

1Corinthians 18-03-11a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace & Truth Bible Church. It's great to have everyone here in our yet another one of our many venues. It probably looks the same on the camera because we have our portable background, but we can be almost anywhere.

And this morning we're up the hill in Claremore and we want to continue our study in 1st Corinthians. We'll be in chapter 5 and moving into chapter 6. Let's take a moment as we begin to ask God's blessing on our fellowship and on our study. We're looking forward to our special music and to our fellowship and our discussion, but let's ask God's blessing as we begin.

Father, we thank you for another day, another opportunity to learn and grow and put into practice the things that come to us through your Holy Spirit and the power of your Word. We are grateful for this portion and we ask that as we study it together, your Holy Spirit will grant us insight and enable us to see its pertinence and the difference that it should make and can make in our thinking and in our attitudes as we examine ourselves, as we look at our relationship to one another and to the world. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. Well let's read chapter 5 again and just get the flavor. There's a few misapprehensions that come to us because of the way the English is translated, but we'll try to straighten those out as we go.

It is actually reported, this is chapter 5 verse 1 of 1st Corinthians, it is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, this is the Greek word *porneia*, and such *porneia* as is not even named among the Gentiles, that a man has his father's wife and you are puffed up. We saw the nature of that, you are hollow and inflated over this, and have not rather mourned that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. For indeed I, 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, when you are gathered together along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 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. Now this naturally raises a few questions, doesn't it? You have to wonder about the role of Satan. Does Satan simply sit around waiting for somebody to be excluded from a fellowship so that he can destroy them? Does he sort of perform this as a free service? Is it in his interest to destroy such a one? What does it mean turning him over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh? Satan is after all an intelligent thinking entity with a plan and a purpose, and what makes us think that he is just sort of sitting around waiting for somebody to be tossed in his direction? Your glorying is not good.

Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ our

Passover was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Then he sort of turns a corner in verse 9, and we think, well, he's addressing a different subject, but this is actually integral to what he has just said. I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.

But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or drunkard, or an extortioner, not even to eat with such a person. For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? Those who are outside God judges. Therefore put away from yourselves the evil person." Well, we started this last time.

What is going on? First of all, the report has come to Paul that there is a man living in a state of immorality that is even recognized as such in the Gentile community. Such is not even named among the Gentiles. A man has his father's wife, and this is perhaps legally possible.

A couple has a son. The mother dies. The man has a second marriage.

She is the stepmother. The father dies, perhaps. The stepmother is closer in age maybe than usual to the son.

By hook or by crook, legally it is possible that the widowed woman could marry the son. There's no law against it, but it is considered out of the bounds of morality. This is in some sense not right.

We don't know the details of how this works. Is the father still alive? What circumstance would make it possible for them to view marrying your father's wife as legitimate? What we do know is two things. First of all, Paul's primary purpose here is not judgment and destruction.

That's not what he's after. Paul's not pronouncing this sentence and using this exercise of authority because he wants to destroy the church or destroy the man. It's not his purpose, and it's here in the Greek, and I'll explain that in just a second.

But if you'll notice, most of what he talks about here is the purity of the group. Your glorying is not good in verse 6. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? By maintaining contact with this individual as a brother in the fellowship, this is going to leaven the whole lump. There is a destructive spread that comes from sin.

This is what is often overlooked. I've heard and read a lot of atheistic objection to the God of the Bible and why he is so down on behavior that people are not interested in either can't help or don't think is particularly bad, and God seems to be excessively judgmental. We've discussed this before.

There is a metastasizing, cancerous nature to sin. I mentioned, I think, a week or two ago that I recently was in a discussion with someone, and they said, well, why is there all this judgment? Why all of the harsh retribution that God puts on sin, and why does there have to be this sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, and this bloody display, and this horrific infliction of judgment? Why can't God just forgive sin? He's God. He's omnipotent.

Why can't He look at sin and just say, you know, let me explain that that was wrong, but if you come to me, I forgive you. Why all of the Levitical sacrifices that pictured the death of all these animals, ultimately the death of Christ, and along with that, those who do not accept the work of Christ on their behalf, they suffer an ultimate eternal penalty of death, and sin is implicated. Sin is what brought death into the world.

So why? Why this big deal? Well, it reminds me of things that I was taught in school. It could remind you of things that you were taught in school. You can talk about the dangers of smoking leading to lung cancer.

You can talk about the dangers of not securing an electrical circuit at the panel while it is being worked on at the other end. I, to my horror and shame, actually did this. I have been trained.

I know better. Any time an electrical circuit is being worked on, for example, take the example of your home. You need to change out a plug.

