

1 Corinthians Class 7 Transcript

Greetings, and welcome back to FI Online.

This evening we will be covering class number 7 in our series on Paul's epistle—first epistle—to the Corinthians.

We mentioned early on that because of some technical issues, we were not able to answer questions along the way. Well, we've resolved most of those, so we're going to begin this evening with the questions that were turned in over those first six classes. That's going to take a little bit more time, and normally, of course, we would begin with the questions and then have our prayer before the class. But since we have so many questions and they're going to take a little bit of time this evening, we'd like to go ahead and begin with a prayer asking God's blessing on the class. So if you would, please bow your heads and join me.

[Prayer]

[1:58]

As we said, we're going to begin by looking at questions that were turned in over the first six classes. So let me begin with each one, and I'll try to give a bit of an answer. I hope they'll be helpful for those who asked the questions. And as we often find, many times when one person asks a question, there are actually quite a few people who have that same question and just didn't have the opportunity to turn it in.

I will say that from this point forward, you again will have one hour after the conclusion of the class on Wednesday evening to go ahead and turn in those questions for the future classes, and we'll try to address those as we move forward.

So here's **question number 1**:

On class 1, I paid special attention to the interest of the gentiles who listened and learned in the synagogues and the three steps that allowed them to become proselytes: a ceremonial washing, giving a sacrifice to the temple, and all the males had to be circumcised. I'm curious about the details of the ceremonial washing. Was it for women and men alike? Was it a hands washing?

I'm also wondering about the way the gentiles hired someone or paid for a sacrifice at the temple.

Well, first of all, let me say that I have been unable to find the original source that mentioned all three of those requirements. Obviously, the requirement for a sacrifice at the temple couldn't have lasted after 70 A.D., when the temple was destroyed—though I think it was likely at that time, especially for those who may have been in the area of Judea. But I really can't find anything that backs that up. It may be true, but I can't really back it up.

Now, on the other two aspects of it—the ceremonial washing and the circumcision of the males—that is still required for one who wishes to become a Jewish proselyte today. The "washing" was a complete immersion in what was called a *mikvah*. The plural of *mikvah* is *mikvot*. Examples of *mikvot* are found all along—well, in many places—throughout Palestine, but, especially along the roadway that led from the lower city of Jerusalem along the southwestern edge of the western wall of the Temple Mount, up to the Temple Mount. There are several of those *mikvot* still around today.

[4:21]

One was large enough that you could—it actually it had two stairways, one going down and one coming

back up, so that it wouldn't get too congested as various worshipers going up to the temple would go through. It appears that there were separate *mikvot* for men and women, or at least that those that were there were limited at certain times, so there was not a mixture of men and women in at the same time.

It appears that the person who wished to go through those would put on a white garment. They would go down the stairway into the *mikvot* or *mikvah* and immerse themselves under the water, and then come back up, change clothes and go on up to the temple to worship.

At Qumran, down near the Dead Sea—the place where the famous Dead Sea Scrolls were found—there are several of these ancient *mikvot*. And the historical records show that those people who lived there—who saw themselves actually as “the sons of light” and all of those who were in Jerusalem as “the sons of darkness”—that at one point in the history of those in Qumran, they even immersed themselves twice a day so that they could make sure they were pure whenever the Messiah came. And if He came in the middle of the day, they wanted to make sure that they had been immersed again to make sure they're completely pure.

They had to build some other large cisterns to gather the rainwater during the rainy season so they would have that water for it, but apparently this was something that went on for quite a number of years. It is because of that custom, when John the Baptist—or as he was probably known then, John the Baptizer or Immerser—came on the scene, most people saw his baptism as just simply a version of that ritual cleansing immersion.

Most of the religious leaders, you may remember, at that time saw very little need for themselves. They were happy that the common people would see the need for purification, but they didn't see the need to go out to John and get immersed in the Jordan River. They had their *mikvot* right there by the temple that they could make themselves pure with. So this had to do with the washing aspect of it.

[6:32]

Question number two:

In 1 Corinthians 2 verse 7, it refers to “the wisdom which God ordained before the ages.” Can you please explain what is meant by that phrase?

Well, it's kind of a confusing phrase, and I can understand why someone might ask a question about it. Let me give you a couple of other translations.

Here's what the *New Century* translation says:

[1 Corinthians 2:7] *I speak God's secret wisdom, which He has kept hidden. Before the world began, God planned this wisdom for our glory.*

I think that gives a sense of it. It's talking about that this wisdom of God is intended to lead His people to the glorious state that He wants us ultimately to have.

New Revised Standard version says it much the same way.

[1 Corinthians 2:7] *But we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory.*

Now one of the older commentaries—I generally don't like to use most of the older ones, but this one actually has a couple of good points here. It's called *Barnes' Notes*. It says—this phrase *which God ordained* says:

It refers to the plan so full of wisdom that God appointed in His own purpose before the foundation of the world. That is, it was a plan which, from eternity, He determined to execute. It was not a new device. It had not been got up to serve an occasion, but it was a plan laid deep in the eternal counsel of God, and on which He had His eye forever fixed. This phrase “unto our glory” (*Barnes* says) means, “in order that we might be honored and glorified.”

Meyer’s New Testament Commentary adds this:

The thought is: to which wisdom God has, before the beginning of the ages of this world, given the predestination that by it (by that wisdom) we should attain to glory.

