

Judgment, Repentance, Restoration

- I. Consider what Scripture says about someone who justly is punitively separated from the church of Jesus Christ.
- A. He is delivered "...unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh..." (**1CO 5:5**).
 - B. His brethren must withdraw from him. **2TH 3:6**.
 - C. He is *put away* from the church as a *wicked person*. **1CO 5:13**.
 - D. He is cut off from the Lord's Table. **1CO 5:11**.
 - E. His brethren must not company with him that he may be ashamed. **2TH 3:14**.
 - F. He loses his inheritance in God's kingdom. **EPH 5:3-6**.
 - G. He is a marked man. **ROM 16:17; 2TH 3:14**.
 - H. He is accounted a heathen man and a publican. **MAT 18:17**.
 - I. His fellowship with saints and God is cut off; he has quenched the Spirit. He is essentially in "King Saul mode" with corrupt, unheard prayers. **1SAM 16:14; 28:15**.
 - J. He is not greatly unlike Esau, who sold his inheritance to satisfy a momentary need of the flesh. **HEB 12:15-16**.
 - K. Eternally speaking, on Judgment Day, the Lord will "...cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (**MAT 24:51**).
 - L. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (**HEB 10:31**).
- II. The spiritually-minded man will note these things and bring his flesh into subjection. **1CO 9:27**.
- A. The spiritually-minded man judges Christ's kingdom the highest value. **MAT 13:44-46**.
 - B. The spiritually-minded man would rather be a doorkeeper in God's house than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. **PSA 84:10**.
 - C. The spiritually-minded man will feel shame that he has been severed from the company of God's saints. **2TH 3:14**.
 - D. The spiritually-minded man who has sinned will justify God and beg for restoration to His presence. **PSA 51:3-13**.
- III. It was said of God, "...yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him" (**2SAM 14:14**).
- A. The manslayer could return to his city after the death of the high priest. **JOS 20:6**.
 - B. The leper who was put *without the camp* (**LEV 13:46**) could be restored after sacrifice and proof of cleanness. **LEV 13-14**.
 - C. The N.T. saint who is put away from the church for sin may also be restored after sacrifice and proof of cleanness.
 - 1. His sacrifice is a broken, contrite spirit. **PSA 51:17 c/w 2CO 2:6-7**.
 - a. contrite: Crushed or broken in spirit by a sense of sin, and so brought to complete penitence.
 - b. Such was the condition of the man at Corinth who had been put out of the church for fornication.
 - 2. His *proof of cleanness* was the period of "humbled time" which Paul deemed to be *sufficient punishment*.
 - 3. The church should confirm its love toward, and restore *such* a man. **2CO 2:8 c/w GAL 6:1**.
- IV. Some have used the account of the restoration of the prodigal son (**LUK 15:11-32**) as a model for

N.T. church discipline, repentance and restoration to fellowship.

- A. Although this account is a beautiful example of mercy, a loving father receiving a repenting son, it is not a rule of N.T. church duty towards a repenting disciplined member.
- B. When a church member withdraws to satisfy his flesh, the church does not send him off with a fine inheritance as did the father of the prodigal.
 - 1. The church turns sinners over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. **1CO 5:5**.
 - 2. The sinner **LOSES** his inheritance; he doesn't take it with him.
1CO 6:9-11; GAL 5:21; EPH 5:5.
- C. The father of the prodigal simply complied with his son's foolish request; there is nothing said about *rebuking* him or *publicly noting* his error.
 - 1. In the church, sinners who forsake fellowship are to be rebuked before all.
1TI 5:20.
 - 2. Such sinners are to be *marked* (**ROM 16:17; PHIL 3:17-18**) and *noted*. **2TH 3:14**.
- D. The father of the prodigal ran to embrace him when he was still far off before he had even heard his confession of sin and then promptly restored him.
 - 1. But the church is instructed to first be convinced of the humility and repentance of a brother who has been turned out of its company.
 - 2. The church is also to impose a probation upon a humbled, penitent returner.
- E. The four gospels detail those things which Jesus taught his apostles while He walked on this earth. There was much more that the Holy Spirit would teach them after Christ's return to glory. **JOH 14:26; 16:13**.
 - 1. The apostles have a *more sure word of prophecy* (**2PE 1:19**) and have the final say in church conduct and creed. **1JO 4:6**.
 - 2. Paul is to be especially regarded.
ROM 16:17; 1CO 4:16-17; GAL 1:8-9; PHIL 3:17-18; 4:9; 2PE 3:15-16.
 - 3. Church ordinances are to be kept *as Paul delivered them*. **1CO 11:1-2**.
 - 4. Ergo, Paul's example, wisdom, directives and rules give us the best understanding of church government concerning the judgment or restoration of brethren.
 - 5. The Holy Spirit has left us a sound pattern to follow in Paul's letters to Corinth.
 - a. In **1CO 5**, Paul instructed the church to exclude a fornicating brother.
 - b. In **2CO**, it is evident that Corinth had taken Paul's words to heart promptly and had cleared themselves of God's judgment by executing judgment on the fornicator. **2CO 7:6-12**.
 - c. Also in **2CO**, Paul gave instruction concerning the restoration of that brother who had been broken with godly contrition and sorrow over what he had done.

