

FBC - 8/1/84
Wed. Evening
From Tape/mc

HOW TO APPLY CHURCH DISCIPLINE!
WEDNESDAY EVENING SERVICE

1 Cor. 5: 1-9 (also V.11)

... make a list, where you're gonna begin, where you're gonna start. But the point I want to get across is: the purpose of discipline. The purpose is marvelous, Scripturally speaking. Not to destroy a person but to save them. The thing that weighs upon my conscious tonight is this: suppose a person needs discipline and the Body, because of its timidity, does not discipline that person and that person is destroyed by his sin. When I was studying this, I searched my own heart and I was thinking of an incident many, many years ago, of a man who fell in sin. It involved alcohol and I remember there were some people who came to me and said 'we ought to take action'. I thought the man would rectify his life and I said 'I don't think really would be the answer'. But it did not happen that way.

That man went from worse to worse and ended in great, incredible tragedy. I would not even tell you what happened to him. The purpose of Biblical discipline is not to ~~hurt~~ hurt, but is to help. I suspect if the church had been able to maintain a degree of discipline and not be ridiculous, I suspect the church of JC today in America, would be very powerful and that people would take ~~us~~ us seriously. But I think one reason that people do NOT is because a person can belong to the church sometimes, and just be a terrible/terrible person.

In moral, often in business and that ought not be. That repudiates everything we preach and denies our witness before the world that's lost and yet, we deal with something that very few people would be willing to touch. It's so distant and so difficult in our day. Let's look at the Scrip. and then I want to share with you something that I wrote and was published some years ago. I delivered here, in 1969, at Grand Avenue Bible Conference we had and then the S.S. Board got ahold of it and said 'we want to publish this'. It's been published - on Discipline. My Text was 1 Cor. 5 - I don't think I've preached on it, but I just want to share with you the salient points. Let's look at 1 Cor. 5:

V. 1 (read) 'it is reported' (it is ACTUALLY reported). Now notice he doesn't say adultery. Adultery is specific; it's unfaithfulness between - on the part of a married person. Fornication is a catch-all word that includes: incest, lesbianism, homosexuality, all kinds of

other sexual sins, other than adultery. So he says 'it's been reported there's fornication among you and 'such fornication as is not so much as named (or does not exist or does not occur) among the Gentiles (or the pagans). What was this act of fornication? 'That one should have (or be living) with) his fathers wife' The Greek verb indicates 'a lifestyle'. He'd been living with his fathers wife.

Now it says that this sin is so horrible that it's not known, even among the pagans. It is a fact that the Romans had a law that one could not marry his fathers wife, even if his father was dead. Now it appears that this person that this member was living with, was not his own mother - or probably would be called adultery - but was his step-mother. Probably. Seems to be a consensus of Bible scholars that this man was living with his step-mother. It could be that his father was dead. The O. T. speaks a strong word against it in Deut. 22: 30; Lev. 18: 8 and other Scrip. It says that even the pagan *in Corinth* Corinthians were shocked, at such a sin.

I was thinking of Jerry Falwells statement at the White House; he told us that on this talk show 'Crossfire' when they asked him what was wrong with homosexuality. He said 'well, not even animals do this'. Not even the pagans did this type thing and yet, here was a member of a church - they'd professed Christ and the New Life - who was committing this terrible sin - i guess we would call it incest. Now, Paul, of course, was concerned about the sin, but he was MORE concerned about the attitude of the church toward the sin. There was no repentance, whatsoever, but there was arrogance. Look in

V. 2 (read) 'puffed up'(or arrogant). Says there no sign of repentance. There's been no tears but rather there's been arrogancy. I was raising the question today as I prayed ^a were they proud in spite of the sin or BECAUSE of the sin? You see, here's a very prideful church. They have many wonderful gifts in the chapter for Paul says in the first chapter 'you have all the Gifts'. So here's a church that's so prideful and so puffed up until they, evidently, they are priding themselves 'well we're broadminded, we're not legalistic. You know we can tolerate this, we can handle it. Maybe another church couldn't but we're more educated and so we're not

gonna deal with this' and rather than dealing with it, they seemed to be boasting about it. We can handle indeed! When Paul says you ought to be weeping. You ought to have been tremendously concerned. So he goes on to give them an instruction as to what to do and it's a very strong word, indeed. He says in

V. 3 (read) he's say 'though I'm physically absent in my body but I'm present in Spirit'. That is to say 'I'm not physically with you but I know the situation and I indeed am involved in my Spirit and I am deeply concerned'. He goes on to say 'I have judged already, as though I were present concerning him that had done this deed'. Said 'I've made a decision what ought to be done'. And this, of course, is the Word of God. This is not just an opinion; this is Inspired Scrip. He says in

V. 4 (read) he says 'here's the thing you ought to do: 'in the name (or in the authority) or (as the representatives - we could translate it) of our Lord, JC'. He says 'you are to act under the authority of Jes.' Now we cannot know, but would hope - and I assume - they must have known the teaching of Jes. on this subject which is in Matt. 18 and Jes. says when there is offense, like this, He gives the steps: if one has offended one, the individual goes. If he will not hear, he takes a committee. If he will not hear the committee, then it is to be brought before the church; if he does not hear the church, they are ~~are treated as~~ treated as Publicans or sinners.

