

# *THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST*

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

## **1 CORINTHIANS LESSON 3 (Chapters 5-6)**

### **Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:**

*THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.* Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Ben Bailey.

“It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father’s wife!” (1 Cor. 5: 1). Welcome to our study of the Book of 1 Corinthians—a book that deals with church problems related to spiritual immaturity. One of the problems that Paul identifies in chapters 5 and 6 is certain sins against the body—such as sins against the human body (like sexual immorality, chapter 5) that also affected the spiritual body. In chapter 6 he deals with sins against the body of Christ (the church) when Christians sue one another. We thus might title our study, “Sins Against the Body.”

What is the problem in 1 Corinthians 5? It is a very serious problem. A man was living with his father’s wife, and the congregation seems to think that it has enough holiness and righteousness it they can overlook such actions, permit them to continue, and think, “We are OK with God.” But Paul said that this is unacceptable, and that the church needed to remove such an ungodly person from its midst. Notice 1 Corinthians 5:1—“It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father’s wife!” Here we see a Christian who is involved in a sexual relationship with his stepmother. That is a very serious problem. A man is living with his stepmother, which is involving the church in Corinth in gross immorality. This was a sinful action because, based on principles going all the way back to the Old Testament, this type of sexual conduct was something that God clearly condemned. In fact, it was something that caused people who were involved in it to be worthy of death. Look in Leviticus 20:11, which says, “The man who lies with his father’s wife has uncovered his father’s nakedness; both of them shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them.” This was considered by God to be a type of incest, and was something that was punishable by death. Thus, this was a very serious sin. This man is living with, and having sexual relations with, this woman. This is causing sexual immorality in the church. Plus, there is adultery going on (assuming that the man’s father was still alive). These were very serious problems facing the church in Corinth. One of the main problems is that the church in Corinth had not responded properly to this kind of immorality. They were puffed up, and thought they could overlook it. But Paul said that they should have been in mourning. In 1 Corinthians 5:2 Paul said, “You are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.” Paul tells them that this ungodly man should have been put out of the assembly. We can never allow sin to continue in the church, and think that we can simply overlook it. If someone is involved in a relationship that is unscriptural (such as wrong marriage that involves adulterous practices), then the church needs to deal with that. If people are involved in sin such as drinking alcohol or gambling, then we need to deal with such problems. We cannot simply say to ourselves, “We can allow that person to attend here, but we won’t let him wait on the Lord’s Table or do certain other things. We know he’s living in sin, but we’re still going to allow him to attend here.” We want people to hear the Gospel, but if they want to be an active part of a

congregation and be in fellowship with the church, they cannot do things that are clearly condemned in Scripture. Paul makes it clear to these people that they need to deal with such sin in their midst. “You cannot allow these people to continue living in sin, so take care of it.” That is what the Corinthian Christians were doing. Elders must take charge and dis-fellowship those who are living immorally.

If we are going to be people who follow the Bible, we must follow **all** that it says. In 1 Corinthians 5 the Scriptures clearly teach that where immoral actions exist, and where sin is persistent so that people are in rebellion to God, then the elders must be willing to dis-fellowship those who are living in sin. A failure to do so is in essence saying, “We are better than God, and we can overlook such things. Even if God doesn’t like it, we can deal with it and allow it to go on.” It is imperative that, as Christians, we make judgments on matters of morals and doctrine. There are some who say that we must not judge. Paul said that he had already made such a judgment, and that he had already made up his mind on the situation because God had already decided on it. Some people say today that a person cannot judge, and if he does, he is sinning. They then quote Matthew 7:1—“Judge not that you be not judged.” The context of that passage is not about making decisions on morals and doctrines. It is dealing with hypocritical Jews who said to others, “You do this!,” and then they would turn around and do the exact opposite. Matthew 7:21 deals with hypocritical types of judgment where a person tells someone else to go and do something right, but then the person doing the judging goes out and does something wrong. That was the type of hypocritical judgment that Jesus condemned. But the Scriptures teach us that we **must** make judgments on morals and doctrines. Notice John 7:24 where Jesus said, “Do not judge according to appearance, but **judge with righteous judgment.**” We have to be brave enough, courageous enough, and bold enough to stand up and say, “You are living in sin. We love you and want you to go to Heaven. The Scriptures teach us that your actions are wrong. And we are going to have to dis-fellowship you for the sake of your soul if you are not willing to repent.” Do we **want** to do that? No—not in the sense that we want to make a person feel like he is being punished for no reason. But do we want to do it because God told us to do it in order to save the person’s soul? Absolutely!

