

Connivance Condemned

1 Corinthians 5:1-12

Halifax: 9 January 2005

Introduction:

On Wednesday, January 5, the elders had to remove Miss Debbie Whitman from membership of this church.

- She has spoken to many of you about the temptation that she has been facing for several weeks now.
 - For those of you who do not know what her particular temptation was,
 - there is no reason to state it except to say that it involved behaviour that the elders found to be inconsistent with a Christian profession.
- For several weeks, she was wavering back and forth, sinning and then repenting.
 - While this was going on, the elders advised her to abstain from the Lord's Table except on one occasion when she professed repentance.
 - As long as this wavering was going on, we did not officially remove her from the communion table or make the matter of her abstention public...
 - We tried to help her to firm up her repentance privately first.
 - However, after much deliberation,
 - She has finally chosen to take the path of rebellion.
 - She has firmly set her course.
 - She made it clear that she does not intend to repent now and will not follow Jesus Christ in this matter.
 - She determined that she would leave the church and go to a church that was not "born again."
- After she declared this to two or three of the elders,
 - we arranged a formal meeting with her to urge her to repentance.
 - We warned her of the serious nature of the decision that she was making to turn away from Jesus Christ and pled with her to reconsider.
 - She absolutely refused to hear us.
 - Finally, we were forced to remove her from the church.
- She is no longer to be regarded by us as a Christian in accordance with Jesus' command in Matthew 18:17 to regard the one who refuses to hear the church (when called to repent) as a "heathen and a tax collector."
 - In Jesus day,

- this designation (“a heathen and a tax collector”) was used to refer to persons who were outside the covenant community—
 - persons who were not a part of the kingdom of God—
 - persons who were not considered to be numbered among God’s people.

As a church, we are all in this together.

- It is important for all of you to understand and support what the elders have done.
 - When a member is rightly received into the church (whether it is this church or another biblical church),
 - we are all called to receive that member and count him as a brother...
 - When a member is put out of the church (whether it is this church or another biblical church),
 - we are all supposed to regard him as one who is outside the kingdom of God.

Since we have not had any discipline cases since many of you joined the church,

- I thought it would be good to preach a special message today about church discipline in the wake of this event.
- To this end, I have selected 1 Corinthians 5 as my text.
 - From this passage, I will begin by showing you that our Lord indeed calls us to take this kind of action.
 - Then we will look at some of the basic principles of church discipline that are presented in this chapter.
 - And finally, I will show you three important reasons that are given as to why we ought to be zealous to obey our Lord in this matter.

So I will begin with my first point...

I. In I Corinthians 5, we are clearly called to remove the evil person from our congregation.

A. In this chapter, we find Paul urging the Corinthians to remove an immoral man from their number.

1. This man was guilty of “sexual immorality,” and in particular of “having his father’s wife.”
 - a. Apparently, this is not his mother or the apostle would say so.
 - It would seem that the man’s father had married a second time—
 - We are not told if he was a polygamist, a divorcee, or a widower who had married again, but his son had his wife.

- b. Although some suggest that the father was dead,
 - I am inclined to think he was still living.
 - If he were dead, I don't think his widow would be called his wife.
 - A woman is no longer married after her husband dies.
 - c. I would also suggest that she is herself an unbeliever—
 - otherwise, Paul would be calling on the church to discipline her as well.
2. Whatever the case, Paul is appalled that the Corinthians should tolerate this kind of thing in their midst!
- a. For a man to have his father's wife was something that was not even accepted among the Gentiles!
 - By Gentiles, Paul means "unbelievers" as opposed to "Christians."
 - Even the city of Corinth, as immoral as it was known to be, did not approve of this kind of behaviour.
 - Of course in saying this, Paul is not suggesting that only those who do things that are not approved of by the unbelievers should be dealt with...
 - He is rather urging upon them an aggravation of the offense!
 - That here they are: a church,
 - and yet they are allowing what is forbidden even among Gentiles!
 - This is unconscionable!
 - b. And so you see that Paul opens and closes this chapter with the demand that the immoral man be removed from the church!
 - 1) In verse 2, he says:
 - 1 Cor 5:2: And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.
 - 2) And at the very end of the chapter he concludes by quoting the Old Testament:
 - 1 Cor 5:13: "Put away from yourselves the evil person."

TRANS> But what does this have to do with us?

- 3. We use the scriptures rightly when we recognise that Paul's instructions to the Corinthians are God's instructions to us.

