

Church Live Re-Visited: Session Five - Part 2

by Ron Bailey

The sermon emphasizes the importance of church discipline and the need to maintain purity within the community by addressing sin and divisiveness decisively.

Duration: 17:09

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 5:1

Topics: "Church Discipline", "Christian Unity"

Description

This sermon delves into the importance of addressing immorality and divisive behavior within the covenant community, as highlighted in passages from 1 Corinthians 5, Titus 3, 2 Thessalonians 3, and 2 Timothy 3. It emphasizes the need to confront and remove pervasive sinful influences, likened to leaven, to maintain purity and unity within the church. The message stresses the authority of Jesus Christ in disciplinary actions and the necessity of upholding truth and righteousness, even if it means excluding disobedient or divisive individuals.

Transcript

Okay, let's go on from 1 Corinthians chapter 5, and I'm hoping that you've read this. I'll read it anyway, shall I? Just to put it into its context. We've just been talking about times when it's necessary to isolate someone from the covenant community.

And there are other passages of Scripture which do this same thing. Let me give you one or two illustrations before we go to 1 Corinthians 5. Turn to Titus chapter 3 and verse 10. Titus chapter 3 and verse 10.

Titus chapter 3 and verse 10. And it says this. A man that is, and I think the New King James Version says, Yes, that's a good word.

The man that is of a sectarian spirit, after the first and second admonition, rejects, knowing that he that is such is subverted and sins being condemned of himself. So he's a divisive man, and there is a disciplinary process necessary for a divisive man. The word heretic, which you've got in your Old King James Version, heresy originally didn't mean doctrinal non-conformity.

Originally, heresy actually means someone who is sectarian. It's actually someone who is fiercely individualistic and is establishing a clique around himself. So the context here, the undergirding sense of

heresy, is not that it's a doctrinal aberration, but that it is a fellowship aberration.

It's not that he hasn't kicked all the doctrinal boxes properly. The thing is that this man is divisive. He is sectarian.

He is schismatic. He is someone who is causing the unity of the family to be constantly under threat. And he's warned.

And he's warned one, two, and then the first strike is out. Then in 2 Thessalonians 3 verse 6, 2 Thessalonians 3 verse 6, it says, 2 Timothy 3 verse 6, Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, notice this little phrase, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, this is Paul claiming divine authority for what he's doing. This isn't his own opinion.

This is a man who is conscious that he's acting under the authority with the direction of Jesus Christ. We command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw yourselves from every brother that walks disorderly, and not according to the tradition received of us. Now it doesn't tell us specifically what he has in mind there, but what we've got really is this is a disorderly man.

This is someone whose life is inconsistent with the truth. And if he persists in his disorderly life, and I guess this is really where this 5 man is going to fit in, if he persists with his disorderly life, ultimately, he too must be rejected. And you must withdraw from him.

And then finally, in 2 Thessalonians 3, verse 14, it says here, And if any man obeys not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. So this is a disobedient man. This is someone who is setting himself against what is plainly true teaching, true instruction, inspired words of God, a man who does that.

Ultimately, that person too must be excluded from the covenant community. And let's go to 1 Corinthians chapter 5, and we'll begin to see, hopefully, why some of this is happening. I mean, this is pretty heavy stuff, isn't it? I think it is.

So, this is what you got in 1 Corinthians chapter 5. This is the case history, as I said, in some ways. But before we get to the case history, we'll just see part of the purpose of this epistle. It's actually reported among you, or it's well known among you, sort of thing.

That there is, now my King James Version says fornication. And it's probably better to widen that to immorality, sexual immorality. So it's commonly reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.

And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned that he that has done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I truly, as absent in body but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that has so done this deed. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such a one unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Your glory is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? That's yeast, of course. A little yeast leavens the whole lump.

Purge out, therefore, the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, as you are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Leaven, or yeast, is used often in the Bible as an illustration of a pervasive power, something which, you only need a little bit of it, but it affects everything. Nothing escapes the effect of the leaven. This is the kind of picture of someone, you know there's two kinds of different kinds of bread, there's leavened and there's unleavened.

Unleavened bread has no yeast in it, it stays kind of fairly flat and kind of crisp. But if you put yeast in it, the chemical process that takes place, it's fermentation effect, and the bread rises and it becomes something quite different. And it isn't just one little bit of the bread that rises, if you mix it together properly, it's the whole of the bread that rises, that little bit of yeast affects the whole thing.

So it becomes a picture of pervasive power, power that gets into every little nook and cranny. Nothing escapes the power of leaven, that's kind of the underlying picture of this. But throughout the Bible, leaven is used of things which are evil pervasive powers.

So that you've got, for example, Jesus who refers to, he says to his disciples, actually in Matthew chapter 16, he says, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees. And in Luke's Gospel, it kind of amplifies that, and it says, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. And that's an interesting kind of thing.

I think we've said this before, but I'll say it again just for completeness sake, that the Greek word hypocrite is the word for an actor. So a hypocrite is someone who is pretending to be someone who is not. And it was hypocrisy that Paul rebuked Peter for, in Antioch.

