

# Welcome to Calvary Church, Brighton



This morning our speaker is Philip Wells full-time Elder.  
Our theme is deeper exploration of Church Membership -  
(4) Accountability

[www.calvary-brighton.org.uk](http://www.calvary-brighton.org.uk)

*Sermons and talks - [calvary-brighton.sermon.net](http://calvary-brighton.sermon.net)*

*The background is a picture of a man building a house by fitting stones together*

# Introduction

"... I've lived a life that's full  
I've travelled each and every highway  
But more, much more than this  
I did it my way..." - sung by ...

"Since I was seventeen I've had no-one over me ..." - sung  
by ...

"I do my own thing - I'm free and not tied down"

= western individualism

- independence, self-reliance, individual takes precedence  
over the social group

= I stand and fall alone, I think as an individual, I am  
responsible to no-one, I am responsible for no-one

I do as I please

# A deeper look at "church membership"

■ As many as possible Christians should belong to a local community of real Christian people

... but you may well say, for good reasons

"church xyz is NOT for me"

- Fundamental differences, which mean that I cannot whole-heartedly join in

"church abc is for me"

- Superficial differences ... matters of freedom and individual conscience
- Fundamental agreement on the important things like accountability and responsibility

# Plan

Previously:

(i) love (ii) doctrine (iii) service

Today look at (iv) accountability - a study

1. State the target

- i.e. what is this “accountability”?

2. Look at 4 texts

- Old testament Israel (x2)

- New Testament church (x2)

3. Draw out conclusions

- (forgive my brutality)

# 1. State the target

Q: What is meant by accountability?

A: that way of living in which I accept that my spiritual life is bound up with the spiritual life of my brothers and sisters

And that I, by my sin, can harm myself and them, and that they have a right to rebuke me

And that I have a duty to seek their best interests by rebuking them for their good.

That I have **no right** to live without concern for my effect on them.

That I have **no right** to live without concern to rebuke them for their good.

= That, by design of our Saviour, we live in a community/body whose sinews and ligaments are responsibility and accountability

## 2. Text (1)

### Deuteronomy 17:1-7

- Israel, the community, in the land of gift v.2
- worship of different gods v.3
- investigated and proven v.4
- death penalty v.6
- 2 or 3 witnesses (NOT just 1)
- by the hands of X+ the whole community v.7
- "you must purge the evil from among you"

Purge = ~ burn

Evil = evil

From among you = from within you, your midst

*Objection: in this community I do as I please, these matters are indifferent to me!*



## 2. Text (1)

Similar texts:

"you must purge the evil from among you" (x~15)

17:12 - they show contempt for judge or priest

v.13 all the people will hear and fear

19:12 - escaped murderer ... bring and execute

v.13 you must **purge** from Israel ... innocent blood

21:21 - rebellious son - drunkard - stone to death

v.21 **you must purge the evil from among you**

v.21 all Israel will hear and be afraid

Likewise - adulterous couple, consenting to extra-marital sex (not rape), kidnapping, non-virgin wife

*Objection - in this community I do as I please, these are matters of indifference to me!*

## 2. Text (1)

### Note:

1. there is a true, real God  
(so life matters)
2. there really is community  
(not just individuals)
3. there is evil - it affects the community  
→ purge it out
4. sin can contaminate the community  
→ purge innocent blood
5. enforcement keeps the community safe  
(they will fear)
6. no benefit is offered to the person/thing purged



## 2. Text (2) Exodus 12

■ Passover meal = great act of OT salvation

- a night of judgment = death of first born
  - Lamb dies in place of first-born in Israel  
Signified by painted blood (v.13)  
angel of death passes over
  - they eat the Lamb, roasted v.8
  - they also eat bread, made in haste, without yeast (v.14,15)  
(over time, a little yeast makes the whole dough rise)  
"remove the yeast" v.15  
"or be cut off from the community" v.19
- = that's the way you celebrate and enjoy this great act of redemption in every succeeding year

*Objection: this is nothing to do with me!*

## 2. Text (3) 1 Corinthians 5

N.B. NOT in the land ... a small group in a pagan nation

N.B. after the cross of Christ = the greater act of N.T. salvation

5:1 there is sin - worse than the nations

Should be grief and put out "from your midst"

- ingredients

- Absent Paul's judgment (v.3)
- Assembly of church in name of Lord Jesus
- Presence of apostle/ power of Jesus by Spirit
- Hand over to Satan [=remove him from church]
- Aim = learn the hard way, to be saved in the end

LIKE - having the [Christian Passover] feast, and removing the yeast

Yeast = immoral, greedy, idolater, slanderer, drunkard, swindler ...

JUDGE those inside

*Purge the evil from among you*

*// Remove the wicked one from among you*

## 2. Text (3) 1 Corinthians 5

==>

1. There is a Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ
2. there is a community
3. there is evil - over time sin will influence the whole community  
"a little yeast works through the whole batch"  
- the safety of the community
4. Do not get in a church-mixture with sexually immoral people (etc)
5. removal can bring salvation to the expelled
6. N.B. in Christ, in the Christian community the death penalty is transformed into removal from the church
7. the church has authority via the apostolic judgment, the Spirit of the Lord Jesus to move people out of the salvation-community into the Satan-community.

## 2. Text (4) Matthew 18:15-20

- if ... your brother sins against you v.15 (may be small)
- you go, individually and privately
  - win him over
- but if ... take 1 or 2 others
  - [-> win him over]
- but if ... tell it to the church
  - = local church gathered together, not simply the elders
  - [-> win him over]
- if he refuses to listen to the church
  - treat him like [someone totally outside the church]

v.18 when the church makes such a solemn and careful decision  
it carries the authority of heaven

(N.B. be careful which church you submit to! Some churches are  
not in touch with the Lord, and their judgments are wrong!)

Rightly done = Heaven ↔ linked with earth

## 2. Text (4) Matthew 18:15-20

1. there is a Father in heaven who judges
2. there is sin which needs to be addressed
3. there is a community
  - Which needs to be defended
  - Which seeks restoration
  - Which has heavenly authority to [accept] **or**  
**remove**
4. there is a process ... with many opportunities to repent, but leads to being removed [to Satan]

*Objection - this is a matter of indifference to me!*



### 3. Conclusions

1. there is a God, Saviour in heaven who judges
2. there is a community that he forms
3. there is evil / sin which matters
4. unrepentant sinner must be purged out of the kingdom  
(with many opportunities to repent)

*Objection: this is nothing to do with me, I do as I please, I care not whether I belong or not, no-one tells me what to do*

- *ministry, service ... as if completely independent??*
- *attendance, support ... as if you had no ties to anyone??*
- *seriousness, and conscience ... as if it were trivial and pointless??*

*=> church membership is turning from western individualism and yielding to God's call to be his community*



### 3. Conclusions

Footnote:

- the idolater died for his/her sin ... thus the evil was purged

*BUT we have one who was not an idolater who died to purge our sin!*

- the Lamb died and was eaten along with the purged bread.  
*Celebrated to this day*

*We have a better feast to keep! With gratitude to the Lamb Jesus with lives purged from sin.*

*Let us keep the feast, walk the walk, live the life  
... until we reach the heavenly kingdom where love reigns and  
sin is no more!*