

Studies in 1 Corinthians-04 1 Cor 4:14-5:7

by William MacDonald

Paul's relationship with the Corinthians is personal and paternal, and he calls for them to imitate him, as he imitates Christ, emphasizing the importance of power in the kingdom of God.

Duration: 48:54

Scripture: Psalm 115:1, Proverbs 6:27, Matthew 6:33, 1 Corinthians 4:14, 1 Corinthians 5:11-13, 1 Corinthians 10:12-13

Topics: "Church Unity", "Moral Purity"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the issue of the Corinthians becoming followers of men and forming parties around favorite preachers. The preacher emphasizes the importance of shifting their focus from men to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the worthy gathering center of his people. The preacher also discusses the temptation to fall into sin and highlights the words of Jesus in Gethsemane, urging his disciples to watch and pray. The preacher shares advice given by Chuck Smith to young men entering the Christian ministry, cautioning them against touching the glory, money, and women, and emphasizing the need for moral purity.

Transcript

Give my spirit voice, tender to me, the promise of his word. In God my Savior shall my heart rejoice. We're just going to sing the first verse.

Once again, Carolyn, would you mind playing it through? That last one is the only part you're going to have any trouble with. I know it's because I do. In God my Savior shall my heart rejoice.

Let's play that once again, Carolyn. Let's try it. Tell out, my soul, the greatness of good.

Unnumbered blessing give my spirit, tender to me, the promise of his word. In God my Savior shall my heart rejoice. You like it? Words are good, aren't they? Try it again.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of good. Unnumbered blessing give my spirit, tender to me, the promise of his word. We'll pick them up afterwards.

Today we continue our studies in 1 Corinthians, and we got to chapter 4 last time, but we didn't finish chapter 4, so we'd like to turn today to chapter 4 and begin reading with verse 14. You remember the subject in these verses is that the Corinthians were becoming followers of men, favorite preachers, and they were forming parties around men. And Paul is dealing with that subject here, and he's trying to get

their eyes off men and onto the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ is the worthy gathering center of his people. And just as we were closing last week, Paul was telling the Corinthians how different their position was than the position of the apostles. They were swimming along in full celestial state.

They were up in the box seats in the Colosseum, and the apostles were down in the Colosseum being thrown to the animals. The glory of the Corinthians contrasted with the shame of the apostles. I'd like to begin reading now in chapter 4, verse 14.

I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you. For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers. For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

Therefore I urge you, imitate me. For this reason I've sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ as I teach everywhere in every church. Now some are puffed up as though I were not coming to you.

But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills, and I will know not the word of those who are puffed up, but the power. For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod or in love and a spirit of gentleness? First of all, Paul is speaking here about his relation to the Corinthians.

And I think it's a very moving passage of Scripture. He's saying here that he writes these things not as one who shames, but one who counsels. You know, it's possible to be a professional in Christian life and service.

Possible, for instance, to be a preacher and you get up and you have a big audience and you preach to them and then at the end of the meeting you rush off to your hotel and you don't want to be bothered talking to people. I mean, that happens. But Paul wasn't that kind of a servant of the Lord.

Paul had the people of God on his heart. He says that, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. And so if he writes in a very blunt and direct fashion here to the Corinthians, it wasn't just to produce shame in them, but it was to counsel them concerning the pathway of God.

And he goes on to emphasize that he wasn't just a tutor to them, but a father. A tutor can be a professional teacher. Someone who has this hour to fulfill and then moves on to something else.

But the Apostle Paul was a father to these Corinthian believers. Why was he a father to them? Because he had begotten them through the gospel. Paul had gone into this pagan city, a city that was known for immorality, licentiousness.

I mean, you could really call it Sin City. And he went and he preached the gospel and there were people who turned to God from their idols and became believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and began to live lives of purity. And so that father-child relationship existed and the Apostle Paul really loved these people.

He wasn't doing this work for what he got out of it. He was doing it because of the burden that was upon his heart. And you know, that's still true today.

You might have many instructors in Christ and yet not have many fathers. You might have many who carry on a Christian ministry, but it's another thing when you have a man who's really a father in the faith. I can remember years ago a dear man who worked among the assemblies.

His name was Harold Harper. He wasn't well physically, but that didn't make any difference to him. He would travel across the country and he'd hear about some little group of believers up in a remote town in North Dakota.