It seems that the church there must have done this because they actually ~~xxx~~ were told to treat this individual as a lost person. So he says 'it's under the authority of Christ that you're acting; not under your own authority'. Now he says in middle part of V. 4 'when ye are gathered together' - now what does this mean? Well, of course, it refers to the church as being assembled together for an act of worship; we're led to believe, later on, in V. 11, that it probably was the Lords Supper he's talking about because he says 'you're not to eat with this type person' and there are five other sins which we will see Sunday night and which we really need to see. It's not only this that the church is to discipline ^{For;} you are actually to

discipline for covetousness. If one wants too much material things. Have you ever seen a brother in the Body - I have many times - that I thought was making great errors in trying to get too much that I thought someone ought to caution him. Now we wouldn't think of this as a rule and this shows how far that we have come from the apostolic order. There in V. 11, he mentions the covetous, the idolater, a railer (that means a slanderer - a person in the fellowship that would slander someone else) or a drunkard, an extortioner - he names six things. Fornication is just one. But he says 'with such an one no not to eat' which would indicate that these are to be excluded from the Lords Table. That they are not to come to the Lords Table.

So when you're gathered together, it seems in the context refers to a meeting of the congregation to partake of the Lords Supper. He says 'when you're gathered together and My Spirit (that is, My Spirit or 'I am with you in Spirit'. I'm with you, you have my apostolic approval and direction) with the power of our Lord J.C. You've met in the authority of Jes., I'm present with you in Spirit and the power of Jes. is with you because you are obeying and representing ~~Jes.~~ Jes. You're not engaged in a bad deed or something to hurt someone; you're engaged in a noble deed, in the name of Jes.

The whole church acts as last resort - individuals are to try to work matters out before
Now who is to do this? The whole church. It's very significant that you do not have the pastor or the deacons mentioned. You don't have a Bishop, Elder, Pastor or Deacon mentioned in the context. *it goes to the church*
The responsibility of discipline is the responsibility of the Body. The whole church must act and you immediately see a problem here. Because that would be difficult. That would be difficult in any church in this world to get a congregation to act on a heresy trial. Most people wouldn't attend it. That would be difficult in any church in this world, to get done. Most people couldn't bear it. Nothing would hurt me more - I include myself. I simply don't want to be a part of this.

But I'm dealing with the Scrip. here. Now what were they to do? He said he made a decision as to what they ought to do. The next verse is one of the most mysterious Scrip. there is, in

Paul told them what to do - Who

the Bible. He says in

V. 5 (read) he says my decision is that you deliver such a one unto satan for the destruction of the flesh, ~~XXXXXX~~ and there is a redemptive purpose, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord, JC. Now the question is raised 'was this church member a Born Again believer?' Well, look over there in 1 Cor. 6: 9 & 10 (read) see 'fornicator' is the first one he lists (this man was a fornicator) nor... etc. 'abusers of themselves with mankind (that is homosexuality). Who was it who said 'it's alright to ordain a homosexual'? Well, I don't think you would want one of them as pastor if he wasn't saved, would you? That's ridiculous! 'Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God'.

On the basis of Scrip., I do not believe that we could say that this man is saved. But he is a church member and he's passing as a member of the Body and Paul says 'the thing for you to do is to put him out of the church. To put him out from under the protection of the pastor and the congregation. Now here is a very significant thing. There is a protection in being in a church. This is one of the reasons that every person should be anchored in a local church. Under a pastor and a part of the congregation. I would not want to live a month without a meaningful relationship with a church. I'm serious. Here you see - the church was giving da protection to this man, but they said 'remove the protection; cast him out'. Why?

before the destruction of the flesh. What does that mean? Well, you notice down there in the last verse, it says that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jes. Well, I believe that the flesh there is the body. Now you might disagree and if you do, that won't have anything to do, really, with the ultimate interpretation. Some would say that it's flesh dealing with the evil nature; that by casting him out, that the power of his fleshly (or evil) nature would be broken. But I think you have a contrast here in the Text between flesh (which, in this verse, refers to the body) and that Spirit it's talking about being ultimately saved. ~~XXXXXX~~ But to make it real simple, you can't miss the

real thrust of what Paul is saying. Turn him out; treat him as a pagan, a lost man; don't give him your blessings any more; don't give him the protection of the church but put him out on the outside, that satan might bring such chastisement and such punishment on him, physically, that he will wake up and one translation puts it this way 'that he might wake up repent, asked for forgiveness and therefore, have a hope of Eternal Life.'

so keep man in fellowship would have sent him to hell.