- a. The Holy Spirit has given the Scriptures to the church as a permanent rule for our own practice.
 - b. Therefore, if we do not remove the evil person from our congregation,
 - we are just as wrong as the Corinthians were!
 - God's word applies to us just as much as it applied to them.
 - It is just as appalling for churches that live in North America in the twenty first century to refuse to put away the evil person as it was for the Corinthian church.
 - If anything, it is worse because we have the scriptures to guide us and ought to know better!
- B. Nevertheless, this terrible problem of connivance is every bit as present in the church today as it was in the Corinthian church.
1. **Connivance** is when you ignore wrongdoing that you ought to be dealing with!
 - Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines it this way:
 - **Connivance**: "the act of conniving; especially knowledge of and active or passive consent to wrongdoing."
 - The word **connive** is derived from a compound that means "to close the eyes."
 - **Connive** is defined:
 1. "to pretend ignorance of or fail to take action against something one ought to oppose."
 2. "To be indulgent or in secret sympathy."
 2. Connivance is one of the greatest problems in the church today!
 - a. Just think about it...
 - 1) Connivance has become so pervasive in the church in North America that we have actually come to the place where there is discussion about ordaining persons that shouldn't even be admitted to the communion table!
 - There are churches in our land that allow homosexuals or persons who deny that Jesus is the only way of salvation not only to be members, but even to be ordained as ministers!
 - Many churches today would find the Corinthians to be too intolerant!
 - 2) How did this state of affairs ever come about?
 - It happened because ever so gradually, there was connivance...
 - It began when persons who were living in sin were not put out of the church.

- There was a woman, living with a man to whom she was not married, welcome to the communion table!
 - There was an important lawyer in the community, doubting the miracles in the Bible, welcome to the communion table.
 - Those who opposed such persons acceptance in the church were accused of being unloving and intolerant.
- Gradually, there was more and more acceptance (or connivance) until it got to the place where...
 - There was a student of ministry,
 - uncertain as to whether Christ was born of a virgin,
 - yet licensed to preach the gospel!
 - And there was another with an unbiblical divorce—accepted.
 - And now things have come to the place where almost anything is tolerated!
- b. Connivance has become so pervasive that as a Christian, you are expected to connive!
- It is considered unchristian and unloving to speak against sexual immorality, disrespect for authority, or idolatry.
 - It is considered just plain wrong to remove such persons from the church!
 - If you are to be seen as enlightened and with it,
 - you will turn a blind eye and pretend to see no wrongdoing.
 - Do you not find that this is so?
 - Our whole society has been bombarded with literature and movies that make absolute demons out anyone who speaks against wrongdoing...
 - With only one exception...
 - It is perfectly acceptable to speak against those who speak against wrongdoing.
- c. Tell me, do you not find that you are tempted to connive on a personal level?
- 1) Is it not the easiest thing in the world to look the other way and say nothing when you your brother sin?
 - Who wants to be bothered with raising the issue and having to deal with the likely possibility of a negative reaction on his part?

- Who wants to do that especially when there is such an atmosphere of opposition to anyone who speaks up against wrong and you will likely be considered rude and uncouth?
- 2) And you parents...
- Do you not find that it is easy to be blind to your children's disobedience?
 - It would be hard enough just because it is work to address wrong behaviour and you are often tired—
 - but it is even easier to do this when it is considered a virtue to look the other way!
3. There are many reasons we like to connive.
- But I think the leading reason is because of our own guilt!
- a. If you are not addressing sin in your own life, you certainly won't want to address it in the lives of others...
- I find that whenever I have deal with sin in the lives of others,
 - I always see many things that I need to address in myself also.
 - What can you say to your children about grumbling when you are full of grumbling yourself and not addressing it in your own life?
 - If you do deal with others without dealing with yourself,
 - you can be sure that you will be harsh and provoking...
 - The reason is because you are not bringing them to delight in the forgiveness and cleansing that Jesus gives...
 - You can't be because you are not living in the delight of those things yourself!
 - You are just irritated and trying to set them straight!
- b. But if you are rejoicing in the forgiveness and deliverance that comes through Jesus Christ,
- then you will want to lead others into your joy...
 - You will come to them as a fellow sinner who is being helped and who wants them to find the same help.
 - You want to bring them back into fellowship with Christ who forgives us and cleanses us from all sin.
 - You will want to deal with the one who goes astray for all the right reasons.

TRANS> Now let us turn to consider how we are taught to go about exercising discipline.

