

“Put Away from among Yourselves”

1 Corinthians 5:1-13

This is one of the most difficult passages in the New Testament for us, as a church, to both understand and to apply.

One thing to keep in mind as we look at this chapter – this is dealing with a sin that was known all over that part of the world (not just in the city of Corinth, but most likely in every church under Paul’s care) – “it is reported commonly.” That word “commonly” comes from one that means wholly, altogether, in every part or sense – speaks to everywhere (Zodhiates).

When a church has to deal with “sin in the camp,” it is to be only those sins that are known and seen and obvious to all (that’s why drunkenness is mentioned in this text, as well as the immorality dealt with). We are all sinners – still – sinners saved by grace, but sinners still. If we hold that this is dealing with any and all sin, then the church would cease to exist. This is only dealing with the type of sin that this immorality portrays. That’s not to minimize sin, nor excuse it away – just one sin would have been enough to nail Jesus to the cross, so to speak.

I. THE SITUATION (OR SIN) – VS. 1-2

A. Vs. 1 – There was a very egregious sin in the church – more than likely, within the leadership of the church in Corinth

1. “That there is fornication among you”

a) “Fornication” comes from a word (πορνεία)

that was used historically in Roman days for a prostitute and came to mean (and is used in this sense in Scripture) for any sexual sin. It is translated "sexual immorality" in the ESV, which gives the sense of the word. It speaks of the act, not the temptation to act.

b) "Among you" – it is unclear whether this is simply someone in the greater congregation of the church, or, as I believe it to be dealing with, at the very least, someone of prominence, and most likely pastor/elder in the church.

2. "And such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles"

a) This sexual immorality was so egregious that it wasn't even talked about among the Gentile world – this lead some to believe that the person spoken of was a Jew, which would have made this an even more astounding sin because of what the Levitical Law said regarding the sin.

b) This is beyond a "normal" adulterous affair, which was common enough in Bible times for it to not fall under these terms – it certainly was "named among the Gentiles"

c) Some want to equate this with the homosexual lifestyle today, and there may be a case to be made for that but we need to be careful we don't read more into this than we should

3. "That one should have his father's wife"

a) The way this is worded, it indicates, in all probability, that the man accused by Paul here had actually married the women

referred to (at the very least, she would have been more than a mistress – she would have been a concubine – someone he lived with but was not married to).

John 4:18

18 For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.

- b) Whether this man's father was still alive is also unclear, but, based on 2 Cor. 7:12, it would seem he was – so whether they were divorced or just separated is unclear as well.

2 Corinthians 7:12

12 Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you.

- c) That's not what the sin was however – it was the fact that it was his father's wife – not the man's mother but his step-mother
- d) This was a clear violation of Scripture, and a clear violation of common law of the time

Leviticus 20:11

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.

Deuteronomy 22:30

30 A man shall not take his father's wife, nor discover his father's skirt.

Deuteronomy 27:20

²⁰ Cursed be he that lieth with his father's wife; because he uncovereth his father's skirt. And all the people shall say, Amen.

4. Consider how we view sexual immorality today, even in the church. We think it's okay to do whatever we want because we have the right. Not according to Scripture, we don't.

B. Vs. 2 – It was a sin that was not only not dealt with, but was gloried in

The ESV reads: "And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you."

1. "And ye are puffed up" – they (most likely the leadership of the church, primarily) were arrogant about the whole matter. They were fine with just letting the matter be.

The emphasis of this text is not verse 5 in the discipline needed – it is the fact that the church was okay with such open and egregious sin.

2. "And have not rather mourned" – the action they should have taken should have been one of sorrow for both this man and what he would have to face because of his unrepentant attitude, as well (and more importantly) for the cause of Christ and the sake of the gospel.
3. "That he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you"
 - a) The result of their sorrow and penitent

heart as individuals and as a whole congregation should have been to expel this man from their church

- b) This is the first of several mentions regarding the expelling of the unrepentant person living in open sin – it’s something that even Jesus taught, albeit not in quite the same context

Matthew 18:17

17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

II. THE SOLUTION – VS. 3-5

A. Vs. 3 – even though Paul wasn’t there, he had already sent his “judgment” for the unrepentant person involved

1. Jesus said, recorded in Matthew 7, “Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged.” There is no contradiction here – the criteria for judging that Jesus spoke to was that we aren’t to pass judgment on someone else unless we are willing to live by the standard by which we are judging – something Paul was certainly willing to do.