Something needs to be done. So you go to the breaker panel and you flip off the breaker. You tell everybody in the house now, I have turned off this breaker because I'm working down here.

And that is safety. In the Navy, you have to put signage and all kinds of things at the point that you've cut off the circuit. Well, one day last year, I had an electrician out.

He cut the breakers off and he was doing some work on the electricity out at the pump. He was out behind the little fence screen there. Somebody came and I forgot the guy was out there.

I walked into the garage and something was beeping, like the internet or whatever, the little backup unit or whatever. I just reached over and flipped the breaker. The guy was working on the circuit.

Well, naturally, he came in in a somewhat excited state because he got shocked. I had been with him. He and I together had turned it off.

He went out there. He'd been out there a half hour. Real estate lady, somebody came by.

I forget what was going on. I can't remember now what possessed me. Something wasn't working.

And I said, oh, it's just the breaker. And without thinking, I flipped it. Yeah, well, the guy's out there and he's got pliers and wires.

And I was mortified. I was humiliated. I know better than this.

You can tell somebody all day long about the dangers of a thing. What would have really been bad is if he'd been standing in a puddle out there and it hit power and had been knocked out. And I still didn't remember he was out there.

I mean, this was a potentially seriously dangerous situation. I did it. Why? It wasn't sufficiently impressed on me how dangerous that is.

It is now. I'll tell you what I even when I'm the only person working, I take all kinds of steps. I will never let that happen again in my life.

I've been trained. I knew better. I've worked on electricity a lot.

But when you are responsible for zapping someone else, it sticks with you in a way that no amount of talking, no amount of videos, no amount of YouTube is ever going to do. I personally was responsible for endangering the man's life. And because of that, I now have a new and fresh appreciation for not doing that in the future.

This is what we're talking about with sin. It's one thing for God to say, you know, that sin is a really bad thing. Let's not do that anymore.

I forgive you. But we underestimate sin's power. We underestimate its corrosive, destructive, life-taking nature.

How can we forgive sin? How can we forgive sin? How can God get that across to us? Well, in the Old Testament days, He got it across to the Israelites by saying, you know what, because you have allowed sin in the perimeter, because you have transgressed, because you have broken God's law, this animal has to die. Because this is rife in your community, there is a lamb that's going to die every morning, and there's a lamb that's going to die every evening. Every day in Israel, from the time the Levitical offering started, there was the daily sacrifice, a lamb in the morning, a lamb in the evening.

And you think, well, that's just heinous. It's wanton destruction. How cruel, how violent, how bloody and unnecessary is that? No.

If you want to understand why God has to destroy the majority of the human race in the lake of fire, destroy a third of the angels in the lake of fire, do you want to know why they have to be expunged? It is because any presence is like leaven, and a little leaven leavens the whole lump. Sometimes there's no other way to get this across. This is why good parents used to spank their children.

You need to understand that when you break rules, it is going to cause harm. It is going to cause pain. So here is a symbolic representation of the damage that can be done by your disobedience.

And it is designed to associate, in the mind, disobedience with negative consequence that is memorable. And it's very effective. Very effective.

You remember it your entire life. And that's what is going on here. Paul says, not because he has a punitive desire to see this man suffer, but because he has a father's desire that the group he founded and his brothers and sisters in Christ not end up destroyed, they have got to remove the source of offense.

They've got to remove the contact with this sin. It is, and I've said this many times, but when the doctor goes in to remove a tumor, many times they will take healthy flesh around it to ensure that there is no further contact with that metastasizing influence. You can't afford to hope that, you know, and why not leave it? Isn't it a part of your body? Doesn't it have life? Doesn't it have the right to live just because it's of a different sort? No, because of its destructive nature, it has to go.

So that's this man. And they are puffed up. They are proud.

Why? Well, as you read the rest of this, and he says, I wrote to you, verse 9, in my epistle, not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Remember earlier in this letter, I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Cephas, I am of Christ. And part of this is not just identifying with a faction, but there were different views held by those who followed these different leaders.

Paul had written in an earlier letter, do not keep company with Pornia people. Well, these leaders, evidently some of the unnamed leaders, came up and said, well, this is just ridiculous. This doesn't make any sense.

Use your logical mind here. If we are not to keep company with immoral people, we are going to have to move out of Corinth, because my neighbor is an immoral person. My other neighbor is an idolater.

I can't buy food without coming in contact with people who aren't of the fellowship. And so, this is ridiculous. They took Paul's instruction and said, it makes no sense.

