

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

FEBRUARY 20TH, 2022 // BOOK OF 1 CORINTHIANS

UNRIGHTEOUS COURTS (1 CORINTHIANS 6:1-6)

DO NOT SEEK JUSTICE AMONG THE UNJUST

After discussing church discipline, Paul wants to know **why disputes within the church are being taken before "unrighteous" judges.**

- He is not saying that courts are bad or corrupt, but the issue is that these **spiritual matters and civil disputes were being taken to worldly courts to seek justice.**

WE HAVE THE ABILITY TO SETTLE DISPUTES

To show that the Corinthian Christians should be able to handle these internal disputes among themselves, Paul tells them that **one day they will participate in the judgement of the world and of the angels.**

- If we have been entrusted with these heavenly judgements, then **how much more are we able to judge earthly disputes?**

DO NOT WEAKEN YOUR MINISTRY

These court proceedings **weakened the ministry of the Corinthians amongst the unbelievers around them.**

- It gave the impression that the people of the church were **at each other's throats, they were unable to have a good relationship with one another, and it aired out their dirty laundry to the world.**

HUMBLY SEEK WISDOM

The Corinthians had become very prideful and were "wise in their own eyes" (Proverbs 3:7), but Paul is saying that their actions showed that there was not one wise among them.

- In order to see to ourselves as we really are, **we must humble ourselves and trust in the one who is truly wise.**

THE REAL ISSUE

Paul is not advocating for churches to create their own judicial system, however he is saying that **Christians should be able to settle certain civil disputes amongst themselves.**

- Paul was not opposed to courts. He even appealed to the Roman courts for his rights in Acts 22:25 and 25:10-11, but **he was opposed to a brother going to court against a brother.**

CLEANSING (1 CORINTHIANS 6:7-11)

NO WINNERS

"To have legal disputes against one another is already a defeat for you," means that there is no winner in these disputes but both sides lose regardless of the outcome.

- **It is better to lose possessions or money than to lose a brother because of disputes and lose your testimony in the process.** (1 John 4:20)

SACRIFICE FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL

Paul is essentially saying that it is better to be "wronged" and "cheated" than to defend your "rights" at the expense of God's glory and the good of His kingdom.

- **Jesus laid down his rights as God to be born as a man and even laid down his rights as man to give his life as a sacrifice for us.**

"YOU YOURSELVES DO WRONG AND CHEAT"

Paul points out that these Christians were not willing to be "wronged" or "cheated" for the sake of the Gospel, but instead they were the ones cheating and doing wrong to their own brothers and sisters.

- Their actions mimicked the unbelievers around them more than they mimicked Christ, whom they claimed to follow.

RECOGNIZE THE SEVERITY OF SIN

Paul calls the people to the carpet that have been wronging their own by asking, "Do you know that the **unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?**"

- He wants them to recognize how serious their sin is and that **the only thing they gain from cheating a brother or sister is an eternity with the unrighteous.**

"DO NOT BE DECEIVED"

By telling the Corinthian Christians not to be deceived, Paul is saying that if you claim to be a Christ follower and are able to operate in these sins without remorse, then it may be fair to evaluate if you are truly a Christ follower.

- **One who lives a life characterized by these sins will not inherit the kingdom of God.**

WE DO NOT ELEVATE ONE SIN OVER ANOTHER

Though Paul called out homosexuality along with sexual immorality, this is not our ticket to single out homosexuality as if it is a sin that God is uniquely angry with.

- **It is listed separately because of its acceptance and prevalence** in the ancient world. 14 out of the first 15 Roman Emperors were bisexual or homosexual.

"YOU USED TO BE LIKE THIS."

After mentioning these sins that will keep someone from inheriting the kingdom of God, Paul essentially says "do not forget where you came from."

- **We can never be unloving or uncaring towards anyone whose lives are characterized by these sins because they are right where we once were.**

NO LONGER KNOWN BY OUR SINS

We are no longer characterized by those sins, but by the one who had "washed," "sanctified," and "justified" us.

- Through the mercy of God, power of the Holy Spirit, and the redemptive work of Christ on the cross, the people described in 1 Cor. 6:9-10 can become the people mentioned in 1 Cor. 6:11.

GLORIFY GOD (1 CORINTHIANS 6:12-20)

PERMISSIBLE, NOT PROFITABLE

Similar to other teachings of Paul about Christian liberty, he says, **"Everything is permissible for me, but not everything is beneficial."**

- He mentions this here because the Corinthian Christians had **taken their "liberties" as a license to give in to sins that were permissible by the culture around them.**

"THE BODY IS NOT FOR SEXUAL IMMORALITY."

In v.13, Paul seems to be correcting the Corinthian Christians willingness to give the body what it desires. They justified their sexual immorality by saying things like, "When my body wants food, I eat. When my body wants sex, I hire a prostitute."

- **There are consequences for using our bodies in ways that the Lord never intended** (unwanted pregnancy, abortion, STD's).

"DO YOU NOT KNOW..."

Apparently, many of the Corinthian Christians were able to compartmentalize what they did with their bodies sexually and their relationship with Jesus.

- In order to correct this, Paul pointed out that "their bodies are part of Christ's body," and sexual immorality of an individual member disgraces the entire body of Christ.

"THE TWO WILL BECOME ONE FLESH."

In the biblical sense, there is no such thing as "casual sex," because through any sexual relationship, the Bible says you become one flesh with your partner. We may unknowingly give a piece of ourselves to a partner that is meant only for God or our future spouse.

- **We belong to Jesus and have no right to give away a part of ourselves in sinful ways.**

FLEE FROM SEXUAL IMMORALITY

When it comes to sexually immorality, Paul does not say to "try and tough it out," or "try to resist the temptation to give the flesh what it wants." Instead, he asserts that we are to "flee sexual immorality," literally meaning to run from it.

- We run from it because **a lifestyle of sin begins with single acts of sin.**

"YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN."

These Christians treated sex as an appetite to be satisfied and not as a gift to be cherished and used carefully, so Paul reminds them that their bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. Their bodies are not their own, because they were bought at a price.

- If we know the glorious origin of our bodies and know that He placed His Spirit in them, **how can we use them for such evil purposes?**

WILLINGLY WRONGED AND CHEATED

- We are to give up what we "deserve" for the greater good of God and His kingdom.
- We should settle our own disputes, but even if resolution is not received, we need to place our trust in a "just" God and not "unjust" courts.
- We are not wronged or cheated because we did not confront a problem, but because we chose not to bring it before unbelievers.

DO NOT BE DECEIVED...

- We are not to be deceived about who we are!
- If any of these sins listed in verses 9-10 characterize our lives, then we must immediately repent and forsake them so that we are no longer known by those sinful characteristics.
- **We take on the characteristics of Christ as he washes, sanctifies, and justifies us!**
- V.20 says, "for you were bought at a price, so glorify God with your body."
- Do not be deceived about how great the price was that you were bought with.
- **Are we glorifying God with our bodies?**
- **Are we honoring the price that was paid so that we are no longer characterized by the sin to which we once belonged?**