

# “Church Gone Wild: The 4 Whys of Church Discipline” // 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 // *Cutting Through the Noise # 4*

[VIDEO: Prison Ministry]

Awesome stuff, amen? (Why I love prison ministry)

We’ve been talking about what it means to truly connect to the mission here at Summit—so whether it be getting your blue card to serve in our prison ministry, getting connected to one of our local outreach teams and serving our community during Serve Weekend here in a few weeks, or simply serving at your local campus on the weekend...the idea is that every single one of us who call TSC home would be connected to the mission of the church.

I said it a few weeks ago, but whenever we do our church surveys, those who feel most connected, known, and loved at TSC are those on a serving team. So I pray that in the next few weeks you’ll figure out how you can do that.

OK,<sup>1</sup> please open up your Bibles to **1 Corinthians 5:1**. Paul says, **“It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and the kind of sexual immorality that is not even tolerated among the Gentiles—a man is sleeping with his father’s wife.”**

Welcome to church this morning. If you are a first time guest, I apologize. You couldn’t have come on a weirder day.

(BTW, I should probably also acknowledge that the subject matter this morning, as you can see from the first verse, has some... adult themes. Now, I’m not going to be explicit--the adult nature of this will mostly be in the background, because the focus of this passage is not on what this guy is doing but how the church is responding to it. My own 11 year old will remain in here, if that helps you. But, for you parents, if you feel like this might raise some questions you are not ready to answer, now would be a great moment to acquaint yourself with our excellent kids’ ministries—just walk to the lobby, they’ll see the look on your face and they’ll know.

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<sup>1</sup> Works Consulted: Timothy Keller, “1 Corinthians 5,” sermon preached at Redeemer Presbyterian Church, December 6th, 2004; David Platt, “1 Corinthians part 5,” March 8, 2020; Andrew Wilson, *1 Corinthians For You: Thrilling You With How Grace Changes Lives*, The Good Book Company; Mark Driscoll, “Judging Like Jesus,” sermon preached at Mars Hill Church on March 19, 2006; John Mark Comer, “First Corinthians: Hand This Man Over to Satan?” sermon preached at Bridgetown Church on January 23, 2011; John MacArthur, *1 Corinthians MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (MacArthur New Testament Commentary Series), Moody Publishers.

**If you remember from the first week, we saw that there are 5 major sections in Paul's letters to the Corinthians.** The first section, chapters 1–4, was about the problem of divisions in the church. Now, in chapter 5, Paul starts to address some confusion the church has regarding sex.

Corinth, you may recall, was a notoriously immoral city. It was situated on an isthmus between two major ports, one on either side, which turned the city into both an economic powerhouse and popular vacation destination. Young, upwardly mobile people from all over the Empire poured into it, and these young, upwardly mobile people brought young, upwardly mobile issues. So, sexual immorality was a problem. Plus, the city boasted scores and scores of temples to the Greek and Roman gods, and the worship rituals in these temples often included prostitution.

The point is that sexual immorality was all around them, and so, on one level it's not surprising that they were dealing with it in the church. But this sexual immorality that you are dealing with, Paul said, goes beyond even the pagan immorality: Again, vs 1. It's "**...the kind of sexual immorality that is not even tolerated among the Gentiles—a man is sleeping with his father's wife...**" "His father's wife" means it's either his mom or his stepmom—I don't know and honestly don't want to know--most scholars say it's his stepmom since Paul calls her 'his father's wife' and not 'his mom'--but EITHER WAY, if there is a woman you call "Mom" and then ask her to the prom—that's over the line. "is sleeping with" is written in the present continual tense, which means it is an ongoing thing.

Some of you glamorize the early church. Don't! Summit has a lot of problems, to my knowledge we've never had this one.

