

<b>Topic</b>	Redemptive Church Discipline
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<b>Speaker</b>	Pastor Massimo Gei

Hi, good morning FBC. It's such a joy and privilege to be able to be here with you this morning and preach on God's word. Well, the topic we're going to be looking at this morning is a bit of a dicey topic. It's redemptive church discipline. It's the kind of topic where you should try to get the guest preacher to come and preach it. So that's my job here today to kind of talk about this topic. So my question to you is this, what comes to your mind when you think about church discipline, what is church discipline? One of the words or one of the thought processes that happen in your mind when this word comes to you, maybe it's judgment or punishment or shame, the airing of dirty laundry, the revealing in public, what's it supposed to stay in private or the moralistic judgment of bigots who are sinners themselves. Or maybe a hypocritical license to shame others, but is that what biblical church discipline really is? Well, today this is what we want to focus on, biblical church discipline and biblical church discipline is redemptive church discipline.

Church discipline is one of the part of discipleship process, the part where we correct sin and points the disciple towards a better path. Growth happens through teaching and through correction, just think about it from a school point of view. If you are a teacher, imagine you teach and teach and teach and you are showing people some good stuff and they're learning and they're growing, but imagine you're never really correcting anybody. Imagine the teacher comes and exam comes and the person has done a poor job on the exam and you never failed them, you never correct their mistakes. You are actually missing out on a very important part of growth of learning. Even Psalm 23, if you look at David wrote in Psalm 23, he wrote,

Even though I walked through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are with me, your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

He talks about the rod and the staff. The staff is that one that guides and shows the path and the rod is the one that keeps the sheep in its place in the right path that they're supposed to follow. And both of them provide comfort to David. So today's text 1 Corinthian five helps us to understand four things about church discipline, which is,

- The people - The Who of discipline.
- The purpose - The Why of discipline.
- The practice - The How of discipline.
- The problem - The heart of church discipline.

### The people - The Who of Discipline

Who receives discipline or another way of asking a question is what warrants for discipline? It says here,

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans for a man has his father's wife.

Well, when we think about that, of course, we know that this is sexual immoral sin that's happening right now. Maybe just to explain what's happening. This is probably not a sin of incest, but more a sin of adultery. It says here a man is having his father's wife, it is not saying that a man is having his mother. There is a difference there and probably back then culturally, an older man well may have been taken on a second wife or another wife who was younger and the son was probably the same age as that lady and they would have a sexual affair. Nevertheless, it is still a great sin. It's just not a sin of incest, it's a sin of adultery. So it's a sexual immoral sin. And again, in verse nine, we read again,

**I wrote to you in my letter, not to associate with sexually immoral people.**

So again, it is sexually immoral people what warrants or sexual immorality what warrants for church discipline. But then in verse 11, we see he widens the scope. He says,

**But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of a brother if he is guilty of sexual morality or greed or is an idolater, a reviler, a drunkard or a swindler, not even to eat with such a one.**

So when he's talking about here is sinners. What warrants for church discipline? Sin. So, who received church discipline? It is sinners, but what kind of sinners. Now he's saying that here is somebody who's called an idolater, reviler, a drunkard, a swindler, in a way it's not somebody who has just one time had a bit too much to drink. There's a different between somebody has a drink and drinks too much one time or a drunkard. So it's talking about people who have obsessive regular compulsive sin of a particular kind, and it has to be outward sin. And that's the first thing I want talk about. It's outward sin. The Bible talks about fruit very often in the way we manifest our gifts, in a way we manifest the spirit is in fruit, but also in a way you have the fruit of sin, and we have to see this fruit of sin manifest itself before we can actually have or call somebody to discipline. We cannot just assume it and there need to be necessarily evidences of it, the Holy Spirit does not give us magical visions to see the conditions of people's hearts and sinfulness. You can't just assume that somebody slandered, you cannot just assume that somebody has an ill intent, it has to be manifested. It has to be an outward sin. It has to be a face value. You have to be able to see it.

