

Having a Healthy Holy Church (Leviticus 18:1-8 & 1 Corinthians 5:1-13)

22-Mar-20

G'Day church family

Today we're **continuing** our look at **Paul's letter** to the **Corinthians** – and we're looking at **chapter 5**.

You have an **outline** if you want to take **notes** as we go.

Let's **pray** and ask for **God's help** in understanding His Word.

Intro/Imitate Jesus

There's the story of a peeping Tom

He went through a whole neighbourhood each night – and secretly looked through couple's bedroom windows – filming them as they made love

After several weeks he was finally caught – and arrested – and eventually sent to jail.

Quite rightly too!

Compare this peeping Tom with a Christian guy – he's actually an elder of a church – who hears from his mates at work - about this new great movie - that just came out – the movie's got his very actress in it – apparently there's some really hot sex scenes in the movie – but all the same – he persuades his wife to watch it – make a date night out of it. After all, there's no harm - it's just a movie. He's still taking his wife out – and he gets a chance to see his favourite actresses half naked. The movie even has some really coarse language – and some very violent scenes. But it's not real – it's just a movie. It's not like he's a peeping Tom or anything? Anyway, no one at church knows!

Is that what God expects from a Christian?

The peeping Tom's actions are illegal – the Christian guy's actions are not illegal

But does that make the Christian guy's actions ok?

Is that what Jesus would want us to do?

Last week we left Paul telling the Corinthians (and us) to stop boasting about themselves and to stop boasting about other leaders

And actually, start imitating Paul as he imitates Jesus

[Powerpoint-1a-Imitate Jesus]

To imitate Jesus then - we need to understand what Jesus is like

We can't imitate someone unless we know what they're like

Now remember – Jesus is God

We know Jesus is God from:

John 10:30 – I and the Father are one

& John 14:9 - He who has seen Me has seen the Father

& Colossians 2:9-10 - For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form

[Powerpoint-1b-Holy]

So, because Jesus is God

He is Holy

Holy means [kadoshe]-set apart for God – morally and spiritually excellent

Therefore - if we are to imitate Jesus – we need to be holy – morally and spiritually excellent

That's not easy is it?

The Sin (vv1-2)

In chapter 5 of 1 Corinthians – the Apostle Paul explores what it might look like to be holy – by giving an example of unholy behaviour

See v1 and 2

There is a **report of sexual immorality** in the **church**

The word used in **Greek** is **porneia** – it means any sexual activity outside of **marriage** (including homosexuality)

And the **specific incident** here at **Corinth** is **sexual immorality** that even the **pagan Greeks** would find **unacceptable**.

[PowerPoint 2-Sin]

Even **though** the **Greeks** were **okay** with **multiple sexual partners** – and took **sexual pleasure when and where** they wanted – **even** they wouldn't accept a **man** having an ongoing **sexual relationship** with his **father's wife** – i.e. his **stepmother**.

Even the **pagan Greeks** drew the **line** at **sexual relations** with a **stepmother**!

Now remember **Paul** is **writing** to **Christians** here at Corinth

And it's **difficult** for these **Christians** in **Corinth** – it's **like** they are an **island surrounded** by a **sea of sexual immorality** and it's **hard** for the **church** in Corinth to **escape** this **sexual immoral influence**. **Not unlike Sydney today**.

But here we have inside the **Corinth church** (not outside) a **sexual misconduct** that even the **pagan Greeks** drew a line at

The **OT Law** says – in **Leviticus 18:8**

“**Do not have sexual relations with your father's wife; that would dishonor your father**”

The **wording** of Paul here – in his letter - **suggests** that the **stepmother** is not a **Christian** – because there is **no suggestion** from Paul of **dealing with her**.

Paul only deals with the **man's sin**

But **instead** of the **Corinthians** dealing with this **man's clear sin**

See V2 – **they are proud**.

It's **like** they're **saying** – **look how tolerant** and **forgiving** and **understanding** we are – we **even tolerate this sin** – and **we're proud** of the **grace** and **understanding** we've given this man

Paul says – **NO!** - You **Corinthians** – **should be mourning** or **grieving** such **behaviour**

Application – We can **fall** for the **myth** – that **being a Christian** – means we **go easy on** people's **sin** – and we **don't judge** sinful behaviour

Well – that's **wrong** – the **Bible** doesn't say we **shouldn't judge sin**

Matt 7 – warns against being **hypocritical** in **judging** and **warns against judging people's motives** but we **must be honest** about **each other's conduct**.

Matt 7 is saying - If we judge – we need to expect to be judged in the same way. But Matt 7 doesn't say we let sin go on!

If someone in our **church** is **sinning** -we need to **call the person out** – but **our motive** for doing so – is **not** so **we look great** and they **look bad** – or so we can **gloat** about how **superior** we are.

