

1Corinthians 18-03-04a

This is Sunday, March the 4th, 2018. I would like to express a sincere happy anniversary to our musical family in Richardson, Texas. We continue our study this morning in 1 Corinthians.

You can be turning to chapter 5, 1 Corinthians chapter 5. We'll take a moment as is our regular practice to go to the Lord in prayer, take our concerns and our distractions and lay them aside so that we can benefit from the truth of God's Word and the wonderful presence and power of God's Holy Spirit that helps us to understand it and to remember it and to put it into practice. Shall we pray? Father, we thank You for this day and for the fellowship that we enjoy with each other. We so appreciate the Lord Jesus and His work on our behalf on the cross, the saving grace that has brought us not only out of condemnation and out of judgment, but into life and into light and into Your presence.

We're so thankful that we have hope both now and in the ages to come, and we thank You for this opportunity to remind ourselves of the spiritual realities that define us and that create the potentials and the opportunities to live and grow in grace and knowledge. We pray that as we look at this portion of Your Word that Your Holy Spirit will be our teacher, make it real, overcome the limitations of the communicator and the presentation, and bring Your truth into each heart in a way that will be meaningful and motivating and helpful in the days and years ahead. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. Well, something that was very fascinating to me in our study last week was a fresh perspective, if you will, for me, at least personally, in 1 Corinthians chapter 4 as we looked at Paul taking this figure that he has applied to himself and to Apollos for our sakes and realizing that it's always, for me, easy to look at the Corinthian letter and say, well, those Corinthians, they were sure messed up. They were divided.

They were trying to follow different speakers. And boy, when we get into chapter 5, here's this man that's living in an outright, overt, immoral, incestuous situation. And, you know, it's easy to do mental finger wagging at the Corinthians and say, well, those, they really went downhill from the time that Paul founded the church.

And, I mean, it's one thing to start a church, you get a few people together and study the Word of God. The Apostle Paul started this church. Paul, Damascus Road Paul, meeting Jesus Christ face-to-face Paul, going down to Mount Sinai, spending 14 years integrating his Old Testament and New Testament understanding Paul, he's the guy that founded this church.

And not that long after he leaves, here they are with all of these problems. And you think, well, when I think problem church in the New Testament, I'm turning to 1 Corinthians. That's those poor rascals.

I'm never going to be in that situation. But you get to chapter 4 and he says, all of this I've been talking about in terms of, I'm of Paul, I'm of Apollos. And, you know, the difference between the

wisdom of God and the wisdom of men, even God's, what seems to be foolishness is wiser than men.

And if you're going to really be wise, you need to become a fool. And so I was just turning that over in my mind and thinking and thinking, well, I know that there is something here in Corinthians that I have been missing. And then it dawned on me, and we covered it last Sunday, that when he says in chapter 4, verse 1, let a man so consider us as servants of Christ.

And remember the servant word, how fascinating that was, because it wasn't *doulos*, Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, how he starts nearly every letter. That's not the word. Do you remember what the word was? Or do you remember what it means? More importantly, I don't expect you to remember the Greek.

Do you remember what it means? Under, under rower, under rower. Now, if Paul is the oarsman on the lower deck, what is the ship? This is the person and work of Jesus Christ, right? He is serving as a means for the person and the work of Christ to be communicated, to be transferred into our hearts and into our souls, right? That's Paul's mission. He is rowing the ship so that we arrive at the destination of the Lord Jesus Christ and through Christ to God the Father.

One thing we often forget is we don't stop when we arrive at the Lord Jesus. As great as he is and as wonderful as he is, and he's unsurpassed in so many ways, he is the way to the Father. John 14, 6, no man comes to the Father but by me.

And Jesus understood he's the way. And that truth and that life, why do you have the truth? Isn't it great that he said all three things? He didn't just say, I am the way. No man comes to the Father but by me.

It would make perfect sense, but that's not what he said. He said, I'm the way, the truth, and the life. We all have life, we all have truth, and we are all on that way through the Lord Jesus.