The second thing is it has to be serious. You can't just church discipline every single sin. We are all sinners saved by grace and on a daily basis every one of us commit a number of sins. If every single one of those sins would warrant for church discipline, everyone would be on church discipline all the time. So, it has to be outward sin, but it has to be serious sin, let me just to give a quick story about this. Imagine I'm somebody who loves cake. I love sweet stuff and so if I go to the fridge and I see the last piece of cake in the fridge and I take it and without consulting my wife or informing her then in a way that's sin because I'm being selfish and I'm not being kind and considerate towards my wife, however that does not warrant for church discipline that does not give her the grounds to go to the church and saying, Massimo has sinned against me and therefore, because he has taken the last piece of cake we should remove him from

the Lord supper. If you do that, nobody would ever be take the Lord's supper ever. So there needs to be a certain kind of seriousness and outward manifestation of the sin.

Now how do you gauge what is serious or not? I think there's some cultural things that play into that. There is also some wisdom that plays into that. So I think it will be within the church and the body of the church that will actually be able to discern this under the leadership of the pastors and the elders as well. I'm just saying not every sin leads to church discipline. The Bible does say that forbearance is a biblical concept as well. So there are certain sins that we can forebear with one another as our brothers we can overlook. Hopefully of course they will repent and change their ways, but it does not warrant for church discipline.

And also we must understand it is not the severity of sin that warrants for church discipline. It is the unrepentance of that sin. So, it's not the severity of the sin, but the unrepentance of that serious sin that warrants for church disciplines. If somebody has an outward and serious sin and is aware of it is convicted of it and is repented of it and is trying to make change in their life that means they are repentant. That means they don't have to be put under church discipline because they admit I have a problem and I am needing to make change in this. What warrants for church discipline is outward, serious unrepentant sin.

If somebody admits and recognizes it, it is okay, but if somebody is unaware or isn't made aware and is still not willing to repent of that sin that's the grounds of church discipline.

Now, when we talk about the people, the who of discipline, we now talked about the type of people, it's a somebody who's outwardly sinning and is unrepentant, but does it mean that we go around the world and we church discipline everybody? Of course not. We can only church discipline a particular people. And these people are the people from within our church members from within our local church. It says here,

**But now I'm writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of a brother.**

So is somebody who bears the name of a brother, somebody who is a Christian,

**If he is guilty of sexual morality or greed, or it's an adulterer, reviler, drunkard or swindler, not even to eat which such a one 12 for what have I to do with judging outsiders. It is not those inside the church whom you are to judge.**

So if you think of the language of outsiders and insiders, that means there is a particular group of people who are inside and outside. Now, I would like to say that the best way to gauge who is inside and outside is church membership. So if you are a member of a local church that means discipline is for you. If you're not a member of the local church, then, well, the church can't really discipline you because you have not agreed to be part of that church and put yourself under the authority of the discipline of that church. You can't just judge outsiders. In that sense, First Baptist Church does not have authority to discipline me and I'm not part of the body of FBC that I could contribute to decision-making of church discipline for somebody of FBC or Gospel City Church cannot discipline a member of First Baptist Church.

So the question is how do you then decide who is outside and inside? Well, I would say church membership is the way to go and how do you decide on church membership? Well, I think that depends on the local church position on how to go about this. My encouragement to this will be probably the way you think about committed relationships and what needs to be done to be in a committed relationship probably that is what needs to be done for church membership. So, if you're somebody who thinks that if you want to get married, you should sign something or if you want to have a business contract, you should sign something, a committed relationship then probably for church membership you should probably sign something too, but maybe in smaller villages on smaller areas, but there's may one just church, maybe just a strong handshake for a business deal or a small handshake or a certain action or ritual to be part of a committed relationship might be enough to then say that you're part of church membership. But anyway, what I'm trying to say here, the discipline is for members. It is not for people who are outside the church, it is for people who are inside the church.

Now the reality is often we get that twisted. We judge outsiders and we give a lot of grace to the insiders. I'm not saying you shouldn't give grace. Grace is a biblical concept and everything you are doing, you are talking about here is redemptive. However, a lot of times we are very, very exclusive towards outsiders. Oh, that drug addict, that person, that sinner should not enter into our sphere, but then there's somebody who's within our church who might be a swindler or something like that. And we're saying, oh, let's just look over that sin and we give more grace again. Often we get it twisted. We judge the outsider and are very lenient on the insiders. So, the who of discipline? Who receives discipline? What warrants for church discipline, outward serious unrepentant sin by the church members that is who receives church discipline.

