

LET THE BIBLE SPEAK SERIES

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DELIVER SUCH AN ONE TO SATAN

One of the besetting sins in all layers of human society is an absence of real discipline.

Homes reel on brink of disaster
Schools, Colleges
Laws of the land--no teeth in judicial decrees
Most religious bodies exclude it

A lack of discipline is a breeding ground for contempt of law

The bible teaches instructive discipline over and over. All we do in teaching, admonishing, exhorting etc. is a part of instructive discipline.

The bible also teaches corrective or punitive discipline. This picks up where instructive discipline fails.

The Problem Stated

Read 1Cor. 5:1-2

The Corinthians had written Paul several questions relative to marriage in 1Cor.7. Yet, they had been silent as a tomb about this grievous and glaring case of incest.

The report, whatever its source, was correct.

There was fornication in their midst.

They were not living up to the demands of Eph. 5:3-5

Porneia refers to every kind of sexual uncleanness between those of the same sex, those of the opposite sex, or sex between humans and animals. In this verse the reference is to incest or illicit sex between family members. One of the Corinthians had stolen his father's wife or stepmother.

Hebrew law forbade such in Lev. 18:8 and Deut 27:20

So also Christian Law Gal.5:19

Even Roman and Grecian customs, frowned upon and deplored such unnatural unions.

The father was still living--2Cor.7:12

It would appear that the woman was a pagan, not a Chrisitan, since no punitive action is commanded regarding her.

The over-riding tragedy was that this horrible deed had caused no ripple of protest among the complacent Corinthians. In fact they they were puffed up in its regard, and proudly tolerant and broadminded in their views.

Solution Of The Problem

Read 1Cor. 5:3-5

Paul brings apostolic authoritative judgment to bear on the guilty party.

The church was to come together and act under apostolic directive, by the power of Jesus Christ.

The incestuous man was to be delivered to Satan. What does this mean?

Some think this refers to an Apostolic power, exercised only on rare occasions, in which the offender was put to death or greatly afflicted.

Coffman "the full meaning not fully clear; there being a great many things that men simply do not know concerning what is here revealed."

"there is a hint that Paul expected the man would die upon the announcement of his judgement, in the same manner as Ananias and Sapphira had died in Jerusalem."

The hint being a reference to the final judgement i.e. "that his spirit may be saved ..."

The conclusion is unwarranted.

F.F. Bruce thinks the reference is to some type of physical affliction visited upon him to bring him to repentance.

Clarke "No such power remains in the church of God; none such should be assumed; and the pretensions to it are as wicked as they are vain. It was the same power by which Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead, and Elymas the sorcerer struck blind. Apostles alone were intrusted with it."

Several problems surface with this interpretation. The main one being no proof or evidence that such a conclusion was intended by the Apostle. Secondly, if stricken dead on the scene, how could there be repentance? How saved in the day of judgment?

The more probable interpretation is that Paul is merely referring to withdrawal of fellowship.

There are two kingdoms

Removal from God's Kingdom--the church meant the offender be sent back to the kingdom of Satan, whose fleshly puppet he already was as a result of this illicit relationship.

Twofold Purpose

1. The flesh was to be destroyed i.e. withdrawal would bring man to his senses and cause him to mortify or crucify the flesh which led him to commit this vile act.

2. His salvation at the second coming of Christ. If no repentance, he might die in this situation, thereby being lost.

Why Discipline Was Essential

1Cor.5:6-8

They were giving the matter arrogant toleration

This not good

A little leaven will soon permeate the entire mass

The old leaven (incestuous man) must be purged
(disfellowshipped)

Jewish passover kept without leaven--all removed from houses

Christ is our Passover. He has been sacrificed. In feasting upon him i.e. service, love honor etc. we are obligated to do so without old leaven i.e. minus the guilty brother in our fellowship.

Earlier Pauline Instructions

1Cor.5:9-11

This epistle not preserved.

They apparently misunderstood Paul's instructions, hence this is written to clarify.

Previous instructions regarded fraternal fellowship with church members guilty of the named sins.

There had to be some association with worldly people guilty of such. To avoid them would mean leaving the world.

Fornicators--those guilty of all kinds of sexual uncleanness.

Covetous--those greedy of gain who seek what others have regardless of how they obtain it.

Extortioners--those who by force or fraud take what belong to others.

Revilers--those who rail against God or man.

Drunkards--those who are addicted to liquor. They are at the end of the so-called social or moderate drinking road. Any Christian who tries to defend the social drinking of liquor in any form or for any reason is on the wrong road.

The eating is a common meal, not the Lord's Supper. For the following reasons:

1. No way to keep unfaithful from partaking of Lord's Supper.
2. What Paul forbids our doing with a brother guilty of these sins, he permits our doing with a man of the world. Thus if the eating under consideration is the L. Supper, he is permitting us to eat it with men of the world. Something we know is not true.
3. To eat a meal with one was to acknowledge him as an equal and to be in fellowship with him. The idea is not to socialize with this man in any way so that people get the idea that we condone what he is doing. We are to be with him only for the purpose of warning him. 2Thess.3:15

To practice what Paul teaches here, really puts teeth into the discipline.

Action Required Now

1Cor.5:12-13

Neither Paul nor the church was in a position to judge the sinners among non-Christians. They belong to the jurisdiction of God.

But with the erring brother, they were to promptly put him away.
This man had been a disciple. He had fallen. Now he is to be dealt with.

What a blow this is to calvinism.

Other Passages To Consider

1Tim.1:19,20 Paul delivered Hymenaeus and Alexander to Satan in order that they might learn not to blaspheme, nor make shipwreck of fundamental faith.

Mt. 7:20 "By their fruits shall ye know them" Did not say "by their roots..." When we approach a fruit tree, we don't have to dig up the roots to determine its kind, we merely look at the fruit in making a judgment of its kind.

The same is the case with those needing church discipline today.

One is not forced to go to The Vatican in order to know what is wrong with Romanism, he need only examine the fruits.

Why Discipline

1. Church discipline is designed to save the offender.
2. Church discipline is designed to make others think twice before committing sins.
3. Church Discipline is designed to keep the church pure.
4. Church discipline is designed to show the world of outside spectators that we are serious about N. T. Christianity.
5. Church discipline shows that we are obedient to the Lord in a very crucial area of his work on earth.

Will Discipline Work?

It worked in this case. For in 2Cor.2:6, some six months later, paul wrote and informed us that the fornicator of 1Cor.5 is now penitent and needs to be received back into their fellowship and good graces.