REMOVE THE CANCER!

I Corinthians 5:1-13

4-2-2023

Introduction:

**** A local church must expel a wicked sinning member from its body!***

I. <u>WHO</u> should be removed from a church body? (v.1)

Answer: One <u>practicing</u> a <u>publicly known</u>, sinful, <u>unrepentant</u> lifestyle

II. <u>HOW</u> should an unrepentant evil person be removed from a church body? (v.2-5a)

Answer: After the steps of Matthew 18:15-17 are taken:

Remove the unrepentant sinner with...

A. <u>CONTRITION</u> (in deep sorrow - v.2)

B. <u>CONVICTION</u> (under Christ's Authority - v.3-4a)

C. <u>CONGRUITY</u> (united in the Assembly - v.4b)

D. <u>COURAGE</u> (with strength from Christ - v.4c)

E. <u>COMPLETENESS</u> (involving total disassociation - v.5a)

III. <u>WHY</u> should an unrepentant evil person be removed from the church body? (v.5b-13)

A. So that God may <u>save</u> his/her <u>soul</u> (v.5b)

B. So that the <u>church body</u> may remain <u>pure</u> (v.6-8)

C. So that the <u>command</u> of <u>God</u> may be <u>obeyed</u> (v.9-13)

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B. So that the _____ *may remain* _____ *(v.6-8)*

C. So that the _____ *of <u>God</u> may be* _____ *(v.9-13)*

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Introduction:

ILLUS: My grandmother, brother, and sister all had one thing in common. They all had their appendix explode. The removal of that organ from their body was for the benefit of their body. The toxic poisons from those hemorrhaged appendixes would have killed them had they not been removed by emergency surgery.

The dominant theme of chapter five is on <u>separating</u> or <u>removing</u> an unrepentant, sinning member from the local church body.

"Taken away (v. 2)*. . . deliver unto Satan* (v. 5) . . . *purge out* (v. 7) . . . *not to company* (v. 9)*not to eat* (v. 11) . . . *put away* (v. 13)."

**** A local church must expel a wicked sinning member from its body!***

I. <u>WHO</u> should be removed from a church body? (v.1)

Answer: One <u>practicing</u> a <u>publicly known</u>, sinful, <u>unrepentant</u> lifestyle

"Reported" - present, passive. Paul says: "It is right <u>now</u> (at the present) being heard (passive) all over the place."

Bad news has wings -- it flies ever so quickly.

"Fornication" - *porneia* (from which "pornography" is derived) - The word generally speaks of immoral sexual relations between people who are <u>not</u> husband and wife.

This word includes various forms of sexual perversion (ranging from premarital sex to incest to bestiality). It is a general term which would include porno magazines, porno movies, masturbation, orgies, homosexuality, lesbianism, etc.

The word is contrasted from *"adultery"* (I Cor. 6:9; Gal. 5:19) (a more specific reference to <u>marital unfaithfulness</u>).

"Not. . . named among the Gentiles" - Even the lost pagans didn't normally stoop to this low level of degradation. Corinth was a pagan city where sexual immorality abounded (was common place). Hence, many were desensitized to the immoral nature of it.

"<u>Have</u>" - the present tense emphasizes the <u>continual possession</u> (Rienecker, p. 399). It was not a one-time act, but an existing, unrepentant lifestyle.

"Father's wife" - A stepmother (perhaps the father had died).