Now, before we move on, we have to ask another who, which is who then for administers church discipline, who gives out the discipline, who dispenses the discipline. Well in verse three it says

For though absent in body I am present in spirit and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present with the power of our Lord Jesus, you are to live with this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

What I want to draw here to is it says you when you are assembled. So it is the assembly of believers, the local church that dispenses the church discipline. It is the assembled body under the guidance of the leaderships, the pastors and the elders of the church that then dispenses discipline, which means it is not a particular person. It is not just the elders. It is not just a particular senior pastor, but it is the local church that enters and supports the act of church discipline, and that's what it says here, under the assembly of the church.

### The Purpose – The Why of Discipline

Now a lot of times, you want to right away jump into the process of how do we do it, but to be able to understand on how to do it we must first understand why we do it. So, what's the purpose of church discipline. The why of discipline. Well, I have five points here and we'll go through them. I just want to give credit to the book which I read, which kind of helped me with this, which is a discipline by Jonathan

Lehman is a nine marks book. And everything you're about to hear is pretty much a summary of what he talks about here. The purpose of discipline.

**The first purpose is to expose.** To expose sin and remove it actually. So you're exposing it to remove it. It says here in verse two,

and you are arrogant, aren't you not rather mourn. Let him who has done this be removed from among you.

So in a way you're supposed to remove, so you're supposed to expose and remove. And why? Because we are the bride of Christ. We are supposed to be holy and pure. So we're supposed to expose the sin and we're supposed to cut it out, we are supposed to remove it. We're supposed to get rid of it. Now hopefully the way that it's getting rid of is through repentance and redemption and the way somebody can move forward by changing their life, but in the extreme cases, of course, it goes towards excommunication and we will talk about that shortly as well, but it is there to expose and remove sin.

**The second is to warn.** In verse five it says,

You are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

Now, what does it mean to deliver the man to Satan? Well, it doesn't mean that you take somebody tied him on a chair around and then bring him to the most evil person in the city who you can find where he says, this person is like Satan and delivered to him, said, now deal with this person. That doesn't mean that. It also doesn't mean that you're calling this person satanic, saying, you are just like Satan. It doesn't mean that neither. What it means is you have to understand the concept. A lot of times in the Bible, we say we have two dominions, the dominion of darkness and a dominion of light. You have the area where God rules and the area where Satan rules. And as we read the Bible, it says that the world is where the prince of the power of the air rules. So in a way, the world is where Satan has his power and the believer, the Christians under the protection of the power of God when they become a member of a local church and they profess faith in that way as well.

So all you're doing is you're actually bringing that person back to the world and saying, you're no longer part of this dominion where God rules and you are no longer part of the local church. So you actually delivering that person to the dominion where Satan rules. Now please make sure we do not enact God's retribution through judgment. We are not the final judge. We can't tell whether the person is really a Christian or not a Christian. We are just merely through discipline, especially the last step of excommunication, we stage in a way a small play that pictures the great judgment to come. It's a compassionate warning. You see the consequence of sin from the beginning of scripture was always death and exile. If you look at the Garden of Eden, as soon as Adam and Eve sinned death came to the world and they were asked to leave Eden, death and exile. In the same way, if you look through the sacrificial process in the Old Testament, then you will have a lamb and unblemished lamb that was sacrificed, death on your behalf, the atonement, and you had to scapegoat on which the sins were cast on and it was cast out of the camp, exile.

So the consequence of sin was always death and exile and through excommunication to removing a person from a community, you are actually staging a small play of the internal judgment to come, the eternal exile to come, the eternal death to come. You're letting them experience that through excommunication. You are actually letting them experience presently a consequence of sin. Now, when you do that, that's a warning. The reason that we do that primarily is to save, to redeem a person. Let's look at verse five again, it says

**you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh so that the spirit may be saved in a day of the Lord.**

The reason why you're doing is to save somebody, so hopefully when they're excommunicated or hopefully when they are removed from ministry or when they are removed from community, when they're removed from the Lord's table, then they will recognize, oh, people are saying that I'm not living like a Christian and maybe they will understand that they are in sin, and the hope is that they will realize this and they will put their faith back in Jesus and they will repent and they will be restored back into a community and back into a full standing within the local church. So, the hope and the purpose is to save somebody but that's not the only purpose. I mean, it's of course it's to expose, to warn to save but also to protect, and we read that in verses six and seven, it says,