We might tie in with this what Paul wrote in Romans 8 verses 16 through 18. He says:

[Romans 8:16] *The Spirit himself (or the spirit itself, as it should be) bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

So the phrase there that Paul was talking about refers to God’s wisdom which, in His wisdom, He intends to use to bring you and me and all of our brethren down through the ages, and in the future, to the glory of being a part of His eternal family.

[9:14]

Another question:

I have a question I’d like to ask about Job. In class 3 of 1 Corinthians, you mentioned that people can know things about God, but that’s not the same as knowing God. Do you think that though Job kept God’s laws, he lacked a real relationship with God? Was he like the rich young man who came to Christ saying he had kept God’s commandments from his youth? Christ never disputed his commandment keeping, but sadly, the young man never took his relationship with God any further.

In contrast, by the end of Job’s ordeal, Job finally saw God. Could we speculate that this was the beginning of Job’s conversion? I’m not sure because God calls Job righteous at the beginning of the book. Any insight would be appreciated.

Well, I think it’s certainly true that the book of Job is a fascinating book that has many, many helpful lessons in it. In the past I think we’ve almost dismissed it rather lightly as being a book that just talks about Job’s self-righteousness. But I can tell you that Dr. Levy and I have discussed that a number of times, and neither one of us really feels that this book is about Job’s self-righteousness. There may be some self-righteousness involved in the book, but I frankly think it had more to do with Job’s three friends than it did with Job himself.

I have often found the book of Job so challenging that I really wondered exactly what I should learn from it. So this past year as Dr. Levy was covering it with the students here at FI, I decided I would sit in on his class and listen to what he had to say.

Now, some of you would probably say: “Oh, can we cover it on FI Online?” And my answer on behalf of Dr. Levy—and I would agree with him totally—is: “No, we really can’t do that.” And the reason I say that is because the understanding of the book of Job is really best discerned by having some good discussion back and forth, to talk about: “What’s there? What are we seeing? What do we understand?” And this format that we have here just really doesn’t allow for that kind of discussion. This is a lecture, and that’s

really all we can do. And Job needs to be seen a little bit differently. So, I would encourage you to read it and study it and perhaps even discuss it with your mate or others who may be going through it as well, but having it as a lecture on FI Online is just not going to work.

[11:33]

Now, as we went through that this year, I stayed in the back of the room, and I very carefully did not offer my thoughts on it during the classes because I didn't want to influence the students. But I thought it was very, very helpful, and I felt I learned a great deal.

I really don't believe I could conclude that Job's comments about seeing God at the end of the book represented the beginning of his conversion. Though they certainly do show that for any converted person, our knowledge of God has to develop and our focus sharpen over a lifetime. And trials may be one of the greatest catalysts we can have to get a greater understanding.

If you would like to study it a little bit more, I would suggest you go to the members' website, select the "Feast of Tabernacles" link, and you will see a listing of the sermons given at the various Feast sites. If you click on the link for Orange Beach for 2018, you will find that Mr. Harold Rhodes gave an excellent message on the book of Job on September 29 of 2018. It will not answer all of your questions, but it gives some excellent insights into what is a very fascinating book.

Along with that I will have to say that the one thing that I often struggle with, when I come to the book of Job, is the way that people see Job's wife. I frankly think that most commentators judge Job's wife far too harshly. I found an interesting article that was published in *Christianity Today* magazine in 2011. It was called "The Most Misunderstood Woman in the Bible." The article presented [a] very different picture of the words of Job's wife. I think one of the interesting things to keep in mind is that the Hebrew word for *bless* and the Hebrew word for *curse* are exactly the same word. You—the commentators, the translators—have to look at the context to figure out what exactly should be the correct understanding. It could be saying that Job's wife said, "Bless the Lord, and die." The commentators or the translators have pretty consistently said *curse* instead, but there is an interesting possibility there.

The article, as I read through it, gave some interesting ideas. Some of the ideas we couldn't embrace. For example, it said Job was tempted to just go ahead and die and go to heaven. Obviously, we're not going to accept that one. But he did give another perspective on this interesting lady, and I thought it was very much worth reading.

[14:00]

Let's move on to the **next question**:

Ecclesiastes 3 verse 21, which was referred to during the class, referred to the "spirit of the beast," or "the spirit of the animal." So, is it safe to assume that animals also have a spirit different from that given to man?

Well, you're certainly correct in assuming that however we might understand those words, what exists in the animal world and what exists in the human world are far different. However, I don't believe that I could go quite to the point of saying that there is a spirit element in animal life. The *spirit in man* is spoken of several times in Scripture, so we have several different perspectives to be able to understand it. But this is the only place in Scripture where you find this phrase about "spirit of the animal."

Actually, when you read Ecclesiastes 3 verse 21, it is pointing out that exactly what happens at death, for either animals or man, is something outside of our human ability to know. Several translations show that.

For example, here is the *English Standard Version*:

[Ecclesiastes 3:21] *Who knows whether the spirit of man goes upward and the spirit of the beast goes down into the earth?*

So, it really tells us: “We don’t know.” So, we would have to be rather careful about that. We know that the word for *spirit* and the word for *breath* are the same in both Hebrew and in Greek. The passage could simply be pointing out that while man’s spirit ascends to God at the end of his life, the animal’s breath simply disperses in the air and that’s it.