Such an incestuous relationship is a complete violation of Lev. 18:7, 8; 20:11, and was punishable under the O.T. theocracy by death. Lev. 20:11 - *"And the man that lieth with his father's wife hath uncovered his father's nakedness: both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them."*

Fornication is wrong because:

1) Fornication is a perversion (twisting) of God's plan for marital oneness (Gen. 2:24-25; I Cor. 6:16) (It is acting out a lie, since the ones involved really are not "one" in God's eyes)

2) Fornication is a violation of God's clear commands against it (Exodus 20:14; Dt. 5:18) (Fornicators will be judged - Heb. 13:4)

3) Fornication cheapens human dignity and treats the body like an object to be used then discarded (that which is common [profane] is cheap) (I Thes. 4:4; Prov. 11:22)

4) Fornication is not God's will for true sanctification (I Thes. 4:1-3) (Defilement is a dirty feeling)

5) Fornication reveals a lack of self-control over one's sexual desires (I Cor. 7:5)

6) Fornication is stealing what belongs to someone else (or will in the future belong to someone else) (I Thes. 4:6)

7) Fornication preoccupies and enslaves the mind and becomes an idol which may substitute for God (II Pet. 2:14; I Cor. 6:13) (It can be more addicting than drugs)

8) Fornication violates a trust of faithfulness between you and your spouse (Prov. 6:29-35)

9) Fornication runs the high risk of acquiring serious infection and fatal disease (Rom. 1:27)

10) Fornication results in unwanted pregnancies, evil abortion, and children who will lack a proper family structure (II Sam. 11:5; Prov. 5:17)

11) Fornication is totally inconsistent for a saint to commit (Eph. 5:3; Col. 3:3-5)

Note: It is not only fornicators whom we should be separated from -
SEE: V. 11 - *"coveteous. . . idolater. . ."*

II Th. 3:6 - one who refuses to work
Titus 3:10 - one who promotes a cardinal false doctrine

II. HOW should an unrepentant evil person be removed from a church body? (v.2-5a)

How is church discipline to be accomplished? SEE: Mt. 18:15-17

Step #1 - Personal confrontation (v. 15)

Step #2 - Semi-private confrontation (v. 16)

Step #3 - Public confrontation (v. 17)

Step #4 - Ex-communication (v. 17b) (dismissal from church fellowship)

How does a church expel a wicked person from its fellowship?

Answer: After the steps of Matthew 18:15-17 are taken:

Remove the unrepentant sinner with...

A. CONTRITION (in deep sorrow - v.2)

"Puffed up" - Inflated with pride

Perhaps some of the Corinthians apparently equated grace with freedom to sin and liberty with license (cp. Rom. 6:1; Gal. 5:13 - *"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.")* (EX: Some churches today ordain homosexual clergy)

Better: Their pride was that they thought they could allow such a sinner to stay in the fellowship and they remain unaffected by his presence.

"Mourned" - To weep like at a funeral. When a brother or sister falls, we should not gloat over how strong we are in comparison to the weak believer; rather, we should in sorrow mourn because of:

1) What his sin does for Christ's testimony (EX: Jimmy Swaggert)
2) How his sin will affect the lost or weak believers
3) How his sin will affect himself (emotionally, physically, an spiritually)

One should never have an attitude of "holier than thou," snobbery, self-righteousness, joy, etc., but we should be heartbroken, have a spirit of anguish and regret, be "bummed out" as Jeremiah in Lamentations.

"Taken away" - lit. lifted up and carried away; i.e. removed (put out of the fellowship; dismissed from membership and association)

B. *CONVICTION (under Christ's Authority - v.3-4a)*

V. 3

Since Paul's judgment was based on God's Word (divine precept), he did not need to be present to render a decision.

V. 4

"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" - Such dismissal is for Christ's glory. A church exercises disciplinary action with Him as the authority behind the action. Decisions made in *"His name"* have His approval (In the context of church discipline, Christ said, *"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I int he midst of them"* - Mt. 18:20).

C. *CONGRUITY (united in the Assembly - v.4b)*

"When ye are gathered together" - The church as a whole must decide to expel the unrepentant person.

--This phrase proves that Christians should gather together.

--This phrase also demonstrates how a church should govern itself (Paul didn't kick the person out; the church was supposed to).

D. *COURAGE (with strength from Christ - v.4c)*

"With the power *(dunamis)* ***of our Lord Jesus Christ" -*** It takes emotional strength from Christ to expel a member. It is not easy.