But the truth and the life that we have is supposed to carry us to the Father. Well, Paul is one of the galley slaves rowing that ship to get us to the Father, if you will. So it really cast the whole section of Corinthians here in a fresh light for me because when Paul applies these things to himself and to Apollos in a figure, as he says in verse 6 of chapter 4, for your sakes that you may learn through us, that you may learn through us, learn the truth, understand the life, walk the way.

He is a means for that to happen, right? So as you continue in the chapter and he talks about not thinking beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up, look at verse 6 again and see that word, puffed up, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other. This word puffed up only occurs 7 times in the New Testament, and 6 of them are in 1 Corinthians. It's a really interesting word, I want to share it with you, because it's going to occur in our passage again in chapter 5, and it's going to occur 4 more times besides these 2. So let's

take a quick look at this, that none of you may be puffed up.

If I can get there, we're having a little bit of an internet issue here, which I'm about to fix with Matthew's help. Okay, I will get there if I have to crawl on my hands and knees. Alright, here we go.

The word is phusiao, p-h-u-s-i-o-o, phusiaso. Actually it's phusiao, but it's an onomopoeitic word because it means to blow into a thing. Phusio, phusiao.

And the two O's on the end, one's an omicron and one's an omega, so you'd put a long mark over the second O. Instead of phusiu to you, it's phusiao. And it means to blow, to puff. You've noted the passing of Dr. Billy Graham in recent days, and the Gaither organization has a biography that they played on PBS of Billy Graham.

And they were talking about his early career, and he had found Cliff Barrows, and he had George Beverly Shea, and he was doing crusades. He opened in a big venue, but the crowds were very modest, and the press wasn't really picking up on it, and he was not yet a phenomenon. So he'd been in this town, and I apologize, I forget if it was Chicago or New York or some fairly large venue, but they had done a tent city almost.

They had these huge tents, but people were just kind of trickling in. And it wasn't the Billy Graham that we've come to know, and the press was ignoring him. One day he goes down, he'd been there, I think this is maybe the eighth day that he had been in this town.

And he went down to those tents, and the press is thronging down there. And they want interviews, and the next day he's headline news all over the place. And from that point on, he never didn't have a packed house.

That was the first time they packed it out, and it was because the press picked it up and just really advertised and brought him to the forefront. And 40,000 people made decisions for Christ, but it was a real turning point. It was the single biggest turning point in his entire life.

And it all hinged on two words, and one of them is this word right here, Fusiao, because William Randolph Hearst of newspaper magnate fame sent a two-word telegram to the press in that city, and it said, Puff Graham. Puff in press and media terms means promote, make a lot of attention and make a lot of things known. William Randolph Hearst, God only knows why, sent this telegram, and he said, Puff Graham.

From that point, he was over the top. Well, here, this means literally to puff up. It's very well translated here.

Some other translations say be arrogant or be prideful or whatever, but it literally means to be inflated with air, not substance. You're big, but there's not a lot of mass there. It's oversized for what you really are.

And he says, don't think beyond what is written that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against another, to be overinflated. And it's going to come up again in our passage this morning. So this is the big picture here.

Let me just do a quick thing here. We're looking at the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the last half of chapter 4, as we saw last time, there was that transference. Paul says, I have put this on Apollos and me for your sakes, but it's really Jesus Christ.

So you remember when we read the last part of this, you are already full. Verse 8, you are already rich. You have reigned as kings without us.

And indeed, I could wish you did reign, that we also might reign with you. Who is actually going to reign? Who is the king? Remember Matthew 24, when the Son of Man comes and the glory of His kingdom and all the angels with Him, you remember that? Well, this is starting in verse 8, I think, and verse 9, God has displayed us last, as men condemned to death, we've been made a spectacle. Who is the one who is the ultimate one condemned to death? Who is the one that was ultimately made a spectacle? The Lord Jesus.

Paul is a model. He's a representation. He says, Apollos and I are a figure.

Jesus is the one who ought to be reigning, and yet you all are reigning in His stead. You are reigning. He has been made a spectacle.

He's the one that has died. But Paul says, we as apostles are a visible figure of that. Remember, they don't have the New Testament.

The four Gospels are not circulating yet. So God is using the apostles, Paul in particular, as a graphic Bible, a visual Bible. When you look at Paul, you see Christ.