Then how does a person make a righteous judgment? Jesus said that we should not judge according to appearance. We must not “just look at something” and say that it is wrong. Rather, we must make “a righteous judgment.” How do we do that? The Bible teaches us that a righteous judgment will always be based upon God’s Word. In Psalm 119:160-172 we see that all of God’s commandments are righteous. John 12:48 tells us that we will be judged by the righteous words of Christ. Thus, in order to make a righteous judgment we must come to the Scriptures. If an action is clearly condemned, then we must stand up and say what God has already said. **We** are not doing the judging; **God** is doing that. We are simply saying and enforcing what God has told us to say and enforce. Should a person who is living an immoral lifestyle, who is involved in sin, and who will not repent, be dis-fellowshipped? Yes, the Scriptures teach us that by Christ’s authority we must be willing to put those people out of the assembly. Notice the clear teaching of 1 Corinthians 5:4-5 —“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, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” The point here is clear. If we plan to follow the authority of God and spirit of Christ (Col. 3:17), then we must, in truth and love (Eph. 4:15) withdraw from this person. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 14:37 that his authority came from God and the Holy Spirit. So, we must be willing, when people are living in sin, to dis-fellowship them for the sake of their souls. Think about the examples of Jesus and Peter. Jesus clearly told Peter, “You are going to deny Me.” And Peter did that. But Peter realized his sin, repented of it, and was given a chance to come

back. We are not saying that we have to disfellowship people and then never again have anything to do with them. The Scriptures teach that we are to admonish them as a brother (2 Thess. 2-3). But we must want them to go to Heaven badly enough that we are willing to follow through with the procedure of disfellowshipping them. Notice verse 5—"Deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." We want people to stop their sinful actions in the flesh so that their souls can be saved. Disfellowshipping is not intended to be a mean-spirited thing. The Scriptures teach that it is the kindest thing that the church can do to someone who is living in sin because the church is more concerned about the person's soul at that point than the person is. Notice, then, from these passages what Paul said that the congregation in Corinth was to do. Notice his encouragement in 1 Corinthians 5. In verse 5 he says, "Deliver such a one to Satan." In verse 7 he says, "Purge out the old leaven." In verse 11 he says, "Do not 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." Paul wants the church to purge sin from its ranks by disfellowshipping a person who is sin so that such a person no longer remains in the church's fellowship. In 1 Timothy 1:20 we see that Paul delivered Hymenaeus and Alexander to Satan so that they could learn not to blaspheme. We need to do the same thing today.