V. An excluded brother may only be restored if he is genuinely penitent, for it is on the terms of repentance that God and heaven receives sinners. **ISA 55:7; LUK 15:7**.

- A. penitent: That repents, with serious purpose to amend the sin or wrongdoing; repentant, contrite.
- B. contrite: Crushed or broken in spirit by a sense of sin, and so brought to complete penitence.
- C. These terms fit with the description of the brother at Corinth whom Paul ordered to be restored. **2CO 2:6-11**.
 - 1. He was on the verge of being "...swallowed up with overmuch sorrow" (v. 7).
 - 2. This is critical, since "...godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of..." (**2CO 7:10**).

3. Contrast Cain's "sorrow" over his punishment (**GEN 4:13-14**), Esau's "sorrow" over his bad decision to sell his birthright (**HEB 12:16-17**) and Judas' "repentance" of his betrayal of Christ (**MAT 27:3-5**) with David's penitential sorrow over his sin in **PSA 51**.
- D. In **2CO**, Paul reminded Corinth of his previous epistle in which he had ordered the offending brother's exclusion. **2CO 2:4 c/w 1CO 5**.
 - E. Corinth had zealously executed that disciplinary order (and other orders) and Paul's praise for them indicates that they had done so promptly after receiving the epistle of 1 Corinthians. **2CO 2:9 c/w 2CO 7:8-12**.
 - F. Corinth had received the first epistle a year before the second epistle. **2CO 8:10 c/w 9:1-5 c/w 1CO 16:1-3**.
 1. They had been notified in the first epistle to make a collection for the saints, which notice resulted in their beginning to be forward a year before in this ministry to the saints.
 2. Thus, the first epistle was received by Corinth a year before the second.
 3. Inasmuch as Paul only had praise for their zealous response to the first epistle, it may be inferred that they had promptly excluded the offending brother.
 4. Thus, the exclusion and repentance of the offending brother had taken place over the period of a year.
 - G. **2CO 2:6-7** have direct bearing on what Paul ordained relative to church discipline, its intended effect, and the qualifying terms of restoration.
 1. The sinner's exclusion was a *punishment* that was *inflicted of many*. It was a corporate action of the church against one whom God had deemed unworthy of fellowship.
 - a. This punishment is not the natural consequence of sin such as when a man gets drunk and stumbles while holding a carving knife.
 - b. This punishment is not the spiritual judgment of God in withdrawing from a recalcitrant (private or public) sinner. That judgment:
 - (1) may occur without others knowing about it.
 - (2) will occur whether or not others do something about it when they are aware of the sinner's fault.
 - (3) *precedes* any action that men may take to punish an offender. Paul by the Spirit had "...JUDGED ALREADY, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed" (**1CO 5:3**) before Corinth had even received his instruction to exclude the sinning brother.
 - c. If either of "a" or "b" is the punishment Paul is speaking of in **2CO 2:6**, then:
 - (1) a sinner would have already been punished before the church took action and Paul therefore was a horribly confused man.
 - (2) godly sorrow and repentance would be disconnected from the *sufficiency of the punishment*.
 - d. This *punishment inflicted of many* was the corporate action of the church in *imposing a penalty* upon the sinner to *ensure the application and enforcement of a law*.
 - (1) **punishment**: The action of punishing or the fact of being punished; the infliction of a penalty in retribution for an offence; also, that which is inflicted as a penalty; a penalty imposed to ensure the