This explains so much to me. Remember when Paul says, let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Remember that? They can't see Jesus.

They don't have the full New Testament. So Paul is a walking depiction of the Lord Jesus in his life and in his death and in his resurrection. Remember when he was stoned and left for dead at Lystra? And then he's raised.

He's a picture. He's a walking New Testament in that first generation. And it's so critical to understand that as we go forward.

We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise. We are weak, but you are strong. You are distinguished, but we are dishonored, in verse 10.

Verse 11, to the present hour, we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed and beaten and homeless. Remember the guy says, Lord, I want to follow you. And he says, the Son of Man doesn't have a place to lay his head.

We labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless. Being persecuted, we endure.

Being defamed, we entreat. We've been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now. I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children, I warn you for though you might have 10,000 instructors in Christ, you do not have many fathers.

For in Christ Jesus, I have begotten you through the gospel. And he was a witness to Christ. Remember Jesus said, you shall be witnesses unto me.

And that first generation, they are the only witnesses. You can drive through the hills of Oklahoma as I do. And every third section has a corner that somebody or other's apostolic church, and they've got the apostle Fred Mertz there holding forth.

And I'm sorry, I'm sure there's a lot of wonderful things happening in that group, but him being an apostle is not one of them. Because when that which is complete is come, which is the written record from the apostles, Penn and Luke and a few others, then the apostolic ministry was no longer necessary. They were walking representations of the Lord Jesus.

They represented him verbally. They represented him in some cases physically. Nearly all of them came to martyr's deaths, as we know from church tradition.

And this was God's means of communicating. Now, I'm about to build on that two points. They are graphic representations of what will eventually be in writing, right? Now, what else accompanies the apostolic ministry that we don't have now that Scripture is here, if you're a good dispensationalist? What do we no longer have? The special miraculous gifts.

Gifts of healing. They healed. Why? Jesus healed.

It was a mark of who He was. John 9, the man born blind. How could this man not be from God? Since the beginning of the world, who's ever heard of anybody curing congenital blindness? He's got to be from God.

Well, those who represent Him do similar things because they represent the Lord Jesus until the Scripture is complete and it is going to represent the Lord Jesus all down through the remaining centuries. But those are blessings, right? The only negative miracle I can think of is when Simon the sorcerer wants to pay money so he can confer the Holy Spirit on people and he gets struck blind in the same way that the Apostle Paul was struck blind until he got his thinking straightened out. But generally, the miraculous gifts, what do they do? There's healing.

There's tongues and the interpretation of tongues. There is prophecy. These are beneficial.

They are positive things, right? They're miraculously positive in the physical realm because they represent invisible truths about what happens to us spiritually, right? The bodily healings represent this is what the Lord Jesus does to us. He makes us whole. He completes us.

He fulfills our destiny. He makes it possible for us to come to the Father and that's the only

reason to be alive is to connect with our Heavenly Father, the Creator, and dwell with Him and experience eternal life with Him. So these physical miracles on the positive side are pictures and graphic representations until the Scripture is complete of what it is to be connected to God, the source of all things, the source of life and blessing, right? That's point one on my foundation that the apostles represent Christ.

Now, here comes my other point and it's in chapter five. Let's read it. It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles that a man has his father's wife and you are what? Fusio.

You are puffed up. You're full of air over this. Very same word we had in 4.6. Paul says you shouldn't be puffed up one against another and he says you are puffed up over this guy.

I'm thinking, you know, you could be a lot of things. You could be maybe excessively tolerant. You could turn a blind eye.

You could, you know, refrain from criticism. But this isn't what they're doing. This guy has his stepmother.

He's living in close relation with his, and because it says father's wife, it's clearly not his own mother or it would be said it's his stepmother. It's his father's wife or former wife or something. And it's not known even among the Gentiles, not named.

And this is against Roman law. You know, the Romans were pretty relaxed about what you do on your own time as long as you're not committing overt crimes. But there was Roman law against this specific relationship.

A man, it was defined as incense. It was, but the soldiers could come and lock you up. I think I said incense.

I meant incest. So, you are puffed up and have not rather mourned that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I indeed as absent in body but present in spirit have already judged as though I were present him who has so done this deed.

