

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

841 Old Hickory Blvd.

Jackson, TN 38305

oldhickorycofc.com

September 08, 2013

Volume 33, # 37

Put Away That Wicked Person

Sinful brethren must not be permitted to share in the fellowship or the company of faithful brethren.

When Paul wrote to the Corinthians, there were many besetting problems facing the congregation. These troubles were all likely reported to him by members of Chloe's household ([1 Cor. 1:11](#)). We have no idea who Chloe was, nor just who in her family might have had communication with the apostle. Apparently, however, they were well-informed Christians who knew that sin was running amuck in the church of God at Corinth. They were obviously alarmed about several issues in the church and wanted Paul's inspired perspective and directive in dealing with the troubles.

First Corinthians chapter five begins with Paul stating that a common report was circulating regarding blatant, gross immorality among the brethren in Corinth. This instance of ungodliness was well known to Christians and likely to the Corinthian community at large. Paul indicated that the immorality at Corinth was so repulsive that even Gentiles knew better than to practice such (v.

1). "Gentiles" is quite obviously used to distinguish believers from unbelievers, for the Corinthians were by nature Gentiles as far as their physical heritage was concerned. What a shame that unbelievers behaved better than Christians! Unregenerate Corinthians had quite an infamous reputation for their immorality in the first century. In that age, if one were to say of someone that he possesses the "morals of a Corinthian," you would be giving him no compliment at all. So, blatant sin practiced by Christians who previously were "washed, justified and sanctified" ([1 Cor. 6:9-11](#)) did incalculable damage to the cause of Christ. Paul could not let this pass without warning, rebuke, admonition, and a stern expectation that such a situation would immediately be corrected.

In particular, some brother in the church was guilty of "having his father's wife." This involved sexual sin. Many questions about this episode are unanswerable. For instance, "Was the man's father still living?" "Was the 'father's wife' an actual birth mother to the sinning brother at Corinth, or was she a step-mother?" "Was the man actually married to her, or was he carrying on a lustful tryst?" "What caused the Corinthians to turn a blind eye to this sin?" "Why was the church 'puffed up' instead of mournful over this situation?" We might venture some guesses in answering these questions but much remains unknown about why this problem existed in the first place. Apparently, the woman in question was not a Christian, for no instruction is given to the church about what should be done regarding her sin. Paul showed the Corinthians that they had responsibility to judge those who were inside the fellowship of the church (vv. 12-13). God would judge sinners outside the church.

Paul writes to the Corinthians as if he is shocked by their complacency regarding this case of sexual immorality. It is almost as if he is saying, "I simply cannot believe these reports I am hearing about you! Surely, you know better than to behave this way." He also seems surprised that the thought has apparently not occurred to the Corinthians that "he who has done this deed might (should) be taken away from among you" (v. 2). Rather, the Corinthians had gloried in this sinful brother's behavior and Paul wrote, "Your glorying is not good" (v. 6). What made the Corinthians so proud ("puffed up" NKJV; "arrogant" NASB) concerning this man? Was he a prestigious member of the Corinthian society? Was he a wealthy man by whom these brethren may have been employed? Was he a "heavy contributor" to the first day of the week collection ([1 Cor. 16:1, 2](#))? We simply do not know the answers. The fact that Paul did not have to call him by name is evidence, however, that everyone in the church knew of whom Paul wrote. This was not a private affair. It was well known to them all.

Paul forthrightly commanded the Corinthians to "deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (v. 5). Further, he enjoined that they should "purge out the old leaven" (v. 6). Finally, he reminded them of earlier instruction that they were "not to keep company with sexually immoral people" (v. 9). The apostolic expectation of the church was clear. They must not allow this sinning brother their approval and fellowship. They were "not even to eat with such a person" (v. 11), indicating that their social relationship with this brother could not continue as long as he practiced his sin.

Was it difficult for the church to obey this instruction? Yes, we think so. It is difficult for modern churches of Christ to obey, too. But before we quickly criticize the Corinthians, we might take a close look at our own congregation to see how lax or reluctant we have been to keep these directives. We have all made our share of excuses as to why we should not (or will not) "put away the evil person" (v. 13). Neglect of this command makes us all guilty of sin in one way or another. The Lord is simply not pleased with this and we will answer for our disobedience.

The leavening of the church by sin is destroying our ability to be lights in the middle of darkness ([Phil. 2:16](#)). God expected better of the Corinthians, and He expects better of us.

— Mark White via *Biblical Insights*, Vol. 4, No. 7, July 2004

Show Me Your Friends

The Spanish novelist Miguel de Cervantes wrote, "Tell me what company thou keepest, and I'll tell thee what thou art." Cervantes was not a prophet, he simply understood the strong influence friends exert over our lives. You can tell a lot about a person by the company they keep. Scripture brings this truth to light.

Show me your friends ...

And I'll show you your religious convictions. David wrote, "I am a companion of all who fear You, and of those who keep Your precepts"

(Psalm 119:63). Our companions will help or hinder us in letting our light shine, doing good works, devotion to God and in getting to heaven. We ought to be concerned if we realize all our close friends are either godless or involved in false religion.

Show me your friends ...

And I'll show you your favorite activities. "Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way. Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh: for the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man in rags" (Proverbs 23:19-21). We do things with our friends. Obviously, we do not choose friends so we can AVOID them. We want to spend time with them and generally pursue common interests. Are you involved with the party-hard, drunken, drug-using crowd? Well, guess what that makes you.

Show me your friends ...

And I'll show you your feelings about proper speech. "In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, But he who restrains his lips is wise" (Proverbs 10:19). Some people's mouths are a hotbed for sin: gossip, profanity, anger, criticism. Let us remember, "Evil company corrupts good habits" (1 Cor. 15:33).

What Do Your Friends Say About You?

- Andrew Roberts

Christ's Compassion

Jesus' life was filled with demonstrations of compassion. We would do well to emulate His example.

Compassion is "a sympathetic emotion created by the misfortunes of another, accompanied by a desire to help." Genuine compassion involves love, great feeling, interest, and concern.

The Gospel accounts tell of various ones on whom the Lord had compassion. Such individuals include a leper (Mk. 1:40-41), a demon-possessed man (Mk. 5: 18-20), a widow who lost her son (Lk. 7:11-15), and two blind men (Mt. 20:30-34).

Jesus did not simply "feel sorry" for those suffering. His compassion motivated Him to do something. He healed the sick, raised the dead, and opened the eyes of the blind.

How are you demonstrating your compassion for others? Many are suffering both physically and spiritually. Do something!

- David McPherson

THE LORD WAS THERE, WERE YOU?

"I came to the services Sunday,
I walked up and down the aisle;
I noticed your seat was vacant,"
Said the Master with a smile.

“Yes, I was at home,” I answered,
“Some folks from up the way
Drove down for a weekend visit,
So we stayed in the house all day.”

Or, “I had an awful headache.”
Or, “I had a roast in the pan.”
Or, “We overslept that morning,
But we go whenever we can.”

“I went to the morning service
Not over two months ago,
But so much work must wait till Sunday
There is no time for church, you know.”

Looking upon me sadly,
The Master began to speak,
“My child, are there not
Six other days in the week?”

If all the other children
Should treat me the same as you,
The assembly would be deserted,
Then what would lost sinners do?

I saw I had grieved my Master
As slowly He turned away,
And I vowed He’d not find me absent
Again on His special day.

- unknown

THIS WEEK’S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *“It Is Written!”* (text: John 6:44-47); Sunday evening: *“Saying Things People Don’t Want to Hear!”* (text: Amos 7:1-9)