We need to be careful if we start pointing out someone else’s faults. This particular sin was obvious to all, and was accepted by all (the part that was the most damaging to the church), so it needed to be dealt with by all – but caution needs to be taken in this situation that we don’t get to the point where we look to pass

judgment on those that don't agree with us.

Of course, when our Lord warned, "Judge not," He was not talking about exposing the sins of the ungodly--we must do that. Neither was He talking about withdrawing from the immoral, or restoring erring Christians, or resolving civil disputes, or "knowing a tree by its fruits." He was forbidding illegitimate judgments that stem from a self-righteous, haughty, puffed-up, hypocritical spirit (Matt. 7:15; Luke 6:37, 38; Rom. 2:1-3). He was forbidding judgments based on inadequate information (John 7:21-24). He was forbidding judgments in which the person assumes the position of God, trying and sentencing brethren in regard to eternal salvation (Josh. 4:11, 12; Rom. 14:3, 4, 10, 13; 1 Cor. 4:5).

Matthew 7:3-5

3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

2. This verse is signifying that the church was to deal with this man as a congregation, an were to decide, as a body, what judgment to pass – Paul is sending his recommendation in this letter

B. Vs. 4 – the solution was to be carried out in the name of Christ (since it was the cause of Christ that was harmed the most in this instance), as well as by the church congregation as a whole, under the authority of the Apostle Paul (as an Apostle)

Verses 4 and 5 are together in the ESV:

“When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.”

1. “In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together”
 - a) Although the word order of the ESV lends to a better reading, the KJV is the literal translation, and puts the emphasis where it should be – on the “name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - b) Anything we do as an individual believer, and especially as a church (as is the context here), we are to do it in the name of the Lord, for it is because of Him we have what we have as a believer, and it is His name that is being reproached by the sin of the unrepentant man and the sin of the glorying by the people in the church over it
 - c) “And my spirit” – as the ESV – “and my spirit is present”
 - d) “With the power of the Lord Jesus Christ” – not only done in His name, in all its holiness and justice, as well as in all its mercy and

love, it's to be done by His authority. It's not our opinion of a matter but the authority of the Word of God that is to be our rule of practice in the church.

C. Vs. 5 – This solution was to be done with the intent of the sinner getting right and being reconciled

1. This is one of the most difficult verses in Scripture for us to understand, and for us to apply – it seems to go against a good deal of what is believed and taught by most churches
2. Keep in mind that this man being dealt with was an apparent believer so this cannot be speaking of his salvation being removed from him
3. There is one other time in Scripture the phrase “deliver(ed) unto Satan” is used – 1 Tim. 1:20

1 Timothy 1:19–20

¹⁹ Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:

²⁰ Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

4. To be delivered to Satan is a very troubling action, indeed.

Nothing in this life could be more solemn than to be apostolically handed over to Satan. Such excommunication from the church thrust the offender back into the

world, where Satan is lord and god (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 2 Cor. 4:4) and where the offender would be exposed to Satan's malignity and hate. Such apostolic discipline was exercised sparingly and in the hope that the offender would recover. Paul had dealt thus with the incestuous brother at Corinth (1 Cor. 5:5). Hymanaeus and Alexander were excommunicated so that they could "learn not to blaspheme." (John Phillips)

5. The principle behind this delivering to Satan is found in the teachings of Jesus Himself, recorded in Matt. 18:15-20, where He gives the instructions for what is termed "church discipline."