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Keep in mind all of the introduction we just covered now. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together along with my spirit with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, what did Jesus say about where two or three are gathered in his name? What did he say? There am I in the midst.

And so, you know, I ask myself, now is this literally true? When the Corinthian church meets, Paul's spirit somehow leaves his body and he's in their fellowship. He's got eyes and ears and he's floating in an immaterial invisible. What does he mean? This is scripture.

Paul says, I am absent in body but present in spirit. You know how people like to take a claim in one part of scripture and then inject it into another part of scripture? Can you think of another

time when Paul says absent in body and present? What does he say? I would prefer to be absent from the body and present with the Lord. Now if that's just sort of an abstraction and it's not really a physical presence, when I leave this body I want to be, me, myself and I, present with the Lord.

You know, I think it's, you shut your eyes here, you open them, you're at the rapture, all of your family and fellow believers, there's the Lord, you know. Absent from the body, face to face with the Lord. When does the Bible say we as church are face to face with the Lord? It's at the rapture.

The dead in Christ rise first, we get to see them, just as we're about to say, hey, up we go, right? So he says, absent from the body, present with the Lord. Well here he says, I indeed as absent in body but present in spirit have already judged. Well, I don't think that Paul engaged in mystical out-of-body travels.

He says as absent. Remember he's talking about I'm using myself as a figure here, I'm presenting these things to you in sort of a parable form. And he says, think of me as not where I really am, but right in your midst.

And just because he says absent with the body and present with the Lord in one passage, doesn't mean that the literality of that transfers to this, or that the non-literality of this transfers to that. It's similar language, how do we know the difference? It starts with con and ends with text. Context.

You can't proof text. You can't lay this scripture next to absent with the body, face to face with the Lord and say they're the same thing. They're not.

How do we know they're not? Because we don't just lift them. If you plucked my right eye out and laid it on the ground somewhere and somebody came up and found it, how would they know anything about me? Until they did some DNA testing or ran around looking for a guy in the hospital missing one of his ocular orbs. You cannot extract a thing and know you need the whole thing.

If you want Sam, you've got to get more than just the eye or the ear or the hand. It's got to be the whole thing together. Put it in its context.

Well, that however is not our main point here. He says, verse four, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together along with my spirit, and what he's saying is, why would he be there? He says, if I'm present in spirit, what does it mean? This action is being done with the invocation of his apostolic authority. They are acting, he's not physically present, but his apostolic authority is present.

This action that he is about to demand isn't on them. It's not originating with them. It doesn't have its final authority with them.

He says, I, Paul the Apostle, have judged this, and it is all the same as if I was in your midst. When you do this, if anybody says, why are you doing this? Because the Apostle Paul has adjudicated this matter, and this is what he says. Now, this is, you remember the foundation I built these two points on? Not only are the blessings in the miraculous healings and communications and so on in the early church, a picture of spiritual reality.

Here's my second point. So are the curses. So are the curses.

These things are in bodily form, and they are exaggerated because they depict a spiritual truth. This convocation, where they are going to commend this guy to Satan, it is as though Paul is present, but he's not. It is as though the Lord Jesus is present, even though physically he is not.

So we're being lifted into a three-dimensional world here, not two dimensions. We're not just thinking in literal terms, and we're not thinking anytime somebody commits incest, Satan is going to come and somehow dissolve their molecules into a puddle of concupiscence there. It's going to be something in the spiritual realm.

You'll remember that point now, won't you? Something in the spiritual realm. Notice what he says in verse 5, when you are gathered along with my spirit with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the authority of the Lord Jesus.

This is the authority of the Apostle Paul that is in view here. So in verse 5, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. You know what day means, right? We've covered this a couple of times since we started this book.

What is the day of the Lord Jesus? Day of judgment. Remember back when he said, I don't need to be judged by you or any human day. I don't know of anything against myself, but that doesn't vindicate me.

Same thing here, the day of the Lord Jesus. This is the judgment seat of Christ. This is the day of evaluation.

So in total here, what's our point? In Corinth, or Corinth, in Corinthians for us, somehow the human mouth can't say two words at the same time. You have to pick one. In Corinth, this guy has taken up lodging with his father's wife.

