

1st Corinthians Chapter 6.

The first Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians.

Bill Holdstock

Saints are forbidden to go to law before unbelievers.

Verse 1.

Dare any of you, having a matter against another go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?

We have gathered early on in our study of the Corinthian church that it was in a state of great carnal imperfection and disarray; although there were many eminent persons among them there was no one person who possessed any public ability to settle differences between the members of the fellowship. According to verse 7 and 8 the disagreement appeared to involve one person accused of cheating another. And as one party would not agree to the decisions of the other party there appeared no alternative but to take their contentions to a heathen magistrate.

The Word of God emphatically teaches us to separate ourselves from a wicked and polluted world. We are to separate but not isolate ourselves from all things of the world; but we can be that little leaven to spread light and life to those around us. So as born again believers we should seek council from the courts of heaven rather than from our own judicial system.

2 Corinthians 6: 17

Wherefore come out from among them and be separate says the Lord and touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you.

This verse is directed to the Saints of God who wish to live in a manner pleasing to their maker and to be found worthy of eternal life through a disciplined, obedient walk with God. How can such a man expect a magistrate to judge a case not living to such Godly principles? To the shame of the Church there was none with the right credentials to judge from a Godly standpoint. The apostle Paul who had the spiritual authority to judge over this matter was no longer with them.

Paul used strong words at the beginning of the chapter 'dare' which we have used in a similar way 'how dare you' and according to one commentator this implies treason against all Christians, after all this situation has now become a legal matter.

According to Antiquities of the Jews by Josephus those Jews away from Israel were allowed to have their own Jewish arbitrator to refer their disputes to. So the Christians were allowed the same right but it appears the Corinthian church took their grievance to a heathen court.

Paul then says '*do you not know the saints will judge the world?*' and he goes on, *...and if the world shall be judged by you are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters?* Then he goes further and tells them *they will also judge angels.*

Verse 3

Know you not that we shall judge Angels how much more things that pertain to this life?

Mathew 19: 28

And Jesus said unto them verily I say unto you. That you which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Those who follow Jesus will, one day follow Him into the coming Kingdom Age where Jesus will reign personally from Jerusalem and we shall Judge the twelve tribes of Israel sitting on twelve

thrones.

Paul considered it was a dishonour to their Christian destiny as saints of God to carry small matters about the things of life before heathen magistrates.

Verse 5

I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? No not one who shall be able to judge between his brethren.

Paul is so disgusted and disappointed with the church he uses sarcasm to drive home his point. We can understand his thoughts because he gathered and planted the church and taught them the truths of God. We can be sure his teaching would have been of the best, neither would he travel to another city if he felt the church was not in a good enough place to leave it. These were all grown up men and women, some with families, some in business and some professional. Yet Paul speaks to them like little children, you can feel his frustration. There appeared to be no one in the Church at Corinth who was able to judge right from wrong! So the alternative was to take their disputes to a worldly court to be judged by unbelievers.

Do you remember reading in our first couple of chapters where we learned how the leaders of the church preached with such soulful eloquence and pomp? Their different mannerisms drew favourites from the congregation, but now when these puffed up men were needed to bring order they failed miserably to display any degree of spiritual authority.

Verse 7

Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because you go to Law one with another. Why do you not rather take wrong, why do you not suffer yourselves to be defrauded?

Paul is showing the church the contrast of even allowing the fault to remain unchallenged than taking your brother in Christ to a heathen court to be judged by an unbeliever. Paul considers this is utterly wrong, saying it is better to suffer material loss than to suffer spiritual loss.

Verse 9

*Do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived (Jesus used the same words **'let no man deceive you' Mark 13:5**) neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10. Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revellers, nor extortionist shall inherit the Kingdom of God. And such were some of you: 11. But you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.*

The unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. The unrighteous are those who act contrary to right and cannot inherit for the inheritance is by right. He who is not a child of God has no right to the family inheritance for that inheritance is for the children. *'If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ'* Romans 8: 17. Here are 10 classes of transgressors which Paul excludes from the Kingdom of God and if any man is guilty of any one of these evils mentioned is thereby excluded from His Kingdom.

