

Too Big to Spank and Too Unsophisticated to Trust

(1 Cor. 5, 6)

There is a watershed place every believer must visit.

14 "Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. 15 But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

• *Joshua 24:14, 15*

The two questions addressed in I Cor. 5, 6 force a decision concerning that age old watershed...

Are you going to be loyal to sin and sinner or the Saviour? (1 Cor 5:1-12; 6:12-20)

Are you going to be confident in the counsel of the ungodly or exclusively in Christ? (1 Cor. 6:1-11)

The cracks in loyalty and confidence are derived from two glaringly dangerous developments in Christian behaviour...

• We have made sin a matter of personal business because we have made our relationship with Christ overly personal rather than communal – Christ and his body

• We have made separation of church and state so rigidly unbiblical, that too many view the church as being about religious things and the state about the things of the “real world”

In Corinth...

• *What they were unwilling to do, but needed to do*, was exercise counsel and judgement toward sin on the inside, though painful...

• But were quite willing to engage the services of counsel and judgment from the outside when it worked to their benefit – *something they were willing to do and needed to stop*.

1. Are we as a church willing to sharpen our focus on total praise/loyalty to Christ by having an uncompromising attitude towards the ongoing and publicly flaunted sin of believers?

(1 Cor 5:1-12; 6:12-20)

The problem of hedonism in the church and the misguided flaunting of freedoms...

- Misappropriation of grace
- False ideas about the Christian “prohibition” on judging
- Abuse of freedom

Final Corrective Actions against Sin in the Church (for preliminary actions see Matt. 18:15-18)

- Start with community grief over sin (5:2)
- Recognition of divine authority delegated to church leadership (5:3,4)
- Recognize that passing judgment on personal sinfulness is proper conduct in the Christian

community (5:3, 7, 12)

- Disfellowshipping /excommunicating a willful unrepentant sinner is in the best interests of both the sinner and the community (5:5-8)

- Refuse to associate anywhere with people who call themselves believers but live like lost people (5:9-11)

- Focus on cleaning up our own house instead of the easier target on the outside (5:12)

Caveats Concerning this Level of Discipline (taken from G. Fee)

- This sin was extremely public and affecting everybody .

- The community must be a place of Christ's power truly invested in remedial redemption and not people with quick trigger fingers of judgementalism .

- This type of biblical discipline only works if God's people really take sin seriously, loyalty to Christ as urgent , and refuse to indiscriminately trade disfellowshipped people from church to church.

1. Are we as God's people ready to value our eternal inheritance over present things and total trust in the sufficiency of Christ's ways over the counsel of the world? (1 Cor. 6:1-11)

The problem of overvaluing the material things of this present world and under- valuing the amazing sufficiency the Holy Spirit brings to the Christian community...

- The same saints who will one day judge the whole world and angels, are more than able to offer wise counsel in real life matters – disputes, decisions, life skills, soul health (Ps 1:1-3 cf. Rom 15:14).

- Seeking counsel from the outside, "in front of unbelievers" is an embarrassment to the Lord, he is unwilling to bear (cf 2 Kings 1:16)

- Your eternal inheritance far supersedes anything worth fighting for here – that you fight each other over it in public is a colossal defeat no matter the outcome (6: 7-8)

- Do you not know that these cracks in your confidence draw you close to flirting with the possibility of getting dragged back into the very vices of life that didn't lead you to eternal inheritance then and won't now?

Be wronged before you become wrong (6:9-11)

Whenever the glory of Christ is being dishonored or dragged into a bad light, or Christ's sufficiency is being called into question, the church must take action – the members of the body need to sharpen their focus on total praise/loyalty to the Saviour and total trust /confidence in the sufficiency of Christ. Two glaring course corrective needs in today's church.