And for some reason, this is thought to be a great thing in the church. It isn't looked at as an immoral thing. And I ask myself, how have they rationalized this? Because they clearly have.

They've found a way to look at this as a great thing. So what are the possibilities? And we're not given what they are. But suppose, for example, that the family is very, very rich or very, very influential in Corinth.

And by taking up with this lady, this man in the church confers advantages on the group in

terms of freedom from persecution, lowered taxes, income. Maybe he's able to drop a lot into the plate every Sunday because maybe the father died and this woman inherited the estate and the man did not. Maybe he's a younger son.

Maybe there was some falling out. Who knows what happened. But some kind of way, this relationship of this son with his father's wife, some kind of way, they look at this as they're not congratulating themselves on their flexibility and how big tent and open fold and everybody come.

That's not it. Because they've already been condemned for being narrow and being exclusive and not having a big tent mentality. No, something about this relationship confers an advantage.

It's either political or financial or it gives them some other kind of leverage. And this is the constant bane of especially larger churches is if you have somebody that's got influence or has wealth or has position or has notoriety of some sort. There was a church in Dallas.

Billy Graham is from Monterey, North Carolina. That's where he and Ruth moved and raised all their kids and that's where she was from. And they spent their whole lives there.

But Billy Graham for over 50 years was a member of First Baptist Church of Dallas. Well, the church, of course, thought this was great and made no secret of the fact that, well, you know, Billy Graham's a member here. Well, Billy Graham, I think, darkened the doors there maybe three or four times.

His membership was nominal, but it was thought to confer an advantage on the church. And I'm not picking on them. Billy Graham put his membership wherever he wants.

But I'm trying to illustrate how this must have been looked at in terms of rationalizing, minimizing the fact that, well, yes, she was at one time married to the man's father, but look at how great this is that influence or money or whatever is flowing into the church. And they were puffed up. They were proud of this.

I didn't know until I was an adult that proud literally does mean to puff up. Well, not an adult. I found it out when we had a horse that got tangled up in a barbed wire fence and had a really bad cut on his foreleg.

And so the vet came out and stitched it and gave my dad some medicine to put on. He said, now, you've got to keep putting this on. This is going to actually eat away at the edges of this wound.

And he said, because otherwise he's going to have a huge scar here and it's going to stiffen and it'll mess with the way his foot works. But he said, this overgrowth as it tries to heal is called proud flesh. Proud flesh.

And it's excessive flesh. It's too big for what it needs to be. And this medicine, it was kind of a purple, nasty smelling stuff.

And I don't think it was pleasant for the horse, but when he finally healed up, you'd have never known he had a cut. And the thing was just gory when it first started. He was tangled in the fence.

We had to go up there and cut him out of it. But the medicine was designed to prevent this proud flesh from creating a problem. And that's when I came to understand that proud really does mean something that is too much, too big, puffed up.

And so this is, they're taking pride. This puffed up is a big deal. They're swelling and saying, so-and-so is in our church.

And Paul says, instead of being puffed up over this, you should have been grieving. He says, you had not, in verse two, had you not rather mourned that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. And what it tells us and what it reminds us of, once we think about it, we know this.

There are two ways to look at almost everything. We saw this in our memory verse, to the extent that things are good, to the extent that they're noble or lovely or a good report, think on these things. Well, in this case, there was no spiritual upside, but there was some other advantage.

And they chose to overlook the moral problem. And Paul says, the Romans even know better than this. It's not even named among the Gentiles.

Nobody thinks this is a good idea. And it is a great damage to the cause of Christ. And this should not be embraced or even tolerated.

It needs to be excised. If your right eye offends you, this is why I had that in my mind, pluck it out. If your right hand offends you, cut it off, Jesus said.

There are certain things that if they remain like a cancer, they will metastasize. They are malignant. They will destroy everything if you do not get them removed.

And he says, this particular thing isn't something to be proud of. It's something that needs to be excised. And it's a reminder of the destructive potential of sin.

People say, I saw a big long article. I was cleaning out my office yesterday, and I have a box of stuff. I have lugged this box.

