

Sermon Notes

Our Company and Our Community
1 Corinthians 5:9-13 May 24, 2015

Introduction: Our Company & Our Community

The company we keep matters (“Don’t be deceived: ‘Evil company corrupts good habits.’” 1 Cor. 15:33). This has an impact on our community. Paul has recently instructed the Church in Corinth about what they should have done and what they should now do with a particular man who was living in open and unrepentant sin: he was to be removed from the congregation. This is part of the “discipline” of the Church, and it is taught by Jesus as well as by Paul. Anytime this subject comes up, so do questions. This happened then, and it still happens. In the reminder of this passage Paul writes to remind and to clarify.

A Walk Through the Passage...

5:9—Paul writes to remind them of what he had previously written. This subject of keeping company with those who are particularly sexual immoral has already been addressed in a previous letter. Presently, there was someone among them—and they all knew who it was!—who was to be removed from the congregation and they were wondering how they were to interact with him—and others like him—in the future.

Paul is concerned about the impact that such a person would have on the whole flock. No matter how strong you think you are, there will be some impact or influence. Those who remain doing what they are doing (when it is sinful) are doing so because they want to and they will always urge others to join them (Romans 1:32).

Paul still needs to provide some clarification of what he does *not* mean and what he *does* mean...

5:10—Paul does *not* mean to avoid the people you would come into contact with everyday. There are sexually immoral people (πόρνοις) all over the place. This is nothing new. Paul needs to clarify what he does not mean, otherwise you would have to leave the planet.

Sadly, some Christians seem to have taken this “off the planet” approach and will never interact with non-believers at all. The reality is, it is inevitable—in our increasingly *post-Christian* society—that we will meet with those with a particularly loose approach to sexuality, those who are always grasping for more (covetous), those who will readily steal and cheat (extortioners), and will do so in order to serve themselves (idolaters). In an odd sense, Paul is challenging the church to become more “worldly.”

5:11—That’s what Paul did *not* mean. What did he mean? He had written previously about keeping company with any so-called brother; with someone who was still claiming the name of Christ all the while still busily engaged in such things. Paul mentions some sins: *pornois*, covetous, idolater, reviler, drunkard, extortioner.

Paul adds a couple to the list because of the heart of man which, when in rebellion, seeks to get close to the boundaries and the fire. If Paul simply repeated the same four, not adding any, someone from somewhere would inevitably approach this as some kind of checklist.

By not even eating with such a one, Paul is clearly referring to the communion and the community of the Church. This is to be understood in the light of the context; of “keeping the feast” (5:8). If someone is living a particularly scandalous lifestyle, and we simply acted as if and ate with them as if all is well, we would be lying. Pretending is not allowed.

5:12—We are supposed to care for one another. There is a certain type of (righteous) judging which is to occur in the church. We are our brother’s keeper. Paul makes a clear distinction: I/we don’t have anything to do with judging those outside (ἔξω) of the church. However, we do judge those within.

There is other judging which is to occur...

5:13—Paul refers to those who are outside of the church and says that God will judge them. We are to be like Paul and leave the outside, and final judgment to the Lord. However, it must be admitted that many spend more time judging those who are outside than they do taking care of their own business inside. We are, perhaps, quick to condemn the world for their failures, when we are negligent with our own houses and responsibilities. Yes, the Lord has appointed various governments: ecclesial, familial, and civic/state, yet in and through them all must be self-government. The Church is called to be the Church, to keep the feast, to be unleavened, to be the Body...yet, our witness is commonly weakened because we have sought to change things out there without tending to matters here first.

In Conclusion—some additional observations