1. Fornicators v 9 (the immoral)
2. Idolaters v 9 (false worshipers)
3. Adulterers v 9 (the unfaithful)
4. Effeminate v9 (catamites) women-like traits, love of ease)
5. Abusers v9 (of themselves with mankind, homosexuals and lesbians)
6. Thieves v10 (robbers)
7. Covetous v10 (the lustful)
8. Drunkards v10 (drinkers of intoxicants)
9. Revilers v10 (abusers of others)
10. Extortionists v10 (those who obtain by violence and threats)

We are all guilty of believing we can live in sin or dabble with the world but still get to heaven because God is a God of love and He understands. No! He doesn't understand why His creation will accept the temptations of Satan and a lost eternity for the sake of a few 'pleasures' on earth, and lose God's gift of everlasting security in heaven. These are strong words from Paul but he has been taught by the highest teachers on earth namely Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Those who said a sinner's prayer at an altar and then turned their back on Jesus and wilfully practice a lifestyle of sin, thereby mocking the redemptive power of His shed blood-are not destined for heaven. (at least in my understanding) Those tempted into besetting, iniquitous sin of any kind (including sexual sin) who seek freedom from the temptation (even if this is repetitive) and who keep calling on God's empowering grace to overcome it and who repent of his weakness- I believe these people will be saved and fully restored.

There is also the issue here of what inheriting the Kingdom of God implies. The Kingdom of God has come in part to us already and we can begin to enjoy its benefits here on earth. When we wilfully sin we are excluded from its benefits and fall outside its protection here on earth unless we repent and turn once more to Jesus.

For the so called carnal Christian who goes to church once a week but do not really walk with Jesus for the rest of the time, the Bible talks about being saved 'as if through fire' (1 Cor.3:15). This implies that they reach heaven but never inherit any rewards of the Kingdom because they lived selfish carnal lives. They will not be the ones who rule and reign with Jesus.

Verse 11

Such were some of you, but you are washed, by the blood of the Lamb shed on the cross cleansing us from all sin. *But you are sanctified* giving us a position in Christ, *But you are justified* being declared by Christ as not guilty, *in the name of the Lord Jesus*, This refers to Jesus Christ and what He did at the Cross that we might be saved, *and by the Spirit of our God*, proclaiming the work of the Holy Spirit as the third person of the Triune Godhead, and His great work of Grace.

Some commentators do not agree with the order by which we must be saved, but if we follow the route given above we see God's plan of redemption very clearly, and you must be sure in your own mind the way of Salvation you choose. Let's go over this once more because it is vital to become a Christian, you come to Him His way and no other. There will be many false teachers twisting God's Word to make you think they are showing a new revelation, stick to the Bible it is God's own Word so He will not lead you astray.

You are washed; you have been baptised into the Christian faith, and you have promised in this act of baptism to walk in God's empowering Grace which enables us to put off all filthiness of the flesh and Spirit. Going down into the water and washing your bodies is a sign of the purification of your soul.

You are sanctified; you are separated from all earthly things to be connected to all things spiritual. You are separated from time to be connected with eternity. You are separated from idols to be joined to the one true God. To be separated from the common, earthly sinful way of life, to be wholly employed in the service of the one true God. This is the ideal meaning of this word in the Old and New Testaments and in being set in their hearts to separate themselves totally from the world, they became a church.

You are justified. You have, by accepting His Son Jesus been brought into a state of favour with God, your sins have been blotted out through Jesus and the Spirit of God witnessing this act to your conscience so you know you are saved and you will allow the Holy Spirit to do a great work of regeneration in your hearts.

Paul lays great store in the Born Again Christian being separated from the things of the world. We

just cannot live unto God and flirt with the world. This is why many Christians disagree over the age old Devil inspired belief of 'once you are saved you are always saved'. We have dealt with this subject several times in these studies so I won't pursue it further here, save to say with the return of the Lord so close now do your very best to live unto God ever watching for the sky's to open and your name called to meet Him with all the saints who have walked close to God. Don't be left behind because you find this dangerous doctrine very convenient!

Verse 12

All things are Lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient, all things are Lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

At the Jerusalem Council, the apostles, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and in one accord, wrote down four foundational laws for the Gentile Christians.

1. Acts 15: 20, 29. Abstain from pollutions of idols. It literally means to have nothing to do with, stand aloof from idols, eating things offered to idols, and all immoral acts.
2. Abstain from fornication Acts 15: 20, 29. All uncleanness such as homosexuality and other perversions and prostitution which was very common at idol temples (Numbers 25: 1-15)
3. Abstain from things strangled Acts 20: 29; 21: 25. When animals were strangled the blood remained in their bodies contrary to Lev.17: 10-14. This was considered as a greater delicacy.
4. Abstain from blood, Acts 20, 29; 21; 25; Gen: 9: 4. This not only included eating blood, but also all cruelty and murder in its various forms.

