



## The Purity of the Church Pt 1\_This Just In...Sin Shock!

1 Corinthians 5:1, August 25, 2013

**Text: 1 Corinthians 5:1** (but in the spirit of 1 Tim 4:13, let's read the whole chapter and come back to verse 1)

- By way of reminder, some context from 1 Corinthians 4:
  - 1Co 4:14-21 ESV* I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. (15) For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. (16) I urge you, then, be imitators of me. (17) That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church. (18) Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. (19) But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power. (20) For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power. (21) What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?
- As we said two weeks ago, the transition from **humble** apostle to expecting **honor** from this church he founded was completed in chapter four. The Apostle Paul, after taking lots of time to frame his own ministry in meekness and in light of Christ and Him crucified, now moves to bring correction to this church.
- If you recall, Corinth was a very wicked city:
  - Corinth was situated along a major trade route by land and water, on an isthmus between mainland Greece and the Peloponnesian Peninsula. It was known to be a place of great wealth, trade and a source of information.
  - Unfortunately, Corinth was also infamous for its corruption and sexual immorality.
  - After being destroyed by Rome in 146 B.C., it was re-founded as a Roman colony and became the capital of the Roman province of Achaia.
  - Religion in the city was dominated for a time by the worship of Aphrodite, the goddess of "love", whose priestess-prostitutes at one time numbered 1000, and whose temple was on the highest mountain peak.
  - Prostitution was a driving force of the city's prosperity. It was so bad, to "Corinthianize" became a way of saying "to practice immorality."
- Apparently, not only was this church unable to remain "spotless" in the midst of all this carnality, but there was some sense of wickedness being "**tolerated**."
- There is so much to unpack here. My goal is to walk through the next two chapters in small steps. Today, let's just look at a mindset most of the world (and the church) has lost...**Sin Shock**. Why? Because much of what Paul commands this church to do in this chapter must be seen with a biblical view of sin.



### Verse 1: Some Thoughts

1. 1Co 5:1 (KJV) - *It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.*
2. Like Corinth, we are in a world where sin is tolerated, celebrated, legislated, and only the prophets who cry out against it are castigated! ☺ Sad but true.
3. Church, we must refrain from **legalism**. But we must also understand how God sees sin.
4. We see in this one verse a sense of incredulosity from Paul. Shock! Astonishment! Bewilderment!
5. Yes, the sin itself was bad . . . an **abomination**. Incest. The woman as a stepmother didn't matter. In the Old Testament, this sin was punishable by death:
  - a. *Lev 18:7-8 ESV You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father, which is the nakedness of your mother; she is your mother, you shall not uncover her nakedness. (8) You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife; it is your father's nakedness.*
  - b. *Lev 18:29 ESV For everyone who does any of these abominations, the persons who do them shall be cut off from among their people.*
  - c. *Lev 20:11 ESV If a man lies with his father's wife, he has uncovered his father's nakedness; both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them.*
6. God even said that such sins as incest, homosexuality, and the offering of children to idols are "nations defiled" (Lev 18:6-24). And not just the Nation: ". . . and the land became unclean, so that I punished its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants." *Lev 18:25 ESV*
7. But what was just as bad was the church's apparent **relaxed** attitude about it!
  - a. In his commentary on 1 Corinthians, Gordon Fee writes, "The problem for Paul is twofold: that a believer is living in an incestuous relationship that even pagans disallowed is bad enough; but far worse is the church's relaxed attitude about it."
  - b. John MacArthur writes, "This sin was so vile that even the church's pagan neighbors were doubtless scandalized by it. The Corinthians had rationalized or minimized this sin which was common knowledge."
8. **Somehow, this church had developed (or continued in) a low view of sin. They weren't shocked. They weren't astonished. They weren't saddened. They weren't penitent. They were arrogant and boastful! (v2)**
  - a. "This Just In . . ." It reads like a trifling headline: "This just in . . . man has father's wife in church, story at six."
  - b. For the repentant, this is a non-issue. But Paul was addressing a bold sinner and a church that didn't seem to care.

### Implications for Us

1. Friends, may I ask you a question? What is God's view of sin?
  - a. To answer that, we could talk about Noah's Flood (because of sin), the total wiping out of entire abominable nations by Israel as they entered Canaan (because of sin), or the sending away of both Israel and Judah into captivity (because of their idolatry and sin). But the best way might simply be to point to the sacrifice of **Christ**. **This is how God feels about sin:**
  - b. *Isa 53:3-10 KJV He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. (4) Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. (5) But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. (6) All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. (7) He was oppressed, and he was*

- afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. (8) He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. (9) And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. (10) Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.*
- c. *1Pe 2:22-25 ESV He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. (23) When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. (24) He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. (25) For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.*
  - d. *Luk 22:63-65 ESV Now the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking him as they beat him. (64) They also blindfolded him and kept asking him, "Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?" (65) And they said many other things against him, blaspheming him.*
  - e. *Mat 27:28-31 ESV And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, (29) and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" (30) And they spit on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. (31) And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and led him away to crucify him.*
  - f. *Mat 27:45-50 ESV Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. (46) And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (47) And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, "This man is calling Elijah." (48) And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. (49) But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." (50) And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.*
2. So, in light of our Savior's sacrifice, what should our view of sin be in our lives and in the church?
    - a. Should we take it **lightly** because of grace? Paul would say "no!"
    - b. *Rom 6:1-2 ESV What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? (2) By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?*
    - c. **Perhaps we should see sin through the lens of how Christ will present His church: sanctified, cleansed by the Word, without spot or wrinkle, holy and without blemish. (Eph 5:27-28)**
    - d. Although we can never perfectly hit this mark on earth, it should be our goal due to God's command: *"1Pe 1:14-16 ESV As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, (15) but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, (16) since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."*
  3. And just so all are clear, what is sin?
    - a. "Sin is disobeying or not conforming to God's law in any way." (Shorter Catechism, Q: 14)
    - b. *1Jn 3:4 ESV Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.*
  4. **I submit we too should be shocked and dismayed at sin, in our own lives and in the church. Just as we should not allow our **awe** of God to be lost in worship and obedience, we must not allow the "it is what it is" mantra to take away our distaste for and **hatred** of sin.**

5. This in no way makes allowance for mean-spiritedness or hard-heartedness for the repentant. But that is not our context today. The Corinthian church was arrogant! Instead, they should have been mourning! (v2)
6. We must not allow this to happen to us:
  - a. *Eph 4:17-20 ESV Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. (18) They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. (19) They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. (20) But that is not the way you learned Christ!—*
  - b. Verse 19 says “they have become callous.” KJV says, “past feeling.” The word in Greek means “to be apathetic.”
  - c. This is a characteristic of those who do not know God (the Gentiles); not true Christians!
7. Paul’s stern rebuke here must be seen from the perspective of a God who so loved the world that He gave His only Son for “whoever believes in Him.” (Jn 3:16)
8. **Christ was given as a propitiation FOR sin--not so that we should continue IN sin. To the extent that Christ’s sacrifice is not fully understood (or at least growing in understanding) is the extent that sin is taken lightly.**
9. Paul’s incredulity and passion is similar to the prophets as they cried out against “soft-on-sin” Judah. As we close, let’s consider their words:

*Jer 6:15 ESV Were they ashamed when they committed abomination? No, they were not at all ashamed; they did not know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; at the time that I punish them, they shall be overthrown," says the LORD.*

*Isa 3:9 ESV For the look on their faces bears witness against them; they proclaim their sin like Sodom; they do not hide it. Woe to them! For they have brought evil on themselves.*

*Isa 5:20-21 ESV Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! (21) Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight!*

Amen.