

Studies in 1 Corinthians-05 1 Cor 5:8-13

by William MacDonald

The sermon emphasizes the importance of church discipline in maintaining the holiness of the Church of God and restoring erring believers.

Duration: 49:46

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 5:1-11, 1 Corinthians 5:13, 1 Thessalonians 5:14

Topics: "Church Discipline", "Faith And Work"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher introduces a chorus that the congregation has previously learned and liked. The chorus emphasizes the belief in God's guidance and trust in Him during difficult times. The preacher then shifts to discussing a more serious topic of dealing with offense within the church. He emphasizes the importance of following biblical principles, such as directly addressing the offender and seeking repentance. The sermon also touches on the concept of work as a blessing from God and the need for believers to stay busy and provide for their families.

Transcript

New chorus today. I thought we would review one that we've already learned. Um... I think this is one of the better liked ones that we've learned recently.

So let's see what we can do with it. I know who holds the future and he'll guide me with his hand. Remember it? Ready? I know who holds the future And he'll guide me with his hand With God Just happen Everything by him is And With problems large and small God of miracles give to him Good let's try it again.

I know with Everything by him it's life I face tomorrow I'll trust the God of miracle Give to I think that was very good now. Let's see what you can do with it ready. You remember the word? Sure ready.

I know who holds the future and it'll guide me with his hand Everything by him is So I'll trust the God of miracles give to him Thank you very much, I knew you could do it today we continue our studies in 1st Corinthians Two weeks ago. We were in chapter 5, but we didn't finish it So we're going to go back to 1st Corinthians chapter 5 today and discuss it more 1st Corinthians chapter 5 and I'll read through the chapter it is 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 You are puffed up And have not rather mourns that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you For I indeed is absent in body but

present in spirit have already judged as though I were present Concerning him who has so 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 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 glorying 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 No with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth I wrote to 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 or 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 covetous or an idolater or a reviler or a drunkard or an extortioner Not even to eat with such a person.

Well, what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? Those who are outside God judges Therefore put away from yourself that wicked person so as you can see this chapter deals with discipline in the church the Church of God is holy and It must maintain that character before God and before the world And if it's going to do that there must be Godly discipline now, there are two purposes of discipline according to the Word of God one is to expose and Remove false professors.

It's always possible for people who are not Genuinely saved to come in to the fellowship of a local church They pose as Christians they talk like Christians and in some ways they even act like Christians But the truth of the matter is they have never been born Again, and one of the purposes of church discipline is to bring that situation to life It's something like the mixed multitude that came with Israel out of Egypt There were those who were truly devoted to the Lord But there was what we call the rabble as well and they cause an awful lot of trouble in the journeyings of the children of Israel the scripture says how can two walk together except they be agreed? what fellowship has light with darkness and So this is the part of the purpose of discipline is to expose Those who are not truly believers and remove them from the fellowship of God's people and the other is to restore erring believers We're all made of the same dust and it's possible for even true believers to fall into sin as the purpose of discipline in the church is to bring believers who have gone astray to the place of repentance and Confession and restoration to the Lord and to his people and if The scriptures are followed out this end is achieved Now I think we want to mention this morning too that there are various forms of discipline when we think of discipline Ordinarily, I'm afraid our minds go to the type of discipline described in this chapter, which is known as communication and that is where a person is put out of the church But that's only one of the many forms of discipline for instance If you turn to first Thessalonians chapter 5 and verse 14 and in other passages of scripture as well You'll find that Certain types of people are to be warned first Thessalonians chapter 5 and verse 14 Says now we exhort you brethren warn those who are unruly Comfort the faint-hearted Uphold the weak be patient with all warn those who were unruly What does that mean unruly?

Well here in Thessalonica There were those believers Who were taken up with the thought of the coming again of the Lord Jesus They believed as we believe that he could come at any moment. They believed in the imminent return of Christ But as a result of that they quit working Just sat around waiting for him to come in that sense They were unruly and in this epistle and in the next letter of Paul he has to say look if a man doesn't work you shall not eat and Part of God's program is that we keep busy for the Lord while we wait for his return And so one of the duties of the elders of the assembly would say look brother You say

you believe in the coming of the Lord We want to warn you You have to get to work.

You have to provide a living for your family You have to take care of them work is not part of the curse Work is a blessing from God Another form of discipline is found in the word avoid Romans chapter 16 and Verse 17 Romans chapter 16 and verse 17 it says now I urge you brethren note those who cause divisions and offenses Concur to the doctrine which you have learned and avoid them You see here's another situation that can arise in a local fellowship where people start causing Difficulty and here it says that we are to avoid those who are divisive and offensive in their behavior And yet that isn't the same as putting them out of the fellowship of the local church is it? It simply means that the Christians by their attitude toward these people show That they are not in favor with what is going on They're not happy and they show that by Avoiding them now. There's another passage in Titus chapter 3 and I confess to you. It's not completely clear but if you turn to Titus chapter 3 and verse 10 You read this Says reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition Well, it isn't exactly clear what is meant by that word reject does that mean Does that mean to dis fellowship him? Does that mean to read him out of the assembly or is it a lesser form of discipline? The commentators are not agreed on this But this man is a factious man He goes around trying to divide the people of God and and have people follow him and he is to be rejected knowing that such a person is warped and sinning being Self-condemned and then of course there is the extreme form of discipline which is excommunication and You read about that, of course in the passage that's before us, but I think you also have it in Matthew chapter 18 Matthew chapter 18 verses 15 through 17 Says moreover if your brother sins against you Go and tell him his fault between you and him alone If he hears you you have gained your brother But if he will not hear you take with you one or two more that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established and If he refuses to hear them tell it to the church but if he if he refuses even to hear the church let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector Now this is apparently a rather serious form of offense I mean there are people that offend us and we can just say well forget it You know a lot of minor offenses that come in life and and you don't get too perturbed about them But apparently this is a more serious form.

Somebody has Offended you in a very serious way and the proper thing to do instead of going and gabbing about it to other people Go directly to that man and speak to him about it the purpose is to bring him to the place where he repents and Where he says he's sorry if He doesn't listen to you You take one or two other witnesses Because this is God's rule for competent Testimony in the mouths of two or three witnesses shall everything be established Not a lot of trouble would be avoided in the Christian life and in Christian Church Policy if people would really follow this the mouths of two or three witnesses Then if he does not hear those two or three witnesses Take it to the church and if he refuses to hear the church, what do you what does that mean? it means count him like an Unsaved person. That's what it means. He's a man and a tax collector That was just a way of saying You don't consider him as a Christian He's not acting like a Christian and you take him at his profession and you do not consider him as a Christian that doesn't mean he can't attend meetings of the church because It's good for him to come under the sound of the gospel and by the Word of God be convicted of his sins However, he certainly wouldn't be allowed to partake of the Lord's supper because you wouldn't permit a heathen or a tax collector To do that So I have here reasons for Excommunication there aren't there aren't many reasons for excommunication in the Word of God It's not something that's just carried on very lightly.

It's a very serious matter and the first one that I have here goes back to what I just read in Matthew 18 and verse 17 the repeat repeated refusal before witnesses to repent of an offense That is ground for putting a person out of the fellowship of the local church then the second is sexual immorality and That's what you

had in this chapter that we read 1st Corinthians chapter 5 Sexual immorality actually this was a case of incest for a man Had relations with his father's wife and we decided two weeks ago and we studied this that this was not his own mother But it was his father's Second wife or third wife or something like that would be his stepmother Paul himself is outraged by this because he says that's the type of a sin that even the ungodly Gentiles Don't engage in That's true Although although sexual immorality is the cardinal sin of the Gentile world not this particular type of sin It was a very serious form of sin then another Another form of in 1st Corinthians chapter 5 11 which is grounds for excommunication is covetousness Say what does that mean? Why would you be? Excommunicated for covetousness well covetousness means the inordinate desire to get more and Doing it in a such a way as to bring shame on the local church Now, let me explain that maybe with an illustration during the Second World War When food supplies were scarce and they were rationed There was a Christian in a church in Montreal and He wanted more sugar for his business than he was legally allowed to have and So he used dishonest methods to get sugar coupons and he was caught and it was front page news in Montreal this man holding a Prominent place in the church Accused and found guilty actually of covetousness Being willing to bring shame and disgrace upon the name of the Lord by dishonestly obtaining sugar coupons he was excommunicated from the church of the grounds of covetousness then another Another cause and we find this again in the passage we read today. Another reason for excommunication is reviling or railing Now this doesn't mean just because a man Maybe loses his temper wants and says something that he shouldn't say. It's not that but a railer is a man who? habitually a person who habitually Uses strong and intemperate language against others he Characteristically flies off the handle with other people and uses abusive words with them That's what a railer is in the Christian sense of the word in the scriptural sense of the word It's not common, but it's not unknown either and that sort of behavior cannot be tolerated in the Church of God.

That's all And if a man insists on that Does not come to the place of repentance. He is to be read out of the church Drunkenness 1st Corinthians chapter notice all of these are listed 1st Corinthians chapter 5 verse 11 Say can a Christian become drunk Well, I think I said before I quoted dr. Barnhouse a Christian can commit any sin That he's warned against in the New Testament, and he certainly warned against this We have to face the fact today all of us that in ourselves.

We're very very weak Very very prone to fall into sin That's why our guards must be up That's why in this country at least The safest policy for a child of God with regard to alcoholic beverages is total abstinence The Bible doesn't teach total abstinence But because of the culture in which we live because of the situation in the United States It's damaging to a Christian's testimony to engage in alcoholic Beverages to and this is the safest policy. I say total abstinence then another reason for text communication would be extortion What do we mean by extortion? Well, there's probably have to do mostly with business life But it's where a person Tries to get money or possessions from you by exerting illegal Undue pressure upon you might even find you in somewhat of a compromising position and uses that as leverage to get money From you once again. The suggestion is that it it comes out in the paper it goes to a court of law and once again the Church is involved in public Scandal and so the Word of God says this is grounds for excommunication and then I mentioned again Titus chapter 3 verse 10 where it says reject that man.

And so I say here possibly factiousness this is a man who's He determined to have his own way even if it means splitting the church and drawing people after him I Can't speak to dogmatically on that because Christians are not agreed as To what it means recheck, but possibly it's a ground for excommunication. It's a warning enough for a person not to do it, isn't it? It says that in 1st Corinthians 3 that if any man wrecked the church of God him. Oh God wreck Then I tell you that verse is a solemn verse to me Okay, what

should be the attitude of the church in all of this well, first of all the attitude toward ourselves is this some situation where we sit in the scorner's seat and look down our Theological noses at someone who has fallen into sin and the answer is no We should have a spirit of deep humility in all of this Galatians chapter 6 and verse 1 What does it say there? Well, I think most of you are familiar with it, but it says that If any man is overtaken in a fault you who are spiritual restore such a one what in the spirit of Meekness, let me just read the verse Brethren if a man is overtaken in a trespass you who are spiritual Restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness considering yourself Lest you also be tempted and so you see this happen to a person and what do you say you say? Well, it's him today.

It may be me tomorrow if I get my eyes off the Lord If I don't walk in fellowship with the Lord It could happen to me and of course Real reason why we should live close to the Lord day by day What is the attitude toward the excommunicated person? Well, first of all, it says in verse 11 and 1st Corinthians 5 do not Keep company with him Good and what it really means is that you do not Show in any way that you approve what has happened In fact you show by your behavior that you're very much in disapproval of what has happened In fact, it even goes so far as to say do not even eat with him not to keep coming Don't even eat with him.

