

One of the most important, if not the most important, part of our education as human beings is learning the difference between right and wrong. One of the unique features of our existence as self - aware persons is our innate awareness that some behaviors are right and others are wrong. As far as we know no other creature in our world has this Moral sense. But there is a problem. What or whose version of right and wrong is true and should be used as our standard?

For Christians that standard has been Revealed by God. Beginning in the Old Testament we recognize a gradual but relentless effort by God to raise humanity out of the barbaric morality into which it had sunk. A good example of this from the Old Testament is the rather famous law requiring "an eye for an eye" as Justice. To Christians this often seems harsh but in the early days of God's moral teaching this was a big step forward. The morality of barbarism was a morality of "might makes right" and retribution for offences was unmeasured-- if you insulted me I would be justified in "getting you back" by killing you, and perhaps your whole family as well. In a world like that an eye for an eye was real progress.

For the new Christians at Corinth the high moral standards of Christ's teaching was quite a challenge. Many of these converts had been Pagans and had not had the benefit of Gods Teaching to the Jews. St Paul is working hard to teach them the new way of living that will establish them in the New Life of the Holy Spirit. Over and over he is trying to get across to them that the central feature of this new life is learning to love each other in the same way as God is loving them. There can be no substitute for this.

It is also important to recognize that St. Paul is writing to Christians, not to the general public. He knows that the standards of behavior for the Christian community must be higher than those of the Pagan culture in which it finds itself. Because of this he also knows that it is vital that the Church strongly teach and support its God Revealed standards internally. He calls out, not only those who are behaving badly, but also those who by their silence and inaction are "tolerating" that behavior - what we might call enablers these days. All of this, says the Apostle, comes from the failure to love. " Let those who do not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let them be anathema" he

says. These are the ones who say they love Christ but make no effort to live according to his commandments, His Revelation of what is right and what is wrong.

Brothers and Sisters, do you see the similarities with the situation of the Church today? Only for us the general culture is falling back into a morality that rejects God's Revelation and in arrogant vanity believes that they are wiser and even more enlightened than God. The end of such folly will be tragic for all. In such times we in the Church must hold fast to the Truth that we have been given, not just for ourselves. 2000 years of history have shown that in times of societal collapse, it has always been the Church that preserves the seeds of civilization for the future. It is not in our power to determine the course of history or the rise and fall of nations. It is only in our power to be Faithful and to live the way Jesus has shown us, rightly dividing the word of Truth. May God Bless us all to continue and even prosper in such holy enterprise.

Amen