

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

FEBRUARY 19TH - 20TH, 2022 // BOOK OF 1 CORINTHIANS

LEGAL MATTERS (1 CORINTHIANS 6:1-6)

WE'RE TO HOLD OTHER BELIEVERS ACCOUNTABLE

Chapter 5 told us that we are to not judge outsiders, but those within the church. In that same vein, Paul tells the church to not let outsiders who don't have the wisdom of God decide matters that they can handle within the church community.

- Keep in mind, there weren't any Christians in positions of civic authority in Corinth.

IT REALLY WASN'T JUST ABOUT LAWSUITS

The real problem was a lack of **maturity** in their faith and their trusting of the world's systems over God's. As a byproduct, they lacked **discernment**.

- With the Spirit's wisdom and guidance, along with elders in the church, the Corinthians should've been able to decide trivial matters before having to take it to courts.

"HOW MUCH MORE MATTERS OF THIS LIFE?"

Paul says something interesting: "the saints will judge the world (Mt. 19:28, Rev. 20:4, Dan. 7:22)...[and] angels." Us "judging angels" most likely refers to fallen angels (demons).

- **God has made humans unique to all other creatures, therefore He has high standards for us. If we can't handle authority in this life, how can we in the next?**

"I SAY THIS TO YOUR SHAME"

Paul was frustrated that there weren't enough mature people in the church to handle disputes between Christians.

- This all points back to **the underlying problem** in Corinth (and the church today): **the Christian community started to rely more on the ways of the world than the ways God taught through His Word.**

THIS DAMAGES OUR WITNESS

We have to be extremely careful how we conduct ourselves in the church community because if we act inappropriately we can damage our ability to speak into the lives of non-Christians.

- This is why **we must avoid public squabbles and learn to resolve our differences as mature followers of Jesus.**

MISSING IT (1 CORINTHIANS 6:7-11)

THIS IS A HARD ONE...

Not only are the improperly handled disputes a "defeat," but Paul told them that **it is better to be wronged and cheated than to argue with other Christians.**

- Paul is essentially challenging them to follow Jesus' command to **turn the other cheek (Mt. 5) and be wronged versus becoming the aggressor.**

THE PROBLEM GOES BACK TO IDENTITY

The Christians in Corinth had forgotten a basic doctrine: there is a big difference between believers and non-believers. The difference is that **unrighteous people will not inherit the kingdom of God.**

- Now, the question arises of what constitutes unrighteousness? **Fortunately, the Bible is clear on good and evil.**

WHO DETERMINES GOOD AND EVIL?

Relative truth is illogical at best. If we believe that good and evil must be universal, who sets this standard? In the case of the Christian, we believe God, through the Bible, does.

- Paul gives an **overview of sins that prohibit us from heaven: sexual immorality, idolatry, adultery, homosexuality, theft, greed, intoxication, verbal abuse, or swindlers.**

NOT A SLIP UP, A CONSCIOUS LIFESTYLE

Paul wasn't referring to people that occasionally fell to sin, but people that **willingly lived a lifestyle contrary to the teachings of the Bible.**

- Many Corinthians once lived these lifestyles but had been saved and set free. **The problem is they forgot Jesus had "washed," "sanctified," and "justified" them, and they returned to their former patterns.**

A MATTER OF SACRIFICE, OBEDIENCE, AND TRUST

Though we may still be tempted and even occasionally fall, we can be delivered from our sinful patterns!

- But, **we must know that we will have to sacrifice and be obedient to the Bible even when we don't understand, and we must trust that even though it is hard, God has our best interests at heart.**

PURCHASED (1 CORINTHIANS 6:12-17)

ABUSING OUR FREEDOM IN JESUS

The Corinthians were doing something many modern Christians do today: they used grace as an excuse to live carelessly.

- They were actually taking this further by using their freedom in Christ as an excuse to sin. This took God and salvation for granted and was antithetical to the teachings of scripture.

PERMISSIBLE, BUT NOT BENEFICIAL

Practically speaking, though we may have the right to do something, that doesn't mean we should always do it.

- Though drinking alcohol isn't a sin, being a stumbling block to someone else is. Though surfing the internet at night isn't a sin, if we are tempted, we shouldn't. **This wisdom helps us avoid falling to sin.**

"I WILL NOT BE MASTERED BY ANYTHING"

Paul uses the analogy of "food [being] for the stomach and the stomach for food" meaning that **we're to not live our lives around things that God will do away with.**

- The Corinthians used this phrase to justify their lusts, saying "sex is natural, so we shouldn't limit it." **This line of thinking makes the individual a slave to desires.**

YOUR BODY DOESN'T BELONG TO YOU ANYMORE

We are reminded in V15 that we are part of Christ's body after our conversion, and when we give it up to other things it is similar to a married person sleeping with a prostitute.

- Like earthly marriage, **Christians are "one flesh" with our spiritual "husband" Jesus.** So, we're to avoid any desire that is contrary to the teachings of our "husband."

GET AWAY FROM IT (1 CORINTHIANS 6:18-20)

IT SEEMS LIKE HE'S PICKING ON SEXUAL SIN

Maybe Paul keeps talking about sexual sin because so many of us fall to it. Another reason he is mentioning it again is because sexual sin has a unique effect on us.

- **Sexual sin is a "sin against [our] own body" meaning the ramifications of sexual sins are usually more severe than most other sins in this life.**

SO, WE ARE TO RUN FROM IT

In 2 Timothy 2:22 Paul instructs Tim to have radical separation from sexual sin instead of trying to keep a moderate distance.

- We need to be careful not to be prideful or foolish and get close to things we struggle with. **If we will put as much distance as we can between us and our temptations, we will struggle less or even not at all.**

WE ARE TO HONOR GOD WITH OUR BODIES

We strive to avoid sin because we should be in love and have devotion to the One that saved our souls from eternal damnation!

- **We're not only saved by grace through our faith in Christ, we are redeemed (bought back) from our destructive ways! In our redemption we should WANT to live holy lives!**

"YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN..."

We've been redeemed not only by a high cost (God's Son) but for a high calling! **We're saved not only from hell but to do good works in this life for the glory of Jesus (Eph. 2:10)!**

- **The Christian should live as a steward of a life that ultimately doesn't belong to them because we know we've been "bought at a price."**

A MATURE FAITH

- If we claim Christianity, we should be constantly maturing in our thoughts, faith, and actions.
- Maturity in Christ will enable us to handle disputes with others in a way that honors God and sets a good example.
- This is vital because God has commissioned us to be witnesses to the world.

SACRIFICE, OBEDIENCE, AND TRUST

- Salvation, deliverance, and spiritual maturity will only come if we are willing to **sacrifice our will for God's**, if we are willing to **be obedient to His Word**, and if we will **trust that His ways are the best things for us.**
- It is not easy to exchange our desires for God's, but **submission to Him will change our lives and eternities!**

BEING WISE ENOUGH TO HAVE FENCES

- If we are to maintain a relationship with Jesus, grow in our faith, and see other people's lives changed by our witness, **we must deliberately distance ourselves from evil and the temptation to do evil things.**
- This means we must be humble, wise, and use discernment. **Are we willing to admit that we can fall if we aren't careful?**

WHO DO WE BELONG TO?

- We sacrifice, obey, and trust because we should understand that God loves us so much that He "bought [us] for a price." Therefore, our lives no longer belong to us.
- But, **in a culture that teaches self over selflessness, excess over sacrifice, choice over submission, and feelings over truth, will we trust and obey the Creator?**