Perhaps the emotional trauma and difficulty involved is a reason why most churches don't exercise discipline of their willfully-sinning members.

E. *COMPLETENESS (involving total disassociation - v.5a)*

The rebel is to be dis-fellowshipped from completely.
--No fellowship with him (II Th. 3:14 - *"And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be*

ashamed.").
--Not even a <u>meal</u> (SEE: I Cor. 5:11)

III. <u>WHY</u> should an unrepentant evil person be removed from the church body? (v.5b-13)

A. So that God may <u>save</u> his/her <u>soul</u> (v.5b)

"Deliver such an one unto <u>Satan</u> for the <u>destruction of the flesh</u>" - When someone is dis-fellowshipped with, he/she is placed outside of the protective umbrella of the local church.

The sanctifying protection of God (because of that person's close association with God's people) is removed.

EX: An unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife (I Cor. 7:14).

EX: God would not destroy Sodom if even ten righteous people were in it (Gen. 18:32). God would not destroy Sodom until the only righteous man, Lot, was removed (Gen. 19:16; II Pet. 2:7-8).

EX: God blessed Potiphar because of Joseph's presence in the home (Gen. 39:5).

The goal of church discipline is correction and conversion.

"That the <u>spirit</u> may be <u>saved</u> in the day of the Lord Jesus" - The person's lifestyle demonstrates that he may be a non-believer. By allowing him to remain in fellowship, he will deceive himself into thinking he's okay. By expelling him, his conscience may be smitten with conviction and guilt. He then will be in the domain of Satan where God will allow demonic forces to afflict him with a view to get his attention, show him his lostness, and reveal to him his need of salvation.

When a person is dismissed from a church's fellowship, God may get his <u>attention</u>, as he is outside of the umbrella of the protection of the church and will feel the loneliness; the onslaught of Satanic oppression, etc. (cp. I Tim. 1:20).

"The destruction of the flesh" would happen from sickness due to the sin (cp. James 5) and this may be effective in God getting the attention of the person, perhaps showing him his need of Christ for salvation.

The goal of church discipline is not a permanent shunning or lifelong excommunication, but restoration. (SEE: II Cor. 2:5-11)

When genuine repentance is evident by the offender's public acknowledgment and pursuit of Godliness, we cannot keep the offender at a distance. We must joyfully restore the person back into the fellowship (NOTE: This does not necessarily mean a restoration to public office - Ex: pastor or deacon. Total forgiveness does not necessarily mean restoration to leadership privilege if one becomes disqualified).

We must always *"forgive"..."comfort"...*and "*reaffirm"* our *"love"*

"Unlike the "Scarlet Letter" in Nathaniel Hawthorne's classic novel, Biblical church discipline is designed to restore not to punish" (Laney, p. 354).

We must never give up on people!

In reality the church discipline process should not end until the "brother has either repented or died. . . the purpose of the ostracism is not to punish (or rid ourselves of the sinner), but to awaken" (and restore) (MacArthur, MATTHEW, p. 136-137).

Church discipline is not fleshly revenge, nor cruel punishment, not an act of hatred but to the contrary it is a humble, gentle, truthful, loving response to seek to save a *"soul from death"* and to *"hide a multitude of sins"* (Ja. 5:20).

"There is a vast difference between putting your nose in other people's business and putting your heart in other people's problems" (unknown)

B. *So that the <u>church body</u> may remain <u>pure</u> (v.6-8)*

V. 6
"Leaven" - baker's yeast

When mixed into dough, it spreads and affects the whole batch of dough, causing it to swell and expand.

"Leaven" is often used as a picture of sin int he Bible. EX: *"Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees"* (Mt. 16:6, 22; Lk. 12:1).

Paul used the same expression, *"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump"* in Galatians 5:9 in a context of the false teaching of the Judaizers.

Just a little sin left undealt with eventually grows and grows, spreads and spreads until the whole church is affected (EX: a small patch of rust or a few cancer cells).

"Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" (I Cor. 15:33).