Paul wrote not to keep company with immoral people. Well, there is nobody that is not immoral. We would have to go form an Amish community or become Quakers and go out and live in some little commune.

But we can't do that. It is not practical. My living, my property, my relatives, everybody I have truck with here could qualify under this.

So this Paul is off the mark. This Paul is just being silly and ridiculous. It makes no common sense at all.

Paul says in verse 9, look, I wrote to you in my letter, my previous letter, not to keep company with sexually immoral people. So what happened is, they said, that is ridiculous. And look, not

only are we going to keep company with the immoral people around us, but we will allow them in the church.

And it became a point of pride. We are smarter than Paul and we have got this figured out. So, you know, if I am going to buy meat from the immoral butcher and I am going to buy grain from the immoral farmer, well, I will allow the guy that is married to his father's wife into the church because we are a lot smarter than this prohibition.

Paul is just being silly. He has lost his marbles. Paul says, I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people, yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or with the idolater, or with the immoral, or reviler, or drunkard, or extortioner.

You would have to go out of the world. He says, I am not arguing against common sense here. If you had been paying attention, if you had read more closely, if you had really been trying to understand and pray about and think about and reflect on what I meant in that letter, I wrote you not to keep company with anyone named a brother.

There is a difference in what you tolerate and what you associate with at a distance. A hot burner on a stove will seriously injure you by close contact, but as long as I stay a few feet away, it is useful. Distance makes dangerous things safe.

I can have a live wire, but if I am not in physical contact with it, it is not going to harm me. I respect it. I understand it is danger, but I have some insulation.

I have some separation. And Paul says you need to understand what I am talking about here is that I am not saying that we are so pure and we are so holy that we can't be anywhere near the unclean thing. He says it is what you allow yourself to touch, what is inside your fellowship.

I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother who is sexually immoral or covetous or an idolater or reviler or drunkard or extortioner, not even to eat with such a person. Eat with. It doesn't say do business with.

It doesn't say live next to. It doesn't say walk down the street and bump shoulders with. It says eat with.

You are embracing. You are approving. You are condoning.

You are accepting. You are in harmony and sympathy with this particular thing. Don't eat with such a person.

I didn't mean with the sexually immoral people of the world or with these other forms of immorality, these other forms of patterned sin. Notice this isn't somebody who one time did a bad thing. These are characteristics.

Extortioners don't extort one time and then quit. These are ING words. They are those who are

characterized by this, who are known for this, someone who is routinely covetous, routinely reviling, routinely drunk, routinely doing these immoral things.

If this is the pattern of their life, if you're living with your father's wife, if you've set up housekeeping with her, this isn't a one time dalliance. This isn't an impermissible kiss at the office Christmas party or something. This is something that is established as a pattern.

This is something that people have a reputation for and are known for. So what is he really talking about here? The purity of the church as a group is in view. And if you bring in an idolater, if you bring in an extortioner, if you bring in an immoral, incestuous person and approve them and are proud of the fact that you have them in your midst, you have contact with the live wire.

You have contact with that which will destroy. A little leaven leavens the whole lump. Now you can keep leaven in your house.

That's why they had to purge it out at Passover, right? There's leaven in the house, but you don't let it touch the dough that is supposed to be on leaven bread. You keep a separation. You keep a distance.

You have an insulation so that even while you are aware of and have some contact with these things that have potential destructive power, you know when, where, and how to have contact. And you don't let it in to those core things that make a difference. It's one thing, for example, to tolerate the promises of obscurity that we have in our culture.

I go to the sandwich shop and there are people there who are obviously engaged in a lifestyle or in associations of which I do not approve. Now am I going to embrace them and have them over for lunch and go to their house? No. Am I going to buy a sandwich from them? Sure.

I'm not to judge them. I judge what is inside my own walls, what's in my own household. And as for me and my house, we're trying to serve the Lord.

And that is a pattern that we can't associate with on a familiar basis, on an intimate basis. I respect your choice because God respects your choice. God does not agree with immorality and with sin and with criminal activity, but God respects the choice because He doesn't blast and blight at the point of the decision every person that makes it.

God respects it. He says, look, you want to go that way? You can't. Now this is important because I say all of that to say this.

What does it mean to turn someone over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh? Is Satan waiting there sharpening his butcher knife? He's got his meat cleaver and he is going to chop somebody in pieces as soon as they are sent out of the church? Not at all. Let's go back to the beginning here. Man has his father's wife in verse one.

Verse two, you are puffed up and have not rather mourned. Two choices here. You can either be glad or be sorry.

