



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

What's the Fuss?

Tuesday, 18 February 2014

RON J. BIGALKE, PASTOR/MISSIONARY, CAPITOL COMMISSION, 912.659.4212

Ron J. Bigalke, PhD / PO Box 244, Rincon, GA 31326-0244 / www.capitolcom.org / ron.bigalke@capitolcom.org

CAPITOL BIBLE STUDY

152nd General Assembly

- TUESDAY @ 7:30 AM in 123 CAP
- TUESDAY @ 12 NOON in 328 CLOB

Capitol Commission Bible Studies are held Tuesday mornings at 7:30am *and again* at 12 Noon. The weekly Bible study is nonpartisan and non-denominational. The study for the 2014 General Assembly is the book of First Corinthians.

I pray that this study will be edifying to you. I am here to serve you and to be a resource for prayer and counsel. Please accept my study in the Word of God, as an evidence of my desire to be serving you. – Dr. Ron J. Bigalke, Georgia State Minister, Capitol Commission

Capitol Commission Bible Study

is

Tuesday, 18 February 2014

First Corinthians 5 – “What’s the Fuss?”

First Corinthians 4:18 referred to some who were “arrogant.” In chapter 5, however, there is no such qualification. Why is there a difference? The previous chapter addressed a personal, verbal assault by some against the Apostle Paul. The assertion was that Paul was “all talk and no action,” which apparently was not the majority persuasion. Chapter 5, however, addresses a matter that did involve the entire community of believers. The church was allowing a particular kind of immorality to continue without any rebuke.

The accusation was appropriate because the church thought they could accommodate and tolerate the particular sin, without any damaging affects. Apparently, such a perspective resulted in pride as some actually boasted (1 Cor 5:6). Others thought the guilty individuals might be impure but they would be unaffected. Verse 6 corrects such thinking, “Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump *of dough*?” Boasting that one is immune to the effects of sin is arrogance, and that sort of pride “*goes* before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling” (Prov 16:18). Caution was essential lest all stumble.

First Corinthians 5 has much to teach regarding public and scandalous sin. One truth confirmed is mutual responsibility. No one can dismiss such duty by asking, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” because the answer is “absolutely!” With regard to the immorality

mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5, it was an unmistakable violation of Leviticus 18:8 (cf. John 4:18).

Nevertheless, one must also guard against a sad propensity of a fallen nature that entertains the purveyors of petty scandals. Without any regard for injuring another, a careless remark (relative to some minor fault) may be seized by a busybody, and as the babbling is communicated among other babblers, each adds embellishments until the words assume the basest slander. Few people are without visible faults, and the majority of individuals are sometimes inconsistent; it is among such faults and inconsistencies that petty scandals arise.

Dr. Lawson, of Selkirk, a famous Scottish wit as well as a wise and godly minister, was once approached by a busybody who wanted, with an air of great solemnity, to tell him of the wrongdoing of a brother in the church. The good minister turned to him and asked, “Does anybody else know this but you?” “No, sir,” was the answer. “Have you told it to anybody else?” Again the answer was “No.” “Then,” said the good man, “go home and hide it away at the foot of Jesus, and never speak of it again unless God leads you to speak to the man himself. If the Lord wants you to bring a scandal upon his church, let him do it; but don’t you be the instrument to cause it” (F. N. Peloubet and Amos R. Wells, *Select Notes on the International Lessons for 1912* [Boston: W. A. Wilde, 1911] 348).

If one of their kind is wounded and stumbles, many species of animals will devour their fallen member. Sadly, such animal cruelty is sometimes evident among men and women today. If a man or woman “falls from grace,” the majority often will mock and slander their peer, and the next day smile upon the one who was the primary reason for such ruin. The unrepentant slanderer is regarded kindly, yet the wounded brother or sister is loathed; it would be best to provide assistance with empathy, and kindness should be granted to both if there is repentance and reform. “He who conceals hatred *has* lying lips, and he who spreads slander is a fool” (Prov 10:18). According to George Washington, “To persevere in one’s duty and to be silent, is the best answer to calumny” (Edward M. Taylor, *George Washington, the Ideal Patriot* [New York: Eaton & Mains, 1897] 259).

While we must all guard against babbling slander, the matter of First Corinthians 5 is a different matter because the immorality was evident to all, and continued without repentance; therefore, it should have been addressed. Christians are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, yet we sometimes engage in behavior that is seriously wrong. While unrepentant behavior should never be tolerated, a “stumbling” Christian should not be surprising since believers await ultimate redemption in Christ. What is shocking, however, is the manner in which some react to the sins they have committed.

As a pastor, I have often counseled those who are burdened with guilt. They are aware of their sin and are ashamed. One of the privileges of pastoral ministry is helping true believers in Christ experience forgiveness. However, there are those rare occasions in which someone has not only sinned, but also they are proud of their actions. Despite the harm to themselves and others, some actually

Capitol Commission Bible Studies

Tuesday (18 February) @ 7:30am – 8:00am, 123 CAP

Tuesday (18 February) @ 12 Noon – 12:45pm, 328 CLOB

(lunch provided from sponsorship by Oglethorpe Power)



Enhancing Trust

Georgia

What's the Fuss?

find delight in their sinful actions.

First Corinthians 5 addresses sinful actions that shocked the Apostle Paul. Occasionally, we overreact to situations and others wonder, "what's the fuss?" Paul was not surprised that immorality occurred among believers; rather, his shock was that the Corinthian church trivialized sin by boasting of it.

