cannot cut Christ in two!

4. Humble Love 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 himself; possibly passive indicating that others call him "brother"
 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, but persistently pursuing as "good" those things for which Jesus had to die.
 - 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)
 1. There is to be no close familial fellowship with him
 2. In the least, there is to be no Christian fellowship as if everything is fine, rather the separation shows the severity of the probability that the Spirit is not in him and that he doesn't belong to God as shown by unrepentant sin
 - a. This sin, then, reveals the truest sin of the heart: unbelief and idolatry
- 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 repent in dust and ashes." 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 the right and true value of Christ 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 beholds 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
 - a. Church discipline, administered by the majority, is the authority for distinguishing and disciplining by removing the one who is pursuing sin as acceptable
 - b. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them." (Mat 18:18-20 ESV)
 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. To make peace with sin is to make peace with the enemy. Through His sacrifice we have been cleansed, forgiven, and freed to live to God and for God.

How horrific and grievous it would be to have an unbeliever come into our midst and walk out those doors thinking, "These people are no different than my sorority. They don't care about virtue or goodness, for they go even farther than the things done on campus."

It always comes down to the question, "Is Christ Jesus worth it?" Is He worth holiness? The pain of discipline? Is He worth the sorrow of broken hearts, the anger and accusations of "judgmental" and "mean"? Is He worth it? Is His beloved Church worth it? Is He worth our purity?

Fix your eyes upon the One who poured out His life for your purity, to present you holy and blameless and beyond reproach, all according to the riches of His glorious grace and extravagant mercies. We have not yet arrived at the point where sin no longer crouches at our door. So, let us wage war against it, striving to walk as reflections of Him, by the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells amongst us for such revelation. And let us press forward in humility, knowing the toils, fears, and exhaustion of battle, so that our hearts are softened towards our brothers and sisters who also wage war. May we come alongside with mutual repentance and beckoning words of comfort that our Captain is coming soon and the war will be over.