Although it is probable that there was an apostolic authority given in the time of the apostles that does not exist today, where they, as leaders, could excommunicate pastors on their own, the principle taught in Matthew eighteen is what is followed in the church today. If it were followed more often, when it needs to be, the church would be stronger for it. "Many commentators believe these men were elders in the church...No elder, no deacon, no teacher, no small-group leader, and no member of the church is exempt from this warning." (David Platt)

6. The purpose of the discipline was not punitive, but, as a parent disciplines a child to get them to change their actions, so this form of discipline in the church is intended to change those who are teaching

false doctrines (as in 1 Timothy) and/or those practicing open, egregious sin (as in this text). There is always just cause for the judgment that God sends, or that He ordains in Scripture.

Conclusion to this point: Sin is so prevalent, and so accepted today that the church no longer has the authority it should have and has become so weakened that it cannot function the way God intended. It's not just sin in the life of the believer, it's sin in the camp, sin in the church that is accepted as normal and okay, and, even at times, justified from Scripture. When we do that as a church then there is a price to pay – and it is a high price – reproach on the name of Christ.

On the other hand, there are a great many preachers that preach so strongly against sin that they come across as hating the sinner. Our duty as preachers is to give the “truth in love” and let God do the convicting. We are to love others to Christ. We don't accept their sin and lifestyle, we are to preach against it, not allow it to take root in the church, or in our lives, but we are to preach the love of Christ to all. The truly born-again will be changed by the Holy Spirit – just as the man mentioned in these verses was.

III. THE SEPARATION – VS. 6-8

Let me say at the outset here that although we are to separate the one in the church that is in sin and unrepentant, we are neither to separate the sinner that doesn't know better from the church, nor are we to prevent them from seeking the Lord through the church.

A. Vs. 6 – They were to separate themselves from the immoral person, not glory in him – not praise him (this is why some think this to be, at the very least, a prominent person in the church, if not an elder)

1. "A little leaven" – This same wording is used in Gal. 5:9 to caution against the danger of a little bit of false teaching. In the context here, it is dealing with sin – in particular, a sin that was so depraved that it had corrupted the whole of the church already. It only takes a "little."
2. "Leaveneth the whole lump"

Are you not aware that a little leaven imparts a character to the whole lump? That this is the meaning, and not, 'that a little leaven *will*, if not purged out, leaven the whole lump,' is manifest from the point in hand... One of them was a fornicator of a fearfully depraved kind, tolerated and harboured: by this fact, the *character of the whole was tainted*. (Alford)

3. This is not just true of the church as a whole, but can be applied to our individual lives, as well.

B. Vs. 7 – Make sure there is no part of the sin remaining that could cause others to stumble – that is why Jesus paid our sin debt, became sin for us, as the Passover lamb was to the Israelite in Egypt

1. "Purge out" – to be thoroughly cleansed

from

- a) From two words: *ek*, or out of; and *kathairo*, purge, which is the normal word used
- b) With the prefix of "out of" it is speaking to the issue of complete separation from a thing, a complete and thorough purging

Psalm 119:9

⁹ Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

2 Corinthians 7:1

¹ Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

1 Peter 1:22

²² Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

2. "Therefore" – because of the damage that had been done to the church and to the people, and more importantly to the cause of Christ, they were to remove the "leaven" – the man who was unrepentant in his sin – completely purge the whole of the "lump" of sin
3. "That ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened" – it is only after sin is dealt with that the Holy Spirit can create that new heart in us, as believers, and in the church. If we expect God to do something

with us, we cannot allow sin to be left “fermenting” in our lives, nor in our church.

Psalm 51:10

¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

Ezekiel 18:31

³¹ Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

Let me say this at this point (again) – this is not dealing with lost people. If a lost person comes to church, no matter what they’re life is like, they are to be loved and given the truth in that love – nothing more, nothing less. We are not accepting their sin, but we are allowing the Holy Spirit to do His work in changing them.

Dr. Wuest interprets it this way: Cleanse out completely, at once and once for all, the old yeast which is part of a world which has passed away for you and out from which you were saved, in order that you may be a fresh aggregation of individuals, even as you are without yeast.

4. “For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us”
 - a) “Passover” – the Passover Lamb
 - b) The issue of the Passover is mentioned here because of the analogy of the leaven. No leaven was allowed in the house during

the feast of unleavened bread at Passover.

