

I Corinthians 6:1-8

1. As you know, we live in a very litigious world.

There is currently one lawyer for every 240 Americans!

--Not to speak despairingly about all lawyers; we have some great ones and our society needs more of those to uphold our rule of law and fair treatment of people.

--I am very grateful for our legal system as complicated and imperfect as it may be.

--Nevertheless, something has changed: Forty or fifty years ago, someone standing on a street corner whose elbow was brushed by a passing truck would likely exclaim, "Praise God, I'm alive!" Today a person in the same situation shouts, "Praise, I'm going to be rich!"

2. The circumstances in first-century Corinth are quite similar to ours today; The Greeks loved to sue as much or more than we do.

--The law courts were one of their chief amusements.

--Corinth had dense housing in multi-story buildings with balconies overlooking narrow streets.

--These housing systems had their own courts, and the disputes were held in the streets and people would watch from their balconies.

--We might be inclined to think, "how weird was that" but I remind you that shows like Judge Judy or Judge Joe Brown were and are some of the highest rated shows on daytime television drawing 9 to 10 million viewers every day.

3. Corinthians Christians tended to bring their litigious tendencies into the church.

--Just like they had brought their morals into the church; Paul told them In the previous chapter to get rid of the old leaven, and suing each other was a part of that.

--Paul is upset because they are again failing to act like a family—like a body.

--If your big toe was bringing infection into your body, you would deal with it and not ignore it—this was the main point of chapter 5.

--You would never dream of allowing one part of your body to sue another part in public court.

--Gut sues mouth for overeating; mouth sues hand for overserving; hand sues eyes for looking too long and at the sweets...all in front of some local court!?

4. Crazy stuff especially since part of our responsibility in reaching our world is presenting a united front. If we are a body, and we are, we should act like one.

John 13:35 – How will they know that we really know our Savior if we don't treat each other in a vastly different way than the world does?

--**V. 7** – There is something that is infinitely more important than us winning some argument or being proven right or wrong.

--Whatever we are upset about will not matter the second we are dead, but our testimony about Jesus will matter forever.

- Its far better for us to lose a legitimate argument or even lose financially than it is for us to lose spiritually.
- “Already defeated” – doesn’t matter who’s right or who’s wrong, the fact that we are treating each other wrongly is an instant defeat for both parties.

This is what the world hears when air our dirty laundry: “Don’t come here. We Christians are no better-off than you, We don’t have or follow anything better. We are no different and have nothing to offer.”

- Our primary concern should not be protecting ourselves and our rights but protecting our relationships with each other and our Lord.
- We don’t have anything or any argument that is worth someone’s soul.
- Shame on us if we aren’t willing to sacrifice our own interest for the sake of the Kingdom!

5. Airing our dirty laundry in front of a lost world is a horrible thing—completely sinful.

- But we still have dirty laundry, so, what do we do?
- Like I said last week, the church or its representatives constitutes the highest court in existence short of the throne of God.

Let’s review:

I Cor. 5:3-4 – This is a court proceeding judging sin.

- “in the name of the Lord Jesus” that is, just like He would do if He were there—and He is!

--“With the Power of the Lord Jesus” – **Matthew 18:17-18**

- Don’t you dare snub your nose and the church’s position and potential!

Add to that **I Cor. 6:2-3** – *Because we direct access to the mind of Christ, because we have the special presence of Christ where two or more are gathered, there is no higher court outside of Heaven.*

6. But don’t get too enamored with our abilities and authority.

Before we are any of those things, we are to be the picture of grace and forgiveness.

- Do you remember the parable of the king forgiving the man an incredible amount of money he owed? (Matthew 18:21-25)
- The story starts out with Peter asking Jesus how many times he should forgive his brother “seven times?” Peter thought he was being magnanimous.
- What was Jesus’ response? Not seven, but 70 x 7!
- Jesus follows with the story that illustrates how much we have been forgiven.
- We are like a servant called before the king who owed 10K talents; (that is a preposterous sum).
- Talent were 75 pounds—In today’s prices, 75 pounds of gold at 4K Per ounce gives us 49.2 billion dollars’ worth of debt!
- He was astronomically in debt! He not only borrowed that amount, but he, somehow, spent it all!
- This preposterous story is about us!**
- The King forgives all of that debt.
- What should this man’s attitude be toward those who are indebted to him going forward?

7. Grace and forgiveness ought rule our days and our every

thought.

--"Someone stole from me, what do I do?" We have a verse for that:

Matthew 5:39

--"I just cannot do that" So, is it going to matter in eternity whether you got back at someone for what they did to you or recovered your property?

--Is not going to matter more that you allowed yourself to be wronged so that someone could have the chance to see the Son of God working in your life?

Matthew 5:40 – "you stole my coat; would you like another one?" !

--Your thought might be: "People will just take advantage of us and still not come to Christ"

--So, you know better how to reach this world than Jesus does? You know better how to collect on a debt?

I read about a man who lent another Christian some money and was having trouble getting the man to pay him back. He talked to the man privately about the matter but made no progress. He went to the church leaders, and they talked to the man, but still he wouldn't pay – probably couldn't pay.

Finally, he sent the man a receipt that said his debt was paid. When the borrower asked the lender what happened, because he knew he had not repaid the man, the lender said, "I did everything I could to get you to pay the money back without avail. So, I talked to the Lord about it and He said that He would pay me back and that He would collect from you Himself."