

# Read

1 Corinthians 5:1-13  
1 Corinthians 3:16-17  
Exodus 19:5-6  
1 Peter 2:9-10

# Consider

The Apostle Paul continues his admonishment of the Corinthian church in Chapter 5, taking his condemnation of their arrogance that he mentions in Chapter 4 (4:18), and carrying it into this section by now highlighting a specific instance of this arrogance leading to either an acceptance or overlooking of sin within their midst. As Paul focuses on the sin of this man committing incest, he makes sure to highlight that this is something that is unacceptable even for the pagans (5:1), and yet it has persisted in the midst of their pride (5:2).

While he cites this individual example, he quickly shifts his focus on the response of the church community as a whole. Paul is very intentional in making sure to convey the corporate responsibility of holiness to the Corinthians. The man who committed incest has sinned on an individual level. However, their response as a community of Christ has been left wanting as well (5:2). Paul continues with the imagery of a little bit of yeast working in and leavening a batch of dough, knowing that the original readers would immediately understand the consequences of allowing even something small to go unaddressed in their midst (5:6). Together, they are the people of God, the temple of God, the dwelling place of God (3:16). This means that they have been set apart for God, and as this unleavened bread, they have to be sure that they maintain this status in Christ with sincerity and truth (5:8).

But we do have to be careful with Paul's admonition here for the Corinthians and for us as well. While there is a corporate responsibility for recognizing sin and maintaining holiness, this does not mean that we begin turning on each other and instituting draconian measures to maintain this holiness. The church is not just maintaining holiness for holiness' sake. The church is to be holy, to be the dwelling place of God, so that they can go out into the world, to be a blessing to all peoples. The church is supposed to go out and continue to engage with the world (5:10), and as the unleavened bread, working with sincerity, truth, and love (5:8), we are to draw people into the reality of true life in Christ.

Keep all of this in mind as you read through Chapter 5. Envision the transformed status that we have both as individuals, and as a community, in Christ.

Pastor Will Leung

# Pray

The following are some prayers you might use in your private worship time:

“Gracious Father, we pray for your church. Fill it with all truth, in all truth with all peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in any thing it is amiss, reform it. Where it is right, strengthen it; where it is in want, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of Jesus Christ your Son our Savior. *Amen.*”

“Ever-living God, whose will it is that all should come to you through your Son Jesus Christ: Inspire our witness to him, that all may know the power of his forgiveness and the hope of his resurrection; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. *Amen.*”

# Diving Deeper

Review 1 Corinthians Chapter 4.

- Perhaps reflect on Rev. Dr. Bill Norman’s previous messages.
- What is Paul saying to the Corinthians?
- What is being said to us?

1 Corinthians 5:1-5

- What is Paul saying to the Corinthians?
- What is he saying that should have been the Corinthian church’s response to sin in their midst?
- What is Paul saying about them as a gathered people of God?
- Carefully and prayerfully consider verse 5. What does this mean for the community of Christ, in terms of addressing sin in our midst?
- What might be the Holy Spirit saying to you, as you consider these first 5 verses?

1 Corinthians 5:6-8

Read also 1 Corinthians 3:16-17

- What is Paul saying to the Corinthians?
- Spend some time considering the imagery of yeast and unleavened bread here:
  - What happens when you let yeast work in dough?
  - Why is Paul using this imagery to convey the consequences of sin working in the midst of the community of believers?

- What is a similar illustration that you might have from your life? Have you something “perfect” that has been ruined in some way by a scratch, blemish, or point of damage?
- Why is understanding this imagery important in terms of how the community of Christ is supposed to come together? Take some time to consider what our engagement with the world as God’s holy people is supposed to look like.
- What might be the Holy Spirit saying to you, as you consider this section of the text?

### 1 Corinthians 5:9-13

- Read also Exodus 19:5-6 and 1 Peter 2:9-10
- What is Paul saying to the Corinthians?
- Paul gives us a list of things that are contrary to God’s goodness, and the standards that he wants us to live according to. How should we respond as individuals? How should we respond as a community?
- Paul reminds the Corinthians, and us, that we are to go out into the world to show people the reality of Christ. One very basic way for us to do that is through the way we live our lives. This is why Paul places such an emphasis for the Corinthians (and us) on how we are living as followers of Christ.
  - What do people see in you? Do those around you notice something different about you? Do they know you are a follower of Christ? Are they drawn to you in some way? Are they repulsed by you in some way?
  - What do people see in us at SCBC? Do they notice something different about us? Are they drawn to us in some way? Are they repulsed by us in some way?
  - How are you drawing people to the reality of Christ, through your life?
  - How are we drawing people to the reality of Christ, through our life together as a community?
- What might be the Holy Spirit saying to you, as you consider the end of this section of the text?

How can we live closer **WITH** God in our lives?

How are we being **TRANSFORMED** to be more like Christ?

How is the Holy Spirit empowering us to imitate Christ in what we **DO** this week?