Matthew Henry said this: This is the great doctrine of the gospel. The Jews, after they had killed the passover, kept the feast of unleavened bread. So must we; not for seven days only, but all our days. We should die with our Saviour to sin, be planted into the likeness of his death by mortifying sin, and into the likeness of his resurrection by rising again to newness of life, and that internal and external. We must have new hearts and new lives. Note, The whole life of a Christian must be a feast of unleavened bread. His common conversation and his religious performances must be holy. *He must purge out the old leaven, and keep the feast of unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.* He must be without guilt in his conduct towards God and man. And the more there is of sincerity in our own profession, the less shall we censure that of others. Note, On the whole, The sacrifice of our Redeemer is the strongest argument with a gracious heart for purity and sincerity. How sincere a regard did he show to our welfare, in dying for us! and how terrible a proof was his death of the detestable nature of sin, and God's displeasure against it! Heinous evil, that could not be expiated but with the blood of the Son of God! And shall a Christian love the murderer of his Lord? God forbid.

C. Vs. 8 – They weren't to replace one sin (of immorality) with equally egregious sins of "malice and wickedness," but they were to replace that kind of hatefulness with "sincerity" (purity – being sincere and pure in judging) and

"truth" (out in the open, uncovered)

1. "Therefore let us keep the feast" – referring to the feast of Passover in the previous verse.

Sacrifices were in old times accompanied by feasts in which the reconciled God and His worshippers ate together. In the feast of Passover the lamb which had been used as a sacrifice was consumed as food to strengthen the Israelites for their exodus. This idea Paul here adapts to his present purpose. "Christ, our passover is sacrificed for us," he says, "let us therefore keep the feast." The whole life of the Christian is a festal celebration; his strength is maintained by that which has given him peace with God. By Christ's death God reconciles us to Himself; out of Christ we continually receive what fits us to serve God as His free people. Every Christian should aim at making his life a celebration of the true deliverance Christ has accomplished for us. We should see that our life is a true exodus, and being so it will bear marks of triumph and of freedom. To feed upon Christ, joyfully to assimilate all that is in Him to our own character, it is this which makes life festal, which turns faintness into abounding strength, and brings zest and appetite into monotonous labour. (Expositor's Bible)

2. "Not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness"
 - a) The "old leaven" was their old life – we aren't to continue living in the sin of the

past, we are “born again” – born anew. The old life is passed away and we are no longer to allow the “leaven” of that past to “ferment,” or corrupt, the new.

2 Corinthians 5:17

¹⁷ Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

b) “Leaven of malice and wickedness”

(1) The corrupting force of the old life will lead to this in our lives, as well as the self-righteousness that can come from those that think they are better than others, and that ends up causing the believer to judge others with the same thing they had been redeemed from – malice and wickedness

(2) “Malice” (Bishops and Geneva Bible has it as “maliciousness”) – from a word that simply means “bad” – in this context, “wickedness as an evil habit of the mind” (Zodhiates)

(3) “Wickedness” – badness – the action that is an outcome of the “malice” – the evil habit of the mind. “As if [wickedness], the endeavor to do evil to others, emanates from being inherently evil [malice] (Zodhiates).

3. “But with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth”

a) As opposed to “malice and wickedness,” which are considered to be part of the leaven of sin that corrupts the greater whole

- b) "Sincerity" – pureness – if the church is going to be effective in the world then it needs to understand it, as an institution, must be pure, sincere in its actions

(1) The English word for "sincere" is from the Latin derivative similar to it – "sincerus" – meaning, clean, unadulterated, pure of composition

(2) The Greek is from two words that, put together, literally mean "judged by the sun" – rightly judged because seen in full light

- c) "Truth" – the only way to keep the corruption that is caused by allowing sin to go unchecked is to deal with everything in the light of the truth of the Word of God

IV. THE SANCTIFICATION – VS. 9-13

A. Vs. 9 – sanctification (the aspect of making holy) is to begin with making sure we not only purge the old nature ("mortify the deeds of the flesh") but stay away from those that haven't – "You are the company you keep"

1. "I wrote unto you in an epistle" – a letter he previously sent to the leadership of Corinth
2. "Not to company with fornicators" – this is in a broad sense, where verse eleven is narrower in focus.
 - a) The words "to company with" mean to mix together, to mingle together, have fellowship (Zodhiates). "It denotes not only close, but habitual, [fellowship]" (Vincent).