**your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump, cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump as you are really are unleavened.**

Now, I've been dealing with some bread baking over the MCOs and lockdowns as well and I realized that, you know, you just need a little bit of yeast to actually work through a whole bunch of dough. You take 800 grams of water, 800 grams of flour, and you put two grams of yeast in that and it will work itself through the whole lump, through the whole dough. It will do its work. So what this metaphor is pointing to is saying that there's a little small personal sin, a little small sin that is unexposed, a sin that is not dealt with has the possibility to actually work itself throughout the whole church community, and therefore we actually have to protect the church community from these sins, because if you do not address the sin, if you do not ask people to repent, if you do not go through the process of church discipline, you are actually saying this sin is okay, because you're overlooking it, and therefore imagine young and immature believers or new believers who come they will see members of the church sinning in such a way and nobody's actually addressing it. Nobody's actually telling them that, hey, this is wrong. Nobody is actually repenting. The young and immature believers of the church will actually think that this is normative behavior of a Christian. So in a way suddenly this sin becomes a normalized sin within that particular church, because everybody is doing it.

One aspect a lot of times we can fake is plagiarism. A lot of times we do copies of things or piracy on all times we don't address this and suddenly we think it's okay to do it because everybody does that. So you can see how little leaven leavens to whole lump, how little sin actually works itself throughout the whole body and the reality is all sin affects our brothers and sisters in a particular way. So one way that we're supposed to do it is through church discipline, we actually protect the church.

Paul was angry in this letter and this segment where he's saying that they were not addressing the sin of this man who was actually sleeping with his father's wife and he is saying, you need to address it. You need to do something about it. The problem was that they were not doing something about it. You need to protect the church. And lastly, you need to present a good witness to Jesus. Let's go back to verse one.

**It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife.**

There is sin going on in the church and even people who are not Christians outside the church were not tolerated. What kind of witness does that give to Jesus, imagine a community where sin goes on and people saying, I would never want to join this community. They have lower standards than we have, and they are priding themselves on being holy and pure. But look at them. It's not a good witness for Jesus. We need to preserve the attractiveness and distinctiveness of the Christian Church. When I was here with you here last time, I've talked about being salt and light. We are supposed to be salt and light. It's supposed to be pure and distinctive. You're supposed to be a great witness for Jesus. So therefore we have to protect the church and we have to present the bride pure with fine linen to Jesus. And Jesus says salt loses its saltiness if it loses its saltiness, it's only good for the dumpster. So we have to present the church. So here, the purpose five reasons of why church discipline to expose, to warn, to safe, to protect and to present.

### The Practice – The How of Church Discipline

First of all, we got to talk about the act. What is it that you're doing? What's the act that you're doing. And I would like to argue that it is the removal from the Lord's table. Now there's two things that we have to talk about is the act and the process, so in a way, if we have to ask about the question, how are we supposed to remove the person and from what are we removing that person? And I'm going to look at the second one first from what and that says in verse 11, but I'm now writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of a brother, if he is guilty of sexual morality or greed or is an idolater or reviler a drunken, swindler, not even to eat with such a one.

So there's a stopping to associate yourself with that person so that you're removing the person from associating yourself with them by saying that we are the same and assess here, not even to eat with such a one and I believe that this points to the Lord's table, this does not mean that you shouldn't have a meal with somebody. In the book of James we see that if you go and call back a brother who is in sin back into the family and that that's great work done. So you're supposed to please go out and talk to people who are on the church discipline, who are sinning and have meals with them and talk with them and actually try to explain the gospel to them and show them where they are going wrong and show them grace and love them back and hopefully they will repent.

