

Chapter 6

Good evening and once again thank you for joining us tonight. Would you please turn to 1 Corinthians 6? If you can believe it we're already 1/3rd of the way through this epistle!

SHOW PIC I'm not sure if you've heard, but there's been a discovery with the camp Lejeune drinking water, and you can be eligible for a settlement? Have you gotten these notices? We live in a culture where billboards and ads dominate the airwaves. If you've been wronged, file a lawsuit! **CLOSE PIC**

If they aren't luring us in with billboards, they're enticing us on tv. If they're not combing the police reports for accident victims to solicit, they're mailing color pamphlets to our homes trying to stir up our interests in their services. Admittedly, there are many times we need lawyers-they are trained, skilled and experienced pro's who help us navigate complicated contracts, business ventures or serious cases in which our rights have been violated. But our world has become lawsuit crazed

What we see today is nothing new. In the Greco Roman culture that enveloped the Corinthian church, lawsuits abounded. Sadly, as we have seen, the Christians in Corinth had been slow to abandon many of the vices of the secular culture, and the tendency to sue was no exception.

And in the 1st 11 verses of chapter 6, Paul identifies a major problem plaguing the church-lawsuits amongst believers. He exposes its source and offers a solution not only for 1st century believers, but also for Christians in this generation.

Now the 2nd half of the chapter, verses 12-20, deal with the topic of sex outside of the confines of marriage.

The title of tonight's message is PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY PT 2

Let's pray

1 Dare any of you, (Paul is in shock, almost disgusted) having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? The Corinthian church had become so dysfunctional that believers were running to the secular courts to settle their issues. **SHOW PIC**

These Christians were so influenced by their culture they would rather run to Judge Judy than to seek Godly counsel on their issues! **CLOSE PIC**

And Paul was appalled by the horrible testimony this created. Who wants to join a group of Christians who are so fractured they can't settle their own disputes in the love of Christ? What a terrible witness!

Now the word unrighteous means literally unjust, in the sense of "not justified before God, not saved." So, Paul asks, why are the Corinthian Christians trying to find justice from those who aren't justified before God?

2 Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? The phrase "Do you not know?" appears five times in this chapter. And each time Paul says "do you not know" he's reminding the Corinthian Christians of something they should've known, probably because Paul or Apollos or someone else had previously taught them.

According to Revelation 20 and other passages, as we reign and rule with Christ in the millennial kingdom, part of our job will be to govern and judge those who get saved during the Tribulation. You

see, although we'll be in a glorified state, Tribulation believers who survive will still have fleshly predispositions. Therefore, we will be involved in the process of enforcing righteousness.

And if that wasn't motivation enough...

3 Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? This one of the most shocking verses in the Bible. I don't believe anyone can fully explain the complete extent of what it means...

We know from **Psalm 8:4 What is man that You are mindful of him,**

And the son of man that You visit him?

5 For You have made him a little lower than the angels,[fn]

And You have crowned him with glory and honor.

Mankind was created a little lower than the angels, and the Bible says one day we'll be exalted above them...Exactly how, I don't know - but somehow, we're going to judge angels.

That's a heavy, heavenly responsibility. Which obviously means, that in the here and now, we should at least be able to settle our own differences.

4 If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge? Paul's logic is simple. If Christians are being prepared right now for such a glorious responsibility of judging the world and angels in the future, why would the Corinthian Christians allow secular judges to decide disputes among Christians?

5 I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his

brethren? We studied back in chapter 1 how the Corinthian Christians were proud of what they thought was their “wisdom”.

But Paul says their going to secular courts to settle their church problems reveals their lack of wisdom. By reaching out to the pagan courts they were implying there wasn't a single person in their church wise enough to settle these matters.

And Paul's shock and frustration continue to boil over in this matter, and in verses 6-7 we're given a decree that none of us like...

6 But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers! 7 Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated?

The Corinthians were just like modern Americans: we're addicted to our own “rights.” Allow ourselves to be cheated-that goes against every instinct in us!

But in clinging to their rights so fiercely, these Christians had already shown utter failure. Just by going to court against a fellow Christian, you already lose.

Here the scriptures tell us that its better to take a personal loss, than to disgrace the name of Christ by going before a pagan court. We should be willing to suffer personally, before we let the cause of Christ suffer publicly.

It's better for a Christian to be cheated, than the cause of Christ to be stained.

Now, does this mean Christians should never go to court? Well remember the context here is Christians versus Christians. It's not Christians against the world.

By his actions in the book of Acts, Paul showed he was not against all legal action. In Acts 22 and 25, he appealed to Roman courts for his rights. However, Paul knew it was wrong when brother goes to law against brother.

It's important for Christians to settle disputes among themselves according to God's principles. This can be done either through the church, or through Christian arbitration. But the Bible is clear, there is no reason for Christians to sue one another.

And this is where this commandment gets really hard, because it requires us to give up what we deserve, for the higher good of God and His kingdom.

And our first reaction would be-but I'm going to take a loss! A loss of property, and financial loss, a reputational loss, or some other kind of loss. But we ought to remember that no one who accepts wrong for the sake of God's glory will ever truly take a loss.