Wuest translates it: "Not to be mingling in a close and habitual intimacy..." The word is seen in the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint) in Hosea 7:8, where it defines the word.

Hosea 7:8

⁸ Ephraim, he **hath mixed himself among** the people; Ephraim is a cake not turned.

The word is used only one other time (outside of 1 Cor. 5:9, 11) – in 2 Thess. 3:14:

2 Thessalonians 3:14

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.

- b) "Fornicators" – explained in the portion of this message on verse one – the issue here is that the church was not to have a close relationship with those that lived in an immoral way, and specifically, those within the church. This lifestyle was so common in Corinth at the time that it was a natural, common way of life, and no one seemed to give it much thought that they weren't to have fellowship and close friendship with them.

B. Vs. 10 – we aren't to expect "the world" – the lost around us – to live like a believer does – quite the opposite – we are to approach them where they are in their sin, and allow God to change them

1. "Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world"

- a) "Yet not altogether" – The NET Bible reads: "In no way did I mean the immoral people of this world"
- b) "With the fornicators of this world" – this seems to bring clarification to verse nine, where it seems to be more specific to those living immorally within the church family.

2. "Or with the covetous"

- a) This word translated "covetous" is different than is seen in other passages of the New Testament. This one has more to do with simply wanting more, not necessarily just wanting what someone else has (which is the general understanding of the word). This speaks of being a greedy person.
- b) It isn't just immoral people we are to be careful with, but all those that are living in sin. That said, Paul is telling the church here that there will be the need to interact with lost, sinful, wicked, people in order to reach them with the Gospel, otherwise there would be a direct contradiction to the Great Commission that Jesus gave. (This, too, flies in the face of what is known as "Calvinism," as well.)

3. "Or extortioners"

- a) This is connected to the previous word – those that are "covetous" in this sense, will be those that do what they can to get that gain, by any means, including "oppressing the poor, the needy, and the fatherless, to obtain money" (Barnes).
- b) As a believer, we will need to have contact with all sorts of sinners, including those that will take advantage of anyone they can

to get ahead – but we need to be careful we don't get caught up in their greed.

4. "Or with idolaters"

- a) This is the earliest known instance of this word in the New Testament
- b) "New Testament usage does not confine the term to the worship of images, but extends it to the soul's devotion to any object which usurps the place of God." (Vincent)
- c) Ephesians 5:5 connects this word with that of "covetous" and gives a clear explanation of the connection of these words by Paul in his writings, and why he gave this directive to the church. To be "covetous" will make one an "idolater," as is described in the New Testament.

Ephesians 5:5

⁵ For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, **nor covetous man, who is an idolater**, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

- 5. "For then must ye needs go out of the world" – "You would have to leave this world to get away from everyone who is immoral or greedy or who cheats or worships idols" (CEV).

C. Vs. 11

- 1. If someone claims to be a Christian (whether he is truly born again or not is not the issue here), the church has a responsibility "not to keep company" with those that don't live like one

2. Not just a “fornicator” (the sin at issue in this text), but that of “covetous,” “idolater,” “railer” (slanderer), “drunkard,” or “extortioner”
3. God doesn’t see one sin as greater than others as it relates to salvation or holiness. However, there is a difference when it comes to the outward sins (which is what is under consideration here) as opposed to those that are more inward as it relates to the testimony of Christ and the church.
4. “With such an one no not to eat” – “As in many cultures, dining together took on the special cast of mutual acceptance, in the Middle East; so declining to eat with someone who had been banned would be taken as a serious statement of disapproval” (The Higley Commentary – page 295).