So it doesn't mean do not have fellowship lunch with them but what this means here is that during the times where this was written a lot of times the Lord's Supper was part of the service, where at the end of it, they will come together for a fellowship meal and during that fellowship meal they will break bread and give out the Lord's table. So it is that meal from which they have to be removed from. So, what are you supposed to remove people from, from the Lord's table. Now, why? Because the Lord's table says I hear by a firm that I'm a Christian. I believe in the blood and the bread. I believe in that Jesus Christ has died for

me and that his body was broken for me and I repent of my sins, and here I recognize that I'm a sinner who is in need of grace and Jesus Christ has provided grace for me and the church who then dispenses the Lord's supper saying that yes. I believe that you are affirmed this faith. I believe that you are in repentance. I believe that you put your faith in Jesus in here. Here are the elements as we share and we affirm one another space that we all believe in the same truth together, and we are walking in this truth by actually taking the Lord's Table together, and therefore you remove the person who is unrepentant from the Lord's table. Because at that moment, you can't affirm that this person is really believing in the same truth because they are not walking in the same truths, and therefore you are removing the person from the Lord's table.

Now what's the process. How do you go about doing that? Now to actually go through a process we have to jump to another text and the text is Matthew 18. The process is actually moving from private to public. You're moving from inclusion to exclusion. It says here in Matthew 18,

If your brother sins against you go tell him his fault between you and him alone.

So first step, you go to your brother and you tell him alone, you say, Hey brother or Hey sister, I think you're in sin. I think you are sinning in this particular way.

If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.

If the person that repents and believes great, then you continue or the process is done, but if the person does not repent, you gotta continue to the next step of the process.

But if it does not listen, take one or two along with you that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses.

So you bring somebody else with you and saying, now the two of us, the three of us agreed that you are in sin and you're not repenting. This is also very good to have two or three witnesses with you because maybe you are the one at fault and the other person is correct. So to make sure that there is a group of people who agree on this sin, you bring in other people then maybe the person will recognize, maybe if two or three people think that way, maybe I am wrong, and hopefully that person repents and believes in and you can move on and the process is over. However, if the person still refuses verse 17,

if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen to even the church, let him be to you as a gentile and tax collectors.

Now, what does it mean telling to the church? Well, I believe the first step is to inform the church leaders about it. And then depending on how the church is organized, it will be letting know the leaders of the church and they are trying to then also convince the brother or sister to repent and then come back into the fold as well. Now the church eventually will have to publicly announce that this person has been removed from the Lord's table. It doesn't mean that you have to give out the details. The church leadership can then decide on how much detail to give out. We want to avoid gossip as well, but at least the church leadership can say that this member is under church discipline and therefore has been

removed from the Lord's table. Would you pray for them? Would you engage them? Would you ask them to repent in a particular way? So, it says here.

If the person refuses to listen to even the church, let him be to you as a gentile and tax collector.

That means removal of membership removing from the Lord's table, eventually that's means excommunication because it means that you are not repented. You are not acting like it what it means to be a church member in this local church. It doesn't mean that you have to kick the person out of your worship service. I mean, we hope that non-Christians and seekers and people who want to hear more about the gospel will actually come to our worship services. Right? So it doesn't mean that you keep the person that you can't enter this worship space anymore. You cannot log in anymore. You know, it just doesn't mean that the person has to be removed from all ministry of serving. Because that should be just for Christians or for believers, depending on how you have a set up your serving structure. Some of the areas you might have other people serve as well. But whatever it requires a Christian who affirms faith to serve, you have to remove that person from there and that means also remove the person from the Lord's table. But you can still include them in other areas.

Now, there might be some situations where you might have to physically remove somebody from a space. And that's usually for extreme cases. For example, if somebody would come in and every single Sunday slap Yew Lum in the face, then maybe that will be a problem. That person has to be physically removed, Or if somebody is a sexual predator on the church grounds, you might have to physically remove them, but these are extreme cases. And, it is the wisdom of the elders of the church and the pastors of the church to handle those extreme cases, but it's going from private to public. So you might ask the question, what about honor and shame? You know, isn't it, it's very shameful to tell people about this. Well, actually the way God designed this process is actually taking care of your shame because it starts in private, and it's just, you're unrepentance that slowly brings it out into the public. So, God designed a process that actually covers your face and takes care of your shame as well.