Scripture shows that God created life. And there is certainly a difference between a living animal and a dead animal. But concluding that that difference could be similar to—in function to—the spirit in man is a leap that I don’t think we could comfortably make, especially on the basis of a passage like this that’s a bit obscure in the first place.

However, in looking this up, I did want to quote from what Mr. Armstrong wrote in his last book, *The Mystery of the Ages*. Here’s what he said:

The Spirit of God cannot be received by, or injected into, the brute animal because the animal has no spirit within itself with which the Spirit of God could combine.

So Mr. Armstrong’s conclusion was that: “No, there is no spirit element where animal life is concerned.”

[16:24]

Next question:

1 Corinthians 2 verse 14 explains that the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God, but the natural man does seem to automatically receive the things of the spirit of Satan. So, do we have the spirit of Satan at birth? I do understand that Satan is the prince of the power of the air.

Well, actually this is a question that we had to address many years ago as we came to understand about the spirit in man. After all, we would read Jeremiah 17 verse 9 that says:

[Jeremiah 17:9] *“The heart is deceitful above all things,
And desperately wicked; ...*

And we would logically then ask the question: “Okay, are babies born with a wicked heart, or is it something that’s acquired after birth?” At one point we actually taught that when we entered the world, we had a heart that was at enmity with God. But we realized there were some serious problems with that idea. Anyone holding their newborn baby would be very stressed to try to convince that that baby was somehow desperately wicked.

So in answering this, we should, first of all, notice something else. Scripture nowhere speaks of a “spirit of Satan,” though it is clear that Satan does have power to influence the spirit in man. But in Ephesians 2 [verse 2] he is described as: *the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience*. But that is referring to him as a spirit being, “*the spirit being that now works in the sons of disobedience*.” His influence is certainly spiritual—no question. But we find no place that he has a spirit to impart in a way similar to God imparting the Holy Spirit. Satan does not give wicked people the “unholy spirit.”

So, how does a baby become a wicked person? If God were to create man as being evil when we arrive in this world, then we have a couple of serious problems.

1. First of all, God becomes the author of evil, which is impossible for a righteous God.

2. Second, if God causes humans to start out as evil, then He has unfairly caused us to be attracted to sin, which brings a death penalty. Therefore, God would be predisposing us to sin and death, which is totally contrary to His plan.

So, we look back, and what other parallel can we find? Well, when God created Adam and Eve, they were not created righteous or evil, either one. They had to choose. Unfortunately, they made the wrong choice. But based upon that principle, we concluded, correctly, that every human baby enters this world spiritually neutral, neither wicked nor righteous. Over a period of time, under the influence of those who've gone before us, we tune in to Satan's spiritual influences, and we gradually acquire that *desperately wicked* heart that Jeremiah describes.

But remember that even in the previous chapter, Jeremiah 16 and verse 19, Jeremiah said this:

[Jeremiah 16:19] *O Lord, my strength and my fortress,
My refuge in the day of affliction,
The Gentiles shall come to You
From the ends of the earth and say,
"Surely our fathers have inherited lies,
Worthlessness and unprofitable things."*

There will be that recognition among those in the future that are called, that as a matter of fact, what we received from those who've gone before us have been empty. You might also remember that in the New Testament that Peter talks about our *aimless conduct received by tradition from our fathers*. The heart becomes desperately wicked over a period of time as a result of the choices that we make, not because we are created that way.

[20:24]

All right, **one more question** to answer:

Ecclesiastes 11 verse 5 explains that we do not know how the spirit enters the womb, but I do remember Mr. Armstrong saying that the spirit in man entered the embryo through the man, but it, the spirit of man, is still a spiritual component, so how is this possible?

Our understanding of when the spirit in man enters into a human evolved over a period of time as we came to learn more. Again, since the word "spirit" and the word for "breath" are the same, we originally decided that the spirit in man must enter when a child takes its first breath. Some of the older versions of Mr. Armstrong's book on *The Incredible Human Potential* expressed it that way. But, since it is the spirit in man that makes us human, if the spirit enters with the first breath, would that mean that an infant in the womb was not fully human? If so, some might use that as a justification for the horrible scourge of abortion.

Now, Mr. Armstrong always believed that abortion was wrong, but he struggled for a while trying to understand how all of this worked. Eventually, he was given information about—showing that thinking and learning at a certain level actually begin within the womb, prior to birth. Since those activities—thinking, learning—would not be possible without the spirit in man, he concluded that the spirit in man must be present within the womb **prior** to the first breath.

Here's what he wrote in his last book, *Mystery of the Ages*:

The human spirit enters the human embryo at conception. It is this spirit that may, upon adult

conversion, be united with the Holy Spirit from the great Creator God, impregnating that human with God-life as a child of the living God, in a state of gestation, though as yet unborn. To destroy an embryo or a fetus in a mother's uterus is to murder a potential future God Being. Therefore, abortion is murder.

I know of no point at which Mr. Armstrong said that the spirit in man is imparted through the male, as opposed to the female. In conception, male and female each contribute the same amount of genetic material. From the moment of conception onward, the parents contribute nothing to the makeup of the child, though obviously the mother provides safety and nutrition as the child grows within the womb. Since God has the ultimate plan in mind for each human being who has ever lived, then it seems logical to me—certainly not unreasonable—that He alone is the One who can impart the spirit of man at conception for each human being.

Now, I'll be honest—to be fair, that explanation doesn't answer every question. But, as with most journeys in discovering the truth, it does move us a little bit closer to a better understanding of exactly how God is working these things out.

