

AFTER THE SPANKING...



TEXT: **2 Corinthians 2:5-11** *But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all. Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave anything, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.*

INTRO.: A. After the parent disciplines his child, there must be forgiveness & restoration. *(The fact of his discipline implied that there was already love.)* After the church disciplines a member, there must be forgiveness & restoration. *(The fact of his discipline implied that there was already love.)*

B. If discipline is not administered in love then it is simply harsh punishment. That should never be the motive. Anger, not at the person, but at the action, is acceptable. Disappointment at the person and his action is likewise acceptable. But never should the person be simply judged and discarded, but when repentance is obvious and **"works meet for repentance"** is manifested, then forgiveness and restoration must be forthcoming.

I. THE NEED FOR CHURCH DISCIPLINE: SIN V.5

A. Public Not Just Personal:

1. The nature of this particular event is well documented in 1 Cor.5.
2. Church discipline should only be administered when the sin is so public that the reputation and purity of the church is involved.

ILLUS.: Since all church members sin regularly to suggest otherwise would be ridiculous. Sometimes folks come to the pastor with this or that story about one of the church members. "I saw Mrs. Carnality at the mall and she was with Mr. Worldly..." or "I saw Deacon Fleshly going into this bar..." Be careful. Unless you saw Mrs. Carnality and Mr. Worldly doing something inappropriate or sinful, don't jump to conclusions. Unless you know why Deacon Fleshly was going into the bar, beware. Maybe the company he works for sent him there to take care of an electrical problem.

- a. Paul is saying that the sin of this man was not personal towards him, but was public and affected the whole church.
- b. Paul is affirming that he has no personal axe to grind regarding the man he recommended to be disciplined; he had sinned against the church.

II. THE PURPOSE FOR CHURCH DISCIPLINE: RESTORATION V.6

A. The Repentance of the Individual:

1. The censure of the church is important and far-reaching.
2. It is designed to bring shame for the sin to the individual.
3. It is primarily enacted to bring the sinning saint to repentance.

ILLUS.: Once that person manifests "*works meet for repentance*" he should be immediately reinstated. Every church member has things in his life he would prefer not to be made public. (*That fact should be enough for every believer to be generous with his forgiveness towards others who show even the least amount of repentance.*) If and when a sin becomes public the shame itself should be sufficient to bring about repentance, but if that doesn't happen, then church discipline is in order.

B. The Purity of the Church:

1. It needs to be said that more important than the repentance of the individual is the purity of the church.
2. The church should never get the reputation of looking the other way when it comes to public sin.
3. Neither should it have the reputation of constantly looking for reasons to enact discipline on sinning members; we should not be known as the "church of the revolving door."
4. The church is a spiritual hospital for sick, injured and hurting saints, not a religious museum where perfect but dead members are put on display.

QUOTES: "*When discipline has achieved its purpose, a church must be alert to this and quickly extend forgiveness and encouragement.*" "*True punishment for wrong is the work of love, not vengeance.*" "*The commingling of tender pity with stern justice is the common trait of great souls, often seen in the history of truly great men. Saintliness and severity can dwell harmoniously together in great souls.*"

Paul is saying "enough is enough" – the church ("*...which was inflicted of many*") acted correctly in the disciplinary action, but the purity of the church has been vindicated and repentance is evident. That ends it.

III. THE FRUIT OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE: FORGIVENESS V.7-10

NOTE: From this point on, the emphasis is on forgiveness. The word in one of its forms is used no less than 5 times in vv.7 & 10.

A. Avoid Bitterness:

1. Forgiveness, comfort and compassion should characterize the Christian and the church.

ILLUS.: It is easy and a serious danger to become judgmental towards those involved in public sin. While it may be true that their sin has taken them where they never intended and will not allow them to serve the Lord in ministry as they did prior to the sin, it is also true that forgiveness should be readily offered and extended and restoration to former ministries, as much as possible allowed.

Recent news headlines regarding pedophilia in the Catholic Church may serve as an illustration. Instead of discipline from the hierarchy, the child molesters were simply moved to another place where they could practice the same sin again and again. These people should have been turned over to the proper civil authorities for punishment as well as having been removed from sensitive positions.

Tragically, in our own circles, preachers get involved with women immorally, then are forgiven (proper), but allowed to go back into the ministry where they are again exposed to the same temptations (improper). This is not fair to them or the churches and brings reproach on the ministry.

2. We should offer forgiveness as soon as there is any sign of genuine repentance.

ILLUS.: Usually it is wise to assign some time limit or probationary period after which a matter should be reviewed to see if there is any genuine move towards repentance. Then, whether or not the individual seeks restoration, it should be offered.

Of course if the person is hardened and "runs" to another church for consolation and never admits, repents or forsakes his sin or if he simply refuses to accept the loving discipline of the church, there is no need to lift the discipline.

IV. THE DANGER OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE: SATANIC ADVANTAGE V.11

A. Damage of a Saint:

1. When forgiveness after repentance is not offered, the saint is often embittered and rendered useless to the cause of Christ.
2. Satan will whisper: "*See, I told you they had no love for you. They have discarded you. You might as well continue in a life of sin.*"

B. Destruction of a Church:

1. Paul knows how subtle Satan is & issues this stern warning against a lack of love & forgiveness.

2. One the offence is punished and restoration is offered and accepted, then true acceptance and forgiveness should be the result.
3. As much as humanly possible we should not only forgive, but forget the sin.

CONCL. "AFTER THE SPANKING..." the loving parent will not only forgive the erring child, but love them back into complete fellowship. The child should never have to face that issue again. He should never be reminded of it, punished for it again, or have it hang over him like a dark cloud.

So too in the church. Once the discipline has been carried out, and forgiveness has been offered, the record should be expunged and no further mention of the offense should be made. Complete restoration and forgiveness should be given.