That kind of debauchery, Paul says, "is not even tolerated among the pagans." You know it is bad when your pagan neighbors are going, "*Nasty! Now that's just wrong!*"<sup>2</sup>

But rather than mourning over this, Paul said, "**And you are arrogant! (5:2)**"

- Why weren't they dealing with it? Well, there might have been a few that thought, "Hey, this is Corinth, to each his own. Back then, the ancient philosophers always said, "What happens in Corinth stays in Corinth." So, who are we to judge?"
- There may have even been some who were like, "Hey, Christ has freed us from the law, so that means he's freed us to love in whatever way seems best to us."
- Paul seems to address both these groups in his explanation.
- But, it seems to me that the way Paul is speaking to them assumes that most people in the church *knew* it was wrong--and Paul knew they knew it was wrong. The reason they were not dealing with it is because doing so would create a scandal--it would give the church a black eye and they are arrogant and don't want to go through that. These kinds of situations always get messy, don't they? Usually, when you confront people like this, they don't say, "Is what I was doing not ok? Hey mom, did you know...?"

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<sup>2</sup> Borrowed this little quip and the one above about mom/stepmom from Mark Driscoll.

- No, likely this guy would be offended and make a scene. Maybe he was a prominent figure--he gave lots of money to the church. And this is just going to get messy **so let's not poke the hornet's nest**. It's easier to leave well enough alone?
- Have you ever felt like that about some situation? You know what someone is doing is wrong but you know how they'll probably react and it's easier just to leave well enough alone? All you Enneagram 8's are like, "I've never thought that even one time in my life..." but everybody else is like, "Yeah, I've thought that."
- But, Paul says, hey, a brother of yours is being destroyed by sin. And you are concerned about your reputation or not rocking the boat? (vs. 2: **...ought you not rather to mourn?**) That word for "mourn" means like "mourning" at a funeral-- weeping for them like they've died. Sin is destroying people at your church, Paul says. MOURN.

So, Paul says, vs. 3, **"Let him who has done this be removed from you..."** (5:3)

- Now, you are like, "Woah, wait a minute--Kick someone out? Like, out of *church*?" Yes. **You say, "What about unconditional love and acceptance?"** It's true, we ARE called to unconditional love, but our fellowship is conditional.
- You say, "I thought we were to be an open and embracing community?" Yes, we are, but our primary calling is to be representatives of the family of Jesus.
  - AND YES, Jesus welcomed into his family people with all kinds of problems, from all kind of tragic and broken backgrounds--Paul himself was a murderer; Mary Magdalene, one of the female leaders of the early church, had been a prostitute with 7 demons--
  - But each of them had one thing in common--they had come to a point of repentance--a place where they recognized that Jesus is Lord and his way is right. Jesus can take you with all kinds of problems, but you have to be willing to go with him.
- (I know that raises some questions for you. Hang on, I'll get to them, I promise. But let's keep reading).

**"...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."** (5:5) Can you imagine a more strongly-worded sentence? Not only do you remove them from membership in the church, you deliver them to Satan. You say, "What does that even mean?"

**OK, listen. It's like this. This is the deep end of the pool: The church provides an umbrella of protection from the curse and judgment of sin.** It shields us from a lot of sin's effects—some of that is practical and some of it is supernatural. Paul says to remove them from that umbrella of protection so that they experience some of the pain of their sin in hopes that it wakes them up to the seriousness of it.

Paul draws here from the **imagery of the Passover**--in the next few verses he's going to bring it up repeatedly.

**Do you remember the Passover?**

- **God had told Egypt that because of their persistent rebellion**, on this one designated night his death angel, likely Satan, would kill every firstborn in every household in Egypt. Well, all the Jewish people were living in Egypt, and they were sinners, too, but God said that he would spare their firstborn sons if they would kill a lamb and put the blood of that lamb on the doorposts. And when the death angel (again, likely Satan) saw the blood on the doorposts, he would "pass over" the house and not enter it.

- **Think about that image:** Inside of the house, under the blood, with Jesus, you're safe. Outside the house, you're exposed to death. Paul is saying, "In the same way, put this person outside the house so that they are exposed to the death angel and the curses of sin. And maybe, by God's grace, when they start to experience that devastation, they'll wake up to the seriousness of sin and come back. **This is what you are to do with someone in the church** who names the name of Christ but persists in stubborn, willful rebellious sin.

Now let's be clear: this kind of thing only happens after every other attempt at reconciliation has been tried and they have rejected it.

