

First Corinthians

VERSE-BY-VERSE



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Hope Now Cambodia | Hope Now Bible Church

Verse 1–2 | From Session 14

Verse 2–

There is an illicit sexual encounter going on in the church of Corinth. A certain man is committing fornication with his father's wife, and the church doesn't care. Paul is going to tell them what to do about it.

Verse 3–

- **Absent in body** from the Corinthians, but because he was **present in the spirit**, which could mean he was in tune with the spirit, he knew precisely what needed to be done with this sinning man.
 - He knew what was right and wrong. The evidence was so clear that it was time to get rid of this man.
 - No rationalizing would change the fact that there was a grave sin with a man in the church.
 - All too often, we try to rationalize sin away.
- The word **judged** is a tough one here. It may mean "concluded" or "determined." In several passages, it is used in that sense: 1 Corinthians 2:2; Acts 25:25; Titus 3:12
- The word **Already** seems to suggest that *his mind was made up*. He does not need to be there in person to tell them what they should do **concerning him that hath so done this deed**.
 - Is Paul able to make this determination because he is an apostle? Pastoral authority today is not to be compared to Apostolic authority.

Verse 4,5–

- **To deliver such a one unto Satan** is mysterious and puzzling. Let's look at each aspect of this passage and try to make sense of it.
 - It appears to be an instruction for the church in Corinth to practice church discipline.
 - This discipline was to happen in the name of the **Lord Jesus Christ** when the church was **gathered together**.
 - It was not to be a private matter.
 - It also was done with the authority of an apostle, as Paul stated in verse 3 that he was *present in spirit*. Paul possessed the **power of our Lord Jesus Christ**. Again, a pastor cannot claim apostolic authority. Yet, a church is obligated to take care of sin in its midst, and a pastor is to feed or tend to the flock.
 - That church gathering in **the name of our Lord Jesus Christ**, with apostolic authority, in **the power of our Lord Jesus Christ**, allowed this man to be delivered to Satan.
 - This is probably something a church is not to do today since there are no apostles to grant the authority.
 - In the case of the Corinth church, Paul was giving this church his authority because he was not there personally.
 - Sin is destructive. Satan is the author of sin. **To deliver such a one unto Satan** perhaps means to let the man go his own way and allow sin to take its natural course in his life. Or, it could mean more than that; we don't know. But I don't think we have the authority to do it—it appears to be only an apostolic discipline measure.
- **That the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus**, even though his earthly life may be destroyed, if he is a believer in Jesus, he cannot lose his salvation. We are saved by grace through faith and not of works (Ephesians 2:8,9).

- ▶ **The day of the Lord Jesus** is probably the same as the phrase "The Day of the Lord," most likely, Paul means the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Regardless, though miserable, carnal, and destroyed in the flesh, this man was a believer and had salvation.
- Was this man, living in sin, to continue fellowshiping with this church? Paul will address that later.

Verse 6-

- ▶ The word **glorying** could be *boasting or rejoicing*. Earlier, Paul accused them of being *puffed up* (4:6, 18, 19). He means they were *inflated*. Being puffed up is being prideful. Pride comes from boasting, which he says **is not good**.
- ▶ **A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump** (A Jewish figure of speech; leaven or yeast illustrates sin).
- Remember that it had been only 20 years since Paul's conversion and his commission by the Lord that he would "bear my name before the Gentiles" (Acts 9:15).
- Paul went away to Arabia for three years (Galatians 1:17-18). When the apostles figured out what to do with the new Gentile believers, it was A.D. 46 (Acts 15). By the time Paul got to Corinth for the first time, established the church, and began teaching them daily for 18 months, it was A.D. 54 (Acts 18). First Corinthians was written five years later, in A.D. 59. The point is there would have been more Jews in the church since Paul's ministry to the Gentiles was still in its infancy, which is why Paul uses much Jewish terminology.
- The Jewish contingency of believers would have spread much more rapidly since they were the ones (Jews of the dispersion) who heard the word in Jerusalem during Pentecost in A.D. 33. At Pentecost, most were Jews and proselytes (Acts: 9,10).
- Therefore, Paul uses a Jewish figure of speech to illustrate the problem. **Know ye not** is literally, *you can see for yourself when baking bread, a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump*. A pinch of leaven (or yeast) causes the whole loaf to rise or get *puffed up*. This is the same effect pride will have in the church.
- ▶ What should they do about it?

Verses 7,8-

- ▶ The **old leaven** is figurative and concerned *boasting over sin* by the church members. That is what they need to **purge**. Paul isn't referring to the man involved in fornication. He already commanded what should be done with him (5:5).
 - His attention is focused on the pressing problem of the carnality among the members.
 - They need to **purge** themselves of pride caused by their boasting.
 - They need to be a **new lump** of dough or a fresh batch of dough--start fresh! The church is not to be puffed up; instead, it is to be **unleavened**.
- ▶ **Christ, our Passover**. Paul's use of this phrase clarifies that he is writing to a primarily Jewish congregation. Gentiles would not have participated in the Passover. Passover was the Jewish feast that celebrated their salvation from bondage in Egypt. What is Paul's point in referring to the Passover? As the literal **yeast** was removed from the house during **the Passover** (Ex. 12:1-15, 19-20; 13:1-10), so that which it illustrated, sin, was to be removed from the house of God, the local church,
- ▶ **Let us keep the feast** makes it more evident about the nature of this congregation. Likewise, Gentiles would not have kept the feast of Passover nor been required to do so. This is not referring to the Lord's Supper as some have tried to make it into.
 - **Let us keep the feast** is one word in Greek, **ἐορτάζω** | **heortazo**, and it is not an "imperative" (command). It is "subjunctive" (more of a desire than a command).
 - His point is that the church must end its boasting, pride, and divisiveness. Christ was sacrificed for a pure church. Clean out the things that have made their way into the church, like **malice** (hostility) **and wickedness** (perversion); **then**, the church can keep the feast together as they gather in **sincerity and truth**.