You can be proud or you can be mortified. Now if I thought it was a cool thing to zap the electrician, I would be puffed up. Well, he should have known better.

He's an electrician. It's not my fault, but I mourn over that. I mourn to this day as sort of a crude example, but we ought to be sorry if we have done the wrong thing.

We ought to find ways to not do that anymore. And he says you should have mourned that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. And when it says done this deed, and you say, well I thought you said it was a pattern and not an episode.

Evidently he married the woman. He has entered into some sort of contractual, you know, long-term thing. He has formalized this relationship.

He has established it. He has announced it. He has flaunted it, that he's done it in a way that makes it identifiable as a deed.

He who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. This should have disqualified him in their eyes from fellowship. Another extreme example in a church is if you have a pastor, and I have known several, who in the course of well-meant counseling, trying to help a woman who was having self-esteem issues and was left by a guy and perhaps was abused, and you know, in an attempt to communicate the Word of God and to stimulate good thinking and getting back on track and so on, at some point their judgment took a back seat and there was an excessive amount of intimacy leading to a relationship on the part of a married pastor with a woman in the church that is illicit, immoral, and wrong.

Most of us know instinctively and are formally taught that in seminary you do not counsel one-on-one women, ever. Never alone with them. Never closed door session.

Somebody else has to be there. You have to make sure that things don't get out of hand when you're failing to pay attention. And your well-meant desire to reassure and to comfort and to put an arm around someone's shoulder shouldn't turn into some sort of affair.

But it has over and over and over and over again. And pastors who ought to know better, wonderful teachers of the Word of God, exegetes, ice pastors if you know what that is, have gone down the drain. I have been in close observation of two guys you would never dream, and both of them, this is what tripped them up.

You have to keep certain things at a distance for safety. There has to be insulation. There has to be insulation.

You should have mourned. When you saw this happening, you should have cut off that contact. If you see somebody running an electric sweeper and suddenly they hit a puddle on the floor

and now they are standing there vibrating, and they're obviously in the process of being electrically shocked, what do you do? You've got to break that contact.

Get a broom handle. Push them over. Pull the plug on the sweeper.

Do something. Break the contact because you know how dangerous that is. When they saw this guy come into their fellowship, they should have recognized that like electrical danger and been shocked by it in the moral sense and broken contact.

So now Paul says, and this is very interesting because there's a phrase here you've got to circle and move. 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. Then in verse 4 it says, 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, deliver such a one to Satan.

And it sounds like we're all going to get together and say, In the name of the Lord Jesus, I abjure thee, I excommunicate thee, I send thee forth into the howling wilderness. Eizazel, go, you know, bear your sin away. The phrase there, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, at the beginning of verse 4, circle that and put a little arrow up right after the word judged.

I have already judged. That's where it belongs. I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, as though I were present.

It is the judgment that Paul has formed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And there's multiple reasons for it. I could give you the grammar, but I won't belabor that.

And that's why with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ belongs to the assembly. Paul is doing this in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. How do we close our prayers? In Jesus' name, I pray.

Paul basically says here, In Jesus' name, I judge. It is the name of the Lord Jesus that is in view in making this judgment. I have already judged in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is Paul's apostolic authority reflecting the authority of the Lord Jesus in saying, this is what has to happen. So then he says, When you are gathered together along with my spirit, and if you have an NIV or some of the other translations, they really tone this down as though, well, pretend like I'm with you. I can't be there, but pretend like I am.

He is saying he is actually present in spirit. Now, what does it mean to be present? We've thought about this as a church because we have remote attendees, and we say, well, I want face-to-face teaching. Well, can the face be on a screen? Can the voice be coming out of speaker? Or do you need to be in the same room as those who are assembled here this morning are? What does it mean to assemble is the bottom line.

Paul is talking about assembling with this group in spirit, right? And what he is saying is, I'm not saying pretend I'm there. I'm not saying act as though I were there. He says, in spirit, and I saw

one comment on this that I thought was good.

He said it really ought to be capital S slash small s because it is because of the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace. When we are gathered together in the name of the Lord Jesus, and we are one in the Holy Spirit, it unites our spirit, which is the intangible and eternal part of us as believers. And Paul says when you are gathered together in the spirit, my spirit is with you.

I'm anticipating this particular meeting. I will be praying for you as it happens, and I will be there in the spirit. My spirit is connected to the Holy Spirit, which is connected to your spirit.

And when you all assemble in the spirit, the Holy Spirit connects me to you, and I am there in that sense. It is a spirit assembly. If you drive up and down our road out here, 430 Road, there's a church on the way.