- application and enforcement of a law.
- (2) inflict: To lay on as a stroke, blow or wound; to impose as something that must be suffered or endured; to cause to be borne.
- e. The word *many* contrasts with *few* (**MAT 7:13-14**) and thus speaks of a majority action.
2. Considering the following questions and answers helps clarify the issue.
- a. WHO was punished? *Ans.* A sinner whom God had already judged.
 - b. WHO did the punishing? *Ans.* The church as a corporate entity.
 - c. WHEN was the punishment executed? *Ans.* When the church put out the offending brother from its membership and turned him over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh.
 - d. WHAT was the punishment? *Ans.* Public shame and separation from the body of Christ and all of its benefits and privileges.
- H. Mind that the *sufficient punishment* was to “...such a man...” (**2CO 2:6**).
1. First note that Paul did not say, “Appropriate to that fornicator WAS that action which the church took...” but rather, “Sufficient to SUCH a man IS this punishment...” Paul is addressing the term or duration of the punishment.
 2. such: Of the character, degree, or extent described, referred to or implied in what has been said....'such a one' – such a person or thing as that specified or referred to; one of that kind.
 3. “Such” a person as Paul is describing is a humbled, penitent, excluded man on the verge of being “...swallowed up with overmuch sorrow” (**2CO 2:7**).
 4. Since Corinth had zealously undertaken to obey Paul's instructions to cast out the fornicator (given in the first epistle which was received by them one year before the second epistle), and since Paul deemed that one-year period of exclusion to be sufficient punishment for “such a man” (**2CO 2:6**), i.e., a *humbled, sorrowful, repentant excluded brother*, it stands to reason that the sinner's godly sorrow was evident at the time of his exclusion.
 - a. The “clock” for sufficient punishment therefore began with the godly sorrow of an excluded brother.
 - b. The Cincinnati Church has with its own eyes witnessed the godly sorrow of a brother on the day of his exclusion from the membership!
- I. The probation period of an excluded, sorrowful, repentant brother should be counted from the beginning of his sorrowful repentance, NOT from the time he was penalized with exclusion from the church.
1. If the latter be the “one year” measure, then it would be possible for an excluded brother to remain in hard-hearted indifference to the fellowship and communion of the church and of the Lord's Table for 364-7/8 days, then drop into a morning service, come under conviction of conscience, fall apart in tears and be restored immediately.
 2. But Paul's order was for a one-year sufficient punishment for a humbled, sorrowful, repentant brother! The brother who is “such” must bear the reproach and sting of separation for one year.
 - a. Civil law imposes sentences upon an offender after which society is obliged to consider the debt paid and the offender received back into its affairs regardless of his attitude.
 - b. But the church of Jesus Christ is NOT obliged to receive back into its membership someone who has simply been excluded for one year!

3. King David received his banished disobedient son, Absalom before Absalom had demonstrated sufficient contrition or repentance and that produced great trouble for David and Israel. **2SAM 14-15.**
 4. If a person genuinely loves what he cannot have immediately, he will do what is necessary to acquire it. **GEN 29:20.**
- J. After a successful one-year probation of a penitent, the church is to behave “contrariwise” to “such a man” (**2CO 2:6-7**).
1. Since the punishment was exclusion, behaving *contrariwise* would mean restoring the humbled penitent to church membership and the church should corporately forgive, comfort, and confirm their love to such a man. **2CO 2:7-8.**
 2. Such forgiveness averts an inroad for Satan to get an advantage. **2CO 2:10-11 c/w GAL 6:1.**
 3. Judgment awaits those who refuse to show mercy when it is appropriate to do so. **JAM 2:13.**

VI. How should the church treat an excluded member who is proven to be sorrowfully penitent?

- A. Until his restoration, he is still “without” the body and therefore barred from church decisions.
- B. However, he is no longer walking disorderly, per **2TH 3:6.**
- C. He is not causing offenses and divisions contrary to the doctrine, per **ROM 16:17-18.**
- D. He is rather trying to walk orderly by obeying the doctrine.
- E. Unlike the disorderly or divisive person who remains hardened in sin, we may have more dealing with a penitent to encourage his restoration to the church upon sufficient punishment. **GAL 6:1-2 c/w 2CO 2:6-8.**
 1. restore: To give back, to make return or restitution of (anything previously taken away or lost).
 2. The man is eligible for eventual restoration to membership, which was taken away when he was excluded.
 3. However, he is still (“...if a man BE...”) overtaken in the fault.
 - a. He is still bearing the consequences.
 - b. Such would be the case of an excluded brother who is penitent yet still on probation.
 4. He is bearing a burden that we should help him to bear, per **GAL 6:2.**
 5. When one is exercised by a chastening, we should encourage him thus letting him be healed. **HEB 12:11-13.**