

## Unimaginable Sin

### What was this unimaginable sin?

***A man was having physical intimacy with his father's wife, 5:1. The Greek implies marriage, although it may not have been so.***

This was his stepmother; see Lev 18:18; 20:11; Deut 23:1; 27:20.

The Greek tells us this was an ongoing matter

The picture is of one who was habitually and non-repentantly flouting core Christian values

### Why the church must act, 5:6-8

#### *Three mixed metaphors*

Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough, 5:6?

*The point is the remarkable ability of a small amount of leaven to penetrate and transform dough...one man's sin can infect a whole church. This metaphor likens his sin to a toxin that will infect and ruin the whole church.*

Get rid of the old yeast, 5:7

*Because this will infect the whole, they must act*

*They must live out the reality of their relationship with Christ.*

*This shows how Paul couples the imperative to the indicative. Positionally, practically you must be what you are.*

For Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed. Let us keep the Festival..., 5:8a

*The third metaphor is Christ as the Passover lamb. Believers have gone from bondage to freedom through the death of Christ. Therefore, the point is that Christ's death is supposed to effect a change in their moral behavior.*

*Get the old out, bring in the new, 5:8b*

### How the church must act, 5:9-13

#### *What the church must do, 5:9*

Don't associate with sexually immoral people (and others)

*Associate = normally involving spacial proximity and/or joint activity, and usually implying some kind of reciprocal relation or involvement<sup>1</sup>*

*“Don’t mix indiscriminately with,” Thiselton<sup>2</sup>*

**What Paul does NOT mean, 5:10**

*He is not calling on them to be unsociable or to withdraw from the world.*

*Christians are called on to be salt and light in the world, Matthew 5:13-16*

**What Paul clearly does mean, 5:11**

*He is clearly calling on the church to “make unwelcome any Christians in name who flout core Christian moral values (2 Thess 3:14; Titus 3:10-11).”<sup>3</sup>*

**This list is not limited to sexual immorality!**

*Not to eat ...*

**Do give normal courtesies due; don’t be mean or rude**

**Don’t pretend everything is fine, do withdraw association, support, and identity with community. Don’t pretend they are part of the family.**

*Are you not to judge those inside, 5:12b?*

**You are required to “formulate a verdict.”<sup>4</sup>**

**The church must make decisions about those who persist in acting as though they are not saved, those who are habitually and non-repentantly flout core Christian values.**

*Expel the wicked man from among you, 5:13*

**“Root out the wrong-doer from your community,” REB**

***What is the manner in which the church must do this?***

**“When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

*This is a congregational meeting; everybody in the congregation knows what is going on...*

***What is the desired outcome, 5:5?***

**His wicked propensities may be destroyed.**

**He may be genuinely saved before Christ comes.**

<sup>1</sup> Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1989; Published in electronic form by Logos Research Systems, 1996). *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament : Based on semantic domains* (electronic edition of the 2nd ed.) (445). New York: United Bible societies

<sup>2</sup> Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NIGTC, p. 409.

<sup>3</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, ECNT, p. 185.

<sup>4</sup> Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NIGTC, p. 416.

## So what?

***The purity of the congregation is a serious matter. If matters as those listed in 5:11 bring shame upon the Christian community, they must be addressed.***

***Infamous sin cannot be swept under the rug. The only way to make sinners aware of the serious plight of their dire spiritual condition is through drastic discipline...<sup>5</sup>***

***The church must be a community of people who welcome sinners who will listen to the message of the gospel. The church must be a community of believers who help brothers who are “overtaken in a fault,” Gal 6:1. But the church must not be a community that tolerates open, egregious, non-repentant sin among its membership.***

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<sup>5</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, ECNT, p. 181.