V. 7
"A new lump" - unmixed; pure

"Ye are unleavened" - In Christ we are perfect! Sinless! We should live practically what we are positionally.

The reason we are unleavened spiritually is because we have benefitted from the sacrifice of Christ. Our "passover" Lamb (Jn. 1:29) has been slain to free us from bondage. We are <u>now</u> unleavened in Christ, just as unleavened bread immediately followed Passover, so our purity followed our appropriation of Christ's sacrifice).

"Purge out" - As the Israelites did at Passover, when they swept every trace of leaven out of their houses.

V. 8
"Keep the feast" - What feast? The Feast of Unleavened Bread, which followed Passover (Lev. 23:5-66).

How do we *"keep the feast"*? <u>Not</u> literally (Col. 2:16-17; Gal. 4:9-10), but in ***"sincerity and truth"*** (be real, be true, live the truth of God's Word and ways).

C. So that the command of God may be obeyed (v.9-13)

V. 9

"I wrote unto you" - In a specific non-canonical letter (not included in sacred text).

This was not the first time and it would not be the last (cp. II Cor. 6:14ff).

"Not to company" - lit. not to mix together with. Not to closely associate with; not to intimately fellowship with.

This would mean not having close friendships with sexually immoral people.

V. 10

"Yet not altogether" - We are not to break off all contact with the fornicators of the world.

To do this would necessitate our leaving the world entirely. Those in the working world rub shoulders with fornicators all week.

The city of Corinth was filled with fornicators (Wine, women, and wealth was what the average man of Corinth lived for. To worship, for a male citizen of Corinth, usually meant going to the Temple of Aphrodite and having sexual relations with one of the 1,000 prostitutes who served Satan there. The city had such a bad reputation that the term *"Korinthiazoma"* meant to "practice sexual immorality." Corinth's reputation was such that prostitutes in other cities began to be called "Corinthian girls" (Life Applic. Bible note, p. 2,088).

"Covetous" = greedy

"Extortioners" = robbers, swindlers

"Idolaters" = object worshippers

V. 11

"Any man" - none excluded; no matter how high and mighty they are

"Called a brother" - We should expect more from believers than we expect from the world.

If someone claims to be a Christian, then they should be expected to live like it.

"No, not to eat" - No breakfast, lunch, or dinner with him.

"Supping" meant "fellowship" (cp. Rev. 3:20).

To a Jew, having someone over for dinner meant your guest was on kosher terms with you (EX: Acts 10:28; Gal. 2:12-13).

V. 12

"What have I..." - What business do I have to correct the heathen? (those "outside" of Christianity) None!

We do have business to seek to correct those "inside" the family. (EX: A man has no right to discipline his neighbor's kid, only his son)

"The church should leave the judgment of unbelievers to God and concentrate on setting its own house in order" (Ryrie note).

CONCLUSION: The need for Church "Family" Discipline:

The local church is to be a holy family.

Like a family, a local church requires three things to have God's blessings:
Love, Truth, and Discipline

Church discipline should be as normal as disciplining children.

Discipline is a family matter, and the church is a family.

God serves as the pattern for loving discipline (Heb. 12:4-13; Prov. 3:11-12; cp. Rev. 3:19).

Today, many churches are reluctant to take disciplinary action to deal with sin among their members.

Why? It takes courage, time, effort, and love (just as family discipline). Another reason is this: It's easy to tolerate sin in the lives of others, when you tolerate it in your own life.

Discipline is really an act of discipleship.

"Is church discipline necessary? Few would dispute the necessity of pulling a drowning man from a flooding torrent or recovering a fallen climber from a mountain crevasse. Most decent people would skip the verbal exercise and give themselves to the rescue! Should less concern be demonstrated for the believer who has fallen morally and whose spiritual

life is in danger? With some justification the church has been accused of being the only army that shoots its wounded." ("The Biblical Practice of Church Discipline," Bibliotheca Sacra, Oct.-Dec., 1986, by J. Carl Laney).