Now we are supposed to go slowly in pace. It doesn't mean that you go to a brother today and says, I think you're insane tomorrow you bring a friend and the next day bring another friend and next day you go to the church leaders and then the following day, you announced it to the church. No, it's the process doesn't work that way because repentance takes time, and you have to give time for people to actually for it to sink in. And you have to actually give time people to respond to the messages that you're doing. So give time and be graceful about it, understand that there's shame involved as well. So I have tact in the way you engage brothers and sisters and the way you do it, that's it. God does take care of shame, but social way in the process. Grace is very important, not just to tone the language and the way we engage the product, but even the process is important that communicates grace. I remember my church. This is not a church discipline issue, but, we had a young man join our church. He was in his late teens and he wanted to actually come and be part of the worship service and he wanted to serve in the church and he wanted to worship lead and we didn't quite know him and we were young church plant. So of course, you're welcome anybody who wants to serve, but we still want him to go through a process of getting to know a person. So one of the elders got to know him a little bit and through that process, we recognized that the person actually left the church that he was with and then actually his parents were not really happy about him joining our church.

And he comes from a different denomination. He was part of other local church. There was probably some, some problems with him serving there, so that's why he come join our church. So we thought lets actually address this and let's be very gentle and kind and generous to this young gentlemen. We don't want to scare him off. So we decided to maybe after worship service, go have a chat with him. So we took him and I went up to him after worship service. Hey, would you come with us to the site and talk and I brought him to a room, and there was the other two elders as well. There was only by coincidence one chair in that room. So we set that young man on the chair and three elders were standing around him. Let me just stop there. You look at that picture. A young man sitting on chair and three adult man standing around him. I used to do surveillance in Genting and surveillance in other banks, interrogation rooms are less intimidating than this. Our process was not gracious, even though our tone and our intention was, but having a young man having to answer to three older men in the room aside of the church after worship service that was intimidating. Now, we didn't mean to because we didn't think it through properly. So even the process would determine whether you are gracious and gentle. And the Bible says, redeem a brother in all gentleness. So with everything with gentleness, that young gentlemen never turned up to our church service ever again. I'm just saying that our process has to be gracious as well.

Now is this process in Matthew 18 in contradiction to 1 Corinthians 5, because it seems that Paul was writing a letter and quite publicly saying, Hey, this person is acting immorally, cut him out. Well, no, because this problem was known, this problem was a public problem already. The church already knew about this sin, so he was not revealing something new to them. He was just addressing something that they left unaddressed. So, if something is already known by the community, it's already public, you don't have to go from private to public. It's already public. Then you can also publicly address it. Public sin often needs to be addressed publicly. So that you do not condone that sin, so that you already are not teaching young Christians and immature believers that this sin is okay. Because you actually addressing it publicly.

So we have the act, the process, the pace and the face slowly and full of grace, which now leads us to the last point.

### The problem – The Heart of Discipline

What is the problem of church discipline? And the problem is our hearts. The heart of church discipline. And at the heart of our hearts is our judgment. The problem is how we judge people and the reality in our hearts, every one of us we are either lenient or too harsh. We're either too licentious or we are too moralistic. We either two separatists or two accommodationists. We are either or. And now depending a particular church itself could be more of a church that accommodates or it could be a church that actually tries to separate and by becoming very exclusive, so some churches have certain tendencies as well, but also depending on who does the sin, right sometimes we look at a brother who we really love and that person commits the sin. We already be accommodated. We say, it's okay. We can look over it, but if somebody who we do not know, do not like we become very moralistic with that person. And that's the problem of our heart. And the reality, if you really look at our hearts is that every one of us has moralistic sites and licentious sites. And for some people we are more realistic and for some people we accommodate more and for some sins we accommodate more and some other sins we are more moralistic. Well the Corinthian church was both. If you look back what the problem was, they did not mourn over their sin.

They were proud. They overlooked the sin. They were accommodating it too much, but at the same time, they were moralistic because they were judging outsiders. They were too legalistic on the other side. Often, maybe we see a person who is struggling with addiction, we are casting him out, we don't accept them, but then somebody else who's avoiding taxes, we accept them. Oftentimes if it is a person who serves in a ministry, we overlook their sin, but if somebody who is not very active in ministry, we actually become a lot harsher with that person. We have to gauge our heart. That's the problem of church discipline.

