

Sermon for A Year with the Catechism Confession: What do you believe by to these words?

Date: June 19, 2022

Location: St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

Old Testament: Isaiah 12:1-6

Epistle Reading: 1 Corinthians 5:1-13

Gospel Reading: Luke 15:1-3, 11-32



Sermon Text: 1 Corinthians 5:1-13

Sermon Title: Confession: What do you believe by to these words?

Introit: Psalm 130:1-6; Antiphon: Psalm 130:7-8

Hymns:

LSB 607 – From Depths of Woe I Cry to Thee
LSB 611 – Chief of Sinners Though I Be
LSB 480 – He's Risen, He's Risen
LSB 628 – Your Table I Approach
LSB 612 – As Rebels, Lord, Who Foolishly Have
Wandered

Liturgy:

Divine Service IV, p. 203

Songs:

If We're Honest - Francesca Battistelli
Our God is an awesome God - Mullins
Mistakes – Unspoken
One Day – Cochren
Sanctus (King and Country)
Agnus Dei (Michael W Smith)
There Was Jesus - Zach Williams and Dolly Parton
Heavenly Hosts - King and Country

Liturgy:

Creative Worship



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Text: 1 Corinthians 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. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you.

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. When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, 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.

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

I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—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. 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. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.”

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Grace to you, and peace, in Jesus' name. Amen.

We are continuing where we left off last week. We will be looking at these verses, as we dig deep into this subject which is very often addressed in the Bible, but not so often in church. Last week we explored 1 Corinthians 5, and looked in to the first two steps, Paul explains, concerning how the Church should deal with purposeful unrepentant sin.

Step one was: "The Sin Confronted." Step two was: "The Steps Required." Now we will answer why those two steps are required.

The third point is: "The Preservation of the Sacred." In 1 Corinthians 5:6-7 we see the reason why we do these things, beyond what we learned last week. There it is recorded:

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

We do this to preserve and protect the sacredness, the holiness, of the congregation and the Bride of Christ, the Holy Christian Church. Without the loving work of Church Discipline, without utilizing both keys in the Office of the Keys, the Church becomes like the world. It loses its ability to change the world because it is no different than the world.

Its members will come to believe there are no repercussions for unchristian conduct, and the bad conduct will grow, fester and rot out the church from the inside out.

Have you ever been around a family where the kids are not disciplined? You don't want to be around them because children who are not disciplined, by their parents, run wild. They have a negative effect on all the other children who become emboldened in their disobedience, because there is no discipline, no repercussions, for the ones instigating the trouble.

That creates encouragement to find courage to sin more boldly. An amazing thing happens when you discipline one child. Everybody else sits up straight, because we have just had a "come to Jesus moment."

The same is true for adults. The same is true in the Church. In verse 6 Paul says "your boasting is not good." Your tolerance of sin is not good. That is the problem. It all goes back to chapter 1, and their love of human wisdom, and undermining the standard of God.

They were blinded by thinking, “What a great church we have. See how forgiving and tolerant we are.”

Yet what is it you would rather hear? “I love you.” or “I tolerate you.” Love is willing to correct. Love desires to save. Love cares for your future, and your soul.

Tolerance will endure sin and allow it to fester and grow. Tolerance overlooks sin and pretends it and its consequences are “*not my problem.*” Tolerance will let you die saying, “At least I died happy.” Tolerance will let you go to happily Hell. Love corrects sin for the sake of the soul and that person’s eternal salvation. Love acts. Tolerance is lazy.

Look in verse 6. Paul says, “Do you not know...?” Meaning this is common knowledge, common sense.

“Do you not know, that a little leaven
leavens the whole lump of dough.¹”

Leaven, (that is yeast), which here represents sin and sinful conduct, spreads quietly and it

spreads through the whole lump of dough. It eventually affects the whole loaf, the whole congregation. It cannot be compartmentalized. It cannot be isolated and ignored. Given time it will always permeate, it will spread, until it works its way through and affects the whole loaf.

The point Paul makes here is if we do not deal with the sin in the life of this church it will spread into every corner and it will kill any ministry the church might have. It will suffocate the congregation until it dwindles and dies.

Which is why, in verse 7, Paul says it must be removed. Cut it out. Clean it out. The idea is like cutting cancer out of the body, before it spreads any further. It is cutting the cancer out of the Body of Christ.

“Cut out the old leaven,
so that you may be a new lump,
just as you are, in fact, unleavened.²”

The “unleavened” meaning the repentant, and therefore pure by Christ’s Blood, must not mix with the “leavened” meaning the unrepentant and therefore soiled and stained by the killing cancer of sin. Leaven, or yeast, is often used in the Bible as an example, a symbol, of impurity and sin. Leaven spreads and permeates throughout the whole loaf.

“A little leaven leavens the whole loaf.”

1 1 Corinthians 5:6

2 1 Corinthians 5:7

In Christ this church in Corinth began in a state of grace as they were called out of the world,

out of darkness into His marvelous light.³

Paul teaches later, in chapter 6:9-11, if you do not deal with the sin it will spread like fire. It will go from one life to the next, to the next, like a wild fire. The ultimate result will be a place:

“where the worm does not die
and the fire is not quenched.”⁴

In verse 8 Paul teaches:

Let us therefore celebrate the festival [*the Lord’s Supper*],
not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but
with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

For them to be living “in sincerity and truth” they are going to have to step in, to deal with the sin. Just as every parent has to step in, at times, with their children whom they love. The longer it is put off the more difficult it will be to turn it around. Parents that will not correct their children do not love their children. A church that will not correct its erring people, does not love its people.