II. What are some of the basic principles of church discipline that are presented to us in 1 Cor 5?

A. First of all, I want you to look at who is to be disciplined.

1. Paul makes it clear that we are to discipline those who are living in rebellion against Christ.

a. He is not just concerned with this one man or with the particular sin he had committed, but with all sorts of sin...

- In insisting that the church deal with the immoral man,
 - Paul is operating out of the principle that discipline should occur for any behaviour that is inconsistent with our profession.

- In verse 11, he gives a list of examples:

- 1 Cor 5:11: But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner...

b. This is a rather extensive list!

1) If you look at this list in one way, you might wonder how there could be a church at all!

- Is there a one of us that does not struggle with at least one of these sins?

2) But that is just it... we struggle with them...

- Paul is not talking about struggling with sin but about making peace with it.

- A person is not to be disciplined for falling into sin, but for giving himself up to it...

- for refusing to turn from it and come to Jesus Christ for forgiveness and cleansing.

- When Paul speaks of sexually immoral people,

- he is talking about someone who has chosen to live in immorality,

- he is not talking about someone who commits adultery in his heart and then repents and turns to Christ.

- There is a great difference in a man who has pornography stashed away in his files for future use and the man who finds an

unsavoury magazine in a motel room, indulges, and then casts it away and turns to Christ for forgiveness.

- The first man has not repented, even if he asks forgiveness.
- By keeping it in storage, he is planning to use it again.

3) This is why in Matthew 18, Jesus explains that the reason a person is put of the church is not because the person has sinned...

- but because the person has refused to repent of his sin when called to do so by the church.
 - If he hears you when you call him to repentance, you have gained your brother...
 - It is only when he refuses to repent that he is to regarded as a heathen and a tax collector.
- Listen to what Jesus says in Matthew 18:15-17:
 - "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, 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 refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.
 - The session did not put Debbie out the church because she sinned or because she was being tempted...
 - We put her out because she refused to turn from her sin.
 - She has deliberately chosen to live in it.
 - Even if a person murders ten people and then repents, we are to welcome them back to fellowship...
 - though they must be punished by the civil authorities...
 - But if they justify themselves or insist that they have done no wrong or that even though it is wrong, they are determined to continue—
 - Then we cannot accept them.

2. Note also that Paul makes it clear that we are only to discipline those who are inside the church.

a. In verse 12 and 13, he asks the question:

- "What have I to do with those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? But those who are outside, God judges."
- Why should you expect someone who is outside the church to live like a Christian?

- If they have not confessed Christ by entering into His kingdom, that is, the church, then they are out of our jurisdiction.
 - God will indeed judge them, but He has not called us to do so.
- b. Of course this does not mean we are to act as if murder or adultery or covetousness are not wrong when committed by an unbeliever...
- Nor does it mean that a Christian who is a judge or a policeman is supposed to ignore these things in anyone who is not a Christian...
 - It simply means that the church, operating as a church, is not called upon to discipline those who are outside the church!
- c. Incidentally, I might mention here that this is one of the reasons why church membership is necessary.
- We welcome anyone who wants to attend, but we must make a clear distinction between those who are inside and those who are outside.
 - Paul is not talking about buildings here, but about the fellowship of God's people...
 - Christians are to be baptised and to attach themselves to a local church—that is, to come under the care and discipline of a particular church.
 - There has to be a difference between those who are inside and those who are outside, or we cannot possibly obey what the Spirit is teaching in this passage.
 - You can't put someone out of the church if they have never come into the church

TRANS> So you see the first principle:

- The church is called upon to take action against those who sin within the congregation.
 - But what sort of action is to be taken?
 - This is the second principle of church discipline I want you to consider:
- B. I Cor 5 shows us two sorts of actions that are to be taken in church discipline which correspond to two different stages of church discipline taught in scripture.
- Sometimes, these two stages are referred to as lesser excommunication and greater excommunication.
1. Lesser excommunication comes first, and itself has more than one level.
- a. Lesser excommunication begins when you see that your brother has sinned.
 - You are to go to him privately and urge him to repent.