The box weighs 40 pounds. It's full of paperwork, my Marine Corps career, my manuals for every piece of stereo camera, weapons, all of my stuff is in there. And the third thing is, I had some Bible-related materials.

It's a very dense box. In 35 years, I've never had time to go through this box. I opened it up yesterday and said, I'm going through this box.

I'm going to get this stuff sorted out. Kept the stuff that I still have throughout. Most of the manuals have long gone.

Remember those radios that had a phone on the back? I had two manuals for those. I haven't even seen those in 30 years, and I still had the manuals. So I sorted all this out.

But I found this thing called, I can't remember the name of it, but it has a real old-time banner. It looks like it was printed in the 1930s, but they still were publishing it at the point that I archived it. And it had a four-page article on why does God allow evil? And I was reading through there and made a lot of good points, but I can tell you in less time than I took to introduce it, why God allows evil.

We can never understand the destructive power of sin unless we see it. Have you ever tried to tell your kids how dangerous something is and they just don't get it? You haven't lived until you have tried to describe to someone something you know, and you have seen, they don't know, and they haven't seen. And you're trying to say, you just don't realize the fire you're playing with here.

You don't realize the potential for devastation and life-changing, irreversible consequence. If you put yourself in this position, if you go down this road, if you make this choice, if you adopt this strategy, if you live this way or do this thing, you just wish you could take your brain out and shove it into their head for two minutes and then put everything back and say, you see what I'm talking about? Spock on Star Trek used to do this with his Vulcan mind mill. He'd stick his fingers in somebody's face and their minds would unite and then they'd come away and they would say, I have seen what you've seen.

I have heard what you heard. Now I get it. I'm like Simon the Sorcerer.

I would go to the Lord and say, I'll give you any amount of money. If I could just Vulcan mind milled and transfer what I have seen and what I know in certain cases to certain people. But you can't.

People have to experience things for themselves. I'm sure that my parents would have loved to inform me ahead of time before they launched me out into the wide world, especially into the Marine Corps. Here's what you really ought to avoid.

And, uh, but you have to learn for yourself. Why is there evil in the world? Because we would never believe unless we saw it firsthand, how bad it is. Why does Paul, I mean, yes, incest is horrible.

So is child abuse. So is torture. So are, you know, mass murders, Pol Pot, Ho Chi Minh, all these people.

There's been a lot of evil in the world. Why does this guy get turned over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh? I mean, I get that it's immoral, but I can name any number of heinously immoral things that are just disgusting. And this is the only guy I know of that an apostle turned over to Satan by proxy for the destruction of his flesh.

And I think why so severe? Well, why does God allow all of these things to go on and we view it? We experience it. We suffer from it. We watch others suffer.

Why? We're living eternal life. We will never forget what we have seen. You can think of things that you've seen and that you'll never forget.

And it conditions your viewpoint. It conditions your own priorities and goals and decisions and values, right? Well, God isn't going to have to strap our volition down on the plus side. He's not going to have to prevent us from being free to choose because there are certain things in the eternal future we will never choose because we have seen their awful destructive consequences firsthand.

Why would we do that? Why are the angels watching so intently what goes on down here? Because they are involved in history and they are learning. The unfallen angels are not going to have a subsequent fall sometime down the road because they've seen what happened to the third that followed Satan and they've seen what happened to us when we as a race went down that road. This episode in the life of the Corinthian church, Paul tells us down in verse 9, I wrote to you in my earlier letter, don't keep company with immoral people.

You have not done so. I am telling you now as though I were present and invoking as though I were present my apostolic authority, you will meet as a church, publicly excommunicate, not in the Catholic sense, but in the breaking of fellowship. There is a time when you must separate from that which if you continue contact will destroy you.

You have to get some distance. Even the Lord Jesus, try to reconcile, go the second time, then bring it before the ecclesia, before the assembly. It wasn't the church church, but it was the Jewish assembly.

If they will not be reconciled, you put them in the category of a heathen and a tax collector. Now, you don't egg them, you don't attack them, you don't try to judge them. What should you do with heathens and tax collectors if you're a God-fearing Jew or if you're a healthy Christian? How do you treat heathens and tax collectors? Separation.