THE DANGER OF NEGLECT

(1 Cor 5:1-8) As a result of arrogance, the Corinthian church failed to rebuke immorality. They were proud of their tolerance and willingness to accept the immoral and unrepentant individual. The sin should have resulted in mourning with regard to another believer's immorality because sin is always destructive both to the sinner and to the church, the body of believers.

Mourning is appropriate because there is unity of believers in Christ Jesus, and thus when one is affected, all share somehow in the sin. Not that all somehow are to blame for the sin of others; rather, to recognize that without the grace of God, anyone could easily have succumbed to the same sin. Sorrow regarding the sin of oneself and others is a proper response, as evident in several examples throughout Scripture (cf. Gen 6:5-6; Ezra 10:1; Rom 9:2-3).

The Corinthians were naive to the devastation that immorality threatened to bring upon the church and their friend. Sadly, this lack of concern for other believers can permeate the life of a believer, as it did with the Corinthians, and thus this issue is a unifying theme throughout the entire letter. In circumstances where sin is scandalous and unrepentant, it should be addressed formally by the entire church, without proceeding first through the disciplinary responses that are necessary in Matthew 18:15-20 (cf. 1 Cor 5:3-4).

... SIN IS ALWAYS DESTRUCTIVE BOTH TO THE SINNER AND TO THE CHURCH, THE BODY OF BELIEVERS.

Scripture says that the church should have disfellowshipped the offender, which is something Jesus prescribed as the only remaining option (Matt 18:17). No one should be disfellowshipped as a consequence of sin; rather, as Matthew 18 indicates, it is the failure to "listen" that requires various disciplinary responses and ultimately to the final action of disfellowshipping.

The proper action to immorality is to convict the offender of the sin by confronting the individual with appropriate Scripture, and then exhorting the individual to repent. If the person does repent, then the individual is restored (2 Cor 2:5-8; Gal 6:1-5). However, if the person refuses to repent (as in 1 Cor 5), then other believers should mourn and disfellowship the individual. The discipline does not mean forbidding the individual to hear the teaching of God's Word (because one would not forbid those considered unbelievers); rather, the corrective action means the individual no longer receives the care and

protection of the church, and is thus delivered unto Satan (1 Cor 5:5).

If discipline did not occur, the entire body of believers would somehow be affected by the immorality (5:6-8). Perhaps the sin itself would proliferate or the testimony of the church would be ruined (or both). One reason for the discipline is repentance, and the other goal is to purify the church. The analogy of Passover is appropriate since this is when all leaven (symbolizing sin) is removed, and thus the believer lives with the "unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (5:8).

THE SAFETY OF WATCHFULNESS

(1 Cor 5:9-13) Verse 9 reminds us "not to associate with immoral people." The reminder does not mean avoiding all contact "with the immoral people of this world . . . for then you would have to go out of the world" (5:10). Naturally, one must work "with the covetous and swindlers" and "idolaters" in the routine of ordinary life, and such individuals are the church's mission field (cf. Matt 9:10-13; Luke 15:1-32). The prohibition of verse 9, therefore, is with regard to a professing Christian who is living immorally (5:11; cf. 2 Thess 3:14-15).

First Corinthians 15:33 – Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals."

A situation is given in which a believer is being disciplined (or should be) by the local church, and wants "to eat" with another Christian (1 Cor 5:11). As opposed to responding, "I would love to meet you," one must acknowledge the discipline and urge the believer to repent. The sin creates disharmony between believers, and thus the only meeting that can occur is to discuss the sin and repentance. *Christian relationships do suffer when another believer fails to repent!*

Believers frequently join causes, and invest money and time in efforts to reform a world that will not be reformed. John Newton wisely corrected such thinking with regard to political reforms: "When I look around upon the present state of the nation, such an attempt appears to me no less vain and unreasonable, than it would be to paint a cabin while the ship is sinking, or a parlour when the house is already on fire" (John Newton, *The Works of the Rev. John Newton*, 6 vols. [New York: Samuel Whiting, 1811] 6:586). The idea is to make one's own spiritual maturity a primary concern, which means living in a manner that honors God's commands and glorifies his name, and then believers will truly impact society for the better (1 Cor 5:12-13).

Thank you for allowing Capitol Commission the honor to provide Bible studies to you. If you have any questions, please talk with us, or contact us by email or phone.

About Capitol Commission

Capitol Commission state directors are pastors/missionaries who teach weekly verse-by-verse Bible studies for the entire Capitol community. State directors also meet personally with many government leaders to proclaim God's grace in salvation, to encourage our leaders, pray with them, and provide biblical counsel. The mission of Capitol Commission is to reach Capitol communities for Christ—one person at a time, to disciple them, and to prepare them for a lifetime of ministry, wherever God chooses to place them.

Capitol Commission is a charitable and religious nonprofit corporation under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Capitol Commission is supported by the generous gifts of businesses, churches, and individuals. Capitol Commission is not state-funded; rather, those with a heart for the Capitol community fund it.

Please join us in this ministry!

Bible study luncheon sponsored by:



Bible study copies made by:



**NEXT CAPITOL COMMISSION BIBLE STUDIES:
TUESDAY, 25 FEBRUARY @7:30AM in 123 CAP
and again @ 12 NOON in 328 CLOB**