



## 1 Corinthians 5

### INTRODUCTION:

- Paul had been dealing with issues revolving around the ministry in chapter 4. What, would you guess, according to most (if not all) pastors is the most difficult / painful thing to do in pastoral ministry?
- Who told us this work must be carried out, and where is it recorded for us?
- Agree / Disagree: *Excommunication has been abused by so many in power for so long that we should avoid it.*
- Agree / Disagree: *The word "excommunication" is never understood and we should use a different term for it.*

### The Ugly Situation:

#### 1 Corinthians 5:1-5

**1** It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and it is a kind of sexual immorality that not even the Gentiles practice: A man has his father's wife! **2** Yet you are proud! Shouldn't you have been filled with sorrow so that the man who did this deed would be removed from among you? **3** Even though I am absent in body, I am present in spirit, and as one who is present, I have already decided about the man who has done such a thing. **4** In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, and my spirit is there, along with the power of our Lord Jesus, **5** hand such a man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that the spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord Jesus.

- Our best guess here is that a young man was sleeping with his step-mother (who was probably much younger than the father) and he apparently was quite proud of this fact and not ashamed to brag about it. Even the pagans back then thought *that* was crossing a line.
  - What was Paul's reaction at hearing about this?
  - How could this have happened to a Christian who should know better?
  - Does it happen in our congregations today? Is it getting worse? Why?
  - How *should* a pastor react when confronted with blatant immorality among the people he's been called to serve?

- Agree / Disagree: *Paul is even more disappointed in the congregation here.* If you agree with that, explain why:
- How might the church have rationalized turning a blind eye to this?
- Agree / Disagree: *The loving thing to do is to mind one's own business and just stay out of it.*
- How could Paul have possibly passed judgment here without even having first hand knowledge of the situation?
- What does "hand this man over to Satan" mean, and what were they supposed to do?

**malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.**

**9 When I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with the sexually immoral, 10 I did not at all mean the sexually immoral people of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, for then you would have to leave the world. 11 But in this situation, I wrote to you not to associate with anyone who is called a brother if he is sexually immoral, or greedy, or an idolater, or verbally abusive, or a drunkard, or a swindler. Do not even eat with such a person. 12 For what business is it of mine to judge people outside the church? Do you not judge those inside? 13 God will judge the people outside the church. "Remove the wicked man from among yourselves."**

- How could they have possibly boasted about this? What do you think that looked like in this congregation?
- As part of removing this man from fellowship they were not to associate (or even eat a meal) with him. Why / what would that look like in practical terms?
- Agree / Disagree: *When our people invite over those who have been excommunicated from our congregations they are doing more harm than good.* If you agree, then explain how:

## **The Cancer will Spread:**

### **1 Corinthians 5:6-13**

**6 Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough? 7 Purge out the old yeast so that you may be a new batch, just as you are unleavened. For our Passover lamb has been sacrificed, namely, Christ! 8 So let us keep celebrating the festival, not with old yeast, not with the yeast of**

- Explain how failing to remove from membership a person caught in sin could destroy the flock:
- In the wider Christian community in America today, what percentage of congregations (would you guess) actually try to carry out loving church discipline in line with the principles of Scripture?
  - What would you guess it is in WELS?
- Jesus told us “not to judge” and now Paul tells us to “judge those inside the church” - how do you reconcile / understand that?
- Agree / Disagree: *If we all knew what we all did in private we’d all be excommunicated.*
- What are some key lessons we can take from this chapter?
- Can you think of something similar to this situation that could (and maybe does) happen in congregations today?

#### CONCLUSION:

- We know the “rest of the story” from the book of 2 Corinthians, what happened here?

#### CLOSING PRAYER: