**GET RID OF THE OLD YEAST**

1 Corinthians 5:1-13

Key Verse 7

“Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new unleavened batch—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.”

**Introduction**



Everyone wants to be healthy. We want to have a healthy body, we want a strong family, and a healthy church. And we know that there are some things that we should do to get healthy and stay healthy. In today’s passage, we learn the secret of being truly healthy. Paul says, “Get rid of the old yeast.” Paul tells the Corinthian church to expel a sinful man from their community. It was a radical solution to a serious problem. We learn that we have to look at sin as God sees it. We must hate sin and mourn over it. Most of all, we should recognize the serious nature of unrepentant sin among us as it can destroy our Christian community. May the Lord help us to humbly accept his word of truth as we study this passage!

1. Read verses 1-5. What serious problem did the Corinthian church have? (1) What was the attitude of the Corinthian Christians toward this problem? (2) How did Paul instruct them to deal with the man in Jesus? (3-5)

1-1, Read verses 1-5.

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. **2** And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. **3** For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. **4** When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, **5** you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

1-2, What serious problem did the Corinthian church have? (1)

***It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife.***

* The influence of the godless culture in Corinth had infiltrated the Corinthian church to the extent that a man had his father’s wife.
* It sounds like it was a man and his step-mother. If a man had his father’s wife then she could be both his girlfriend and his mother at the same time.
* If the man’s father was still alive he would be so hurt, and his siblings would hate the man who did this. It would tear the family apart.
* Even the godless Romans and Greeks thought such incestuous acts were wrong. How could this occur in the holy church of Jesus Christ our Lord?
* How could this act not be addressed by the Corinthians until they received Paul’s letter? Paul rebukes the church for this problem.

Leviticus 18:8 reads,

You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife; it is your father's nakedness.

Deuteronomy 27:20 reads,

“‘Cursed be anyone who lies with his father's wife, because he has uncovered his father's nakedness..”

1-3, What was the attitude of the Corinthian Christians toward this problem? (2)

***2 And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you.***

* They were proud that their church was tolerant, compassionate, non-judgmental and progressive. But Paul rebuked them for their pride and compromise with sin.
* They ignored the teachings of the Old Testament and that of Jesus Christ and the Apostles.
* If they upheld the word of God, they should have been filled with grief and followed God’s command to challenge the man to repent of his sins.
* Jesus said in Matthews 18:17, “…if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.”
* Sin in the church must be systematically and swiftly dealt with. If there is no repentance, according to the Bible, the perpetrator must be warned sternly.
* In the Corinthian church, he was sleeping with his father’s wife. In other words, his sin was ongoing. It didn’t happen one time because he was drunk with wine. It was happening now. And he showed no sign of remorse, nor repentance.
* We should note this in order to understand why Paul commanded them to take a very drastic measure to deal with the problem, which was to remove him from the church.
* They were proud before God in the sense that they were not filled with grief when the serious problem surfaced.
* They did not cry out to God for help. They did not beat their chest. They did not pray. They did not rebuke the man. So Paul rebuked the church and told them to put out of their fellowship the man who had been actively sinning.

1-4, How did Paul instruct them to deal with the man in Jesus? (3-5)

***For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. 4 When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus,***

* Paul was not with them physically; but he was with them in spirit. He took the problem as his own. He was not a spectator.
* His mind was on it and he prayed to the Lord about it. He was their shepherd and he saw a disease spreading among his sheep. He could not just sit around and let the disease destroy his precious sheep.
* He said he had already passed judgment on the man who committed the sin. He did so in the name of our Lord Jesus.
* He told the church to have a public assembly in the name of the Lord Jesus and expel the man. A radical spiritual surgery was needed to protect the community

***5 you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.***

* The man in this passage clearly committed a great sin in the sight of God. If he had repented, the matter would have been dealt with quietly and peacefully.
* The man would have received the help he needed. But apparently he refused to repent. Paul called for the Corinthians to assemble in the name of and the power of the Lord Jesus to deal with it openly.
* Paul regarded the church as a community, not a group of individuals. He wanted the whole church to co-work together to help the man repent by cutting him off from the church and the warmth of Christian fellowship.
* This would also send a clear message to the whole church community that sin is very serious, and that they should have one opinion about the matter.
* If the church did not all have the same mind, the man could go around and get sympathy from various people. There could divisions in the church.
* When this man was expelled before the whole church, it was called “handing him over to Satan.” He would have to struggle in the world all by himself.
* In this way, he could plunge into the depths of misery like the prodigal son who wallowed in the mud among the pigs.
* In this situation he could seriously think about what he did. Hopefully he would come to his senses, repent and come back into the loving arms of the Father.
* Today people don’t want to confront anyone about their sin. They want to be politically correct and not hurt anyone’s feelings. Sometimes we think that love means tolerating everything someone does gracefully.
* However, the deepest love involves discipline that doesn’t feel very good at times. Ask any parent or any coach of a winning team.

Hebrews 12:11 says,

“No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”

Proverbs 12:1 says,

“Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid.”

* Discipline is a key to healthy churches, healthy families and healthy individuals. Correction is also necessary to get on the path to eternal life.
* Let’s take sin very seriously and be willing to rebuke those who sin, counseling them to repent. Let’s bring back true love rather than superficial love.
* Let’s also accept correction and discipline humbly as God’s great love for us so that we may be blessed. Amen!

1. Read verses 6-8. What would be the consequence if such a public sin as sexual immorality were ignored in the church? (6) Why should a Christian fellowship get rid of the old yeast? (7, 8)

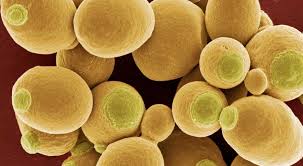
2-1, Read verses 6-8.

Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? **7** Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. **8** Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

2-2, What would be the consequence if such a public sin as sexual immorality were ignored in the church? (6)

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

* The connection between pride and their inaction(inactivity) in dealing with the sin problem is wrong. It was their blind boasting. Instead of crying out to God in prayer for the man and the church, they boasted about their permissive attitude.
* Paul told them that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough. A small sin can have a bad influence on the whole congregation. This was no trivial matter at all.



* Yeast is a small micro organism. Yet when a small amount is mixed with sugar and heated, it grows quickly. While it multiplies, it emits a gas that makes dough puffy.
* Likewise, sin spreads quickly among a group and makes people “puffed up”…that is…proud before God and boastful. Sin also spreads rapidly like a small amount of yeast through dough.
* At first, sin seems like a small matter. But once it is compromised with, it becomes an insidious problem.
* It is not just a personal matter. It becomes a bad influence among the whole fellowship, like a cancer that corrupts many quickly.
* In the case of the Corinthians, when they began to compromise with the immoral culture around them,
* Instead of being a good influence, the Corinthian church was being influenced by the world and was being rendered useless.
* We need to be careful that we don’t lose our spiritual influence in this world. We can do so by getting rid of the yeast of sexual immorality through repentance and a commitment to live holy lives of mission in this world.
* By the blood of Jesus, each of us could get rid of the old yeast of hedonistic pleasure seeking, and became a shepherd of God’s flock.
* We ourselves have experienced the life-changing power of the blood of Jesus which enabled us to get rid of our old sinful lives and live new lives in Christ.
* May the forgiving blood of the Passover lamb Jesus give many more people the power to get rid of their old lives of sin and live a new life under Jesus’ grace.

2-3, Why should a Christian fellowship get rid of the old yeast? (7, 8)

***7 Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.***

* The old yeast symbolizes the bad influence. Jesus warned his disciples, “Be careful. Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod” (Mark 8:15).
* Paul told the Corinthians to get rid of the old yeast so that they might be a new unleavened batch, or the new batch without yeast.
* Before they were saved by the blood of Jesus, they used to live in their pride and immorality. But they were set free from their slavery to sin when Jesus Christ, the Passover lamb, sacrificed himself on the cross, paying the price of their sins.

***8 Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.***

* This verse reminds us of the grace of God that brought his people Israel out of their slavery in Egypt. They had lived as slaves among the ungodly Egyptians.
* On the night of exodus when the angel of death passed over their houses whose doorposts were smeared with the blood of the Passover lamb, God told them to eat the bread without yeast.
* That’s how they began a journey of faith toward the Promised Land. They were to be a holy people.
* Similarly, Christians in Corinth were set free from their sins by Jesus who shed his blood on the cross as the Passover lamb.
* The old had gone and the new had come. They were a new creation! They should no longer live in their old ways of life in malice and wickedness.
* Instead, they were to live with sincerity and truth. We really are a new unleavened batch, not because what we have done, but because what Christ has done for us.
* When we realize this, we can no longer live in our old ways. We must live with sincerity and truth as the new batch without yeast.
* We must be a good influence to each other in our community as well as to the outside world.

1. Read verses 9-13. How should we deal with the sexually immoral, the greedy, an idolater, a slanderer, a drunkard, or a swindler in the church? (9-11) Why should we expel the wicked person from among us? (12-13)

3-1, Read verses 9-13.

I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— **10** not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. **11** But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. **12** For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%205#fen-ESV-28450b)] whom you are to judge? **13** God judges[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%205#fen-ESV-28451c)] those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.”

3-2, How should we deal with the sexually immoral, the greedy, an idolater, a slanderer, a drunkard, or a swindler in the church? (9-11)

***I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— 10 not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.***

* By being so uncompromising with sin, they might have misunderstood that he was saying that they should separate themselves from all immoral people, such as the greedy, swindlers and idolaters who are everywhere.
* On the contrary, God called Christians to live in this world among sinful people and make friends with them.
* Jesus himself set a good example in that he spent time with tax collectors and sinners to save them.

Luke 5:31-32 says,

"It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

***11 But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one.***

* God has left us here in the world to associate with people in the world and be a good influence on it.
* While loving people, we have to hate sin and not compromise with it. In the culture of that day and in many cultures today, eating with someone is an expression of friendship and partnership.
* Paul is warning the Corinthian Christians they cannot continue in Christian fellowship with a notorious sinner who calls himself a Christian.
* To **revile** is to criticize in an abusive or hostile way, or to spread negative information about. When you verbally attack someone and call him names and say mean things, this is an example of “revile.”
* **Swindle** means to use deception to deprive (someone) of money or possessions.

3-3, Why should we expel the wicked person from among us? (12-13)

***12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? 13 God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.”***

* For those in the church who sin and should know better, they need to know that the way to truly love people is by being strict at times. It sounds extreme but Paul again asserted that they should purge evil among them.
* When we are clear with sin in the church, it is painful in the short term. But it is the best medicine and the best remedy.
* The command to expel the immoral brother made the Corinthians very sorrowful, and the man who was expelled had a very difficult time.
* But we know that the man who was handed over to Satan finally repented his sin and was changed by the grace of God.

2 Corinthians 7:9,10 reads,

“For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.”

* Helping people to repent is very difficult. Often people get mad and try to retaliate when they are asked to repent. But even though it is very difficult, it is a very joyful thing to see people come to God.

**Conclusion**

Through this passage we learn of God’s love to send Jesus to cleanse our sins and make us pure. May God also give us a clear attitude towards sin so that we may not be influenced by the world, but be strong and healthy Christians who can be a good influence on the world. May our lives of faith be a Festival as we celebrate with joy our Passover Lamb Jesus with pure lives of sincerity and truth. Amen!

**One word: Healthy Community!**