

Sunday, June 19, 2016—I Corinthians 5:6-8: Purge Out Therefore the Old Leaven

Introduction/Review

- Last week during our time together we covered verses 2 through 5. In doing so, we looked at the reaction of the Corinthians to the fornication that had been occurring within their midst as well as Paul’s prescribed course of action with respect to it.
- Verse 2—the Corinthians were “puffed up” over this man’s sin. They had taken their knowledge of the grace of God (I Cor. 8:1; Rom. 5:20; 6:1-2, 14-15) and used it as an occasion to glory in this man’s sin. Instead of being “puffed up” regarding it they should have “mourned” and removed the offender from the assembly.
- Verse 3—while he was absent in body Paul was present with the Corinthians in spirit and had already judged what the proper course of action would be. I didn’t mention this last week, but note Paul’s use of the word “judged” in verse 2. Often those taken in sexual sins will say things like who are you to judge me and my behavior? Paul “judged” this man’s conduct in accordance with the “mind of Christ.”
 - I Corinthians 2:15-16—“he that is spiritual judgeth all tings”
- Verse 4—regarding this verse we covered four primary issues: 1) all the Corinthian church is to assemble together, 2) when they assemble Paul’s own spirit is present within the assembly (follows from the previous verse), 3) when they so assemble they will be doing so with “the power of our Lord Jesus Christ”, and 4) the assembly is to conduct this business “in the name or our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- Verse 5—the expression “to deliver” means that the Corinthians were to give, hand over, or abandoned the offender to Satan. In the context, how would this be accomplished? By putting the offender out of the local assembly and turning him over to the natural consequence and outcome of his sin. By cutting off the offender’s access to the local church he was being placed back into the world, the domain of the adversary.

I Corinthians 5:6

- **Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?**
- *Your glorying is not good*—once again as we saw in the introduction, the Corinthians were “puffed up” and glorying over their tolerance of this sin in their midst. According to Noah Webster’s *American Dictionary of the English Language*, the English word “glorying” means:
 - “The act of exulting; exultation; boasting; display of pride.”

- Paul tells them straight up in verse 6 that they “glorying is not good” i.e., it is not the proper response. The apostle has already outlined the proper course of action in verses 3-5. In the next section he is going to further elaborate on why this is the case.
- *Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump*—this statement is a question. Paul asks the Corinthians whether or not they know about the leavening properties of leaven. Strictly speaking “leaven” is what makes bread rise.
 - “A mass of sour dough, which, mixed with a larger quantity of dough or paste, produces fermentation in it and renders it light. During the seven days of the passover, no *leaven* was permitted to be in the houses of the Jews.” (*Webster’s 1828*)
 - Exodus 12:15
- What makes bread “unleavened” is the fact that there is no “leaven” present. If one adds even a “little leaven” to the lump of dough the entire lump is leavened.
 - Matthew 13:33
- Paul is using this discussion of “leaven” to illustrate a great spiritual point. In your Bible, “leaven” can also be an illustration or metaphor of sin or impurity. *Strong’s Concordance* acknowledges a metaphorical meaning for the underlying Greek word: “of inveterate mental and moral corruption, viewed in its tendency to infect others.” Likewise, the English dictionary follows suit when it states:
 - “Anything which makes a general change in the mass. It generally means something which corrupts or depraves that with which it is mixed.” (*Webster’s 1828*)
- Matthew 16:6-12—the “leaven” or teaching of the Pharisees possessed a corrosive element that Christ warned his followers about.
- I Corinthians 5:6—in this context Paul is using “leaven” as an illustration of the proper course of action that the Corinthians should take with respect to this man’s fornication.

I Corinthians 5:7

- **Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:**
- Paul instructs the Corinthian to “purge out” i.e., “to cleanse or purify by separating and carrying off whatever is impure, heterogeneous, foreign or superfluous.” (*Webster’s 1828*) This instruction is consistent with Paul’s judgment in verses 2 and 5.

- They are supposed to remove the “old leaven” so “that” (purpose and intent) they might be a new lump. Notice that by purging the “old leaven” the Corinthians will bring themselves back in line with who they are in Christ. The verb in the expression, “as ye are unleavened” is a present indicative statement which means that despite their mismanagement of the situation the saints at Corinth are unleavened in the eyes of God. Paul’s instructions to “purge out the old leaven” are designed to bring their practice back in line with their position. For them to tolerate and glory in the leaven of this man’s was not in line with their unleavened position in Christ.
 - II Corinthians 5:21—the Corinthians were forensically sinless and possessors of the righteousness of God in Christ.
- *For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us*—Paul is able to declare that the Corinthians are unleavened on the basis of the sacrificial death of Christ.
- Exodus 12:5-6—everything about the Passover feast was symbolic of the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ who was not tainted by the leaven of sin was sacrificed to pay for sin. Israel was instructed to eat unleavened bread as memorial of their deliverance from Egypt but also as type looking forward to when the lamb slain before the foundation of the world would be scarified for sin.

I Corinthians 5:8

- **Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.**
- *Therefore let us keep the feast*—on the basis of the fact that “Christ our Passover is scarified for us” Paul instructed the Corinthians to keep the feast in verse 8. I take this statement as precursory to Paul’s discussion of the Lord’s Supper in chapter 11.
- I Corinthians 11:20, 23—part of what Paul received of the Lord and delivered to the Corinthians was the Lord’s Supper. As we will see when we study chapter 11, Paul offers instructions regarding what he received as well as how the Corinthians should keep that which Paul delivered unto them.
- I Corinthians 5:8—in keeping the feast they are not supposed to do so with “old leaven” i.e., the fornicator that is to be purged from their midst. The offender ought not to be joining them in their observed of the feast.
 - I Corinthians 5:11—does this verse mean that a believer is never to eat a meal with an unbeliever? In the context it makes more sense to view this statement as a reference to the feast back in verse 8.
- Neither are they to keep the feast with the leaven of malice and wickedness. Once again, I believe that Paul’s statements about them not keeping the feat with the leaven of “malice” and

“wickedness” are precursory statements to his specific instructions to them regarding the Lord’s Supper in chapter 11.

- In contrast, they are to keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. We will come back to some of these verses when we begin to study chapter 11.