And it was hypocrisy that Peter spoke a word of God, which actually killed Ananias and Sapphira, in the early days of the Christian Church. Hypocrisy is pervasive. It gets into every single part.

It's a deadly, I love to mix the metaphors, it's a deadly virus. There's no escape from this, unless you actually remove this cause of hypocrisy. And I think it's something that maybe we English people, if you'll excuse me saying this, Maggie, that we English people have to be particularly aware of, because I think the sin of the English is hypocrisy.

That's my own personal view, and you don't have to, oh, sorry, you don't have to admit it. I don't know who you are. But it is, to create an appearance, to create an effect, to go with the flow, so as not to upset somebody, to be compliant, and just let it be, I think that is a temptation that affects people from an English culture probably much more than it affects some other nations, and some other cultures are much more in-your-face and volatile.

The Mediterranean culture, I don't think, is quite so susceptible to hypocrisy, in quite this way. So, Paul talks, Jesus talks about hypocrisy. He says it's like a leather, it gets into everything.

In the Old Testament, they were specifically told when they came out of Egypt, and this was their Passover feast, their Passover celebration, that one of the first things they had to do was to make sure that the bread that they were eating had no leaven in it at all. This is a picture of unalloyed purity. It's a picture of unspoiled purity.

It's a picture of something that has no pervasive energies and powers in it which will corrupt the whole thing. So, it's plain. It's like it's dead.

The process is kind of finished. And this is the kind of people that God was going to bring out of Egypt and bring into the Promised Land. People for whom the old had passed away completely.

And even today, on the Feast of Passover, it's a great, it's one of the great exciting things that Jewish children do. They have to go through the house and make sure that there's no leaven, no yeast anywhere in the house. It's a great game.

They have to go somewhere so it can be found, so that the children have this kind of exciting adventure of finding the leaven. Because they can't have the Passover if there's any leaven in the house at all. So, the other thing is that it wasn't allowed in the sacrifices that were made on the altar.

And almost certainly, 99% certain, it wasn't allowed in what was known as the bread of the presence. That's the shoe bread, but they don't specifically say it wasn't, but there are later Jewish authorities who say that they didn't use leaven. So, it's this picture of the contaminating power of something.

The way in which something spreads and spreads and spreads, and once it's started, there's no stopping it. And it's this kind of picture here. And Paul here says, purge out, therefore, the old leaven.

And he uses a particular form of the word here, which is what we call a, it's an imperative, but it's an Aorist imperative, which really has the impact of saying do it now. This is not a process. It isn't saying be purging out.

This isn't a process that kind of goes on and on and on. And what's being purged here is not the individual Christian. What's being purged here is the local church.

Because the local church is essentially bringing in leaven. It potentially, it's always going to be contaminated by something in one way. So, there has to be this vigilance so that when you see what it is, you deal with it.

There's a very vigorous kind of activity going on here. One of our patterns often has been, well, we'll wait on the Lord and see what develops. And there's a right place for that.

But there's a right place too for kind of taking the bull by the horns as they say and actually dealing with issues as they come up and facing them. And if they're not compatible, if they're going to be this pervasive influence, actually pointing that out and dealing with it early on in the process. Okay, I won't spend too much time on that except to say this, that in Matthew chapter 13 there's a series of parables about the rapid growth of the kingdom.

And the traditional brethren interpret it, one of them is Levin, a woman that takes three measures of leaven and she mixes it in and everything. There's the whole thing. And then there's another one of the mustard seed.

Is it the mustard seed? Yes, the mustard seed that grows and it becomes like a tree and it fills everything and birds of the air kind of come and rest in it. So it's a picture of rapid growth. And the traditional brethren position was that these are actually pictures of abnormal growth.

That these pictures are not good pictures. They're not pictures of healthy growth in the church. They're actually pictures of something which is working at a level which is almost grotesque.

Now, I have a lot of sympathy with that. I was very encouraged, I picked up an MP3 listening to David Vine I think it was last summer conference and he was doing this parable and I noticed he was taking exactly that line and he just becomes a brethren background anyway. But I think that's a valid interpretation.

I think maybe those Matthew 13 parables are illustrating the mixed nature of the kingdom of heaven. Not the unmixed nature of the kingdom of God. But the mixed nature of the kingdom of heaven.

As to say how it works out on earth. And you've got the big keep net that's thrown out that brings in some good fish and some bad fish. It isn't nice and neat and clear.

When I was a younger Christian that was one of my cries all the time Lord, why don't you just make it clear? Why don't you just show what's right and what isn't right? Why don't you kind of weed out the tears of making everything that is just all perfect? Because there's a process going on here as well. And what I'm saying is that this is not an individual that we're talking about here that's being told to purge out. It's the church which is actually needing to go through a purging process.

And it may be that churches will often need to go through purging processes. Let me come on to Now let me pause again for another couple of minutes just in case there are any questions on that.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/BGyZIEf0l8o.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ron-bailey/church-live-re-visited-session-five-part-2/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net