8 No, you yourselves do wrong and cheat, and you do these things to your brethren!

There is no place for dishonest dealing by Christians; how much less place is there for dishonest dealing between Christians! Many non-believers have rejected the things of God and the fellowship of the saints because of dishonesty and cheating among Christians.

9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Pause here...

Paul speaks strongly to the brother who did the wrong. "Don't you realize how serious your sin is? The only thing you may 'gain' from cheating your brother is eternity with the unrighteous!"

The Bible pulls no punches when talking of our faith and how it must translate into our actions. **James 2:18 But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your[fn] works, and I will show you my faith by my[fn] works.**

If a Christian has no problem trying to cheat and defraud another Christian, then it's quite possible and probable that the person is not really a Christian at all.

The man who cheated his fellow Christian had to see that if his life was dominated and characterized by this sin, he should be just as concerned for his salvation as any of those other people who practice unrighteousness.

And this is now what Paul does, he lists several series' of lifestyles that will keep a person out of heaven!

Verse 9 continues...

Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, First on the list of unrighteous living is “fornicators.” The Greek word is “ pornos ” - from which we get the term pornography. In Greek this was a sweeping term referring to all forms of illicit sexual activity: prostitution, adultery, hooking up, etc.

Understand, Paul isn't saying that a person who is tempted and fails in a moment of weakness, can't inherit the kingdom of God - that would contradict a host of other Scriptures. Jesus provides forgiveness.

But what he is saying is that a real relationship with God will insulate us from an uninterrupted lifestyle of sin. There's victory in Jesus. We can overcome

...9 nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals,[fn] nor sodomites,

Again, this doesn't mean a person who struggles with adulterous or homosexual thoughts can't be a Christian. Not so... Even if a person stumbles and falls to temptation, there is still forgiveness in Jesus' name when a person repents.

But what it does mean is that the man or woman who accepts homosexual relationships as a legitimate form of sexual expression, and practices these behaviors, is void of repentance. And it's the unrepentant person who the Bible says will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Homosexuality was rampant in the ancient world; 14 out of the first 15 Roman emperors were bisexual or homosexual. At the very time Paul wrote, Nero was emperor. Nero castrated a boy named Sporus and then married him (with a full ceremony), brought him to the palace with a great procession, and made the boy his "wife." Later, the emperor lived with another man, and Nero was declared to be the other man's "wife."

To be clear, in this list of sins, homosexuality is described, but it is described right along with other sins. Some Christians who so strongly denounce homosexuals are guilty of other sins on this list. Can fornicators or adulterers or the covetous or drunkards rightly condemn homosexuals? Of course not.

Christians err when they excuse homosexuality, and deny that it is sin, but they also err just as badly when they single it out as a sin God is uniquely angry with.

10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. Again, what applies to homosexuals goes for thieves, for greedy people, for alcoholics, for idolators and verbal abusers.

The Bible is uncompromisingly unwavering in its statements here. Without any confusion, it states if any person engages in the

uninterrupted, unrepentant practice of sin; it's evidence that there's something wrong in their relationship with God.

Though that person might say they're a Christian, the evidence speaks otherwise. And notice again the weightiness of the Bible's words. These folks "will (not) inherit the kingdom of God."

Matthew 7:21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

We're gonna read verse 11 then break it down.

11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. Yet notice the first six words in verse 11. Paul's dire warning is followed by perhaps the most hopeful words in the Bible. Paul writes, "And such were some of you." To me, these are some of the most grace-soaked lines in all the Scripture.

Apparently, the Corinthian church consisted of former fornicators, ex-adulterers, previous idolaters, recovering homosexuals, and sodomites, and thieves, and covetous, and drunkards, and revilers, and extortionists. They had been a wild bunch. But notice the operative word "were." That was all in their past now.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

This is why the Gospel is such a miracle... the thief, the alcoholic, the homosexual, the sex addict doesn't have to stay that way! This is why Jesus came for us!

Matthew 1:21 And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.

God's great work for us in Jesus Christ is described in three terms in verse 11...

But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified

We are washed clean from sin by the mercy of God **Titus 3:5** not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.

We can have our sins washed away by calling on the name of the Lord **Acts 22:16** And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.'

Next verse 11 says 'You were sanctified': We are set apart, away from the world and unto God, by the work of Jesus on the cross **Hebrews 10:10** By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

But we're also sanctified by God's Word **John 17:19** "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

Finally, Paul says **'you were justified'**: We're not only declared not guilty, but we are declared "just" before the court of God. We are justified by God's grace through the work of Jesus on the cross **Romans 3:23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory

of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

And

Romans 3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.

God can take the kind of people described in 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 10 and make them into the kind of people described in verse 11! How great is the work of God!

Finally, please notice verse 11 lists the triune nature, the 3 persons of the Godhead in connection with this great work of God in the life of the believer. **in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God**

12 All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. The critic of Christianity who accuses Christians of being strict, repressive, and uptight hasn't read v 12! How can you get any freer than "All things are lawful..."