And he would go all the way out of his way just to go over there and be with that little group of people and try to encourage them on in the things of the Lord. He wasn't just an instructor, he was a father. And I'll tell you, when the Lord took him home to heaven, the assembly suffered a great loss.

So Paul presents himself here as a model to be imitated. That might sound like conceit to you. That might sound like pride to you.

But it isn't really. He was telling them that he was their model insofar as he modeled Christ. In another passage he says that.

Be followers of me even as I follow Christ. And it's a wonderful thing when a man can say that. You know, there are some people who preach cream, but they live water, you know.

High talk, low walk. What they preach and what they are in themselves is a great gulf fixed between the two. Wasn't true with Paul.

Certainly wasn't true with the Lord Jesus, was it? The Lord Jesus was the perfect exemplification of all that he ever taught. And Paul sought to be that. He sought to exemplify the Lord Jesus.

And that's how he could say, be imitators of me. Therefore I urge you, imitate me. The greatest example that any man or woman may have in this world is to be like Jesus.

There's nothing higher than that. And we all have to guard against that. That our lives correspond with our preaching.

And then he says that he's going to send Timothy to them. And Timothy was an assistant of Paul. And just hear what he says.

This reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ as I teach everywhere in every church. Timothy was going to come to remind them of the model that they found in Christ. To me that's very interesting.

The first view of Christ that the Corinthians ever had was in Paul. That's how they first came to know Christ. Through what they saw in the life of Paul.

And that's very searching. That's true of you too if you're a believer. People look at you and they say, that's what a Christian ought to be.

I find that very searching, don't you? Years ago, a young man, I wrote in the front of my Bible. I think it's still there in that Bible, although the Bible is pretty worn. It says, if of Jesus Christ their only view may be what they see of him in you, McDonald, what do they see? Wow.

If of Jesus Christ their only view may be what they see of him in you, McDonald. Oh, you put your name in there. What do they see? Enough to keep me humble for 24 hours.

So Timothy's role was to remind them of Paul's ways in Christ as he taught everywhere in the church. And then Paul tells them about a planned visit. You know, there were always people who said, yeah, Paul, he talks like a lion, but he's just a paper tiger when he's around.

They did. They were detractors. Paul, look, whenever you do something for God, there are always going to be people on the sidelines who will take a swipe at you.

Did you know that? It's true. And there were people in Paul's day who said, oh, yeah, he talks like that, but he's just a coward when he's with you. So Paul is going to pay a visit to the Corinthians.

He says, some are puffed up as though I were not coming to you. Strange what people will get puffed up about, isn't it? But he says, I will come to you shortly. I say here, determined by Paul, DV.

DV means Lord willing. The Latin words for God willing. And it says that here.

I will come to you shortly if the Lord wills. And I will know not the word of those who are puffed up, but the power. These people were very good with their mouths, but not so good with their lives.

And so Paul is going to come and check them up on that. I like verse 20. He says the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.

That means that what really counts in the kingdom of God is not word. Talk is cheap, but it's the power of a life. It's indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God that makes an impact for God in the world.

That really is what counts. And that's why Edgar Guest said that he'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day. It's wonderful how much you learn by watching other Christians, godly Christians.

Wonderful how much you can learn and imitate in them. It's one thing to read it in the Bible. It's another thing to see it in a human life.

I mean, you might read it in the Bible and say, oh, yes, well, that was Jesus. And he was God, and I'm not God. And he could do it, but I can't do it.

But it's a wonderful thing when you see the life of Jesus reproduced in a human being. You can't argue against the facts, can you? You can't explain away the facts. And so we can learn a lot from one another.

You see a Christian who has marvelous graces in his or her life. For instance, they might be very, very generous, very, very gracious, or very, very broken. You say, boy, I'd like to be more like that.

Well, he says here that there's a decision to be reached when he comes. And the decision will depend on them. They're the ones that are going to make the choice.

He says, I will know not the word of those who are puffed up with the power, for the kingdom of God is not in word but in power. What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod or in love and a spirit of gentleness? And the idea is that the way they react to this letter that he's sending them. And their general attitude is going to determine the ministry that he will give them when he comes to their midst.

