

Handout: 1 Corinthians Lesson 3

Just as the sin of one person contaminates many, if it is not dealt with once it is known, so also does the sin of the many who know what is happening and either do not turn away from it or pretend that they have not noticed it. Sin does not look like sin if it is not corrected or avoided by anybody.

Ambrosiaster, *Commentary on Paul's Epistles*

In Chapters 5-6, Paul addresses moral disorders within the Corinthian faith community.

1. Paul's ruling on a case of incest (5:1-13).
2. The question of bringing lawsuits to secular courts (6:1-11).
3. Keeping holy physical bodies that are members of Christ's Body (6:12-20).

5:2c. *The one who did this deed should be expelled from your midst.* See an example of the judgment of excommunication from the community for sins in Lev 18:29.

Excommunication is an ecclesiastical censure by which excludes a person from communion with the faithful. There are two basic forms of excommunication legislated by the Code of Canon Law: inflicted penalties (*ferendae sententiae*) and automatic penalties (*latae sententiae*). In the first type, a penalty does not bind until after it is imposed on the guilty party. In the second type, the excommunication is incurred by the very commission of the offense, if the law or precept expressly determines this (Canon 1314). Among other offenses identified by the new code are:

1. "An apostate from the faith, a heretic or a schismatic incurs automatic excommunication" (Canon 1364).
2. "A person who throws away the consecrated species or takes them or retains them for a sacrilegious purpose incurs an automatic excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See" (Canon 1367).
3. "A confessor who directly violates the seal of confession incurs an automatic excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See" (Canon 1388).
4. "A person who procures a successful abortion incurs an automatic excommunication" (Canon 1398).

There are three principal effects of the penalty, so that "An excommunicated person is forbidden:

1. To have any ministerial participation in celebrating the Eucharistic Sacrifice or in any other ceremonies whatsoever of public worship.
2. To celebrate the sacraments and sacramentals and to receive the sacraments.
3. To discharge any ecclesiastical offices, ministries or functions whatsoever, or to place acts of governance."

(Canon 1331; Catholic Dictionary, "excommunication," page 137; CCC 1463).

In 6:9-10 Paul lists ten sins that disqualify one from entering the gates of Heaven. Compare this list with Paul's other lists of sins that could cost a person their eternal salvation in Romans 1:26-27, 29-30; 2 Corinthians 12:21; Ephesians 5:5; 1 Timothy 1:10 and Hebrews 13:4.

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1 Corinthians 6:9-10
fornicators
idolaters
adulterers
prostitutes
sodomites/homosexuals
thieves
greedy
drunkards
slanderers
robbers

In Part II of his letter, Paul answers the questions of the community in three sections in Chapters 7:1-11:1. In Section I, Paul is apparently addressing two different groups with opposing views on sexual matters in the Corinthian church: one group is actively practicing sexual sins, and the other group advocates asceticism in sexual matters (7:1). Paul writes that both groups are in error. Some of his advice he writes is his opinion, and other advice is from “the Lord.”

In Part II of his letter, Paul begins to answer the questions the community sent in the letter from Chloe’s household (1:11) in three sections in 7:1-11:1. In Section I, Paul offers advice to the married and unmarried, in the second section, he answers questions concerning sacrifices to pagan idols, and in section three, he warns against idolatry:
Section I: Paul answers questions concerning marriage and virginity/celibacy (7:1-40):

1. Advice to the married (7:1-7).
2. Advice to the unmarried and widows (7:8-11, 39-40).
3. Advice on divorce (7:12-16).
4. Advice that applies to both the married and the unmarried (7:17-24).
5. Advice to virgins and widows (7:25-38).