

Bad Ideas for a Good Church

Week 2 - We Can Tolerate What Jesus Condemns

Text: 1 Corinthians 5:1-13

Big Idea: Grace never excuses sin; it calls people toward holiness because people are sacred and sin is destructive.

Introduction

- The church in Corinth was a *good* church with a strong foundation in Christ.
- Yet good churches can still be shaped by bad ideas.
- This week's bad idea: believing grace means tolerating what Jesus condemns.

Exposition: Understanding the Text

1. The Sin Named Plainly (v.1)

- Paul identifies sexual immorality (*porneia*) that was public and ongoing.
- The issue is not hidden struggle, but behavior normalized within the church.
- Even the surrounding culture recognized the seriousness of the situation.

2. Pride Instead of Grief (v.2)

- The church responds with arrogance rather than mourning.
- Paul expected heartbreak, not celebration.
- True love grieves what harms people and the community.

3. "In the Name of the Lord Jesus" (vv.3-4)

- The phrase is grammatically ambiguous.
- Best understood as describing the man's action done "in the name of Jesus."
- Sin is being defended as Christian freedom, with church approval.

4. "Deliver This Man to Satan" (v.5)

- The goal is redemption: "so that his spirit may be saved."
- This describes removal from the sphere of church affirmation.
- Discipline disrupts destructive patterns in hope of repentance and restoration.
- The target is the sinful way of life, not the person.

5. Leaven, Passover, and Identity (vv.6-8)

- Sin spreads if left unaddressed.
- Paul draws on Passover imagery from Israel's exodus.
- Christ is the Passover Lamb who inaugurates a new way of life.
- Grace calls the church to live out its new identity, not return to Egypt.

6. Inside and Outside the Church (vv.9-13)

- Paul distinguishes between those inside and outside the faith.
- Church discipline applies to those who claim allegiance to Christ.
- The church does not withdraw from the world or police outsiders.
- Faithful witness begins with honesty and responsibility within the church.

Passage Summary

- A public sin is defended in Christ's name.
- The church responds with pride instead of grief.
- Paul calls for loving clarity, redemptive discipline, and faithfulness to the gospel.

Theological Center: People Are Sacred, Sin Is Destructive

- The kingdom does not treat every desire as sacred.
- People are precious; sin harms and dehumanizes.
- Grace and truth belong together.
- The cross reveals both the seriousness of sin and the value of people.

Application

For the Church

- Grace must never be confused with silence or avoidance.
- Discipline exists to protect people, the gospel, and the vulnerable.
- Faithful witness flows from truth-telling, repentance, and restoration.

For Individuals

- This passage comforts those who struggle and seek help.
- It confronts those who defend sin rather than seek transformation.
- Grace calls us not to self-justification, but to repentance and freedom.

Conclusion

- Corinth's problem was not a lack of love, but a distorted vision of grace.
- Paul calls the church back to clarity rooted in love.
- When Jesus is at the center, even hard truth becomes an act of love.
- Discipline, rightly practiced, can become a doorway to redemption.