When he comes with a rod, it will be a corrective ministry, which Paul could certainly handle and handle very capably, as we all know. Or he says, shall I come to you in love and a spirit of gentleness? Of course, that's the way that he would prefer to come. The Bible says that judgment is God's strange work.

God would rather show mercy than show judgment. He really would. And so that's what Paul is saying in a way here.

My preference would be to come to you in a spirit of gentleness and in love, but it's up to you. And it's up to you how you react to the things that I'm saying to you today. That brings us to chapter 5, and I'd like to read a portion, if not all of it, to you at the present time.

Chapter 5 and verse 1. This has to do with the question of discipline in the assembly of God. Sanctuary reported that there's sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality is not even named among the Gentiles that a man has his father's wife. And you are puffed up and have not rather mourned that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.

For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged as though I were present concerning him who has done this deed. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, to 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. Your glory 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 old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

I wrote unto 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, but 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 a fornicator or a covetous or an idolater or a reviler or a drunkard or an extortioner, not even to eat with such a person, for what have I to do with judging those who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? But those who are outside God judges, therefore put away from yourselves that wicked person. There are some chapters in the Bible that we wish we didn't have to think about, and this is one of those chapters.

You know, I don't think anybody rejoices to teach a chapter like this, but it is the Word of God, isn't it? And it deals with life the way it is. And this is the value of consecutive systematic study of the Scriptures, that you get all the diet that God wants you to get. That's the weakness of topical study.

You get snatches from here and there. But when you go through the Bible consecutively in a systematic way, you get a well-balanced diet from the Word of God. And here we come to a very serious subject in the Scriptures and a subject that we don't handle carelessly or pridefully, but a subject that we have to handle very, very humbly.

There are two areas, two special areas in the Christian life where Satan seeks to derail people. One is in the area of doctrine, and the other is in the area of morals, and they're very closely connected. First of all, he tries to lure Christians off into false doctrine.

He's been somewhat successful in that. I don't know that he's been extremely successful at it. Because where people are fed the Word of God, they know false doctrine.

They have the indwelling Spirit of God who enables them to discern between truth and error. But then there's the area of morals. And here, I believe, is where Satan has been eminently successful.

The Christian church in the United States within the last few years has been rocked by scandals in the church. So, what attitude do we take towards it? Well, first of all, the Scripture says, lest you also be tempted. We don't sit in the scorner's seat.

We don't look down our theological noses at people who have fallen into sin. Rather, we say, well, we're all vulnerable. We're all made of the same clay.

We all have feet of iron and clay. We all have the same weaknesses. Somebody has said, every David has his Bathsheba.

What does that mean? Well, it means that we all have besetting sins. Not necessarily the same sins, either. Paul wrote to the Corinthians in chapter 10, verse 13, he says, There has no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man.

God is faithful. He will not suffer you to be tempted above that you're able, but will also, with the temptation, provide a way of escape that you may be able to bear it. The Scripture says, let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

In other words, it's not our attitude to stand aside and just deal harshly with people like this, but realize that we must not be proud. Dr. Barnhouse said, a Christian, somebody said to him, Dr. Barnhouse, what sins may a Christian commit? He said, any sin against which he is warned in the New Testament. It's good to think soberly about this.

And when you read about these scandals in the church, in the paper, you see it on the television, hear it on the radio, you think, what can I do so that this won't happen to me? And in that connection, I can't help thinking of the words of the Lord Jesus there in Gethsemane as he was approaching the cross and he said to the disciples, Watch and pray, lest you enter not into temptation. I suppose it would be neat if I could stand here today and give you five things, five mechanical things, which if you did it, you'd never fall into sin. I could say, well, pray every day, read the Bible every day, you know, five, just five things and you'll never fall into sin.

You can't do that. Because some of those men that you read about in scandals, they read the Bible every day. They're not already read it.

They preached it. They prayed. You know, there was something wrong in here.

There was something wrong in their heart. The outward mechanics might have been all right, but they never, they didn't, I shouldn't say they never, they didn't have a tender heart toward the Lord. They somehow got hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Somehow. And they came to the place where they were not appalled at sin. Somebody said the greatest protection against sin is being shocked by it.

That's good. I think that's true. It's when we lose that sense of shock about sin and when we start to condone it and roll it as a sweet morsel under our tongues that the danger is.