You hope that things will change, you can pray for those who despitefully use you, you can love your enemies, do good to those, all the rest of it, but there's distance. There is a gulf fixed between the rich man and Lazarus. There's a gulf.

God establishes that separation for a reason. If Lazarus were to even dip his finger in water and touch that guy's tongue, he is in danger of getting corrupted and going down the same road. So, he cannot go and touch the guy's tongue, one touch.

God says, no, great gulf fixed. People over here can't go there, those that are over there cannot come here. That gulf is necessary to preserve righteousness, to preserve holiness, and to quarantine evil.

Now, Paul is going to go on in this chapter to talk about you can't go out of the world. So, there are times when you do this and times when you don't. But it's very practical, but ultimately, we're going to go back to our foundation.

We're just about to go to our break here, but I want to make one quick point. In the early church days, when you had the apostles on the earth, and they are the walking, talking Bible. They are the walking, talking picture of Lord Jesus Christ.

And we've seen that consistently, beginning back in the middle of chapter 4, right? It's still here. This is the Lord Jesus, as it were, for us, saying, if you identify, just like He did when He was walking the earth and preaching and teaching, talking about eyes and hands being cut off. It is better for you to enter into life missing that, than to keep it and be in danger of destruction.

Remember in the old King James, it says hellfire, in danger of hellfire. Well, it's not the lake of fire, loss of salvation. We know that.

It's this. So, what we want to know now is, what is this destruction of the flesh so that the Spirit may be saved, when? Verse 5, in the day, the judgment day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying is not good.

Notice this puffed up attitude about this guy? They're glorying. They're claiming this is an advantage of some sort. And Paul doesn't even bother to repudiate whatever the rationale is.

But one final thought on this. This, I believe, is part of what some of the teachers in Corinth had spun. One of the reasons Paul is so wound up about these teachers who think much of themselves, and he says, I'm going to come and we'll see, is it the word or is it the power? And he says, I've only mentioned Paul and Apollos, but there are these unnamed teachers.

Well, some of them have made this a glorying point in the church. It's a teaching. It's been spread and adopted by some of the leadership.

And Paul says, that glorying is not good. You've got some bad leadership in the church. And one of the things it's going to do, when they excise and expunge this guy from their fellowship, guess what's going to happen to all the ones who said this is a great idea? Well, their credibility is shot.

Paul has apostolic authority that none of them have. And when he says, this guy must go, all of the people who say, not only must he stay, but we should glory in it. Well, they are shot down by extension.

They lose all credibility and all traction with their teaching as well. So Paul is actually, you know

how when they go after a tumor, they get not only the cancer, but a little bit of all of the flesh around it that might be supporting it and feeding it blood and all the rest of it. Well, that's what's going to happen when this guy leaves.

All of those who thought this was a great idea and were puffed up and glorying in it are going to be either leaving or chastened by it. So this is going to be a healthy and necessary step. But this is Paul in Corinth in the first blush.

What is it to us? Well, we're going to come back from the break and go a little further in the chapter and we're going to see that. But the key to it, in my opinion, is recognizing that these forms, these early church miracles tell us something about spiritual truth now. And these on the opposite side of that, equal and opposite, the great cursings are not literal in this day in the same way that the healings are not literal and physical in this day.

They are pictures. They are designed to teach us how important it is to look for and expunge that which corrupts. Because what's on the line is the day of the Lord Jesus.

That's the constant through all of these. And if we're going to be able to, having done all, stand, stand therefore having girded your waist with truth and so on, the only way to stand is to look at this example and then look at our personal fellowship, our personal temple of God. And if there's something in there that we're actually thinking is pretty good, pretty fun, pretty advantageous, and yet we should be mourning and we should be sending it forth away and out, we've got to do that.

This is a graphic picture of a spiritual truth. And it's not the Apostle Paul we're going to be dealing with. Remember when he said at the end of chapter 4, what do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod or with love and a spirit of gentleness? We're not waiting for Paul to come back, are we? Who are we waiting for? Do we want the Lord Jesus to come back with a rod or with a spirit of love and gentleness to us? Well, we've got to do what these people are told to do.

And that's what we'll look at when we come back from the break.