Jesus actually lays out those steps in Matthew 18:15–17. So, hold your finger in 1 Cor 5 and flip back to Matthew 18. Jesus says,

15 "If your brother sins against you (some translations leave off against you), go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.

**Step 1 - Private Correction:** This one is really simple, y'all. (A) GO to them and (B) talk to them. Don't text them, email them, or tweet about them. Go to them. Then TELL him his fault between you and him ALONE. And the world alone in Greek means... ALONE. Don't bring ten people together to team up on him. Just you and him alone.

16 But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses.

**Step 2 - Small Group Clarification:**<sup>3</sup> If they didn't listen to you, take 2 or 3 people from their immediate circle--their small group--and go talk to them. That will not only help ensure that they understand the seriousness of what is happening, but also that you are seeing things clearly. That's why he said "2 or 3 witnesses will establish the charge." You're coming together to agree on it.

17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church.

**Step 3 - Church Admonition:** This is where the church elders get involved. If they won't listen to you or their small group, the elders come and--in a more official capacity--warn them about the seriousness of what they are doing.

17 And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

**Step 4 - Church Exclusion:** This is where you remove them from church membership and put them outside the house of the church exposed to the activity of Satan. They are still welcome to come and sit in church, of course--lots of unbelievers do that every week--just not in the capacity of family member.

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<sup>3</sup> I borrow the titles of these steps from David Platt in his message on 1 Cor 5.

It's why we ask them not to take communion... Let me say that again: you're not saying they can't come; you are just saying that they don't get the benefits of family.

Back in **1 Cor 5**, Paul describes what that looks like. Flip back there and look at vs. **10** "...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." Eat there means a meal of "fellowship." It doesn't mean you are never anywhere that you're eating together--you're at a neighborhood potluck and you have to say, "Get away from me, I'm eating." No, back then, eating together in your home was one of the surest signs of fellowship, and Paul is saying to avoid doing things that imply that you're family. Some scholars even think that the eating Paul is referring to here is communion--where we eat the bread and drink the cup together. He says, "Don't do that, because you don't want to imply that God is ok with their sin."

**Paul says there are 4 reasons you should do this. But before I give you those, let me take** a quick time-out, because there are a couple things I want to be clear on.

- **First**, when we're talking about public action by the church, **we're talking about someone who defiantly persists in something that is blatantly** unbiblical. We're not talking about things like, "I'm concerned you are watching too much TV" or "You seem a little cranky in the morning"--of course we should always be speaking into one another's lives, that's part of iron sharpening iron--but the later stages of this discipline process is when we are dealing with someone overtly defying Jesus' authority.
- **Second, in a large church**, this kind of public exclusion happens on a more local level--with a person's small group or service team or their immediate circle, because they are the ones who know about the sin. We don't need to announce someone's sin to thousands of people who don't even know them.<sup>4</sup>

*OK, 4 reasons WHY Paul says we should do this:*

## (4 Reasons the Church Must Remove Willfully Sinning Members From Its Midst)

### **1. For the sake of the sinning brother (5:5)**

"...so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord." (5:5)

- The hope, the goal, is always that they wake up from their sin; that the pain of being removed from the blessings of the church wakes them up and brings them back to their senses.
- The goal is never punishment or exclusion, it's always healing and restoration.

### **2. For the sake of other believers (5:6)**

"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." (5:6-7)

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<sup>4</sup> Thirdly, we're not talking about judging motives. In chapter 4 Paul said, "Don't judge anything before the end time--the Lord will judge everyone's hearts." So, we're not talking about judging motives. Again, we're talking about things that are a clear rejection of Jesus' authority.

Leaven is not a common word for us. The word we use is “yeast.” You may not know this, and it may ruin your love of bread, but yeast is a type of fungus that makes bread rise. It grows and multiplies quickly. If you take just a little bit and put it in a batch of dough, soon all the dough will be filled with yeast.

The Bible uses that as a picture of sin. Just like a little yeast quickly spreads through the whole lump of dough, a little sin in the community quickly infects everybody.