- At this time, it is inappropriate for you to have ordinary social interaction with him—
 - It's not a time to have him over for tea or to go on a fishing trip with him.
 - Your disposition toward him must be one of serious loving urgent concern.
 - This is what Paul is getting at in verse 9 to 11 when he tells you not to “keep company” or “even eat with” a person who is living in sin:
 - In verse 11, he says:
 - 1 Cor 5:11: But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.
 - It is entirely inappropriate to ignore such a serious problem in a Christian brother or sister and act like nothing is wrong!
- b. Lesser excommunication becomes more formal when the matter is brought before the elders...
- 1) In Matthew 18, when Jesus tells you to take your brother before the church if he refuses to hear your call to repentance...
 - He is referring to the elders who are the part of the church that is responsible for formal church discipline.
 - It is the same as when you take someone before the province—
 - It doesn't mean you assemble all the citizens together, but it means you take it before those elders (judges and courts) who represent the citizens.
 - I will have more to say about that in a moment...
 - 2) But once the elders are involved, lesser excommunication can become official and formalised...
 - When this happens, the elders officially bar the impenitent sinner from the communion table...
 - Ordinarily, they also declare this action to the entire church who is then to take on the same posture as the first person...
 - Refuse to keep company with the sinning brother, but to spend all their time with him admonishing him...
 - As Jay Adams states it,
 - If he calls you up and invites you to play golf with him on Saturday, tell him you can't do that because of his sin, but that

you would love to come over and talk to him about it.

3) In lesser excommunication, the sinful person is still regarded as a brother, but because he is a brother living in sin, he is a brother to be admonished rather than mingled with.

- This is brought out very succinctly in 2 Thess 3:14-15:

- There the apostle says:

- 2 Thes 3:14-15: And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet do not count *him* as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother.

TRANS> But if the sinning brother will not respond to this discipline, that is, if he will not repent,

- then the church must move on to greater excommunication

2. Greater excommunication is when the sinning brother is put out of the church.

a. This is what Paul is calling for with reference to the immoral man in 1 Cor 5.

- in verse 2 where he says that he should be “taken away from you...”

- and in verse 13 where he says, “put away from yourselves the evil person.”

b. Sometimes it is necessary to skip the first stage and go immediately to the second.

1) It wasn't in the case with Debbie Whitman because she wanted to withdraw from the church and had no desire to be admonished formally.

- The lesser excommunication only occurred informally...

2) Likewise, this is what Paul calls for with the immoral man in Corinth.

- He only mentions lesser excommunication when he speaks of the general principle of what ought to be done with one who is “named a brother.” (v. 11)

- But once a person is put out of the church, he is no longer “named a brother,”

- nor is he to be admonished as a brother...

- Now he is to be regarded, to use Jesus' words,

- as a heathen and tax collector...

- or to use Paul's, as a person “of this world” who is “outside the church.”

- c. Now you may eat with this person,
 - but you may not pretend that he is a Christian.
 - You are to regard him as a non-Christian until he is restored to the church.
 - This is not a judgement of the person's heart,
 - We are never called upon judge another person's heart because we can't.
 - But Jesus has given us guidelines in the Scriptures about who is to be admitted to the church and who is to be excluded from the church...
 - This is a judgement that He has called us to make and we dare not pretend we can't do it or refuse to do it.
 - Each congregation must determine who in their assembly is to be received,
 - who is to be given the lesser excommunication...
 - and who is to be given the greater excommunication.

TRANS> Those are the two sorts of discipline that you need to know about...

- Now I want you to consider a third principle that is set forth in this passage:

C. Thirdly, I want you to look at the agents of church discipline.

- In other words, who is supposed to do it?
- Paul speaks about this in verse 4:
 - 1 Cor 5:4: In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,
- 1. Notice first of all that he speaks of "when you are gathered together."
 - a. Putting someone out of the church is not something any individual is supposed to do...
 - God has not given such authority to individuals.
 - It is unscriptural to give a bishop or a pastor or a pope the authority to remove people from the church.
 - b. Nevertheless, I do not think we should take this to mean that the whole congregation was to assemble for church discipline either...
 - When Jesus speaks about a meeting for this purpose in Matthew 18, He says "where two or three are gathered together in my name."

