

CHAPTER THIRTY

The Nature of the Christian Life (1 Corinthians 5:6–8)

THE LARGER CONTEXT

In 1 Corinthians 5:1–5 Paul has reprimanded the church at Corinth for being “puffed up” (πεφυσιωμένοι; cf. 4:6,18f.; 8:1; 13:4) rather than mournful over the fact that one of their members is guilty of immorality (“fornication,” Bruce, p. 53). A man is sexually involved with his stepmother (Héring, p. 34), an offense condemned by both Jewish and Roman morals (see Conzelmann, p. 96, and Barrett, p. 21, for the Jewish and Roman evidence). Since the church has not removed the offender from its midst (vs. 2), Paul has judged and will recommend that in “a solemn act of excommunication at a special meeting of the church” (Bruce, p. 54) the offender is to “be handed over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit might be saved on the day of the Lord” (vs. 5 recalls Acts 5:1ff.; 2 Cor. 12:7; 1 Tim. 1:20).

NOTES

verse 6

Οὐ καλὸν τὸ καύχημα ὑμῶν—Is there a difference in meaning between καλός and ἀγαθός (W. Grundmann, in TDNT, 3,538,539)? Bruce, p. 55, distinguishes καύχημα, the ground of boasting, from καύχῃσις, the act of boasting; but Bultmann, in TDNT, 3,649n35, shows that the distinction is not strictly observed. What are they boasting about (cf. 5:1f.)? Is this a concrete instance of where the Corinthian slogan that “all things are lawful” (6:12; 10:23) led? For the view of sexuality behind this boasting, see Barrett, p. 19; and contrast the asceticism of 1 Cor. 7 (Bruce, p. 66). On the theological significance of boasting for Paul see Bultmann, in TDNT, 3,648–52.

οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι—In questions does οὐ(κ) expect a negative or positive answer (DM, p. 264)? Οἴδατε (perf. act. ind. 2 pl.) inflects as a 2nd

perfect of the hypothetical εἶδω, "I see." But it is always translated as the present tense of "know" (I have seen = I know). Does ὅτι mean "that" (indirect discourse, HNTG §37.821) or "because" (causal clause, HNTG §37.5321)?

μικρὰ ζύμη ὅλον τὸ φύραμα ζυμοῖ—ζύμη = "yeast, leaven" (AG, p. 340; H. Windisch, in TDNT, 2,902). It is the subject of what verb? The circumflex accent in ζυμοῖ alerts us that it is not a masc. pl. noun but a contract verb: ζυμο + ει = ζυμοῖ (HNTG §24.4112), "it ferments or leavens" (AG, p. 340). φύραμα: "that which is mixed or kneaded, (a lump or batch of) dough" (AG, p. 877); it is a 3rd decl. neut. noun (nom. and acc. case of neuter nouns always look the same). Ὀλον: 2nd decl., agreeing with φύραμα. When used with an article it is always in the predicate position (Moulton III, p. 199).

For the proverb see Conzelmann, p. 98; Bruce, p. 56; cf. Gal. 5:9. Barrett, p. 127, gives a possible Jewish source; a secular Greek proverb to the same effect is cited in 1 Cor. 15:33. The meaning in this context seems to be "the *single* case has the result of defiling the whole community" (Conzelmann, p. 98). See "Leaven" in IDB, 3, 105, for the symbolical significance of leaven in the Old and New Testaments, and why it has this significance; cf. TDNT, 2,902-906; C. L. Mitton, "Leaven," *ExpT*, 84 (1972-73), 339-42. The reference to the Passover in the next verse shows that Paul's thought about leaven springs from Old Testament texts such as Exod. 12:14-20.

verse 7

ἐκκαθάρατε τὴν παλαιὰν ζύμην—ἐκκαθάρατε: from ἐκκαθαίρω, "clean out, cleanse" (AG, p. 239). See HNTG paradigm V-4e on liquid verbs. For parsing note the "α" theme vowel; the "σ" tense sign drops out after ρ, λ, and ν. What does the absence of an augment tell us about the mood?

