

Sabbath School Lesson #4 – Sin in the Church – 18-24 July 2026

Christ would have us know that, as the process of cleansing us from sin, so that there be no more sin in the church, there is such a thing as living to the glory of God even in eating and drinking. We are to serve God, therefore, with our bodies. Again, the apostle writes, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). How are we to glorify and serve God in our bodies? Evidently, not by subjecting them to misuse, but by preserving each faculty in the best condition for use in His service. This is how we can eat and drink to the glory of God. The preservation of the faculties of the body is intimately connected with eating and drinking; and therefore we are bound to eat and drink such things and to do this in such a manner, as will tend to keep our physical faculties strong and unimpaired. Even our bodies are not our own, but belong to God, and are to be used not to gratify ourselves, but to serve Him. We are therefore accountable to Him for the way that we treat them, as men are accountable for the use they make of the property of another.

Sunday: Dissonance Between Faith and Practice – Read 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; what scandalous situation does Paul describe in this passage, and why is it so disturbing? Sin in the church of Corinth had reached so far that men were marrying their father's widows. The law against a man's marrying his father's widow, or having any undue familiarity with his father's wife, ought to have been known, as stated in Deuteronomy 22:30 and Leviticus 18:8. It is scandalous and detestable situation of which the apostle Paul says, "It is not so much as named among the Gentiles" (1 Corinthians 5:1). This sin in the church of Corinth was told in all places, to the church's dishonour, and the reproach of Christians. And it was the more reproachful because it could not be denied. Note, the heinous sins of professed Christians are quickly noted and noised abroad. We should walk circumspectly, for many eyes are upon us, and many mouths will be opened against us if we fall into any scandalous practice. Paul heard of this scandalous situation in the church of Corinth. Someone must have told Paul, for he says, "it is reported." The reporter was not just gossiping, else would have been rebuked by Paul who warns them of "backbitings" (2 Corinthians 12:20) but must have had the interest of the church at heart to report the matter to Paul. "A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak" (Ecclesiasts 3:7). The reporter must have believed Paul was appointed by the Lord. Paul himself says, "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Corinthians 4:1-2). That the report was accurate, Paul acted upon it, "For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed" (1 Corinthians 5:3).

Monday: Dealing With Scandals – Read again 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; how does Paul tell them to deal with this situation? "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators" (verse 9). "But now have I written you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, for a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat" (verse 11). Many take a view that this prohibition refers to having the Lord's Supper with brethren in the church who are guilty of the above-mentioned sins, but this goes beyond, the prohibition extends to ordinary meals. Of course this would shut off communion, for they would not commune with one with whom they could not eat a common meal. To say that they shall not eat with a certain class is a far greater restriction than to say that they must not commune with them. Now in his former epistle Paul had said that they were not to company with fornicators. Of course, that would effectually shut off partaking of the Lord's Supper with them. Still, they were not to abstain absolutely from all dealings with such men, for that would necessitate, as Paul says, a removal from the world. But now he is more rigid than before and says that if one who professes to be a Christian is guilty of such practices, they are to show their abhorrence of his course, by refusing even to eat with him. The reason for this is readily seen: If a man made no profession, but was known to be a heathen, no one would think of holding the church responsible for his crimes, even though its members had dealings with him. But should the

members of the church associate with one who had been, and perhaps still professed to be, one of their own numbers, who was notoriously licentious, the world would think that the church still recognised him as a Christian. They were not to be seen in his company at all. This course was to be followed, not in a spirit of harshness, but for the reputation of Christ's cause. This restriction would not prevent them from relieving wants of who might need aid.

Tuesday: Protecting the Church's Identity – Read 1 Corinthians 5:3, 12-13 and 1 Corinthians 6:1-13; what is Paul trying to teach the Corinthians and us? You had better read this Scriptures several times, before you hastily conclude that it sanctions going to law, but not before unbelievers. If a Christian did go to law, but not before unbelievers, he would have to go before the church, and that would show that the church had usurped the functions of the civil power. But let us study the text closely. Note the first word. "Dare any of you go to law?" It is certainly no light matter, or the word "dare" would not be used. The word here signifies, to have boldness, the effrontery. According to this it is great presumption for a Christians to go to law. The saints are to judge the world and angels; certainly, then, they ought to be able to decide matters pertaining to this life. Who ought to be able to decide? Why, everybody who is to have a share in judging angels. Do you not see that this shuts out even arbitration in the church? for if all the saints (and all in the church are supposed to be, and ought to be, saints) are capable of judging in the affairs of their neighbours, they are certainly able to settle their own affairs, without bringing them before anybody else. For one to demand a trial before his brother, to settle the question, whether by arbitration or any other means, is to stand self-confessed as unfit for the world to come; and in that case one certainly has a greater and more important duty than trying to secure ones "rights" at law.

Wednesday: Antidote Against Sexual Immorality – Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; what does this passage say about the connection between sanctification and abstinence from sexual immorality? The connection is summed up in doing the will of God. We have been taught how we "ought to walk, and to please God." What is the will of God for man? "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself" (Luke 10:27). This comprehends all, but we may specify: "Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 16:31). "Depart from iniquity" (2 Timothy 2:19). "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15). "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth" (Matthew 6:19). "Filled with the fruits of righteousness" (Philippians 1:11). "Even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication" (1 Thess. 4:3). "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life" (Jude 21). "That denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:12-13). "And not be overcharged with cares of this life so that day come upon you unawares" (Luke 21:34). "Unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all his saints" (1 Thess. 3:13). "Seek knowledge, wisdom and understanding as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures" (Proverbs 2:2-4). "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith" (1 Corinthians 16:13). "And pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:36).

Thursday: Marriage and Singleness – Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-7:9; how does this passage shed light on how one can put into practice the commandment to "flee fornication" (1 Corinthians 6:18)? By applying the spirit of the law. The seventh Commandment forbids adultery (Exodus 20: 14). In magnifying this law, Jesus taught the spirit of the law, showing that the evil thoughts or looks to be as truly sin as is the unlawful act of adultery itself. Looking at the letter of the law, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery', Jesus gave the spirit of the law, that lust was adultery. Jesus put it this way: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5:27, 28). The Bible clearly teaches that, man is as his thoughts are (Proverbs 23:7); and for that reason: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23).