

# The Growth of the Church

## The Problem of Sin in the Church

### Introduction

1. Each and every Christian here is to be commended for the concern you have for the local church here and in other places. Christ loved it and died for it. We should love it.
2. You are to be commended for the concern of the purity of the church. There are three things that should always be true of the church:
  - A. Sound - Doctrinally
  - B. Clean - Morally
  - C. Diligent - In Service
3. This afternoon I'm going to discuss - "The Problem of Sin in the Church".

### Sin in the Church

1. We are not primarily concerned with the moral condition of people out of the church.
  - A. They are servants of sin and not righteousness.  
**Romans 6:17-23**

2. **The church is not a social reform organization, set up to police the evils of the world.**
  - A. **The church has an obligation to the world, but it is not primarily to reform it.**  
**1 Corinthians 5:9-13**
  - B. **No inspired man ever delivered a sermon exclusively on morals to aliens. Sermons delivered to **get the aliens to repent and be saved.****
  - C. **The obligation of the church is to save the world by preaching the gospel to it.**

### **Sin Is Not in Harmony in the Church**

1. **It's founder and head is sinless.**

Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

2. **The Church has an obligation to purge itself of all sin.**  
**Titus 2:11-14**
3. **Sin is unbecoming in the church because of the very nature and state of those who constitute the church.**  
**Acts 2:42-47**

#### 4. Christians are said to be:

##### A. Dead to sin - raised to righteousness.

**Romans 6:1-4**

##### B. New Creatures.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; **old things have passed away**; behold, all things have become new.

##### C. Washed, Sanctified, Justified.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such **were some of you**. But you were **washed**, but you were **sanctified**, but you were **justified** in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

1) **Washed = Baptism.**

2) **Sanctified = Withdrawn from fellowship w/the world.**

3) **Justified = Acquitted from guilt; righteous.**

##### D. Freed from sin.

Romans 6:17 But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed **from the heart** that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

#### 5. The Whole matter is summed up in Colossians 3:

Colossians 3:17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

## 6. What's the Conclusion about what Christians are said to be?

Romans 8:12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors-- not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.

### **Galatians 5:19-21**

- A. Sin in the church is a result of fleshly or worldly desires. A Christian will always put Jesus first and others second. Therefore, a Christian would not do these things.

## 7. How do we avoid fulfilling the lusts of the flesh?

Galatians 5:16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

## God's Displeasure of Sin among His People

### 1. Achan (Joshua 7)

- A. The Lord marked Jericho for total destruction. Nothing could be saved by the Israelites or they would be accursed. Achan hid valuables under his tent. He was destroyed!

### 2. Ananias and Sapphira. (Acts 5:1-11)

- A. Ananias and Sapphira sold some land and Ananias brought part of it back and gave it to the apostles leading them to think that he sold the land for less than he did. He died and 3 hours later his wife Sapphira died when she also lied about the selling price of the land.
- B. God wants purity among His people, therefore - we should want purity!

### 3. The final message to the church in Revelation is to repent or perish.

## **Sin among Members - Worse than Without**

1. **Latter end is worse than first.**  
**2 Peter 2:20-22**
  - A. **Once we obtain the knowledge and then turn from it we sin against knowledge.**

## **What Is the Ultimate Danger**

1. **Die in sin and be lost.**
2. **Apostasy, (Religious defection) - sin is hardening tendency.**
3. **Sin condoned by the local church - pollutes the church.**

1 Corinthians 5:6 Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?

- A. **Sometimes we glory **simply by tolerating** the evil, sinful things that other members may be doing. Sin is wrong - all the time.**

## What Is the Solution?

1. **The answer is in God's Holy Word. We must read it to gain the knowledge to **grow** and to **know** when we need to:**

**A. Restore.**

James 5:19-20 Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

Galatians 6:1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.

**B. Withdraw.**

1 Corinthians 5:13 But those who are outside God judges. Therefore "put away from yourselves the evil person."

1) **We'll talk more about this in a future lesson concerning "Church Growth by Right Relationships."**

2. **Sin in the church is dangerous. As Christians we need to keep ourselves pure and strive to do everything that God wants us to do. If we do, we will stay pure and keep sin out of the Lord's church!**

## Invitation

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*Richard Thetford, 1995 – Reworked, January 2011*