What does the "old leaven" refer to (cf. vs. 8)? E.g., "evil influences" (Barrett, p. 128); "each knows the plague-spot in himself" (RP, 102); "remnants of the former pagan period" (Grosheide, p. 125); "not the man but the crime attaching to their character as a church" (Alford, p. 507). Conzelmann (p. 98) notes that "leaven is in actual fact old dough. But the catchword παλαιός is hardly derived from the figure itself. What is in mind is . . . the antithesis of the old and new man, Rom. 6:6; 7:6; Col. 3:9; Eph. 4:22, etc." What is the logical relation between the imperative of v. 7a and v. 6?

For understanding Paul's allusion, Héring's summary (p. 36) of details of the Jewish passover is helpful: "(1) In the night of 13/14 Nisan [March-April] and in the morning of the 14th, the house had to be cleaned out carefully to remove every trace of leavened bread which in this instance was regarded as containing a principle of contagious impurity [Exod. 12:15]. (2) The Passover bread has to be ἄζυμος, i.e.

without leaven." See also Strack-Billerbeck 3,359f.; J. Jeremias, *Eucharistic Words of Jesus*² (1966), pp. 59f. For the application to the Christian Eucharist, see R. P. Martin, *Worship in the Early Church*² (1975), pp. 125f.

ἵνα ἦτε νέον φύραμα—ἵνα introduces what kind of adverbial clause (HNTG §37.5421)? It is followed regularly by the subjunctive mood, here of εἰμί. Paul's metaphor does not seem to be exact: "clean out" pictures the church as the house of Exod. 12:15, but here the church is pictured as a new lump of dough (Conzelmann, p. 98). "The first batch of dough from which new bread is made is . . . completely unleavened [after the cleaning out of Exod. 12:15], a new lump. That is what they should be by virtue of their turning to Christ—'a new creation' (2 C. 5.17)" (Bruce, p. 56).

καθώς ἐστε ἄζυμοι—Note that καθώς can have a causal sense, translated "since" (AG, p. 392,3). "The community for which Christ was sacrificed as the paschal lamb is called the unleavened dough. This expresses the fact that to be in Christ is to be already in the fulfilled Passover" (Jeremias, in TDNT, 5,901).

What is the relationship between the imperative ("clean out the old leaven") and the indicative ("you are unleavened")? A thoughtful answer to this question is essential for a proper understanding of New Testament ethics. For a discussion of the relation between the indicative and imperative in Pauline theology and ethics see Ladd, pp. 524f.; Kümmel, pp. 224–28; Bultmann, pp. 332f.; Furnish, pp. 224–27. This tension "is a reflection of the fundamental theological substructure of the whole of Pauline thinking: the tension between the two ages" (Ladd, p. 524). Against the misleading RSV translation "as you *really* are unleavened," see Bruce, p. 56. For other New Testament passages where imperative and indicative are similarly related see Rom. 6:11–14,19; Col. 3:1–14. The meaning is: "Be *de facto* what you are *de jure*; be really what you are ideally in the purpose of God" (Bruce, p. 56).

καὶ γὰρ τὸ πάσχα ἡμῶν ἐτύθη Χριστός—What kind of clause does the postpositive (HNTG §30.3611) γὰρ introduce (HNTG §37.531)? Πάσχα = "Passover, passover lamb, passover meal" (AG, pp. 638f.); it is an indeclinable noun. For ἐτύθη isolate the morphemes: ἐ - τύ - θη. The augment and θη tell us it is aor. pass. indic. 3rd sing. The present stem is not τύω but θύω ("sacrifice, kill in a ritualistic way as *kosher*"). *Theta* dissimilates to *tau* when the next syllable begins with *theta* (HNTG §13.242).