The reason for that is Eating at a table expresses fellowship, doesn't it? You know when we sit around a table and we eat together We are holding things in common and that's what Fellowship means it means holding things in common You know as far as the evangelical world is concerned that verse of Scripture might just as well not be in the Bible It's obeyed so little I Thank God for fellowship like this where it is obeyed But we take the Word of God as being the Word of God and we obey it Because it's written in the Word This is a man who professes to be a Christian Now I would have to say that there may be an exception to that rule.

For instance if a man is found To be in sin and excommunicated from the assembly his wife still has Responsibilities toward him doesn't she his wife still does as far as the home is concerned As far as providing meals and eating meals back in the Old Testament was an interesting thing that a priest could not defile himself with a dead body like if somebody in the Congregation died he was not to go in and touch the dead body but in the case of a close relative he could But was that exception made and I just often think that maybe that carries over just a little to a passage like this in the New Testament Where there would be that slight exception to this rule another Responsibility that we have for the excommunicated person is to refrain from gossiping so easy to talk but This what the scripture would do Would be to draw a kindly veil over the whole situation Not make it the occasion of rumor mongering or anything else The church has taken godly action now You leave it with the Lord and the person and of course when the person repents Which is the goal of it all the answer is to forgive him Forgive him and you read that in 2nd Corinthians chapter 2 verses 7 and 8 2nd Corinthians chapter 2 verses 7 and 8 there was a man here who had been disciplined by an assembly Some people think it's the same man that you have here in 1st Corinthians chapter 5 It may be it may not be it's impossible to say with certainty but let's read these verses 2nd Corinthians 2 verses 7 and 8 I think I should go back and read some for the sake of connection Says and I wrote verse 3 I wrote this very thing to you lest when I came I should have sorrow over those from whom I ought to have joy Having confidence in you all that my joy is the joy of you all for out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears not that you should be grieved that you might know the love Which I have so abundantly for you, but if any anyone has caused grief This is the the man who has sinned he has not grieved me But all of you to some extent not to be too severe the punishment which was Inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man the church had taken godly

action So that on the contrary you ought rather to forgive and comfort him because he has come to the place of repentance you ought to Forgive and comfort him lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love Toward him Verse 10 now whom you forgive anything I also forgive For if indeed I have forgiven anything I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ Lest Satan should take advantage of us But we are not ignorant of his devices that means that if the church doesn't forgive this man.

He could be plunged What is our responsibility toward the elders? well Let me just say this that Actually discipline is the function of the whole assembly but generally speaking it's committed to the elders of an assembly because the church has confidence in them and Without spreading the matter too much the church feels these men will act in a godly way and we can trust them Beside that there are some very sordid situations that can arise in connection with the whole subject of discipline and It's really better that it be confined with those men who are elders and our Responsibility toward them is a responsibility of full support Hebrews chapter 11 13 sorry Hebrews chapter 13 and verse 17 Says obey those who rule over you and be submissive For they watch out for your souls as those who must give account Let them do so with joy and not with grief. So that would be unprofitable For you I think we should all remember this that when elders meet in godly counsel to deliberate over some of these problems they know a lot more than we know and They don't they're not in a position to discuss it and the path of wisdom Is to pray for the elders and say well They know more about it than I know and they've acted in the fear of God and I will support them in it And I think this is characteristically what? What does happen? You say but supposing those elders are out of the will of God and supposing they make decisions that are not right That's between them and the Lord. But in the meantime, I'm not going to oppose them.

I'm not going to Stand against them Now I'd like to go back to 1st Corinthians chapter 5 and just go on from where we left off Last time 1st Corinthians chapter 5 First of all, the offense is spelled out very clearly in Chapter in verse 1 and we've already discussed that the very heinous form of sin That was committed, you know, there's nothing worse than fallen man Man is capable of sins that even animals don't commit You ever think of that you look into your own heart and you realize the capability for sin that's there the only reason we haven't done some of those things is fear of the police fear of jail and fear of prison and the protecting grace of God There's nothing worse than the heart of men Jeremiah said it didn't he heart is deceitful and desperately wicked above all things who can know it There's a real answer and here you have a manifestation of the wickedness of the heart of God Amazingly enough was the Corinthians reaction to that Instead of being crushed Instead of calling a general meeting for fasting and prayer and confession. He says they were puffed up. I Don't know what in the world they had to be puffed up about to you That's a puzzle.