Why is this so necessary?

The answer to that is part 4: The Separation from Sin.

Paul writes in verse 8, to not celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion with the unrepentant sinner. To do so soils the Sacred Sacrament. There must be a separation from sin. In verse 11 he states:

I am writing to you, not to associate with anyone who
bears the name of brother [*meaning: church member*] if he
is guilty of [*unrepentant sin*], do not even to eat with such
a one.

Once this unrepentant person is put out of the Church they are to remain separated from them. They are not to have lunch, go on morning walks, or hang out with them. They are to have nothing to do with this person, who most certainly should not, and cannot, be admitted to the Lord’s Supper while they remain unrepentant, and therefore holding God and God’s Word in contempt.

This is not done in a mean spirit. This is not done in hate or anger. If this person is

3 1 Peter 2:9

4 Mark 9:48

truly saved, if this person has a redeemed heart, if this person truly is a “Temple of the Holy Spirit⁵” this will, by God’s good grace, have an effect of bringing them back.

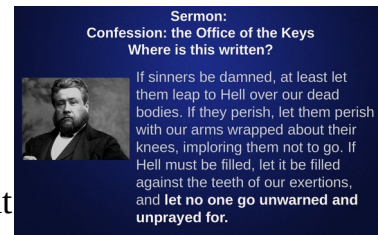
Paul writes:

“Do not associate with anyone
who bears the name of brother [*church member*].”

There is a certain shock when we hear that. It seems harsh, maybe even cruel. Would it not be more cruel to say nothing, do nothing, and let them go happily to Hell, never having been warned.

“...let no one go unwarned
and unprayed for.”

We are sending this person out into the world, but then what is Paul’s point later? We are to go into the world, to reach the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That is evangelism. As the person is put out of the Church, they immediately become part of those who need Jesus.



Paul makes a very clear distinction, in verse 10, between people out in the world and

people in the Church. He points out, you go seek after people out in the world, and you share the Gospel of Jesus with them. You reach out to them in love because they are simply acting like lost people. Lost people act like lost people. They will be living in sin. That’s where we go to fish them out.⁶ By God’s grace they are brought to Christ.

It is different for those inside the Church. Peter says:

“Let judgment begin
with the household of God.⁷”

A “so-called brother” cannot be in the Church if the Church is going to reach the lost. Their very presence proclaims the message of Jesus, null and void.

1. When you go to them in private, and they will not hear you...
2. When two or three witnesses come, and they will not hear you...
3. When they just keep piling up sin upon sin, and they will not hear you...

5 1 Corinthians 6:19

6 Matthew 4:19 – [*Jesus*] said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

7 1 Peter 4:17

Their presence is sucking the life out of the Church⁸ and bringing the congregation down with them. Their sin consumes every working facet of the church. The time is spent having to talk about it constantly. It demoralizes the congregation. That is why Paul says we are to stand clear of such a person, in the hope that God would use the isolation, where they are abandoned to them-self, like the prodigal son in the pig pen, will finally bring them to their senses.⁹ This process is meant to bring blessings.

What are the blessings of discipline?

- 1) There is the good: for the one who is disciplined. May it be used by God to reach them for Christ before the Last Day.
- 2) There is the good for other Christians, because it puts the “fear, love and trust of God above all things¹⁰” into their hearts and it reminds them of their accountability to God. It is also used by God to cultivate a healthy and holy fear of God, within our own hearts, when we see others who are disciplined.
- 3) There is the good of the Church. It preserves the holiness and sacredness of the Church. This is about sanctifying (or holy-ifying) the entire Church.
- 4) There is the good for the witness of the Church. The witness of the Church is damaged when there is one, or more, among us who openly and knowingly live with sin. Without Church discipline, the world looks in and rightly says, “they’re just a bunch of hypocrites.”
- 5) There is the glory of God. This is preserving the revelation of the glory of God, that should shine through the life of the Church. It is sin that darkens that glory. It is purity that reflects that glory.

The goal in all of this is to bring them back! In the city of Corinth that is exactly what happened. The unrepentant sinner, and the congregation, repented. They humbled themselves before God. They submitted to God’s Holy Word. In 2 Corinthians Paul returns to this very subject, this very matter, of Church discipline. These are again very strong and powerful words. They are words that seek the only true goal of the Church: To save souls at the expense of Satan’s lose.

Paul writes there:

Now if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but in some measure—not to put it too severely—to all of you. For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort

8 John 14:6 – Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

9 See: Luke 15:17

10 Luther’s Small Catechism: Explanation to the commandments.

him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him.

This is why I wrote, that I might test you, and know whether you are obedient in everything. Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.¹¹

That man who was sinning in that congregation, he repented. He was forgiven and restored. Church discipline is an important and necessary biblical ministry of Christian love. We approach it with a spirit of gentleness. We err on the side of grace. It should be approached with long suffering. We approach others as we would want to be approached.

However, if there is one who continues to run through: the stop signs, the warnings and the barricades, Paul says they must be put out the Church to preserve the purity, the unity and the peace of the Church. The Church must then immediately be filled with righteous prayers, for itself and that person.

This is also Scripture's statute:

Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.¹²

May God give us grace, wisdom, patients, love and courage to do what the Apostolic mandate, and Divine command, call us to do. In Jesus' name.

Amen.

**Proclaim God's Word,
Encourage one another in faith,
Witness to God's love and
Serve all people**



¹¹ 2 Corinthians 2:5-11

¹² James 5:16