- What's more, the practice established in the Old Testament and practised in the synagogue was that the elders were the ones who gathered to enact church discipline.
 - The elders represent the whole church and are given the responsibility for receiving and dismissing members.
 - The elders are chosen to rule in the congregation and must be men of sound judgement, wisdom, and godly life.
 - They are the ones who are to act in behalf of the congregation in this matter, and if their actions are biblical, the members are to support those actions.
2. But it is very important to understand that the elders are not the only agents involved in this matter!
- a. The primary agent is Jesus Christ Himself!
- This is what Paul means when he says that they are to gather "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" and act by "the power of our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - Two things are required if the elders are to act in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ when they discipline:
 - First, they must call upon His name...
 - Secondly, they must act according to His instruction given in the word...
 - which includes the instructions He gives us through the apostles who, though absent in body, are present in spirit when we follow their teaching.
- b. When this is done, the elders are doing nothing on earth but what Jesus Himself is doing in heaven!
- 1) They are acting as His faithful servants and agents, carrying out His will on earth.
- It is His action because it is performed by His servants according to His will...
 - in the very same way that a king may be said to build a city or go to war who never lays a stone or lifts a sword because the king sends his servants to do this for him.
 - This is why in Matthew 18, Jesus says:
 - Mat. 18:18: Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.
 - What the elders do on earth is what has been ordered from heaven!

- Jesus is our king who is reigning in heaven, and if a person is put out of the church, it is His church they are put out of...
 - It is not just the action of the elders, but it is the action of Jesus acting through the elders.
- 2) Understanding church discipline as an action of King Jesus ought to have two powerful affects on us!
- a) It ought to affect the elders with the solemnity of their task in following His will!
 - Even if they do wrong, they are still acting in His name and as His representatives!
 - What a fearful thing it is to think of misrepresenting Him!
 - b) Secondly, it ought to affect the congregation and those who are actually being disciplined...
 - This is not merely the action of men!
 - This is an action of the Lord Jesus Christ, and...
 - If done according to His word, is fully approved of by Him!

TRANS> And now having seen that we are to discipline and something about the method that is to be employed, I want to impress you with reasons to do it.

- It is a hard business and one about which we are naturally indisposed, but...

III. This passage gives us three very important reasons to motivate us to obey our Lord in this matter of removing the wicked person from our midst.

A. First of all, we learn here that we should exercise discipline for the sake of the offender himself.

1. In verse 5 Paul tells the Corinthians to:

- 1 Cor 5:5: “deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”
- a. What does he mean when he says, “deliver Him over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh”?
 - 1) To understand this, you must recognise that there are two and only two kingdoms in this world...
 - There is the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light.
 - Satan is the ruler of the kingdom of darkness...
 - Jesus is the ruler of the kingdom of light.

- 2) When a person is brought into the kingdom of Christ, he is brought out of the kingdom of Satan.
 - On the other hand, when a person is put out of the church, he is delivered back to the kingdom of Satan again.
 - And Satan, who is always prowling about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour—
 - is more than ready to come and unleash his fury upon that one as soon as God’s protection is taken away.
 - God will allow Satan to deal very roughly with that person, especially if that person is elect...
 - God will use Satan to bring down heavy chastisement upon that one until he repents...
 - In 1 Cor 11, Paul will speak about those who, because of their conduct at the Lord’s table, had become sick or even died!
 - b. But notice what the gracious purpose of this is!
 - “that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus!”
 - This destruction of the flesh is with a view to the saving of the soul!
2. Church discipline is a wonderful tool that Jesus uses to reclaim his erring people!
 - a. Sometimes, it reclaims them before it comes to the point that they are put out of the church.
 - The sinful believer repents because of the threat of church discipline...
 - He is awoken to his folly and brought to his senses by the admonition of the elders...
 - b. But even when admonition does not succeed and he is turned over to Satan, this is by no means the end!
 - It should be our prayer that under Satan’s rough treatment, the erring one will be restored and come back to the church again with true repentance!
 - We cannot pray for Debbie’s forgiveness, but we can and should pray for her repentance!
 - If she repents, then God will certainly forgive her through Jesus Christ.
3. If you are living in communion with Jesus Christ,
 - a. If you are living in the reality of His forgiveness and cleansing,
 - then surely you want others to live in this reality too...
 - Surely you would not want them to be deceived and think everything was okay when they are living outside of this reality!

- b. Is this not the right reason for disciplining your children?
 - to restore them to live in communion with Christ who forgives and cleanses?
 - And is this not the same right reason for disciplining members of the congregation who are not walking in fellowship with Jesus?
 - Surely if we love them, we cannot connive... we cannot pretend that everything is okay when they are not living in this fellowship!
 - If their flesh is spared now, it may be that their spirit will not be saved in the end!
 - but if we deliver them over to Satan for the destruction of their flesh now...
 - it may be that their spirit will be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

TRANS> The first reason for church discipline is to reclaim the offender.