It's been there longer than we have, which is saying something. But it says spirit-filled worship. And I like that in the sense that it is a church.

Worship ought to be characterized by the presence of God's spirit. It ought to be spirit-filled. And it is the spirit that unites us.

We're not always in the same room, yet we're always fellow church members. We think about each other. We pray for one another.

We have occasions when we are helping one another, physically present, physically absent. But there is a sense in which we are always united wherever we are and whatever we're doing. And Paul invokes that here.

And he says, look, I've been gone a while. But when you're together and we have decided together that we're going to implement this course of action, I'm there. I'm with you.

And it is more than just a suggestion or an imagination. Paul is united with them actually in that sense. And we are united with each other wherever we are when we are united in common purpose, in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

And in that sense, we can assemble remotely. It is that much of a, it's not quite tangible, but it is a real link. And Paul invokes it here.

He doesn't just say, you know, pretend I'm there. They should have a sense of Paul's approval, of Paul's authority, of Paul's love for them and desire that their group be preserved whole and entire, that the Lord Jesus can present to Himself a glorious church that doesn't have spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but it is holy and without blemish. And it is a real thing.

So that's what he says here. He says, I have already in my apostolic role, in the name of the Lord Jesus, said this is what needs to happen. Now this flies in the face of the attitude.

If you go to the end of this book, Paul mentions that they wrote him a letter. He wrote them a

letter that he mentions here in verse 9. I wrote to you not to keep company, right? They wrote back and said, well, you're just being ridiculous. And it became a point of pride and they were puffed up that, well, you know, this Paul doesn't know what he's talking about.

And some of these teachers made that their point of approval, that they were more practical than Paul. And well, we should embrace these people. How are they going to come to Christ? And I'm sure they had all kinds of rationalizations.

But Paul says, look, in case you forgot, I'm an apostle and you're not. And when you gather the next time I am in the presence and power of the Spirit, my Spirit is with you. And this is what we're going to do.

I have made this judgment. And this is pretty well put up or shut up time for the Corinthian church. They are either going to recognize again Paul's apostolic authority and do what he says, or they're all going to be turned over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh because they've opened themselves up to that influence.

They like the electricity. They like the smoke more than they worry about the cancer or whatever. So he is directly confronting here.

They're questioning his authority. They're questioning his power. Remember at the end of the previous chapter when he said, what do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod or in love and a spirit of gentleness? Which way do you want it? Do I need to reassert my authority by physically swinging the rod as it were? Or will you recognize it yourselves and I can come in love and gentleness? And this is the way God deals with us.

When we judge ourselves, we're not judged. God can deal with us in love and gentleness. If we choose not to do that, we think we've got a better, smarter way, well, God will come with the rod and get our attention just as with a small child.

The older your children get, the less you have to physically discipline them because you can now use more in the realm of ideas and less in the realm of physical surprise. So what does it mean then when he says, 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? Verse 5, 1 Corinthians 5.5. What does it mean to be delivered over to Satan? Is this what Paul is doing? Is he saying, all right, you're going to take him. You're going to say whatever his name was.

Maybe his name is Zeus. We say, okay, Zeus here in the church, we're sending you out and as soon as you walk down the steps of the house here, Satan is going to grab you and drag you off and you're going to be in some sort of living destruction. What does it mean? Well, this is one place where it really does pay to have access to the Greek language and to see the way the sentence is constructed.

What is circumstance and what is purpose? And as we go to the break, I will tell you now that the purpose of the meeting is not the destruction of the flesh. We have structure here. We have

the Greek preposition *ace* and we have a purpose clause and we have a circumstantial clause and they're not the same thing.

So we're going to pause here and take our break and when we come back, we'll see what it means to be turned over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. But just remember, in the same way that we've talked about, as goes the nation in the Old Testament, so goes the individual believer in the new. There's a sense in which, and we saw this last time, what Paul says about the church in the first generations and in the apostolic age also pertains to the individual believer.

So if it is important for a church in order to maintain its purity and not be leavened and not be spoiled and unfit, to identify, mourn over, and separate from that which is destructive, how much importance is there for us to do the same thing in our own lives, in our own soul? To identify those things that are disqualifying, that are inhibiting, that are corrosive and corrupt and ultimately destructive and separate us from God. And so we have to make a choice. Is God going to come back to us with a rod or in a spirit of love and gentleness? Well it depends on whether we mourn over that that we ought to mourn over and separate from it or if we tolerate it and are even proud of it.

It's true for us as individuals and it's the primary application for us in this passage. Let's go to the break and when we come back we'll find out what Satan's doing when he's destroying.