Yet read the rest of the sentence, "...but all things are not helpful."

The issue by which the Christian judges a deed is no longer "Is it lawful?" but "Is it helpful?"

"Will this activity deepen my love for Christ, and benefit my brothers and sisters?"

See our decision-making filter is no longer law, but love.

And Paul's point is clear-since Christ died to make me free, my priority should be to stay free. So if there's a matter that's not addressed as sin in scripture, and that thing threatens to take away my freedom - and impose its bondage - it's a sin to me.

13 Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. Paul reminds the Corinthians that neither feasting or fasting - kosher or non-kosher will impact their status with God. God ultimately destroys both stomach and food. How we manage our physical appetites doesn't make us righteous before God.

But the Corinthians had mistakenly applied the same logic to sex. "I've got a hunger drive, a thirst drive, a sleep drive, a sex drive - so since it's not a sin to eat anything I want, or drink anything I want, or sleep anytime I want - it must not matter to God if I have sex whenever and with whomever I want."

And in the remainder of the chapter Paul corrects this erroneous thinking.

14 And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power. God will resurrect and perfect your body one day. Until that day what matters to God is that we use our body for His glory

15-17

15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! 16 Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh."^[fn] 17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. Here's what folks often don't realize - unlike eating, and drinking, and sleeping, sex carries with it deep spiritual implications. Sex isn't just another bodily function. It's a spiritual act as well as a physical act. It symbolizes eternal relationships - even our relationship with God.

Sex is like super glue. It creates an unbreakable bond. Pull an item apart after it's been super glued and it doesn't separate as easily as it joined. There's ripping and tearing - not just at the point where the two parties touch - but the tear goes deeper and broader. And this is what happens with sex, it fuses together two souls - even two spirits. And when they separate there's an emotional tearing.

Some of you remember Ann Landers. **SHOW PIC** A man once wrote a letter to Ann Landers, "Dear Ann, I've been sleeping with three women for several months. Until a few days ago, none of them knew the others existed. Things were fine. By chance, two of them met, compared notes, and found me out. Now they're furious. What should I do? P.S. Please don't give me any of your moral junk. Signed, Trapped."

Ann replied, "Dear Trapped, The one major thing that separates human beings from animals is a God-given sense of morality. Since you don't have a sense of morality, I strongly suggest you consult a veterinarian." **CLOSE PIC**

Today, our society is swimming in a sea of hyper sexuality. Most Americans, even many church going Christians, see human sexuality as little more than an animal instinct. But the Bible is clear-sexual relations carry with it profound spiritual implications.

When you become a Christian your body is no longer your own. It's the property of Jesus - literally, the Body of Christ. His Spirit dwells in our spirit.

That means if you engage in any form of sex outside the boundaries of heterosexual marriage you are prostituting Jesus' body. You're selling out faithfulness to Jesus, for the cheap thrill of a moment's pleasure.

It was Weirsbe who said:

“Sex outside of marriage is like a man robbing a bank: he gets something, but it is not his and he will one day pay for it. Sex within marriage can be like a person putting money into a bank: there is safety, security, and he will collect dividends.”

Like our world today, Corinthian Christians were surrounded by hyper sexuality. So what does the Bible tell us to do?

18 Flee sexual immorality. Pause here. The bible doesn't tell us to be brave and resist the lustful passion of sexual immorality, but to flee from its very presence.

Many people fall into sexual sin because they underestimate the power of lustful passion. But the Bible says flee, just as Joseph fled from Potiphar's wife!

Next week we'll be discussing marriage and sex in deeper context. But it's important to remember God gave sex as a precious gift to mankind, and uses it powerfully to bond husband and wife together in a true one-flesh relationship.

But sexual immorality works against God's good purpose for sex, Sex outside of marriage can be exciting, but it can't be enriching.

Again, Paul isn't saying sexual immorality is worse than any other sin, but the bible does teach that sexual sin has a unique effect on the body. The effect is physical, but it is also moral and spiritual.

Let's read all of verse 18.

18 Flee sexual immorality Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.

Paul isn't saying sexual immorality is worse than any other sin, but he does teach that sexual sin has a unique effect on the body. The effect of sexual sin isn't just physical, it's spiritual as well. And why is this?

19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? In the OT the Temple was God's house - and it had a single purpose... the service and worship of God.

Likewise as Christians our body is the home of the Holy Spirit. It was purchased by the blood of Jesus. And it too has one purpose-to be used for His glory.

20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body[fn] and in your spirit, which are God's.

Which means we're NOT free to use our body's as we please to engage in sinful activity. We have freedom, but this freedom is in the context of using our body for the service and worship of the Almighty!

If you've ever borrowed something of any value from someone, you typically take care of that borrowed item better because it's not yours, it doesn't belong to you. **SHOW PIC** If you're borrowing a car you're more careful, you're not plowing through a big mac while you're driving your friends car. **CLOSE PIC**

And in the same way, Our bodies belong to God because He bought them. We don't have the right to pollute and abuse God's property!