And so, at the Passover, God had them take all yeast and put it outside the house and eat only unleavened bread--a symbol that they were leaving the sin of Egypt behind. They shouldn't keep any of it in their houses.<sup>5</sup>

- Another analogy would be cancer cells. Just a few cancer cells, if left unchecked, will soon multiply and destroy the whole body. You better stop it while it is small lest it spread all throughout the body. If you find it when it's localized, you can get rid of it. If you don't, soon it will destroy everything.
- In the same way, Paul says, open, rebellious sin will soon affect the whole church. So, for the sake of the church, you have to get it outside the house.
- Now, maybe you are still having trouble thinking of this as consistent with love. Think of it like this: *Illus. I know of families where an older sibling was living at home, post college, and started making really bad choices. They were dabbling with drugs. Then they started to bring around all kinds of questionable people, even stealing things from the house. The parents are broken-hearted, of course, but they are not just worried about him--they are also worried about the safety of the younger siblings and what they see. They have conversation after conversation, but their son just won't listen and keeps doing things that put the family in danger. So, finally, the mom and dad, in love, broken-hearted, ask the child to leave and live somewhere else. It's not because they hate their son or have given up on him. They just know they need to protect their other kids. Plus, life on the street is hard, and maybe if they remove that protective covering and quit giving him such a soft place to land--maybe then he'll wake up to the foolishness of his choices. You get that, right? That's not UNLOVING. In fact, sometimes, continuing to house and protect this person is literally the most unloving thing you can do for them. You're enabling them. So, in love you unhouse them so they can experience the consequences of their sin. That's what Paul is talking about here.*

So, first, we do this for the sake of the sinning brother; second, for the sake of other believers...

### **3. For the sake of Christ (5:7–8)**

**“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. (5:7–8)**

- Christ died, Paul says, to get rid of sin. So why would his church tolerate in their midst those things that put him on the cross.
- Paul says that believers, when they come to worship, should rid themselves of the leaven of sin. In another place he says, “Lift up holy hands in worship.” That means seek to offer worship Jesus that is not mixed with the leaven of sin.
- Now, two things that doesn't mean (this is the message of 1000 qualifications).

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<sup>5</sup> Exodus 13:3, 7. Another analogy would be “mold.” See Andrew Wilson

- First, it doesn't mean unbelievers can't come to worship. Again, they can, they should just not be counted as family. An honored guest in the house is not the same as a member of the household.
- Second, it doesn't mean that if your life has a lot of problems you shouldn't worship Jesus. Jesus welcomes people with problems and brokenness into his house. He invited the sick and the lame to come to him. He said that the well do not need a physician, only the sick do. The only question is if you have a posture of repentance toward your sin, or a spirit of defiance about it. Jesus once told a story about the man whom God was most pleased with in worship. He said it was a tax collector whose life was filled with problems and mistakes. But the man was in a posture of repentance--brokenness over his sin, admitting he needed help. Jesus said, "I'd much rather have that than someone whose life is all together who doesn't realize how much he needs."
- So bring him your problems. But you shouldn't lift your hands in worship to him if your life is raising its fist in defiance of him. Right? That's inauthentic. Hypocritical.

#### 4. For the sake of the outside world (5:9-10)

- Paul says that these steps are important because we need to give the outside world an accurate picture of Jesus. Most of the world will never read the Bible--they read the lives of Christians. We have to present Christ accurately..
  - My favorite superhero growing up was the invisible man. I mean, Superman was cool because it'd be great to fly, Batman with the car... but I thought the Invisible Man was underrated. The Nicolas Cage of Super Heroes. I mean, imagine how amazing life would be for a kid if you could just go invisible anytime you wanted.
  - If you've ever watched the old cartoons, the only way to catch the invisible man was to throw something on him. If you dumped a bucket of paint on him, for e.g., you could see his shape.
  - The church is to be like the paint pointed over the invisible Christ to show the world what he looks like.
  - They learn how glorious he is by how passionately we worship him—I think about that. What does it say about the worth of Jesus...?; how loving he is by how we love each other. How seriously he takes sin by how seriously we take it.
- So, Paul says, for the sake of the outside world we take sin seriously so they get the right picture of Jesus.