[23:47]

Alright, that concludes the questions that we had. And again, we thank you for those from those first six classes, and you are welcome to ask other questions as we go further.

Last time, in the last class, we started into **1 Corinthians chapter 5**. It deals with a very serious problem that existed in the congregation in Corinth. And Paul was—though he wasn't there—remember, he was writing from Ephesus—he really felt a need to address this issue because it was affecting the congregation a great deal.

Now, remember what we've talked about so far. The difficulty in Corinth manifested itself as a division—not a division of going into different organizations, but a division that took place within the congregation, where people did not have the unity and the oneness. They were beginning to kind of divide themselves up, even within the congregation, with some having their own special group and not wanting to be around others, and all of those things that could really destroy what God was building.

So, Paul is addressing those issues that lead to that, because the division itself was only the manifestation. There were attitudes behind it. One of those attitudes we've clearly looked at already, and that's the attitude of pride—how pride separates people and makes us look too highly on ourselves and too poorly at other people. So that's part of the issue that we're dealing with.

But we've also touched upon another issue that's going to come up as well. You will note that as we call this particular series, "1 Corinthians: What Builds Up," we're going to have to address making decisions that have an impact upon others—upon the Church itself—and asking ourselves, "Well, alright, what decision is it that builds?" We're not talking about compromising right and wrong. There can never be a compromise with right and wrong. But within what's right, some decisions are more helpful than others, and we're going to see that as we go further.

[25:55]

Now, what have we had? Now, let's just go back quickly to **verse 1 of chapter 5**. We won't try to go through all the detail again, but Paul says:

[1 Corinthians 5:] 1 *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!*

As we've said, this was undoubtedly a stepmother or perhaps someone who was a widow left from his father, but not his own mother literally, but another one. And this was, again, a terrible thing.

He says, **verse 2**: *And you are puffed up,—*

Now again, we noted that as one of those places where we're going to keep seeing that phrase *puffed up*, and we put it into the context of the Days of Unleavened Bread and the Passover.

— *you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. Verse 3 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 (or who was **doing** this deed).*

Now we emphasize here, this is not something where an individual made a mistake, stumbled and repented. But we're talking about a person who is living in sin, and doing nothing to change that. And Paul says: "Why are you, as members of the Church, tolerating this?"

Now, one of the things that I think we should note here, and we'll see as we go a little bit further even today, is that Paul does not address his correction to the pastor of the congregation, because he recognizes this is a duty that every Christian has. This is a responsibility every Christian has.

[27:38]

So, Paul says, continuing on here in **verse 4**:

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,—

Now, you stop and think about just that phrase, by itself. Is there any phrase that could convey more authority to a Christian than to say: "This is done *in the name of* or by the authority of *our Lord Jesus Christ*?" That's a very powerful statement. And it's something that tells us that we need to pay close attention. And Paul did not hesitate to use that. He is a man, but he says: "I'm an apostle of Jesus Christ, and this is the authority I'm speaking by—not my own, Jesus Christ's."

He says [**verse 4**] *In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit (in other words, as if I were there with you), with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 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.*

Now, there are several things we need to see here, lest we misunderstand what Paul is talking about. First of all, Paul does not claim the man should be expelled because "Paul says that." He says, "This is a decision of Jesus Christ." The Church belongs to Jesus Christ. He is the Head of the Church. He is the One who demands purity and righteousness in His Church.

Now, some would say: "Well, now, wait a minute, what about **Matthew 18**? You know, Paul isn't even there. He hasn't talked to the man, and here he is making this decision. Doesn't **Matthew 18** require that Paul go to the man, and talk to him, and try to understand, and see if they can work something out?"

No, **Matthew 18** is about a problem between people. This isn't a problem between people. This man is not sinning against people, in that sense; his sin's against God, and Paul recognizes that clearly. The man is not sinning against Paul. He was sinning against God, and the entire congregation was being affected by his sin. And in many cases, in a sense, they had become complicit in allowing this to continue. So now, Paul is telling them, being led by God's Spirit, they need to make a decision to deal with this in a proper, godly way.

[30:04]

In a sense, this is similar to when, in the Old Testament, ancient Israel was told that when a punishment was to be inflicted on someone who had done some terrible thing, that the whole community witnessed—remember, they would hear and fear—and even participated in the punishment. So, this is kind of a carry-forward of that same principle.

So Paul has said: “Okay, the power of Jesus Christ is there, and you are to act accordingly.” How do you act? *Deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh.* Okay, what does that mean? Is that some kind of a special curse? That we stand in front of the congregation and we say: “Joe Smith is given over to Satan. Satan, he belongs to you; do your best.” No, that’s not the point at all.

We are all a part of a world over which there is a ruler named Satan. He exerts power over this world. But when God begins to deal with us, He brings us into a special protected environment where the power of God’s Spirit, in a sense, is a shield.

Now, you and I know we still live in this world, and we can walk away from the Spirit of God any time we choose. The Church of God should be a place where there is a great deal of God’s Spirit, where there is—in a sense, we can almost imagine a large dome over the people of God. And, there is protection. There is safety there. There is a protection from that spirit influence that Satan has. But the rest of the world lives under that influence all the time. Before God called us and brought us into that safe place, we lived out there too.