However, the action of disfellowshipping someone is not always taken because of a heinous sexual sin. In 2 Thessalonians 3 Paul is talking about disfellowshipping certain people for laziness! These people had quit working and were staring up at the sky, thinking that Jesus might return at any minute. They had given up their jobs and had stopped taking care of their families. Why was Paul urging that some in Thessalonica be disfellowshipped? It was because they were lazy. When one remains in persistent sin, hardens his heart, and rebels against the will of God, then for the sake of his soul, such a person needs to be disfellowshipped. What is the purpose of disfellowship? It is not merely to save a person's soul. It also is to take a public stand against sin. In Scripture, God always takes the right stand against sin. He tells us what sin does to us when He says that "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). He tells us what it does to our relationship to Him (Is. 59:1-2). He tells us the end result of our sins. According to Mark 9:44, we will be cast into a lake of fire (which is Hell itself). We are to take a stand against sin so that people will not be lost. When people see a congregation stand up against sin in order to do what is right, they will "think twice" about getting involved in that sin. Disfellowshipping also is carried out in order to save a sinner's soul. And it works! Have you read 2 Corinthians 2:5-11? The church in Corinth followed Paul's commands regarding the man mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5. They disfellowshipped him. Then, in 2 Corinthians 2:5-11 Paul writes to them to tell them, "You disfellowshipped that man. He repented. Therefore, I want you to receive him back in love and do not put too much grief on him." He repented, which means that the disfellowshipping process worked! Maybe people will be lost today because we are not following what the Bible says on disfellowshipping. Is it popular? No, it is not! Does it make people feel good in an emotional sense? Not, not all. But is it the right thing to do in order to take a stand against sin and help people get to Heaven? It is the only way for us to reach someone who is steeped in sin. We must do it in order to follow God's directives.

Another reason Paul offers for disfellowshipping is the salvation of the rest of the congregation. In 1 Corinthians 5:6 Paul says that "a little leaven leavens the whole lump." Take a rotten apple, put it in the bottom of a bushel of good apples, and before you know it the whole bushel has gone bad. Disfellowshipping is a preventative, so that other people will not be become involved in sin. It sends a strong message to Christians when a person gets involved in sin and we take it seriously. It sends a message that the leaders of the congregation do not want anyone to go to Hell. It says that they will not put up with sin, and

that if people get involved in sin, there will be repercussions. Sometimes, people see a disfellowshipping, yet still remain in a relationship with those who have been disfellowshipped. To make disfellowshipping work, Christians must choose not to have close association with the people who have been disfellowshipped. We must follow biblical principles. We must no longer fellowship such people. Notice what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 5:9-10—"I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world." Paul did not want Christians to keep company with such sinners. In fact, in verse 11 he said, "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." Why? Such actions on our part tell sinners that we mean what we say and that we want them to repent. Also, if Christians associate with people who do ungodly things, they can be influenced by such people. Someone has rightly said that if you run with the goats, you will begin to smell like them. We need to stay away from sin and those who are in sin, lest their evil deeds rub off on us. We learn from 1 Corinthians 15:33 that "evil companions corrupt good morals." Paul, therefore, was teaching us how we should act.

But why is it that so many Christians or congregations are unwilling to go through with a disfellowshipping procedure? The main reason is because we are not standing up for God says because we do not believe that it will work. It does not matter whether we think it will work or not. In 2 Corinthians 2 we are told that it does work! We need to have the courage to stand up, do what God says, and stop worrying about whether or not someone might be offended. How can we drive away a person who is already living in open sin? Might our actions offend such a person? I hope it **does** offend them, because their sin offends God. Maybe **our** actions will make them think about how offensive **their** actions are to God, to the church, and to others. Maybe it will cause them to realize that their actions are wrong. We must stop being cowards and stop worrying about whether disfellowshipping will drive people away who are already away. Instead, let's put into practice what God has said on this matter.

In 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 we see a sin against the body of Christ where certain Christians were suing one another. Paul told them not to do such things because it would result in a bad testimony for Christ. Paul asks in verse 1, "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints?" Paul wonders why Christians would take their problems before those in the world when Christians are supposed to be the light of the world. It presents a bad testimony for the Lord when we have to go to a pagan court to find out how we should solve our problems. Paul said that the congregation had failed to live up to its full potential in Christ. In verse 7 he said, "It is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated?" If two Christians go to court, both of them end up losing! Christ and the church lose, too. If all else fails, Paul says that a Christian must simply accept the loss by being defrauded instead of going before a heathen court. What did Jesus say in Matthew 5:40? He said, "If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also." Jesus' point was that Christians should go the extra mile. They should give in, rather than presenting a bad testimony for the Lord. We must be willing to go the extra mile in our efforts to live up to our own Christian principles. Where two people are involved in a suit, there is a problem somewhere. Someone is not exhibiting the love of Christ as they ought to be doing.