Romans 16:17

¹⁷ Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

2 Thessalonians 3:6

⁶ Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

2 John 10

¹⁰ If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:

D. Vs. 12 – We aren’t to judge the world by the standards we would someone in the

church – they don't know any better – but we are to judge those in the church because of the affect they have on the cause of Christ

1. "For what have I to do to judge them also that are without"
 - a) It's not that Paul is saying here that it's okay, or even justified, for anyone to live a life of wickedness, but it wasn't his job to judge those outside the church, the body of Christ – that was God's responsibility.
 - b) "Also" – "Implying, *Those within* give me enough to do without those outside" (JFB)
 - c) "That are without" – "Paul's authority as an apostle did not extend to judging and prescribing discipline on unbelievers for their sins. He did, of course, assess the condition of unbelievers (e.g., Rom. 1; et al.), but that is not what is in view here. His ministry and the ministry of other Christians in judging and disciplining sin took place only within church life. Judging means more than criticizing. It involves disciplining, too, as the context shows." (Constable – as found on netbible.org)
2. "Do not ye judge them that are within?" – it is the responsibility of the church, as a congregation of believers, to deal with those living in open sin (especially those of the leadership of the church), not the responsibility of the world (as will be seen in the next chapter). And, it is an action that NEEDS taken, at times, regardless of the cost or outcome.

E. Vs. 13

1. Those that are in the world – “without” the church, or, specifically, the Kingdom of God, God will be the judge.
2. We are to look at the outrageous sins of others that are in the church and make sure we deal with them according to Scripture – “put away from among yourselves that wicked person”
 - a) “Put away” – “sentence of excommunication in language taken from Deut. 24:7” (JFB)

Deuteronomy 24:7

⁷ If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and maketh merchandise of him, or selleth him; then that thief shall die; **and thou shalt put evil away from among you.**

Deut. 17:7 has a similar phrase and is translated in the Greek Septuagint by almost this identical phrase – “thou shalt put away that wicked one among yourselves.”

Deuteronomy 17:7

⁷ The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So thou shalt put the evil away from among you.

- b) “From among yourselves” – among the church body – this is to be done by the church as a whole, and not just as an individual. This is the only way to keep the church pure and holy.

Conclusion: I read a couple weeks ago but it bears repeating.

Sin is so prevalent, and so accepted today that the church no longer has the authority it should have and has become so weakened that it cannot function the way God intended. It's not just sin in the life of the believer, it's sin in the camp, sin in the church that is accepted as normal and okay, and, even at times, justified from Scripture. When we do that as a church then there is a price to pay – and it is a high price – reproach on the name of Christ.

On the other hand, there are a great many preachers that preach so strongly against sin that they come across as hating the sinner. Our duty as preachers is to give the "truth in love" and let God do the convicting. We are to love others to Christ. We don't accept their sin and lifestyle, we are to preach against it, not allow it to take root in the church, or in our lives, but we are to preach the love of Christ to all. The truly born-again will be changed by the Holy Spirit – just as the man mentioned in these verses was.

"If Thy Hand Offend Thee"

"I see you have had the misfortune of losing one of your hands," someone said to a fine-looking man. The gentleman smiled, and hesitated a moment before he answered:

"Yes, or the good fortune. While a man can't exactly rejoice that he must go through life with only one hand, he must acknowledge that it is better than not going through life at all. The loss of that hand saved my life. It was this way: Some years ago I bought a large manufacturing plant, and while I knew

nothing about machinery, it always was a wild fascination for me. In spite of the warnings of the work crew, I was always poking about into places that I had been told were dangerous. One day (I never knew just how it happened) my hand was caught in the machine, and in an instant I felt myself drawn into the very jaws of the machine that would have crushed my body into pulp. The foreman saw my danger; however, he knew that by the time the machinery could be stopped it would be too late. Without the least hesitation he seized a great cleaver and, with an accurate blow, severed my hand from my arm. It was heroic treatment, and for awhile it looked as though I should die from the effects of it. You see that I did not."

Could there be found a better illustration of the meaning of the words of Christ, when he said: "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell" (Matt. 5:30)? In spite of every warning, men are continually being caught in the whirlwind of sin and folly, to find at last that their only hope lies in cutting off that which is a very part of them. Many such go limping through the world, thankful for their deliverance and yet, what a sorrowful reminder of the awful cost of sin.