So that's 4 reasons to go through all the pain and hassle of this process. And here's a special promise: Jesus promises to be with us, in a special way, if we do this. Flip back one more time to Matthew 18 (keep your finger in 1 Cor 5, but go to Matt 18 for just a sec)--Jesus ends his instructions on calling out a sinning brother or sister with these words "For where two or three are gathered in my name (to do this), there am I among them." (Matthew 18:20)

I always hear people quote this verse when small group is really poorly attended and they're trying to encourage each other. Well, there's only 2 of us, but where 2 or 3 are gathered..." I got invited to speak one time at a big student event... the host who invited me told me they were expecting like 1000 teenagers. I go into the arena and they have stacks and stacks of pizzas ordered... like \$3000 worth of pizza. But then only like 10 kids came. I felt so bad. When I got up to speak I was like, "OK, why don't you take your chairs and gather round..." But they were like, "Well, where 2 or 3 are gathered here he is among us." And I'm sure Jesus was there in some way.

But the context of Jesus' statement is when you choose to go through the messy process of lovingly trying to restore someone caught up in sin. He wants you to know that he's with you--when you're doing the hard work of being family--he's like--"I'm there for that. In an unusually powerful way."

Summit, we want to be a church where Christ is, Amen? Christ will be with you if you take sin seriously. And if you don't, he won't. **(There was a couple who came to our church** one time—neither were Christians but they both wanted to get God back in their lives—but they were engaged in a lifestyle the Bible clearly calls sin. God was really doing a work in their lives at our church but they just couldn't get over that we called their chosen lifestyle sin. So, they tried another church in downtown Raleigh where they tolerated—even celebrated—their lifestyle. After 3 weeks one partner looked at the other one and said, "The presence of God is just not in this church." She said, "We have a choice. We can go to Summit, where the presence of God is, and they don't accept our lifestyle and we'll have to change; or we can go to this church where they accept their lifestyle but God is not. You can do what you want, but I'm going where God is." Both came—one at first and then both—both professed faith in Christ and turned away from their sin. Summit, I want to be a place where God is, Amen? And if that means that we've sometimes got to do the uncomfortable work of talking about sin, I'll take it. That's a billion x worth it if I get to be in the presence of God, Amen?)

*OK, before I close, let me deal with...*

## Some Common Objections:

*This is so you don't have to ask me these on the way to my car...*

### A. **"But aren't we to be the friends of sinners? Wasn't Jesus known as 'the friend of sinners'?"**

- Yes! For sure. Paul makes clear he's not talking about separating yourself from unbelievers. Again, look at 1 Cor 5:10 "(I do not mean at all separating yourself from) 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 (these things)..."
- We're not supposed to separate ourselves from people in the world. Of course, lost people act like lost people. Who else are they going to act like? He's talking about people inside the church. Those who "bear the name brother."
- NOW, we usually do the opposite, don't we? We separate ourselves from those outside the church but tolerate sin in our midst.
- Paul says, "Cancer outside of the body is no threat to you. It's when it gets in the body that it destroys."<sup>6</sup>
- So, by all means, we need to reach out and befriend sinful people. Because otherwise there was no reason for God to leave us in the world.

### B. **"Shouldn't our church be a hospital for the spiritually sick?"**

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<sup>6</sup> I owe this insight to John Mark Comer.



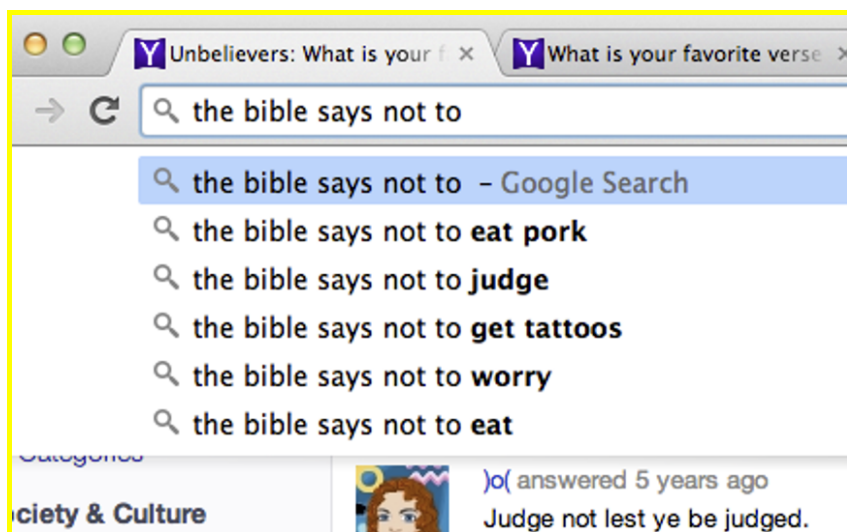
- Yes, yes, 1000x yes. Again, we're not talking about excluding people who struggle. That's all of us, pastor included.
- What Paul has in view here is defiant, unrepentant postures by people who name the name of Christ.