So Jesus says, watch and pray that you enter not into temptation. Now, what do you pray? I'll tell you some of the things I pray. And I'm sure I've told you before, but you never had the same audience.

I pray, Lord, keep me from doing anything that would bring shame and dishonor on your name. I hate the thought of that. My Savior died for me on the cross of Calvary.

He died to pay the penalty of my sin. What an awful thing for me to go out and fall into some sin of a public nature, even, that will bring shame and dishonor on his name. That's the kind of tenderness that you want to maintain in your life, I think.

I pray, secondly, Lord, may not the temptation to sin and the opportunity to sin coincide in my life. Because sometimes I have the temptation to sin, but the opportunity isn't there. And sometimes the opportunity isn't there, but the temptation isn't there.

The bad thing is when they both come at the same time. And I do, I seriously ask the Lord, don't let them happen at the same time, Lord. I pray, Lord, keep me from doing it even if I want to.

Because if you examine your own heart, you remember you have an old nature. The old Adam is still there. And there are times that you might want to do the thing.

You need the divine power, the power of the Holy Spirit to keep you from doing it in that moment of fierce temptation. I pray this, and I think it's a valid prayer. Lord, take me home to heaven rather than let me fall into sin.

It's a good choice to make, isn't it? Take me home to heaven rather than let me fall into sin. You say, well, you don't have to worry, McDonald, you're 73. You're just at the golden gates already.

No such a thing in the Christian life. No such a thing in the Christian life. I pray, Lord, make me as holy as it is possible for a person to be on this side of heaven.

You say, is there anything else I should do? Yeah, there are a lot of other things you should do. You should guard your thought life, because that's where it all begins, isn't it? And the temptation, first of all, comes into your mind. No question about it.

It comes into your mind. And you either say, I'm going to get rid of that. I'm going to expel that by bringing in Christ.

Or you're going to say, rather like that thought. I think I'll think about that for a while. You say, do you have that problem? Of course I have that problem.

I told you, we're all made of the same dust. And everything about us, the whole world about us is, it's a monstrous system of temptation. Everything about us, the TV, you know, the newsstand with all the pornographic literature on it.

It's all designed to drag us down. Within the last two years, I had a preacher come to me. Told me that one day he went to the newsstand and he picked up a pornographic magazine.

And he got hooked on pornography. He said, what? Paul? He got hooked on pornography. He said, a preacher? A preacher.

And he told me about it with a broken heart. Praise God, he got delivered too. He got delivered.

I can tell you about a Bible commentator who late in his life started using drugs. I don't know what kind of drugs they were. But he got hooked on them.

That couldn't happen to a preacher. It can happen to a preacher. Satan wants to knock us out of the race.

He wants to put us on the shelf. And he will bring these temptations to us. Guard the spotlight.

Avoid fetus. I don't see how I can have pure thoughts and watch those Hollywood harlots parading across the screen. Do you? You might as well be practical about it.

Call it what it is. It's rotten. It's filth.

And you can't watch that without being affected by it. There's no way. And we don't legislate for God's people here.

We don't say, if you watch TV, you can't be a member of this show. We don't say that. We try to bring principles of the Word of God that you have to apply in your own life.

And you know whether you're more edified in the things of God after you watch the late evening show, don't you? You know that. You know that you're not. I don't believe anybody will ever make history for God who's a couch potato.

I say keep your heart tender before the Lord. And avoid the very first approaches of sin. When I was back in Chicago years ago, there was a man, a Christian man on the radio.

He was so well loved. I mean, there was that loving timbre in his voice. I mean, he was popular.

But he couldn't keep his hands off the women. And he ended in disgrace. He couldn't keep his hands off the women.

I think I told you, did I, that Chuck Smith, who preaches on the radio, he was speaking at the graduating class at Columbia Bible College. Yeah, I told you this. But here it is.

His message had three parts. He said, don't touch the glory. Don't touch the money.

Don't touch the women. What do you mean? He meant that those were, for young fellows going out into the Christian ministry, those were the three great dangers. Don't touch the glory.

Let the glory belong to the Lord. Wonderful how much you can do if you don't care who gets the glory. Don't touch the money.

Don't be in the ministry for what you get out of it. Don't get a materialistic attitude in the Christian ministry. Don't touch the women.

Watch out in the area of moral purity. And incidentally, the person who stands closest to the captain is the one that's most likely to feel the arrows of the tempter. Satan doesn't waste his gunpowder on nominal

Christians.