So, what this is saying is not some special curse on the man. It’s saying: “If you’re going to be living in sin, you can’t stay here in this protected environment. You have to go back where you were. And out there, that’s Satan’s world.” Okay. So, let him go out there. What will happen? Might the flesh be destroyed? Might he go through such difficulties and trials because of his sin that his flesh is destroyed? Yes, that’s certainly a possibility.

But I want you to note what it says at the end of the verse:

[1 **Corinthians 5:**] 5 ... *that (or, so) that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

[32:34]

This tells us something about church discipline. Church discipline has nothing to do with punishing people. It is corrective. It is intended so that an individual can be stirred to correct what’s wrong in life and begin to do what’s right. What happens when a person does respond and corrects their wrong ways, quits sinning? Well, we bring them right back in again. We’re happy to have them come back. We’ll see that later on—although actually in **2 Corinthians** is where it seems to come up in this particular case. But, an individual certainly is welcome to come back when they quit living in a way that’s sinful.

Now this is not something like shunning as you might find in some of the Old Order Amish or something along that line. Nor is it something like in some Orthodox Jewish circles where, when someone departs from that, they literally hold a funeral, as if that person has died. They don’t have anything to do with them again.

Some of you may remember the old Broadway show or musical, the movie *Fiddler on the Roof*. And we had the one daughter of Tevye who married a gentile, and it was considered a terrible thing. And it was—he treated her as if she died. This is not what this is talking about. That’s not the way that we’re supposed to treat people who are in this situation. But, it’s going to be clear as we go a little further, we cannot carry on a normal relationship with them as we would with a brother in Christ, when they’re not in Christ anymore. If you’re living in sin, you’re not living in the area that Jesus Christ is controlling. You’re back out

there where Satan is.

[34:21]

So, the Church recognizes this individual cannot stay there. The Church doesn't remove the offender from God's protection, but does place him, as we see here—now let me say that differently. The Church does not remove him from God's protection; only God can do that. But the Church acknowledges this is what's taking place because this individual is living in sin. He is removed from fellowship with the Church until he repents of that ongoing sin. But, we see here two purposes for this kind of discipline.

1. The first one: so that the individual will repent. So that the individual will repent and be able to be saved in the end.

One of the commentaries says:

Discipline must never be vengeful. It must always be curative and prophylactic, trying to prevent something from happening.

2. The second purpose for that discipline is actually given as we go into the next verse, and we'll see that as we go there.

Now, one of the things I think we must say here is that sadly, through the years we've seen that when the Church has to make a decision like this, with an individual who is living in sin—again, we're not talking about a person who stumbled, repented, and tried to get it right. We're talking about a person who's living the wrong way, knows they're living in the wrong way, and chooses to keep living in the wrong way. Okay, that's what we're dealing with here. And, when that situation takes place, the Church has a responsibility to its Head, Jesus Christ, to say, "This person may no longer assemble with those who are striving to live the right way." And they are not permitted to be there.

Sadly, through the years we've seen that many times there are Church members who will say, "Oh, well, that's just so very harsh. We need to be more loving to this person and help them." When you do that, what you're really doing for that individual—well, two things I think we can say:

1. Number one, you're minimizing the seriousness of sin. And minimizing the seriousness of sin for yourself or anyone else is a terrible thing to do, and God does not take that lightly.
2. The second thing is: you reinforce in that individual the idea that he's not being treated fairly. And that there are some very fine people who are much kinder. And as a result of that, instead of facing his situation and repenting, that individual decides that: "Well, it's just not fair I'm being treated that way." So, you're harming that individual.

[37:05]

Now, that's one of the things that I think is important here, to note the instruction to put this individual out of our fellowship is an instruction to **all** the Church, not simply to the ministry. Yes, the decision often falls to the local pastor, and it's a painful decision. But all of us have a responsibility to separate ourselves from those who are living the wrong way to help them in the long run be able to recognize, repent, and get restored because **that's** really the goal.

He goes on to say, [1 **Corinthians 5**] **verse 6**:

Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?

The phrase *glorying* here is, as one puts it: it's not the act of boasting that's involved here, or *glorying*, but it's the matter they're boasting about. They prided themselves on how tolerant they were, how much mercy and compassion they had, that they judged this individual in a way and didn't really deal with his situation or help him deal with it properly. They judged themselves to be spiritually mature and righteous, and their self-judgment was wrong. They were not seeing things properly. We must never allow ourselves to minimize the seriousness of sin, our own or someone else's.

Now, Paul uses a phrase which, again, for all of us has a special meaning to it. *Don't you know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?* Now all of us have heard that phrase many, many times in connection with the Days of Unleavened Bread. But I think we could easily say, well, it's one of those probably common, everyday phrases that, by itself, doesn't prove anything about Holy Days or Days of Unleavened Bread. It's just simply a statement, an observation, that a little bit of leaven leavens the whole lump. Yes, that's true. Christ used that metaphor Himself both in a positive way and a negative way, when you read through the Gospels.

So, it would be easy for us to just overlook that and say: "Well, Paul's just using a common, everyday metaphor to say, 'You can't let a little bit of sin be there because all it takes is a little bit and it grows.'" And that would certainly be true. That's a principle that we understand. If Paul had stopped right there, we could probably make an argument that he's not really talking about the Days of Unleavened Bread, but of course, as you and I know, he didn't stop right there. We have a couple more verses that are very specific, that can only refer to the Days of Unleavened Bread.