We're **calling them out** for their benefit – so they **can be holy again** -and for the **benefit** of the **church**

Dealing with the Sin (vv2b-5)

Having **identified** the **sin**

Paul then **describes** how the **Corinthians** should **deal** with the **sinful man**

As their **spiritual father**, **Paul**, is with them **spiritually** (v3 &4) if not physically – and as their **spiritual father** – he says the **way** to **deal** with this **man** and his **sexual sin**

[PowerPoint 3-Dealing with sin]

Is to **hand** the man **over** to **Satan** (v5)

What does that **mean** – **hand** the man **over** to **Satan**?

It means **putting him outside the church** – which is the **domain of God** - and into the **world** – which is the **devil's domain**. (John 12:31 – *describes Satan as the prince of the world* – and John 16:11 -and that *prince of the world (Satan) stands condemned*)

The **punishment** is to put the **man out of spiritual fellowship and protection** – and out of the **comfort of the church**.

Purpose of dealing with the Sin (vv5-8)

The **purpose of dealing with the sin** – is **not** to be **mean and horrible** to the man.

[PowerPoint 5a-benefit of person]

There are in fact **two purposes** in **putting a person out of the church**

a. **First purpose**, it's for the **benefit** of the **person** sinning

Paul says the purpose of putting the person out is so the **sinful flesh** will be **destroyed** (v5) – Paul says that as they **put the person** out of the **church**, the **person** will be given over to the **sinful consequences of their flesh**, and the hope is that by **wallowing in the results of their sin**, the **sinful impulse** of the **flesh** in this **particular area** will be “**destroyed**.”

And the **goal** of this **discipline** is **clear** – so that the **person** will be **saved**. Paul's **not writing the person off**.

The discipline is **to help the person repent and come back to the Lord** and to come back to the **church**

So, the **attitude of discipline** is **restoration** not **condemnation**

As **American pastor, Warren Wiersbe** says

Church discipline is not a group of 'pious policemen' out to catch a criminal. Rather, it is a group of brokenhearted brothers and sisters seeking to restore an erring member of the family

[PowerPoint 5b-benefit of church]

b. 2nd, the **purpose of dealing with sin this way** - is for the **benefit** of the **church**

See v6 – **boasting** in their **tolerance** of this **man** having an **inappropriate sexual relationship** with his **stepmother** – is **nothing** to be **proud of** – it's actually **dangerous** for the **church** – **if this man** is **allowed to continue** in the **church** in **fellowship** – whilst **sleeping with his stepmother**

He **could corrupt** other **people to behave the same way**

If the man is **not disciplined** – **others in the church** might **think** this sort of **sexual relationship** is **okay**

Paul uses the **idea of leaven (or yeast)** in bread **dough**.

Just a **small amount** of **leaven (yeast)** in a **dough** mix – **permeates** the **whole batch** of dough –

In **Jewish writings** – **leaven** almost always **represented evil influence**

The **leaven** mentioned here **isn't merely yeast**, but a **pinch of dough left over** from the **previous batch** of **baking bread**. This is how **bread** was **commonly leavened** in the **ancient world**, and a little **pinch of dough** from the **old lump** could make a **whole new lump** of **dough** rise and “**puff up**.” In this way the work of **leaven** was thought to **illustrate** the **work of sin and pride**. The **presence of a little** can **corrupt a large amount**.

So, by **removal** of the **sinful person** for a **while** – will **actually heal** the **person** and **heal** the **church** – and **prevent** the **person corrupting** whole **church**

At the **feast of Passover** – the bread eaten was **always unleavened** (Ex 12:15ff; 13:7) – as a **symbol of purity**.

And the **day before the Passover Feast** the **law** stated that a **Jew** must **light a candle** and **search for leaven** and that **every last bit of leaven** be **thrown out**. In the **Northern hemisphere** – **Passover often occurs in mid-April** – which is **Spring** - and it seems that this **cleaning up the house of leaven** – is the **origin of the term** – **spring cleaning**.

So what Paul is saying is we need to **spring clean our lives**

Paul says - **Jesus** – our **Passover Lamb** has been **sacrificed** (v7)

And so, our **sins are paid for** – but we need to do a **spring clean of our lives** – and **get rid of every last bit of leaven (sin)** in our lives

And become holy.

His **argument** is if we **let any evil - influence the church** – it can **corrupt** the whole church – just like a bit of leaven corrupts the whole batch of dough.

Discipline in church has to be done for the **sake** of the **body of believers** in the **church**.

If we think of it this way – if we found out we had a **cancer tumor** in our **chest** – **would we** be **proud of** it or **kind to it**? Or **would we want it cut out before** it **spreads** to the rest of our **body**.

Dealing with sin in the church - always has in mind the **glory of God** and His church

How do we become holy? (1 Cor 5:9-13)

So how do the Corinthians and us - become holy?