In 1 Corinthians 6 Paul also deals with additional sins against the physical body. One of the lessons that Paul teaches us is that we must be faithful to God. In order to go to Heaven, we must abandon actions that are related to immorality. What are some of the things that the people of Corinth were doing before they became Christians? Notice verses 9-11:

“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such **were** some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.”

If we are going to be faithful to God, we cannot live in sins such as sexual immorality, fornication, illicit sexual activities, adultery, idolatry, and homosexuality. Paul said that such people will not inherit the kingdom of God. This means that sodomites, fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, and homosexuals will not go to Heaven if they remain in such sin. Some people today say, “Homosexuals were born that way.” If God says that they cannot practice homosexuality and go to Heaven, then how could they be born that way? That would mean that God Himself had created them that way. Surely the Scriptures teach that we have the ability to make choices (Josh. 24:15). Thus, such actions are sinful in God's sight. What does God expect of us? He expects us to control ourselves. We have the ability to control ourselves. Look at 1 Corinthians 6:12 where Paul said, “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.” Something might not be against the law of God or against the law of man, but it also might not be the best thing for us. We do not need to be brought under the power of something if that is going to control and rule our lives. Paul said, “I will not be brought under the power of any.” In Proverbs 25:28 we read, “Whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, without walls.” Imagine in your mind a city that has a wall around it. But the wall is crumbling and full of holes. How could such a wall protect the city? Just like the city that has broken walls, a man who lacks self-control has no protection. In 1 Peter 2:11 we are told to “abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.” We are not to have anything to do with such things. In 1 Corinthians 6:18 Paul tells us to “flee sexual immorality.” Paul told Timothy, “Flee youthful lusts” (2 Tim. 2:22). Such things are sins against our own bodies. And apart from spiritual consequences, they also are physical consequences. What will sexual immorality get you in this life? It might get you a sexually transmitted disease. It might make you a parent before you desire to become one. It will bring you a lot of heartache and emotional baggage. But it will not help you get to Heaven. It will not make you happy. It will not provide you with real love. We need to flee sexual immorality, and abstain from every fleshly lust that wars against the soul. We must flee youthful lusts. We can control our desires and passions if we decide to put our energies in the right places by serving God and His kingdom and by making the most of what God wants you to be.

Here is a passage that I hope you will never forget. Notice 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, which is the basis and foundation of everything I have discussed today. Why should we not get involved in the sin of sexual immorality? Why should we remove from the kingdom of God those who are not living properly? Why did the Corinthian Christians have to come out of gross immorality and begin exhibiting self-control? Here is the basis and foundation of it. Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, and we belong to God. When you obeyed the Gospel, you no longer are your own, but belong to God. Paul said, “Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.” To whom do our bodies and spirits belong? They belong to God. We are not our own. When we obey the Gospel, we no longer belong to our-

selves. Christ paid the ultimate price (Acts 20:28). He purchased the church with His blood, and it is by His stripes (Is. 53:4; 1 Pet. 2:24) that we are healed. He paid the debt. He ransomed us from the devil (Gal. 1:4). Thus, we belong to Christ as a result of what He did for us. Thus, we no longer can live in sin. I believe that a lot of people have a lack of commitment because they have not taken the phrase to heart, "You are not your own." We must remember that we no longer belong to ourselves. In Romans 12:1-2 Paul said,