B. Secondly, we learn in this passage that we should remove the offender for the sake of the whole congregation.

1. In verse 6, Paul warns:

- “Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?”
- a. When the Jews ate the Passover, they were supposed to clear out all the leaven from their houses and then keep the feast of unleavened bread for seven days.
 - Leaven was a picture of sin.
 - And here Paul refers to the effect leaven (or yeast) has when it is put into a lump of dough—
 - It spreads throughout the whole lump.
- b. The Holy Spirit is warning us in this passage that if we do not address the fornicator, the covetous, the extortioner, and the idolater in our church,
 - it will certainly have an affect on all of us!
 - The Corinthians were very proud to think they could connive at the immorality that was going on in their church and not be affected by it!
 - I have heard many foolish believers and even ministers say that by keeping a sinful person, we might be able to win them!
 - Paul says it works the other way!
 - You don’t put yeast a lump of dough and have the unleavened dough dissolve the yeast!

- The yeast always spreads to the dough until it is all leavened if you leave it there!
2. You can see how this happens...
- a. If we are allowing people to live in rebellion against Christ, then some of us will start to think rebellion is okay!
 - If we take a lax attitude about dealing with sin in our church...
 - We will also take a lax attitude about dealing with sin in our hearts!
 - Soon, we all start to think sin is okay!
 - I have already illustrated how the problem of connivance has reduced the church in North America to the point where many churches are even willing to ordain homosexuals!
 - It all started with a refusal to remove the leaven... a refusal to put away the evil person from the church.
 - b. When churches don't deal with the sins of individual members, the whole church becomes guilty before God...
 - And after a time, God visits that church with His judgement...
 - As Jesus warned in Revelation, that church's lamp stand will be removed...
 - He takes away His light and turns them over to darkness to go in their own way.
 - They refused to uphold His way, so it is just for Him to turn them over to their own way!
 - Don't think this doesn't happen!
 - Just look at all the apostate churches around our city!
 - What further evidence do you need?

TRANS> So you see that we ought to exercise church discipline—

- for the sake of the offender and for the sake of the whole congregation...

C. Thirdly, we learn in this passage that we should put away the evil person for the sake of Jesus Christ.

1. In verse 7-8, Paul continue to talk about leaven...
 - but here he emphasises that Christ is our Passover who was sacrificed for us!
- a. Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God that was offered as a sacrifice in our place!
 - He did this to cleanse us and make us holy!

- He actually suffered God's curse for us so that we would not have to suffer it ourselves!
 - He did this out of His great love for us in order that He might restore us to God, freed from our sin!
- b. A true disciple of Jesus Christ is a person who knows this about Jesus...
- And God's Spirit has changed his heart so that he wants to be forgiven of his sin and cleansed from all his wickedness.
 - He sees the loving zeal of Jesus for the church that caused Him to go to the cross in order that we might be saved!
 - And so he comes with gratitude to seek the forgiveness and cleansing of Jesus for all his sins!
 - Jesus makes him unleavened by His sacrifice...
 - And so it is that disciple's desire to purge out all the leaven from his life!
2. But what a great dishonour it is to this loving Saviour who has gone to such extreme lengths to make us unleavened if we become indifferent to leaven!
- a. What wretched ingratitude it is for us to be indifferent about the very thing in our lives that He hates so much that He was willing to suffer the pains of Hell for us!
- Yes, we are weak and full of sin...
 - But how can we allow anyone in the company of the church who is deliberately living in malice and wickedness?
 - Can we look the other way and just pretend that what He hates and did so much to remove does not matter?
 - What a dishonour this is to Christ, our Passover, who was sacrificed for us!
 - Do we wish to test His patience when He has been so kind and gracious?
 - May it never be!
- b. What a despicable insult it is to King Jesus when proud church members act as if the proper exercise of church discipline is harsh and unloving!
- Jesus, the One who was so zealous to cleanse His church from sin that He went the cross is the One who appointed it!
 - Surely He has demonstrated His love for us by His death for us.
 - How unfounded it is to accuse Him of being unloving when He calls us to purge out the leaven of malice and wickedness from our midst!

- He has spent more than any of us will ever spend to purify His church...
 - Is it too much for us to obey Him when He tells us to purge out the evil person from our midst—
 - In order that that person's spirit may be saved...
 - In order that the church might not be corrupted?

Conclusion:

- Let us therefore be diligent to purge our own lives of this leaven...
- And let us be diligent to take our part in seeing that this congregation is also purged!
 - Surely we cannot allow anyone in our number to turn away from applying to Jesus for the precious forgiveness and cleansing that He gives!
 - Let us live in sweet communion with Him!