So the purpose was not to hurt this man, but literally, do him the greatest service in all the world and that was to bring him to the Lord. Now Paul would have said to have kept that man in your fellowship and pat him on the back and overlook that, would be to send him to hell, probably. So you see, Bible discipline is always redemptive. It's really to save a person from ~~the~~ destruction and can you imagine, the tremendous power in a local fellowship, if the people that we see fall into sin, could be disciplined and restored, they would be the most powerful witnesses in the entire church. No question about it!

Did this happen to this man - did they take Paul's word? They evidently did. Because in 11 Cor. (I want you to turn to it) 2, Paul makes reference, it seems, to this man. He says in 11 Cor. 2: 6 (read) and V. 7. There's a tremendous responsibility of the church is to forgive and to forget, if it does this. V. 8 (read) I believe they did do what Paul said and that it had the results that Paul said and the man was converted and I believe that we will see this man in Heaven.

Now why should the church discipline? He goes on to say, having given the case and having given the plan to follow in this discipline, he goes on in V. 6, 7 & 8 to give us the three reasons that we should discipline in the church.

#1. (V. 6) Your glorying (or your boasting) is not good. It's inconceivable that a church could boast under these circumstances. And yet, it may not mean that they were just talking it but it may just have been their attitude. They just didn't recognize this and they didn't intend to do anything about it. But he says 'it's not good' and he goes on to say why discipline is necessary. In the

FIRST PLACE: It keeps the infection from spreading throughout the Body. Look what it says, in the latter part of V. 6 (read) 'leaveneth' or 'spreads through the whole lump (or the whole batch of dough). Now this of course is the imaginary here is the Passover Feast as we'll see a little later. But just a little bit of yeast -- you ladies know this -- will completely permeate a big lump of dough. Now he's stating a real principle here. He's saying ~~that~~ that a little bit of leaven will not stop with that individual, but if it is not checked, it can spread through the whole Body, AND THAT IS CERTAINLY TRUE!

It's especially true, if there is sin in leadership. Where people have influence. Did you know to a great extent, a church will take on the ideal, the morality of the leader? Sometimes leadership can be so worldly. Now, for instance, suppose in 1967 - suppose when I came here, I'd have started smoking and I'd have stayed here 17 years. How many people do you think would be smoking? You'd be amazed! That's just one little example. You'd be AMAZED at the number of people who would have taken it up, thinking it was alright!

Positivism breeds Positivism

There is something that's most contagious with evil. Unfaithfulness breeds unfaithfulness. Negativeism breeds negativeism. He is stating here a tremendous principle of Truth. That sin, unchecked and undisciplined, can filter out until it fills the whole Body or at least brings it down to compromising until there's such lukewarmness. Now it doesn't say that this would be true on the other side of the issue.

It does not say a little right permeate whole body

Now, for instance, suppose you had a clear gallon of water here and you could take just a little bit of polluted water and it would completely contaminate that water until no one could drink it. But suppose, on the other side, you had a gallon of polluted water and you put a spoonful of pure water. It would not cleanse it. Paul speaks of the mystery of iniquity. There's something about evil that's powerful and that's the tragedy. It's not that it's just one person that it involves but it involves the Body. And when this is permitted to go far enough, whole churches can be filled with immorality.

They really can. But it began at a point and then it spread and anything goes, you know! Now

that's the first reason. But in the

SECOND PLACE: THE CHURCH SHOULD DISCIPLINE TO SHOW THAT THE CHURCH IS PURE. You see the church is to be Holy and to stand before the world as Holy. NOT perfect, but Holy. but separated, different. Different from anything in the world and so he says, in

V. 7 (read) 'old leaven (and that would be sin) that ye may be a new lump (course he's already talked about this case of the leavened that was there and he says 'purge it out, get rid of it) that ye may be a new lump as ye are unleavened' and that's the church of JC. The church of Jes., the true apostolic Church is unleavened! It's Holy, if it's the true church, It's Holy! It's unleavened. Is isn't sinless but it is Holy and it should not tolerate sin. Should preach against it and preach against it and Paul said 'deal with it on an individual basis'.