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

We are a living sacrifice to God. When we obey the Gospel, our lives are not about us. In Isaiah 43:7 God said, "Everyone who is called by My name, Whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him." Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10:31, "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." Solomon, who according to 1 Kings 5 was the wisest man ever to live, squandered his blessings in sinful practices, and then later wrote these words: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). We must make sure that we fear God by respecting Him as God, and that we obey Him. That is our "whole duty." That is what life is all about. Life is not about money, achievement, or degrees. Life is about us fearing God and keeping His commandments. We must realize that the reason we need to do that is because we were bought at an awful price. According 1 John 2:2 Jesus is "the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world." When, in Matthew 27:46, Jesus cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?," do you know what the answer is to that question? **We** are the answer to the question. Jesus was forsaken by God because He bore our sins in His own body. We know this from 2 Corinthians 5:21, which tells us that God "made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Habakkuk 1:13 tells us that God is "of purer eyes than to behold evil." Look at the awful price that was paid so that we could have access to salvation.

Today I want to ask you if you are avoiding sins of the flesh that can cause problems in the church. Are you involved in sexual immorality? Have you done things to other members that you know are not right? Have you really changed your life so that you are living a life that shows self-control? If not, you are sinning against the body—your own body and the body of Christ. I encourage you today to make those things right. Or, maybe you have never obeyed the Gospel because you have not realized just what God did for you. There is no time like the present to obey God's will. If you have heard the Word, believe that Jesus is God's Son, are willing to repent of the things in your life that are not right, and are willing to confess before men that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, then you can be baptized for the remission of your sins and become a Christian. In Acts 22:16 Ananias said to Saul, "Why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins." May each of us live every day, giving our lives and bodies to Christ in accordance with the Word of God.

### **Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:**

*THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST* is brought to you by loving, caring members of the church of Christ. The McLish Avenue church of Christ in Ardmore, Oklahoma, oversees this evangelistic effort. For a free CD or DVD of today's broadcast, please write to:

***THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST***  
**607 McLish Ave.**  
**Ardmore, OK 73401**

You may call **580-223-3289**. Please visit us on the web at [www.thegospelofchrist.com](http://www.thegospelofchrist.com). We encourage you to attend the church of Christ, where “the Bible is loved and the Gospel is preached.”

### STUDY QUESTIONS FOR 1 CORINTHIANS LESSON 3 (CHAPTERS 5-6)

1. According to verse 1, what specific problem in the church at Corinth was the apostle Paul addressing in 1 Corinthians 5?
2. What does Leviticus 20:11 have to say about the problem that Paul was addressing in the church in Corinth?
3. In 1 Corinthians 5:2, what did Paul say that the Christians in Corinth had **not** done?
4. In John 7:24, what did Jesus tell Christians to do?
5. How does Psalm 119:160 describe God's judgments?
6. In 1 Corinthians 5:5, what did Paul command the Christians in Corinth to do in regard to a person in their midst who was living in sin and would not repent?
7. According to the last part of 1 Corinthians 5:5, what was the purpose for Paul's command in the first part of the verse?
8. When we speak to others about the condition of their lives, how, according to Ephesians 4:15, should we do that?
9. According to 1 Timothy 1:20, what action had Paul taken against Hymenaeus and Alexander?
10. In 2 Thessalonians 3, for what reason did Paul urge a withdrawal of fellowship from certain Christians?
11. According to 2 Corinthians 2:5-11, what was the end result of the Christians in Corinth withdrawing fellowship from a sinner in their midst?
12. In 1 Corinthians 5:6, what did Paul have to say about the effect that "a little leaven" can have?
13. What does 1 Corinthians 15:33 have to say about the associations we make in this life?
14. In 1 Corinthians 5:11 Paul forbade Christians to do something with a person who had been disfellowshipped. What was it?
15. In 1 Corinthians 6:18, what did Paul tell Christians to flee?
16. In Romans 12:1-2, what did Paul admonish Christians to do?
17. In 1 Peter 2:11, what did Peter admonish Christians to do?
18. According to 1 Corinthians 6:19, whose temple are we?
19. According to 1 Corinthians 6:20, what are Christians commanded to do?