

A Holy Church

1 Corinthians 5:1-13 (ESV) 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. [2] And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. [3] 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. [4] When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, [5] 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.

Nik Wallenda—Grand Canyon, Niagara Falls, Chicago Skyscrapers, Times Square, Riding a bicycle 135 feet in the air.

A. W. Tozer describes that often times we see our lives as a tightrope between two kingdoms—the secular and the sacred. Instead we need to see our lives as one kingdom—sacred before the Lord.

Do we take holiness seriously?

How does a situation like this develop in the church?

We stop pursuing Christ and seeing all of life as a sacred act of worship before the Lord.

- **1 Corinthians 3:17 (ESV) If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.**
- 1. **We are called to be different. We are called to be distinct from the world around us. If we look like the world around us and act no different than the world around us, we misrepresent Christ.**

Jesus loves us enough to save us, to forgive us, to do life with us in order to call us out of our sin.

- **1 Corinthians 1:2 (ESV) To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:**
- **John 17:15-16 (ESV) I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. [16] They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.**

Our love for Jesus and our pursuit of him should cause us to desire more and more the things of Christ—his love, his obedience, his character, and in turn it should cause us to reject the desires of our flesh that war against our spirit.

The Corinthians were tolerating sin in their midst rather than mourning over sin.

Our all out pursuit of Jesus and our love for Jesus should put within us a desire to leave behind the desires of the flesh. We've been called holy in Christ, set apart by him to live out our love of him in obedience to the Spirit rather than obedience to the flesh.

- **Ephesians 5:3 (ESV) But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.**
- **Colossians 3:5 (ESV) Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.**

Remember, we have been declared holy in Christ. All things, therefore, are to be holy. Your marriage is a sacred act. Your parenting is a sacred act. Your work is a sacred act. Your

words are a sacred act. Your thoughts are a sacred act. All of life is sacred unto the Lord.

[6] Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? [7] 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. [8] 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.

The Lord takes our holiness seriously.

2. We are called to be clean.

How many of you have ever made sourdough bread. In order to get the bread made you start this process of fermentation that causes the dough to rise and eventually make the bread. The process of fermentation works its way through the entire lump of dough. And let's just say, the initial process of making the dough doesn't smell good.

Leaven in the OT is always descriptive of the pervasive nature of sin. As people who belong to the Lord, sin is to be done away with and dealt with in our lives.

- **Exodus 12:15 (ESV) Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven out of your houses, for if anyone eats what is leavened, from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.**
- **Exodus 13:6-7 (ESV) Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the LORD. [7] Unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven days; no leavened bread shall be seen with you, and no leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory.**

- **Luke 12:1 (ESV)** In the meantime, when so many thousands of the people had gathered together that they were trampling one another, he began to say to his disciples first, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

We’ve been made holy through sacrifice of Christ, our Passover Lamb.

Because we are a new creation in Christ, we make it our aim to pursue Christ and to deal with the sin nature in our lives. Because we have been made holy we want to be holy in all we do. We celebrate our salvation in Christ by living in purity and truth, not by living in malice and evil.

[9] I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— [10] 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. [11] 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. [12] For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? [13] God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.”

Holiness takes discernment and a commitment to helpfulness.

3. We are called to be discerning and helpful.

Paul had apparently already expressed to them the teaching of dealing with sexual sin in their midst. Sexual immorality was so prevalent in Corinth that Paul dealt with it multiple times. He will cover it again in Chapters 6 & 7.

It’s interesting, when you stop and think about what Paul is discussing in this section, we’ve actually continued to live it out in our day. We’ve become so occupied with the sin in the world all around us, that we

have actually ignored the greater importance of holiness within the church. We are called to be in the world, yet not of it (John 17:15-16).

We can't ignore sin in the church. We are called to help one another be holy in all we are and in all we do. Remember, we are called to be so distinct from the world in our actions, that they see Christ as the only alternative to their broken lives.

Within the family of God, we take our pursuit of Christ seriously. We love Jesus and want Jesus so much that we want what he desires more than we want the broken desires of our flesh.

We in turn make it our aim to pursue Jesus and to die to the flesh. To live to Christ and to destroy the desires of the flesh. In our striving for holiness, we are discerning within the family of Christ, so that we can help those around us to live for Jesus.

- 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15 (ESV) If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. [15] Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.**
- Galatians 6:1-2 (ESV) Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. [2] Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.**

- 1. Pursue Christ.**
- 2. Live in the holiness you've been given.**
- 3. Don't ignore sin in your life or in the life of the family of God.**
- 4. Help each other live in purity and truth.**