

I Corinthians 5; Matthew 18:15-18

Chapter 5 is a rough chapter because it deals with gross, tolerated sin in a congregation.

- It is tempting just to say: "This is too hard to deal with, besides, there are more enjoyable topics, so let's just skip to chapter 6."
- That would be easier for today, and it would also be death to the soul of any church or Christian community in the long run. We have to deal with the hard issues.

I Corinthians 5:1-13

1. Dealing with sin and sinners is one our ongoing major projects here.

- This congregation has been drastically affected by sin in the past all the way up to the position of pastor.
- So we have to be good at dealing with sin and sinners...look around, see any perfect people?
- How do we handle people who sin?
- How do help them and restore them being sinners ourselves?
- What do we do with those who refuse and are determined to continue in their sin? This passage brings all this to our attention.

We are like doctors.

- That is what God has called us to do, like doctors, we send people to the Healer to the healed—church is to be a hospital for the sin sick.
- We doctor them, make prescriptions ("read your bible every day").
- We apply medicine through scripture and prayer (church is like getting a infusion).
- We check in on them, nurse them back to health.
- Nevertheless, while dealing with the illness of sin, we are all still patients, we need our medicine too, need to follow our prescriptions, we still get sick and need the care of the other doctors around us.

2. Some have turned away from passages I Cor. 5 because they Feel like it's encouraging a witch hunt.

- Dealing with sin among believers is not a witch hunt -- they are removing this man from the church because all other options have been exhausted.
- If it is a witch hunt, the hunt is over because we are all "witches" here—all of us are sinners and need of grace and reconciliation.

I Cor. 5 is a passage about a cancer that needs radical surgery.

- Radial surgery is a last resort;
- What steps and procedures come before such a drastic move that stop the process so that it doesn't come to this?

3. Matthew 18:15-18— Steps to avoid surgery.

Step #1 -- A Private Meeting – We have to confront and deal sin privately.

Three possible outcomes:

1. The person is innocent and there is reconciliation.

2. The person is guilty and there is humility and repentance and reconciliation.

3. The person is guilty and yet unrepentant – leading to step #2

4. The most important aspect of any of these steps is that they all flow in the direction of restoration of relationships.

--This cannot be overemphasized: what are God's plan and purposes in our world today—one word: **reconciliation**.

--You might inclined to think that forgiveness is God's plan, it is a part of it, but it's means to an end.

--"We have to stomp out sin and get people to stop sinning" -- that is short sighted and leads to legalism and witch hunts.

--Reconciliation is the end of all of it -- We have to get along, and we have love each other and be reconciled to each other -- that's the real focus!

5. Reconciliation is the theme of the Bible.

--That we be reconciled to God through trusting Jesus' sacrifice which alone forgives our sin and brings us to God.

--That we be reconciled to people

--The immediate outcome of sin in the Garden was people hid from God and brother killed brother.

Never doubt God's intentions for us as we deal with sin in the body of Christ; it is not just about forgiveness; it is about reconciliation.

--You can forgive and never speak to a person again, sometimes it's all that can be done; reconciliation requires both parties.

--Nevertheless, this is not what God wants because sin is still winning to A certain degree.

--God's goal is reconciliation where sin and its effects have been undone.

The two greatest commandments reflect this:

--Love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength (if you have ever broken this, and you have, why do you think you're going to heaven?)

--Love your neighbor as yourself—you would reconcile with yourself, make every effort to reconcile with others.