The closer you stand to the Lord Jesus, and the more effective you are in his work, the more a target for the devil you will be. Well, I just say those things by way of introduction. When we look to this chapter, we don't want to look at things with a censorious, harsh spirit, but applying it to ourselves to be warned by this passage of Scripture.

Well, first of all, you have the offense that's committed here. It's actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality is not even named among the Gentiles that a man has his father's wife. Well, first of all, the man is a professing believer.

It's not his own mother. His mother has died, probably, and his father has remarried. That's generally the view that's taken of this verse.

And so, in a sense, it is, it still is, according to the Scriptures, a form of the sin known as incest. Marriage between relatives. Because although these are not blood relatives, yet they're relatives just the same.

Your Bible may say, such as is not even named among the Gentiles. That word named means here practiced. It doesn't mean they don't talk about it, but it means they don't practice it.

Now, that's really quite a statement, because, first of all, let me say this. Paul divides all humanity into three classifications, Jew, Gentile, and the Church of God. Everybody in the world belongs to one of those three classes, Jew, Gentile, and the Church of God.

And I think you know, Jews, descendants of Abraham. Gentiles, this is the ungodly, pagan, heathen world that most of us here were saved from. And then the Church of God, consisting of all true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, the cardinal sin of the Gentiles was sexual immorality. The cardinal sin of the Gentiles was sexual immorality. And here it says that even the Gentiles don't practice this sin.

I mean, Paul is saying that to create in your mind a sense of the enormity of the sin. As much as this wasn't just an ordinary case of adultery or a fornication, something like that. No, no, no, no.

This is a sin of such hideous nature that even the ungodly Gentiles don't practice it. And that's true. It's really true.

It's true today. That isn't exactly the place that men go to for sexual satisfaction. That a man has his father's wife.

The next verse is rather shocking. Corinthian's reaction to it. And I confess, it blows my mind when it reads it.

He says, and you are puffed up. What were they proud about? Here's a case of sin in the midst of the church. And instead of coming before the Lord and weeping over it, which they should have done.

He says, they're puffed up. What are they proud of? Maybe they were proud of their loving tolerance. Do you think? Was that it? That they were so loving and so gentle and so kind that they could just tolerate this and not create any waves about it.

Horrible. Certainly, if there's any place for pride in life, this is not the one, is it? Be proud of such a thing. And have not rather mourned that he who has done this thing might be taken away from among you.

Does that mean take the word? It means that this sin should be dealt with. Instead of being proud, they should have said, look, we've got to get before the Lord and take godly action in this case. And then Paul gives his own decision in the matter.

And here he's speaking as an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that the apostles had special powers given to them because of their position as witnesses of Christ and resurrection. Because of the special powers that were given to them to perform miracles, signs and wonders.

And I think in these verses you have an illustration of some extraordinary powers that were given them. Paul says, I've already made up my mind as to what should be done. What? This man should be delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that his spirit might be saved in the day of Jesus Christ.

What does that mean? Well, there are different explanations of it offered. One is the destruction of the flesh. That refers to death.

But as far as his body is concerned, he would die. But his spirit would be saved. Another and the one that I favor is this.

There was an evil fleshly principle in this man that had to be dealt with. And Paul says, when you put him out of the fellowship of the church, you're putting him in the devil's territory. So that that evil fleshly streak in him might be dealt with and eradicated from him.

And that he might be restored to fellowship with the Lord and with his people. Perhaps I should pause here just to say that discipline of this nature in the church has two principal purposes. One is to expose those who aren't true believers, who are only professors.

And the other is to restore a true believer. To bring him to the place where he repents of his sins, confesses his sins, and comes back to the Lord and comes back to the fellowship of God's people. You say, well, how can you tell the difference between that man who's not a true believer, who's just a nominal believer, a professor, and one who's a true believer? We can't always tell the difference.

We can't always tell the difference. But the way that people respond to discipline is one indication. It's one indication.

So Paul says, I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged, as though I were present, concerning him who has done this deed. I think as an apostle of Jesus Christ, Paul knew exactly what... This is before the New Testament, incidentally, was written. Don't be too hard on the Corinthians.