It's one of the puzzles of Scripture something. I'd like to ask Paul when I get to heaven What in the world were the Corinthians proud of when such an abhorrent situation arose on their nips? The only thing I can think of maybe they were proud of their tolerance. Yeah.

Well, we can just you know overlook Love, you know Just must love everybody Forgetting that love can be firm We had a couple come to our training program a few years ago and while they were there they learned to discipline their boys three boys a Couple of years later. I visited them where they lived and the father said to me bill he said Now if we don't discipline the boys, they think we don't love them That interesting Before he said to me he said now if we don't discipline the boys we think they think we no longer love them Of course, the Bible says that says the parents who don't discipline their children hate them Not a manifestation of love at all Well, the Apostle Paul had no Difficulty reaching a decision on the

matter. Did he he said I'm absent present with you in spirit I've already decided What should happen in a case like this and what he is saying in verses three through five? Is that the man should be put out of the fellowship of the local church, and I think it's very important to notice Verse five 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 if this man is a true believer Which he professes to be Action must be taken to bring him back to the place of repentance No question about the salvation of his soul.

He saved through the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ But in the meantime, he's delivered into Satan's fear, which is a horrifying thing to think about a Christian walking with the Lord is Tremendously protected more than you and I realized today When a person is put out of the fellowship of the local church, he's delivered to Satan The expression for the destruction of the flesh may mean death. It may mean that It does in 1st Corinthians chapter 11, it says that those who partake of the Lord suffer without judging themselves So this caused many are weak and sickly among you in some sleep It was God's judgment upon them because of unjudged sin in their lives Or it can also mean and this is what I think it means the destruction of the flesh There's a wicked principle in this man that had to be judged The wicked principle of immorality and so he's delivered into Satan's fear so that he might come to his senses and realize the Awfulness of what he has done and be brought to the place where he'll never do it again So Paul says in verse and now Paul is going to Give the argument from leaven the argument why he says this the argument from leaven Don't you know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Leaven is yeast You mix you mix the yeast with the meal and it starts to work In that sense leaven is never static never static And that 11 is used in the Bible in two ways. It's used of Doctrinal evil and it's used of moral evil in Galatians where they were trying to mix law and grace it was used of Doctrinal evil the doctrinal evil of trying to mix law and grace and here it's used of moral evil immorality and What Paul is saying is if if there's immorality and a local fellowship and it goes unchecked It'll increase It's true of moral evil to a doctrinal evil to any Religious system that does not accept the Bible as complete and final is always adding new dogmas Always adding new doctrines.

They never stop But if you accept the Word of God in its completeness, there are no new doctrines. No new dog God's Word is truth and so Paul uses this argument from leaven a Little leaven leavens the whole lump sin is not static It does not stay where it is. It always increases Unless you deal with it.

Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole therefore purge out the old leaven That you may be a new lump. That is a holy people before the Lord since you truly are unleavened. I Position and you have the believers practice you truly are unleavened.

That's the believers position Purge out the old leaven. That's what our practice should be Our practice should correspond to our position for indeed Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us He's going back to the Old Testament to the Passover feast and to the feast of unleavened bread Which was in conjunction with it and he says therefore let us keep the feast now the feast here means the whole Christian life That means that the whole Christian life let us keep the feast not with the old leaven sin but with the leaven of malice not with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of Sincerity and truth. This is what is to characterize the believers light Now he's going to go on here and correct a misunderstanding.