*SM - Bro. Carlton, head of A.S. of Ned. says
expulsion of Baker & Swaggart ~~last~~ helped
the A.S. of God.*

But not only this, but he goes on in the next place and he says that there ought to be discipline so that the church can celebrate its victory over sin! Why is the church so often defeated and has no victories? If a church is tolerating sin, how can it celebrate victory?

We've of course, can talk about the resurrection and we can talk about the Spirit-filled life, but if we, in our own integrity and in our own lives are not purged and unleavened, how on earth can we, as a Body, celebrate Christs victory over our deadly enemy, Sin?

SM. A.S. lost 1/2 from Swaggart

Do you realize there's a direct relationship in our celebration and our Holiness? There's not going to be much celebration on Sunday morning out of the heart of a people that have lived worldly lives - uh huh! You can't do much singing if you're a child of this old world, during the week and come on Sunday. You just can't do it! A choir is not gonna sing above the way it lives and the way it prays during the week and I'm not gonna preach above the way I live in a world. And I'm not gonna celebrate victory if I don't have victory. I can't do it! I'm defeating myself in a sense,

*R. B. Lee "You can't live skim milk on
w/p & preach cream on Sunday."*

Man, the church is the Body of the Lord gathered together to celebrate Christs victory, but it's

victory over its enemies: the world, the flesh and the devil! And Paul says it needs to be Holy if it's gonna be able to celebrate its victory. So in

V. 8 (read) 'keep the feast' but a better translation would be 'keep the Festival'. Xtnity is a Festival, a celebration. He's called the Xtn lifestyle a Festival. Then he goes on and pulls out a couple of attitudenal sins there: 'but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and Truth'. Now at the latter part of V. 7, he brings Christ in. In the background is the imagery of the Passover, before they ate the Passover Lamb; the Jews with a candle went through their houses and they scrubbed everything. They wouldn't let any piece of dough or yeast be found IN IT! If they found a rat running across the floor with a piece of bread, they caught that rat and killed that rat.

They cleansed their house! Then they ate the Passover Lamb, which was just symbolic - could not cleanse at all - and Paul is saying 'Christ our Passover, has been sacrificed for us'. His blood has been shed that we might be Holy and that the church might be Holy and that we might be an unleavened people, not leavened. PTL! Glory to God! The church is ONE - it's apostolic; it's Holy, if it's the church.

You and I have gone through a day when Holiness was almost a lost word. I remember a time if you preached on Holiness, people thought you were crazy. But there's a wonderful think happening in the world today. I don't know of anybody that God's using today whose primary message is not Holiness. God is raising up preachers today who are preaching on Holiness. Theure-vivals of yesterday came out of the preaching on Holiness. How many of you remember Roy Putnam, who came here about 78. He was a Methodist then. Raise your hand. Well, I talked to him last night. He's dedicating a Worship Center up in Greensboro, N. C. He had to leave the Methodist church.

Now if you're a Methodist or your background is Methodist, your heritage is noble. The church has just departed from its heritage, basically, in most places. I said 'Roy, how do you classi-

fy yourself? He says 'I'm a Holiness preacher'. He says 'I'm a Holiness preacher, Bill, preaching Holiness, Holiness'. That's the message is Holiness. We've gone through a period of much excitement, but we're not there now. That excitement has calmed down and much of that has been lost because there was no Holiness in it! Emotional experience without any real Holiness. We're ~~onaa~~ much firmer basis now. My friends, I tell you I call you tonight to the matter of Holiness. Of Holiness! We must be Holy and God wants us to be so Holy until we actually could discipline in the love of Jes. and save many people!

God wants this church to be so Holy that if something like this happens, or there is a continuing problem of evil in the Body could handle it, just as a matter of course and the Body would move with mighty power to save many lives because here's where the church is losing one of its greatest ministries in our day. Unable to discipline and, therefore, many are going down the drain, when they could have been saved and the church would be so powerful. You ever thought about Ananias and Sapphira? All they did was to lie about their giving. Do you think that would offend the average church today if somebody lied about his giving?

5 M I was in a meeting some time ago and a Baptist pastor said 'I have seventy five non-giving tithers'. I said 'well, that's an amazing thing you're saying to me! How could you have seventy five non-giving ~~XXXXX~~ tithers?' He said 'I have seventy five members who signed cards that they tithed, ~~XXXX~~ who not only not tithe, but they don't give one penny to our church!' Do you know what happened to Ananias and Sapphira? That church was so Holy that a lie could even live in it and when they came in there, with their hypocrisy, they dropped dead. The church ought to be so Holy that a hypocrite couldn't sing in the choir!