When God made us He gave us a free will, we can choose what is right and what is wrong. So when He made these rules and gave us the commandments He wanted to see how we would deal with the temptations that come upon us. Paul also knew that unless a Christian keeps himself separate it will be quite likely the Christian will fall into temptation, not strong enough to stand firm in the liberty wherewith Christ has made him free. Many Christians think they are strong enough in themselves to stand strong in their faith but this is not always the case.

I worked for a Christian once and became friends with one of the members of staff as he lived quite close to my house. My friend and a few others invited our Boss to a restaurant where the waitresses were topless. He was very pleased to tell me that our Boss was served at lunch by a topless waitress. I asked him why did he want to embarrass the Boss like that and why he did not ask me to join them. He said that he expected the Boss to say no, but he didn't, and I didn't ask you because I knew you wouldn't come anyway. We must be careful the world is watching us all the time.

Paul says that it is not expedient or profitable for us to indulge in worldly pleasures but they may be lawful, as a born again Christian we should separate ourselves from the things of the world and keep ourselves holy before God. Paul says in verse 12 that he will not be brought under the power or influence of anyone or anything.

We may conduct our business with men who do not know God and make no profession of Christianity and we may be in ignorance to his moral character, but if we are aware of the man professing Christ but who is scandalous in his living and conduct, we must not eat with him. We must let the world see the Church of God will not tolerate iniquity.

These are very high standards for the Christian of today. I am not sure it was any easier in Paul's day but there is no question if we want God's fullness in our lives and in our Churches there are conditions that God has set that we may fall short of. As with the church at Corinth the behaviour of its members affect the lives of all and that has not changed.

Verse 15

Know you not that your bodies are the members of Christ shall I then take the members of Christ and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid.

Verse 16

What? Know you not that he which is joined to a harlot is one body? For the two shall become one flesh.

These words we use in conducting a marriage, in joining husband and wife. At the marriage ceremony the two are joined together as one according to the law of God. The two are joined as one when they come together not only in body but also in spirit which is God centred. That's the same with joining sin and uncleanness to the backsliding Christian they become one flesh. Paul calls the partner of the Christian a 'harlot' joined by carnal intercourse, cemented to, cleaving to, one body with her. In the case of a union with a harlot, the fornicator becomes one body. But a soul tie and spiritual transaction also takes place. Every time we shut out the prompting of the Holy Spirit, we open the door of our heart to evil spirits allowing them to influence our thinking and lead us into more temptation.

Verse 17

But he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

He who is united with God by faith through His Son Christ Jesus receives His Spirit and becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Who in their right mind would want to exchange that for any kind of relationship with a harlot or sensual gratification and forfeit eternal life?

Verse 18

Flee fornication. Every sin that a man does is without the body but he who commits fornication sins against his own body.

Flee fornication is not a suggestion but a command, the rest speaks of all sins other than fornication. Sin such as gluttony, drug taking, drunkenness etc and those previously mentioned these affect the body in a negative way and originate from without the body. With fornication the source of uncleanness comes from and affects the heart and seriously hinders your communion with Jesus if not stops it altogether.

The Bible calls all sin spiritual adultery. God referred to Israel worshiping idols as such in Jerimiah 3: 1-9; Ezekiel 23: 1-45; God will deal with any of us as He did with Israel, he wants a Holy clean nation and Royal Priesthood chosen by Him. He has brought our vile hearts housed in a contaminated body married to death and He has washed us white as snow in His own precious blood and made us like unto Him. So Paul asks;

Verse 19.

What? Do you not know that your body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you? Which you have of God, you are not your own. 20 For you are bought with a price: therefore glory God in your body and in your spirit which are God's.

The Church at Corinth, just like you in your church, have been taught that we are the Temples of the living God and just as God lived in the Mosaic Temple and then again in the Temple of Solomon so truly does the Holy Spirit dwell in the heart and soul of the genuine Christian. When we accepted Him as Lord we must also accept Him as King to rule over us as wholly His. We now are to honour Him with our body soul and spirit which now are His. But God is dishonoured when we become defiled by sin. We all need to realise that we are accountable to God for all we do.

I am grateful to my friend Graham Towse for his valuable support and contribution.

Be blessed

Bill@Holdstock.com

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