### C. "You only pick on certain sins."

- And unfortunately, that's been true in church history. A lot of times we make a big deal out of sins common in the world and then wink at the sins of rich or powerful people in our midst.
- Conservative Christians have a list that they make a big deal out of and then they ignore the rest. So do progressive Christians. But look at the breadth of Paul's list in vs. 11: **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...** " The point is not the KIND of sin that's committed; it's the POSTURE of defiance toward that sin.

### D. What about the command not to judge?

- This is a big one... so let me spend a minute on it.
- Maybe you saw in vs. 3 where Paul says **"I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing."** And you were like, "Wait just a hot second, Paul. Didn't Jesus tell us not to judge?" "Judge not, that you be not judged." That's like the most famous verse in the Bible. It used to be John 3:16; now it's this verse. If you ask the average guy on the street to quote 2 verses from the Bible, this is always one of them.
- In fact, when I typed in **"the Bible says not to..."** on a Google search, here's what Google auto-suggested for me:



(Not eat? **Don't know what Bible** you are reading... certainly not the SB Bible I grew up with... Potlucks were thought of as the 3<sup>rd</sup> church ordinance).

- **So, even Google knows this verse.** I've even heard the atheist Bill Maher quote this verse... "Who are you to say this or that is wrong... doesn't your Bible say, "Judge not?"

- **But is that what Jesus meant?** That we should never confront someone for being wrong? Well, HOW COULD it mean that? I mean, first of all, Jesus spent his whole ministry telling people they were in error. He told us to rebuke the works of darkness.
- **So what is Jesus talking about when he says “Judge not?”** In context in Matthew 7, he’s talking about sitting in judgment over someone as if (a) you had no sin and (b) you are in a place to pass sentence on them. He’s not talking about telling someone the truth. He’s talking about writing them off as beyond hope. Paul is not saying “Cut them off and declare them rejected by God.” In fact, the whole point is doing something that wakes them up and brings them back.
- When we do something like this, we do it not from the posture of a Judge passing sentence, but with arms open wide, ready to receive them back. Telling someone the truth is not judging them—it’s loving them.
- **We have to get rid of this idea that speaking the truth is judging.** Nobody really thinks that, btw. Are we trying to say that we shouldn’t speak out about injustice—that we should look at things like female subjugation, discrimination or racism in a society--and say, “Well, you know we shouldn’t judge.” No, love requires us to speak out.
- Telling someone the truth is not judging them. It’s what you do **AFTER** you tell them the truth that determines whether or not you are judging them in ways that Jesus forbid. Do you write them off, or invite them in?

E. **OK, last question. You ask, “But does this actually work? Doesn’t this just drive people farther away?”**

VAMP

- Yes it does, and we’ve seen it happen here at TSC a number of times. A woman stopped me between our two services when I preached on this and told me, “We were in this situation 10 years ago and I thank you for not just putting your head in the sand or walking away. This church saved my marriage and family.” So, I have lots of those kinds of stories.
- But one of the clearest examples I have in my mind occurred when I was a teenager. A woman in our church left her husband and engaged in a very promiscuous lifestyle. I remember how painful and embarrassing of a situation it was. The church carefully followed the Matthew 18 process. And I remember when they stood up and prayerfully and tearfully told us that she was refusing to turn away from her sin and that we were doing what Jesus told us and removing her from the church and handing her over to Satan to let him work out the pain of her sin into her life. We prayed for her, and this went on for several months. And then I remember the day, at the end of one of our services, when she unexpectedly and tearfully walked down the aisle during the invitation, and told the counselor that her life had become unbearable. That began a process of healing and restoration. When we removed her from the church all of the blessings of God’s family went away and that brought her to repentance. So, I ask you--which would have been more loving? To turn a blind eye and let her go on to destruction, or to warn her of her sin? I know her kids, and now her grandkids, would say that they are glad we did what we did because it saved the life of their grandmother.