After all – Paul also says in Romans 3:23 – **we all fall short of God's glory**

[PowerPoint 5a-associate]

Well in a nutshell it **boils down to who we associate with**.

But first - **Paul** has to **correct a misunderstanding**

It seems (v9) Paul had **written** to them in an **earlier letter** (which we don't have) **telling them not to mix with sexually immoral people**

But the **Corinthians** had **thought Paul meant** don't mix with **people outside the church** who are **immoral** (v10)

But **Paul says no!** I'm not referring to **people outside the church** – in the **world** – otherwise – you'd **have to leave the planet** – to find someone to mix with (v10)

No! Paul was referring to people inside the **church** – who were sexually immoral.

You see **we can't expect non-Christians** to have Christian behaviour

But **Paul's arguing** – we **CAN expect Christians to have Christian behaviour** – and the **church** is quite **entitled to call them out and discipline** them

In fact, Paul lists **various sins** in **v11** – **that must be called out**

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 or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler. Do not even eat with such people.

And these sins **fall into 3 areas**:

[PowerPoint 5b-3 areas]

- 1) First - **Sin against ourselves** – sexual sin sins against our own body – by reducing us to **animal extinct and urges** – and **not having control** of our own body. **Drunkenness** also is **against** our own body – it **destroys** our **body** with alcohol
- 2) Second - **Sin against other people** – being **greedy** and **wanting what others have** – leads to **jealousy**. **Greed** can also lead to **swindling** people -because we have to have what's theirs.
- 3) Third - **Sin against God** – **idolatry** – the **worship** of anything which **takes God's place**

Paul says it's quite legitimate (v12) to **judge** the people inside the **church** on these **3 areas of sin** – **sin against ourselves, against other people and against God**

That's how we become holy and the church becomes holy – by **dealing with the sin properly**

Paul says, **leave the judging of people outside the church to God**.

Concentrate on people inside the church becoming holier – so we can have a **holier and healthier church**

Application – let us **be honest with ourselves** – and **do our own spring cleaning**

What **sin is there in our lives that is against our own body** – **sexual sin, alcohol abuse, drug abuse, food**

(gluttony) – let's **repent of it now**.

What **sin is there in our lives that is against others?** **Greed, jealousy, gossip, slander, lies** – is there **someone we need to say sorry to?**

What **sin is there in our lives against God?** Have we put other things or people before God? It's **interesting** for **example** with the **covid19 virus** – and the **closure of many sporting events and concerts** and

entertainment events – a lot of people are struggling because their idols are not there anymore? It's the same with the stock exchange losing its value – people's love of wealth is being tested. With all our sin – it's time to look upwards and repent.

Conclusion

To finish up then,

There's the story of a driving test examiner who spoke of a teenager who had just driven an almost perfect driving test

The examiner said the teenager only made one mistake – “when he stopped to let me out of the car, the teenager **breathed a sigh of relief** and said *'I'm so glad I don't have to drive like that all the time'*”

I wonder if we can be like that as Christians – we **behave properly** when people are around but when no one is watching there's **not much difference** between us and the **non-Christians** in our society.

But **God is watching!**

Being holy means being serious about sin in our lives

Being holy doesn't earn us a place in Heaven – but it's our response to God's grace in sending Jesus

Being holy is our way of showing God – we love Him – and showing our desire to be more like Him

If we **eliminate sin** in our lives and **eliminate sin** in our church members – with the **idea of restoration** – and **coming back to God** – we will become a healthy holy church.

[PowerPoint 6-Conclusion]

Let me leave you with this command from God

Leviticus 11:44

I am the LORD your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy.

Let's pray...

Imitating Jesus

Remember Jesus is God:

- I AND THE FATHER ARE ONE (JOHN 10:30)
- HE WHO HAS SEEN ME HAS SEEN THE FATHER (JOHN 14:9)
- FOR IN CHRIST THE FULNESS OF THE DEITY LIVES IN BODILY FORM (COLOSSIANS 2:9-10)

Remember Jesus is Holy:

set apart for God – morally and spiritually excellent

1

The Sin (1 Cor 5:1-2)

Sexual relationship with a stepmother

Do not have sexual relations with your father's wife; that would dishonor your father (Leviticus 18:8)

2

Dealing with the Sin (1 Cor 5:2b-5)

Hand over to Satan

3

Purpose of Dealing with the Sin (1 Cor 5:5-8b)

1. For the benefit of the Person
2. For the benefit of the Church

4

How do we become Holy? (1 Cor 5:9-13)

*You must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister but is **sexually immoral** or **greedy**, an **idolater** or **slanderer**, a **drunkard** or **swindler**. Do not even eat with such people. (1 Cor 5:11)*

Three areas of sin:

1. Sin against ourselves
2. Sin against others
3. Sin against God

5

Conclusion

I am the LORD your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy (Leviticus 11:44)

6