So, how do we solve that problem? How do we get our hearts and therefore the heart of the community and the heart of the church to not be moralistic and not to be licentious? The solution we find in Jesus, look at verse seven,

**Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump as you really are unleavened for Christ Our Passover lamb has been sacrificed. Let us therefore celebrate the festival not with the old leaven, the leaven of madness and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.**

It says here Christ was sacrificed and we know that he was sacrificed on the cross. And on the cross, when you look to the cross, you must recognize that there is no reason for you to be licentious to overlook sin because God not overlook sin. He sent his son to die for it and in any sin that Jesus needed to die for on the cross, we can't overlook. If it cost Jesus his life how can we overlook it? We have no reasons to be licentious, but at the same time when we look at it, it can be full of grace and we don't have to become moralistic because Jesus died for everybody's sin in the same way. He died for the addict, he died for the swindler, he died for a drunkard, he died every one of them. So our sins are just equally as bad as the other person's sin. So there's no place for us to be moralistic because Jesus did die for everybody's sin. In a way you can see that Jesus on the cross was excommunicated, so that we can be reconciled.

On the cross he says, father, father, why have you forsaken me? He was separated so that we can be brought in and be brought back together again. He was hung outside the city so that we can enter the city that is to come. He was both the sacrificial lamb and the scapegoat. He was the one who bore death on us. And our sins were put on him. He was both the sacrificial lamb and scapegoat and when we look to the cross, we can't overlook sin for cost Jesus his life. And then there is a call to holiness and purity and to live out the righteousness that he secured for us, but it also mends our moralistic hearts, for Jesus died for all. But not just the cross. The also the empty tomb is something very important for us to look into the fact that Jesus Christ rose again that means he overcame sin and he overcame death. What it means there is power to change. The resurrection power is available for all of us, which means that we can look at anybody and everybody and regardless of what sin they are in right now, we know that there is power to change. They can repent, they can believe, and yes often we say leopard would never change his spots, but sort of supernatural power of the gospel, a leopard can change his spots, that is what it is saying. People can change not by their own works not by their own strength but by the power of the gospel, by the power of Jesus Christ who overcame sin and death on the cross. It means we can engage our brothers and sisters. We can pray for them. We can have hope that if you put people on church discipline, that they will repent and they will redeem, and it will be brought back into the fold that is power to change.

There is hope for change. There's hope for repentance and belief for redemption and restoration. Now, brothers and sisters, let me end with a couple of implications because all of this has implications for the

local church. It has implications for you FBC. It has implications for every local church. The first implication is this that you have to be a loving community. You have to care for one another. You have to be long to one another. Now I would like to say through church membership, but you have to belong through this local body and care and love and cherish one another in such a way that when you actually telling somebody you have to step down from ministry or you have to leave this community, or we do not longer consider you part of this church, and they actually feel it. Imagine your community where nobody cares, nobody loves. Then if you asking me to leave to like, okay, so what. Nobody care about me anyways? And I don't really care about you. I'm just here because I hear a good sermon on Sunday, but if there's no loving community then people won't feel the pressure of the play that you're staging for them through excommunication. They won't feel the weight of exile. So you have to be a loving community.

The second implication is that you have to engage with each other more than just Sunday, just logging in on a Sunday. Service will not do it because first of all, you will not be able to build that relational capital to be able to love one another. Secondly, it says here in the process, first one then two then three. The implication is you have to be the one, the two, the three. It means you actually have to go and have a responsibility to engage your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ when they are going wrong. When they're in sin. And it's your responsibility in truth and love in gentleness, in grace, go and tell them, Hey brother, his sister, I think you're not walking the way that God calls us to walk. I think you're out of line here. I think you are in sin and these are the reasons I think you should repent and believe. And let me pray for you and let me help you. Let me help you recover through this. But the responsibility is to go and be that one to two to three. If you're not that one, that to who's going to go. How are you going to do that process? We have a responsibility to engage one another with all gentleness.

Thirdly, there's a call to continuously look at the cross. We have to recognize that our hearts are either going to be licentious or moralistic. They're going to be either too lenient or too harsh. And the only way that our hearts get mended is by us regularly looking at the cross where we recognize again that we too are sinners saved by grace. And then when we engage our brothers, we can see that they're sinners and the same grace is available for them. So be a loving community, engage each other and look to the cross. Redemptive church discipline is the loving and sincere act to protect and disciple the local church, to expose sin with truth and to warn and redeem church members through repentance of sin and by the power of the gospel.