So, what do we read?

[39:52]

[1 Corinthians 5] verse 7 *Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump,—*

Okay, we've just been talking about a little bit of leaven leavens the whole lump. "You need to be a new lump. The old leaven needs to be gone."

—since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

Okay, so now we're putting this in the context of Passover, which again for you and me is a very logical connection. We don't have a problem with that at all. But, for many people who've never kept the Passover or the Days of Unleavened Bread, they may not even know there's a connection. Now, there is for us. We recognize that.

But, notice a couple other things. The term here to *purge out* is a very strong term. It means "to get rid of something completely; clear it out of the house; get rid of any evidence of the old yeast." One of the commentaries says that the verb tense here conveys urgency. "Do it now and do it effectively." That seems to be the sense of what's there.

But, we also should note something else. Now, it says here, we need you to *purge out the old leaven*—what are we talking about? He's just been talking about a spiritual sin—okay? —a spiritual sin that this individual was involved in, and that sin, allowed to continue in the Church, was going to leaven the Church. So Paul is making a comment about spiritual sin when he talks about *the old leaven*.

So, maybe we can just kind of spiritualize all this away. I'll give you a couple quotes in a moment where some of the commentaries try to do that. But I want you to think about what he says.

7 Purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump (Okay, we're still spiritual.), *since you truly are*

unleavened. —

Now, think about this for a second. If the apostle Paul was speaking only spiritually and he was saying: “Well, you need to purge out the old leaven so that you can be a new lump, because you’re already spiritually unleavened.” If you’re spiritually unleavened, what do you have to purge out? He’s just been correcting them for a spiritual sin, a spiritual leaven, that was in their midst. So, how can he turn around and say, *you truly are unleavened?*

[42:19]

Well, it’s not really hard to figure out; they were physically unleavened. And he said: “Okay, you’ve gone through all the motions. You’ve done all of that. You’ve been diligent to *purge out* the old physical leaven. You are physically unleavened, but, you know what, folks, there’s still a spiritual leaven there, and you need to address that.” So, he says: “Yes, you are physically unleavened.” And there, probably again, I still believe this is leading up to the Days of Unleavened Bread because all of us know that we don’t just normally throw out the last bit of leaven as the sun is sinking on the Night to be Observed. We’ve probably cleared it out in advance of that.

So, these people undoubtedly were preparing—and I think that’s what Paul is talking about here. And then he goes on to say, *for indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us*. What does he mean by that? Well, he’s telling us again that it is through the sacrifice of Christ that the penalty of sin is taken away—that the payment for sin is given. And he’s reminding us that: “Okay, if that’s important to you, (which obviously, it’s supposed to be of supreme importance to us), if it is, then how can you tolerate continuing sin in your midst? If you understand the significance of Christ’s sacrifice **because** of sin, how could you think it’s okay to tolerate a little of it? That minimizes the significance of Christ’s sacrifice.

So, let’s go on. **Verse 8:** *Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

Now again, I’m talking to veterans who have kept the Days of Unleavened Bread many, many times. You immediately know what he’s talking about when he says this. But he makes it clear: *let us keep the feast*. And then he talks about leaven. What feast could he be talking about? Feast of Tabernacles? Last Great Day? Pentecost? No, he’s talking about the Days of Unleavened Bread. That’s clear. You and I understand that, and someday the rest of the world will too.

But, Paul makes a statement—*let us keep the feast*. Now, if we just stopped right there, that by itself is an amazing statement. Why is Paul telling a group of gentiles, because the Corinthian Church was primarily gentile? Why is he telling a group of gentiles, in a gentile city, to keep a **Jewish** feast? Well, there’s really a simple answer to that. It’s **not** a Jewish feast. It’s **God’s** Feast, and He gives it to His people as a gift to teach us about His plan, to teach us the lessons we’re supposed to have.

[45:15]

Now he then goes on to say: “How do we do that? What do I mean by keeping the feast?” Now, they are already physically unleavened. We’ve already talked about that. Paul’s not doing away with that. He doesn’t say, *let us keep the feast* with doughnuts and hot dogs. No, it’s—we don’t do it that way. We are to *keep* the Days of Unleavened Bread. Now, what’s the feast called? The Days of Unleavened Bread. It’s not called “the days of no leaven.” It’s called the Days of Unleavened Bread. We are to be taking in something that is unleavened. It’s more than just simply avoiding what’s leaven. We’re to take in what’s unleavened. Let’s go on.

[1 Corinthians 5:] 8... *not with the old leaven* (Okay, we've been talking about the old spiritual sins that were there.), *nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness* —

Now I think that's a fascinating phrase. We won't take the time to go through Greek words per se, but it's a fascinating phrase, because it means something. Well, I'll tell you what. Let's do look at that, because we have another slide that talks about those two. The—okay, sorry, I got the wrong slide. There we are. The two words that are used here: *malice* is *kakias*, and it means “an evil way of thinking,” and it can even mean “a vicious disposition.” *Wickedness*, *ponērias*, is “an evil deed,” the evil way of life that results from *kakias*, from *malice*. *Malice* is a way of thinking. *Wickedness* is the way it manifests itself.

So, I suppose what we could say is, if we use the metaphor of the Days of Unleavened Bread, we have to get rid of those things which are leavened—the cookies, the cakes, the breads and all of those things. But we also have to get rid of the leaven that causes it in the first place. And you could very easily look at yeast and say, well, you know, I'm not going to eat that anyway; why would I have to worry about that? Well, yes, it has the power to change. So we have to get rid of the agents that cause leavening as well as those things that are leavened themselves. So, we seek to get rid of those.