We don't obey Scripture because it works--we obey it because God said it--but we shouldn't be shocked when it does work.

## Conclusion:

Well, I don't know if this has been clear or not. Probably not. But thank God it's over. Amen? I told you last week that I don't stock the pantry of Scripture, my job is just to serve it. That's what I've done with one of the weirdest passages of Scripture that I just wanted to skip.

If you're here and you are not a believer, I want you to know: we don't pass judgment on you. **We do want you to know that we take sin seriously, because Jesus does.** Sin destroys people's lives; it was so bad that Jesus had to die a bloody, tortured death on a cross to release us from it. We want you to see that your sin puts you in grave danger.

The good news of the gospel, though, is this: *John 3:17, "God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved."*

That means that Jesus stands before you now, not as a Judge to condemn, but as a Savior to save! He extends salvation to all who will receive him. And that means YOU. But if you won't receive him as Savior, then one day you will face him as Judge. Listen: You will encounter Jesus as one of 2 things--Savior or Judge. There's 2 ways to pay for sin—receive Jesus' payment of it on your behalf, or reap the consequences of it yourself in eternity.

Sin is serious. Deadly serious. But Jesus saves. And Summit, we want to do whatever it takes to make that message clear.

- Kids who painted over lines... we've got to keep the message clear.

## Invitation

**Do you see that sin is serious? Are you ready to repent and come to Jesus?**

**Do you need to make a decision to join and actually get involved in the church?**

- If you're serious about this, don't just attend here. Become part of the family. There is a shelter here from the attacks of Satan. It's not a heavy burden--I promise it's not a bunch of people micro-analyzing your life. It's a community of people ready to love, serve, and lay down their lives for each other. So, become family. Sitting in a service is not "being family." Sitting in on a family Bible study doesn't make you family. Join. Be in relationships where you are close enough to know and be known. That's the church.

**Is there someone you need to have a hard conversation with?** Pray for them right now.

## SENT Commissioning + Missional Blessing

Every weekend we end our services by saying “you are sent.” We do that because we truly believe every member should be on mission; therefore, we send every member.

There are some members that God calls overseas to plant churches internationally or to take their businesses overseas to be the springboard for missions in another country. We, as the church that sends these family members, have promised to hold one end of the rope by praying for, advocating for, and caring for them, while they dangle on the other end.

Well there is a group of members on stage with me who have decided that God has called them to “hold the rope” in a special way for those who have gone. These are not people on staff—just regular church members. They call themselves **Summit Encourager Network Team (SENT)**, is a ministry of lay members from every campus who serve, pray, care for, and come alongside our M’s before they go, when they’re gone, and also when they return.

The way this group has encouraged our missionaries is incredible, especially with some of the recent challenges in Central Asia. Their creativity, zeal and love for our people overseas is amazing!

They do things like:

- go on care trips when our M’s call with a crisis--often they’re the first ones to jump on a plane and go for member care to pray and be with field workers
- They visit domestic church plants simply to say “we see you and we’re here for you”
- They sending notes of encouragement and gift packages
- They arrange housing or cars or homes for those who are back stateside
- They watch children for workers who are home, help them find homes, and of course give financially to support these M’s

Our M’s response to this has been incredible--they feel loved and encouraged to keep going largely because of this group right here.

If you look at this group and say, “I’d like to do that, email them at [SENTnetwork@summitchurch.com](mailto:SENTnetwork@summitchurch.com), and they will tell you how to get involved.

[call for pastors and prayers teams at all campuses]

[Pray for SENT]

[Missional Blessing]