The church ought to be so Holy that a liar could not be comfortable; that he would be judged by the H. S., without the action of the Body. Do you think people would be convicted of sin and do you think people would be saved? They would be saved by the hundreds in such an atmosphere! A sinner could not come in a congregation like that; that there wouldn't be old fashioned conviction and weeping and people flocking down the aisles!

Well, my time has gone. I just wanted to share with you this article. I read it rapidly. It's not outstanding but I thought I just wanted to share with you because I've thought and I've prayed, Brothers and Sisters!

"In 1959, Okla. voted wet. Immediately seven churches in Okla. City voted to exclude any member connected with the liquor business. The liquor business is serious; church members who traffic in it, or use it, should be disciplined. But why have church discipline of members on liquor charges and not deal with Un-Xtn conduct in other matters? This question focuses on one of the main problems in administering discipline, that it is easier to begin it than to end it. But it must indeed address itself to those areas which touch the integrity of the life of the church or it is not Biblical discipline".

I made this summary:

#1. Biblical Discipline is always redemptive. It is to gain the brother, not to get rid of him. See? It's Gods love reaching out and saying 'we care enough to confront you with the Truth and try to redeem you. Not let you go.'

#2. Biblical Discipline is always grounded in utter humility, never in a Spirit of self-righteousness. Not Pauls admonition to the one administering discipline, 'considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted' (that's Gal. 6: 1 & 2). See if we discipline, we have to do it in utter humility, realizing that WE'RE sinners and we're unworthy and that we could fall into serious sin.

#3. Biblical Discipline, assuming that it is successful and results in repentance on the part of the offender, results in absolute forgiveness and trust on the part of the church. Now this would be a test! A person doing this - could the church receive him and say 'yeah, you're forgiven and we don't hold a thing against you'. That takes grace. I believe our church could do it. Many churches couldn't.

#4. Biblical Discipline must be exercised by the entire church.

#5. Biblical Discipline must address itself to the vital areas touching the life of the church: namely: sound doctrine, sound character, sound fellowship.

Now there are problems in discipline:

#1. There is the problem of sin in the church, especially in the leadership. A church cannot discipline if there's much sin in it and if there's sin in the leadership, HOW can the church discipline?

#2. There is the problem of decreasing moral and Spiritual convictions on the part of many members. Many members who keep themselves morally clean and are faithful Xtns would be reluctant to draw the line on moral and Spiritual offenders. When God called me to preach, I thought that a church letter ought to mean something. On the back of our church letters you're supposed to mark up if that person is tithing, attending, attitude toward the pastor and everything. I used to do that. And I remember one time, I would say ^{to} the church, 'now we can't grant a good letter to this person, because this person didn't attend'. I did that ~~XXXXXX~~ one time and part of the family was there and they just got as mad as fire with me.

You'd be amazed to know how weak we are and how un-Biblical we are and we wonder why the churches are weak.

#3. There is the problem of social respectability. Can you imagine how shocked the average member of your church would be if the church had a heresy trial, ~~to~~ withdrew fellowship) in open assembly, from one who had ^{committed} ~~committed~~ adultery or gotten drunk or run off with another person's wife? What if we had a heresy trial here in the FBC? OH, we're not prepared for it! I'm not gonna - I'm not prepared for it! We're not gonna do this next Sunday - you all come back!

#4. There is the problem of financial involvements. When churches are heavily obligated financially, there's not much sentiment in losing anyone who might not help with this burden. 'How can we carry on if we lose our good givers' ~~is~~ the howl that would arise if certain persons were dealt with. Now I dealt with the richest man I had in Memphis. I made him come ~~forward~~ before the church and repent, for taking Gods Name in vain. And I wouldn't let anybody here, if I knew it, but I can't know everything.

I wouldn't let a deacon, I would go to him in a minute, if I KNOW these things.

#5. Then there is the problem of family relationship. For example, the church removes Uncle Jimmy from the roll. He's not attended church in fifteen years and refuses to answer an inquiry from the church, asking him to express his desire to remain or not to remain on the roll. Yet, when his name is removed, it's likely to hurt the feelings of his nieces, who may be fine leaders in the church! And then

#6. There is the problem of the grounds for discipline. It's fairly easy to know where to begin but where do we stop? Oh, my friends, this is the challenge of all time! Is discipline in the church. Let's think about it. Let's pray about it.

Now for next time -- you say 'well, that was just for incest' but do you realize he mentions five other sins, in V. 11, including coveteousness! Idolatry! Gossip and slander! Covers a pretty wide area. And this is the Word of the Lord!

Let's stand and pray before we go.