So, we keep this feast:

[1 Corinthians 5:] 8... *not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness* (That has to be cleared out of our minds.), *but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth*.

Now again, we note, *malice*, *wickedness*, *sincerity*, *truth*—these are all elements of thinking. These are all elements of what make up the Christian's mind. And this is the way we are to keep this feast. We are to put away that which is evil, and we are to keep what's good. We are to take in more of that which is *sincere*. It's unadulterated. It's described as “that which judged in the light of day is pure and clean.” That's all the sense of it. Truth again has that sense of what's there, that's true, that can be examined and no one—there's no hidden ulterior motive to it.

[48:25]

Now, I want to just share with you very quickly that phrase that's there, that's so clear, that we read it and I don't know how you get around that. If you are a practicing Protestant or Roman Catholic—well, if you're Roman Catholic, you probably don't read it at all. But, if you're a practicing Protestant of some sort, and you come across this where Paul clearly says, *let us keep the feast*, and he describes the leaven that we are to avoid, and again, obviously, we don't just keep the feast physically; that's not what's involved. Physical is a type; it teaches us. But, it's more than just the physical. How do you read that and then just kind of go your way as if it has nothing to say to you?

It's interesting—I want to share with you a couple of comments.

Expositor's Bible Commentary says this:

About the phrase, let us keep the feast: literally, the word that's used there is a word that has to with “festival keeping.”

It's not just a celebration. It's a unique and different word that means “a festival celebration.”

So, *Expositor's* says this:

So Paul concludes in **verse 8**, *let us keep the festival*. (And then it says) That is, let us live the Christian life in holy consecration to God.

Huh? How do you get that out of: *let us keep the festival?* But, they just totally sidestep it.

Here's what another older book, *Robertson's Word Study*, says:

It is quite possible that Paul was writing about the time of the Jewish Passover since it was before Pentecost (which again we'll see later on in the book). But if so, that's merely incidental, and his language here is not a plea for the observance of Easter by Christians.

Well, at least we can agree with Robertson [that] this is not "a plea to keep Easter," but it certainly is telling us that we should be keeping God's festivals. These are gentiles keeping **God's** festivals, not Jewish festivals.

Now, Paul goes on then, and it almost seems like a change of subject, but it's really not.

[1 Corinthians 5:9] *I wrote to you (verse 9) in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people.*

What epistle is he talking about? This is **1 Corinthians**. We don't have another epistle where he wrote that, where he told them that. Now, what do we derive from that? Well, what we derive is that God has chosen what He wants to preserve for us through the ages, and whatever epistle Paul's talking about that he had written previously, we don't have that. God didn't preserve that. Why not? Well, why preserve it when we're going to read it again right here. He's telling us right here what we need to see, so, we can understand that.

[51:07]

Now, he says, I told you, don't *keep company with sexually immoral people*. To *keep company with* means to spend time with people, to be around them, to share life with them. And we'll see a specific example of that later in this chapter. So, it's talking about just spending your time with people who live by a different set of values than you have, and he's telling us, don't do that. Why? Well, they can have an influence upon you. They can corrupt your way of thinking. They can make you embarrassed about what you believe, because, after all, they don't believe those things. We're not to be around people like that in that kind of a situation.

Now, I'm reminded of a situation I came [across] at camp a number of years ago. I was teaching a class to some of the teenagers, and I don't remember even exactly what all we were talking about, but we were talking to a certain extent about the influence of friends. I remember one young lady who raised her hand and said, "Well, you know, all of my friends use drugs." And I was a bit surprised and kind of taken aback by it a little bit. And so I kind of changed the direction of where I was going, and I asked the whole group, I said: "Well, okay, what about the rest of you? She says all of her friends use drugs. Well, how—what percentage of your friends use drugs?" And different ones would raise their hands, and well, maybe 10 percent, maybe 20 percent, or half, or whatever the figure may have been, and it was just one after another that it was a figure of a number of people that were their friends they knew—that were using drugs.

One young man—I still remember him very well. One young man raised his hand, and I called on him, and he said, "None of my friends use drugs." And I was little bit surprised there too, and I said, "Really, none of your friends use drugs?" And everybody was looking at him, and he said, "No." He said, "I have the power to choose who my friends will be, and I don't choose to have friends who use drugs." I wanted to run over and hug him! I couldn't have said it better myself! And frankly, if I had said it, it wouldn't have had the impact. All over that room you could see young people saying, "Oh, yeah, that's right. I do have the power

to choose who my friends are.”

And I think about that when I read this passage where Paul says, “Don’t keep company with those who live by a different standard.” Now, he mentions sexual immorality. He’s going to mention some other things as we go further. But he makes the point that that’s not where we should be.

[53:39]

Now he explains this; he says: “Okay, that’s what I told you before.”

[1 Corinthians 5] verse 10 *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.*

So, Paul is saying: “When I told you that, yes, I had something in mind, but I didn’t mean that you can’t associate with **anybody** who doesn’t live by the right standards, because then you’re going to have to go off and live in a commune by yourself; that’s not God’s way.” No, we don’t do it that way. That still doesn’t mean you can **overlook** the wrong standards that people live by. But, he’s saying that when you’re dealing with the world, a lot of times you don’t have a lot of choice about what kind of people they are.