He said I previously wrote to you Not to keep company with sexually immoral people but he said when I said that I Didn't mean the unconverted people of the world. What does that mean? What it means that? When you go down to the butcher shop that butcher may be a fornicator Or when you ride on the BART

train the driver may live a very promiscuous life You'd have to go out of the world to separate yourself from all of that, you know, that's not what I'm talking about And that's true, you know, that's true There's no way where a Christian can completely remove himself from any person who is Sinful so that's what he goes on to say yet I certainly did not mean with a sexually immoral people of this world or with the covetous or extortioners or idolaters Since then you would have to go out of the world It's true. We have to do business day by day with all sorts of people and God doesn't say that we have to isolate ourselves completely from them Actually, our responsibility is to testify to them, isn't it? Not to separate ourselves from them, but to go to them and testify to the world that its works are evil But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother.

You see the difference? This is one who professes to be a believer Who is a fornicator? Covetous an idolater reviler a drunkard or an extortioner not even to eat with such a person See he's making that Distinction he didn't intend pagans when he said that originally But immoral Christians are the ones who are in view He says well, whatever Well, so what have I to do with judging those who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside in other words? I? Can't go around judging the people of the world. That's God's responsibility to take care of them But I have an offer I have an obligation to judge those who are in the church Those who are outside God judges and so He says those who are outside God judges therefore put away from yourselves From among yourselves that wicked person and so you have the whole situation spelled out here the personal discipline intended Excommunication the sphere of discipline restated the church is the sphere of discipline and the church Discipline is to be invoked notice as I said before that Discipline is the function of the local church therefore put away from yourselves that wicked person, but ordinarily it's carried on by the elders with the confidence and the prayerful support of The people of God's people in the church Now I realize there may be many questions in your mind about this I hope you'll feel free to ask them afterwards if there are I was thinking this morning Now there's not very much of the gospel in this chapter is there? If you came in here this morning, and you wanted to know how to be saved I don't think you'll find it in chapter 5 And I always like to say a word in the gospel and so before I left my place this morning I picked up six copies of this little booklet, and it's called light for anxious souls And the reason I picked it up is this is the book which Next to the Bible was the greatest help to me in finding assurance of salvation I Really have struggled over this whole question of my soul salvation And I went through months of agony I Wanted to know that if I died or if the Lord came that I would be with him in heaven And it was a terrible struggle in some ways it was like a war And then it seemed that the Lord won the war and I bowed the knee to Jesus Christ, but What I expected to happen didn't happen. I didn't get happy feelings and I groped on in the darkness for about three months and then I came across this book by George cutting light for anxious souls and I read it and it was just what I needed It was wonderful when the doctor gives you a prescription and just takes care of the matter like that isn't that wonderful? Well, this was the doctor's prescription for me And I read the book and I could honestly stand here this morning and tell you I've never had doubt about my assurance of salvation since then So if you're here today, and this isn't a problem to you Or if you are not a decided Christian, and you would like a copy of this book Please feel free to come up afterwards.

There's no charge. I will not buttonhole you I will not embarrass you in any way, but I would ask that you read it I have a dear friend in Minnesota he's really a riot to be with and he he all he witnesses to every waiter and waitress that comes of and So when we finish our meal and the waiter or the waitress comes he says um I want to give you something and he has a copy of a gospel booklet there It happens to be God's answers to man's questions. He says now raise your right hand And they do they raise their right hand.

It says say after me. I promise to read this booklet Well, I'm not going to make you raise your right hand today, but It's amazing how many people have been saved through that fellow testimony really amazing If you'd like a copy you feel free to come up and ask for it afterwards. I'll be glad to give you one Let's look to the Lord in prayer, and I think then Tom has a closing hymn for us Father we Realize that we've been going over a sensitive passage of Scripture this morning Sometimes we'd rather not talk about these things and yet we realize that the character the holy character of the Church of God Must be preserved and sin must be dealt with And we just pray Lord that You will speak to all of our hearts in this connection and may we walk softly before you all the days of our lives Considering ourselves that we also be tempted We just pray your blessing upon your word as we've asked you before the meeting honor your word Blessed Lord Jesus we ask in your worthy name Amen

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