Does the γὰρ connect with ἐστε ἄζυμοι (Morris, p. 90), or with ἐκκαθάρατε (Hodge, p. 87) or with both (Barrett, p. 128; RP, p. 102)? What is the function of the *καί* (Conzelmann, p. 94n13)? The comparison of Christ to the paschal lamb was part of a tradition in the early church (cf. 1 Pet. 1:19; John 1:29,36; 19:36; Rev. 5:6,9,12; 12:11). Ac-

ording to Jeremias (TDNT, 5,900) the link goes back to Jesus' own interpretation of his death (Mark 14:22-24). Conzelmann disputes this origin of the tradition (p. 99n50). "It is plain that in the primitive church the sequence of events comprising the Passover, the Exodus and Israel's wilderness wanderings . . . provided a pictorial pattern for the narrating of the Christian salvation-story (see especially 10.1-11)" (Bruce, pp. 56f.).

verse 8

ὥστε ἑορτάζομεν—"Ὡστε may introduce independent clauses: "therefore, for this reason" (AG, p. 908,1b). ἑορτάζω = "celebrate a festival" (AG, p. 279), is found only here in the New Testament. What kind of subjunctive is it (HNTG §31.332)?

"The Passover meal was followed by the seven-day *hāgīgāh* or festival of unleavened bread (Ex. 23:15; 34:18; Dt. 16:3f. etc.)" (Bruce, p. 57). RP, p. 103, quotes Godet: "Our passover feast is not for a week, but for a lifetime."

μὴ ἐν ζύμῃ παλαιᾷ μηδὲ ἐν ζύμῃ κακίας καὶ πονηρίας—Μὴ rather than οὐ is used with subjunctives. Κακία ("badness, faultiness, depravity, wickedness"—AG, p. 397) and πονηρία ("wickedness, baseness, maliciousness, sinfulness"—AG, p. 697) are genitives of apposition (Alford, p. 508; HNTG §35.3112). Apparently the phrase introduced by μηδέ defines "old leaven" more specifically (Barrett, p. 129). Don't confuse πονηρία and πορνεία.

ἀλλ' ἐν ἄζύμοις εἰλικρινείας καὶ ἀληθείας—Ἄλλά drops the final α before words beginning with a vowel. The plural of ἄζυμος ("unleavened bread") is due to the fact that the bread was in the form of numerous flat cakes (AG, p. 19,1; cf. Exod. 12:8,15; Heb. *maṣṣôt*). Εἰλικρινεία = "sincerity, purity of motive" (AG, p. 221; F. Büchsel, TDNT, 2,397).

"Here the consciousness is expressed that Christians form a 'New' Israel—they are the real people of God and the whole Christian Life, because of the crucified Christ, can be thought of as a Passover festival of joy" (Davies, p. 105).

THE STRUCTURE OF THE ARGUMENT

The foundation stone of the argument is that Christ, our passover lamb, has been sacrificed (vs. 7d). This is the ground (hence the γάρ) for the assertion that the new people of God are *de jure* a new, pure lump of dough (vs. 7c). This indicative is in turn the ground (causal καθώς) for the imperative: "clean out the old leaven and be a new lump" (vs. 7a,b). This imperative is repeated and defined more specifically in vs. 8: "clean out wickedness and evil, and be sincere and truthful." Verse 6 is an additional ground for the church's cleaning out of all evil from its midst.

Thus the foundation stone of the argument is the death of Christ and the capstone is the appeal to walk in newness of life.

Why does Paul choose to stress the need for "sincerity and truth" when the sin that gave rise to this discussion was open sexual immorality? The reason appears to be that the Corinthians not only failed to deal with the offender, but by condoning this action were actually proud of their indifference to morality. This seems to confirm the idea that some Corinthian Christians had accepted gnostic teaching with its looseness of moral standards, particularly in the matter of sex relations, on the ground that no bodily indulgence could harm their "pure" spirit. Paul's response is to show how "sincerity and truth" affect all life's relationships.

The passage, therefore, gives an important insight into *the nature of the Christian life* in Paul's teaching.