First of all, he’s trying to convey that there is the realization we cannot completely separate ourselves from all sinners; we just can’t do that. There’s no way for us to do it in this world. But also, we’re not helping a brother or even ourselves if we compromise or minimize or condone sin.

So, now he clarifies this, **verse 11**:

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 a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.

Now, he lists a number of characteristics here. We won’t spend the time to look at them in a lot of detail. I think there’s an obvious aspect to much of it. The word *reviler*, I think, is an interesting word. It can refer to somebody who slanders, but it also refers to somebody who’s abusive, somebody who’s just a bully, who is abusive to other people and not respectful in those ways. But he tells us here: “Okay, when I said avoid those people who have these wrong morals, I wasn’t saying the world, but when you come across a brother...”

Okay, this is what brings us back to the beginning of the chapter. Here’s a brother who’s supposed to be living in a certain way, and they’re not. So, he says: “When it’s a brother, don’t even eat with this person.” Now, what—is there something magical about food? No, but I think most of us understand that when we share a meal with somebody, there’s kind of a special bond there. We have a bond that when we enjoy a meal together, it’s a very special kind of fellowship. I think it’s one of the reasons why in the Church of God we so often enjoy potluck meals. We just get a chance to share a meal together. And the Night to be Much Observed, very often an opportunity to share a meal together, and it has great meaning for us. It creates great bonds. But, what he’s telling us here is that when someone’s living the wrong way, then if you get into that kind of relationship, you’re creating bonds with somebody whose values are not the right values, and that’s not where you want to be.

[56:34]

Now again, “Well, what about Jesus’ example; didn’t He eat with sinners?” Yes, He did. That was not His normal environment. He spent most of His time with His apostles, but He didn’t cut Himself off from someone. That’s not the point. Those people didn’t **claim** to be believers. This is a person who claims to

be a believer, but doesn't live that way.

Now, Paul goes on to say there in **verse 12**:

For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside?

He said—now in other words, he says, “We’re not judges of those God hasn’t called yet.” And the world hasn’t been called yet, so no, we’re not judging those individuals. But when it comes to those who are part of the Church—yeah, if people aren’t living the right way, then we have to judge that that’s true. We are to judge within the Church with *righteous judgment*. Paul’s questions probably could better be put: “Are you not to judge those inside the Church?”

And one of the commentaries says:

This is expressed in such a way that it expects a positive answer.

Well, yes, we have to make sure that—I mean, when we’re around people, if they’re not living the right way, we have to make certain judgments. One of those judgments is, “I really can’t afford to be around a person who’s not living by the right standards.”

Now, sometimes people look at this and say: “Oh, well, you know, the Church sometimes is so harsh, and it just seems so painful that somebody is told they can’t attend.” We sometimes may suspend a person for a period of time in hopes that they will respond to it. But, sometimes when they don’t respond, it moves on to what we call “disfellowshipping,” which is more of a formal statement to say: “Okay, until you’re ready to change your life around, then we really can’t be of much help to you. And you are not welcome to be here.”

I think there are some people who think that somehow there’s a satisfaction in being able to make that decision, having that power. I can tell you from experience as 35 years as a pastor, I’ve never enjoyed that. It’s been a very painful thing, and thankfully, there are very few that I’ve ever had to tell that they were not welcome to be there. And when the time came, I would say that every time I’d lie awake at night, questioning myself, “Could I have done this better? Is there another way?” And I think virtually every pastor experiences it in much the same way. That’s not something anybody enjoys doing. It’s a very painful process. But we have a whole flock that we’re responsible for, and we have a responsibility before Jesus Christ to protect them. So sometimes that’s a decision that has to be made.

[59:23]

Verse 13 *But those who are outside God judges.—*

At the right time, in the right way—He knows what to do. The verb that’s used here emphasizes futurity. There’s a future judgment that these people will come [to]. It’s as if it’s saying, for “those outside, God will judge.”

—*Therefore* (Paul says) “*put away from yourselves the evil person.*”

The person who chooses to live the wrong way, even when they know the right way, is described here as *the evil person*. They’re thinking the wrong way, and they think somehow they can minimize it, it doesn’t matter as much, or it’s not that big a deal; they can deal with it. No, it’s serious. It must be addressed. So Paul says: “You have to put them away.” It’s never a pleasant thing.

But one of the lessons of the Days of Unleavened Bread is the putting away of evil. We don’t just put away physical things. And I put it this way, “putting away evil,” because if we’re not careful, we tend to think of

the leaven that we put away as representing specific sins. So, when we put the leaven away, it's like we put away a specific sin. But when we talk about "putting away evil," we're talking about the way of thinking that leads to that. We're talking about the leaven at the core that has to be put away, that we can't let be a part of our lives.

And it's interesting—one of the commentaries says this:

The verb is plural. It emphasizes that this is an action each member of the Church is to take. It's not simply an official act of the Church as a whole.

So it's an important step that had to be taken there in Corinth. Paul was not pleased to have to take it, but he recognized his responsibility before Jesus Christ. This is what he had to do.

This is going to lead us to another fascinating section in **1 Corinthians chapter 6**, but we've used up our time for today's class, so thank you for joining us.

We look forward to seeing you next time for class number 8 in our series on **1 Corinthians**.

[1:01:25]