They didn't have the New Testament as you and I have it. Paul says, I know what should be done. This action is taken in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, verse 4, and that means by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul was not acting just as the apostle Paul. He was acting by authority that had been committed to him by the Lord Jesus Christ. He was God's man in the situation.

You have that expression in the Old Testament, a man of God. And it refers not only to the holiness of his character, but the fact that he was a representative of God. A mouthpiece of God.

He spoke for God. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. You know, that's a very solemn thing.

It's a very solemn thing to realize that when a man is... a person is disfellowshipped, when he's put out of the fellowship of the local church, you really are putting him into the devil's territory. He becomes subject to the attack of the devil in a way that isn't true while he's in the fellowship of the church. This may be, I say, unto death.

Paul says that in chapter 11. He said that some people were coming to the Lord's Supper and they weren't judging sin in their lives. They weren't judging sin in their lives.

And he says, for this cause, many are weak and sickly among you, and some sleep. And sleep there is the sleep of death. In 1 Corinthians chapter 11.

So it could very well be in this passage of Scripture that Paul says this man should be disfellowshipped with the possibility that it might result in his physical death, but not in the loss of his soul. Is this man a real Christian? He could be a real Christian, yes. I've said before, it's possible to be fit for heaven through the merits of the Lord Jesus.

And that's the only way anybody's fit for heaven. It's possible to be fit for heaven through the merits of the Lord Jesus and to be unfit for further life and testimony on earth. It is.

Just think about that for a minute. It's possible to know of a certainty that your home is in heaven because of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ for you on the cross of Calvary. And yet God has to remove you from the earth because your life is a libel rather than a Bible.

And that's what Paul is saying here. Deliver such an one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. And the day of the Lord Jesus has to do with the coming of the Lord Jesus and with the judgment seat of Christ that follows the rapture of the church.

Now he's stated his conclusion and then he uses an argument from leaven. And you know what leaven is. Leaven is yeast.

And it's used in the Bible always of evil. Sometimes leaven in the Bible refers to evil doctrine and sometimes it refers to evil morals. Here of course it refers to evil morals.

Your imploring is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? What does that mean? Well it means even in a church, even in an assembly like this, if there's a little sin and it's tolerated, it spreads. Leaven is never static and sin is never static either.

And if it is tolerated as it was apparently, they were rejoicing, they were puffed up, Paul says it'll spread. Don't you know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Somebody said there's no such a thing as a little garlic. Well you can say that about leaven too.

There's no such a thing as a little leaven. It's just a peccadillo, it's just an indiscretion. No it isn't.

God it isn't. Therefore purge out the old leaven. That means deal with sin.

Deal with it in your own life and it's a public nature. Deal with it in the assembly that you may be a new lump since you truly are unleavened. I'd like to explain something to you.

Verse 7 is a very interesting verse differentiating between the believer's position and the believer's practice. The believer's standing and the believer's state. The believer's position is we are unleavened.

That's what we are in Christ. That's our standing. We're unleavened at the sight of God because we're in Christ.

Now he says let your state correspond to your standing. Let your practice correspond to your position. You are unleavened, now be unleavened.

That might help to clarify what seems to be a contradiction in this verse. He says purge out the old leaven that you may be a new lump since you truly are unleavened. The first part, those first two expressions have to do with your state, with your practice, and the last since you truly are unleavened has to do with your standing, your position in Christ.

For indeed Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us. Paul's magnet always points to Christ, doesn't it? It brings Christ into every situation and into every argument. Now I see that our time is gone and I do not want to transgress, but we will take up, Lord willing, from this portion next week, finish the chapter and go on.

Shall we just look to the Lord in closing prayer? Lord, once again we come to you and thank you for your word and we confess that our hearts are somewhat heavy as we have to deal with subjects like this in the scripture, and yet we know, Lord, that it's for our good, not for yours. And so we pray that our hearts might truly be exercised in this regard. We do thank you for forgiveness of sins through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We thank you that with all our failures we can come to you and confess our sin and know that our sin is forgiven, that you will never bring them up against us again. We do pray for those who have fallen and become public scandals, Father. We would just eat the sin offering and say, Lord, we have sinned.

We take our place with all the blood-bought ones and confess to you our utter failure and unworthiness. And we just pray, Lord, for one another here today that you will keep us from the accursed thing. We ask it in Jesus' name and for his sake.

Amen.

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