

## What's Really the Issue? Outline

### *1st Corinthians 6:1-11*

- I. Corinth—a sinful church
  - A. A disunified, self-seeking, fleshly, immoral, idolatrous, sacrilegious church.
  - B. A litigation happy culture.
    1. Litigation was a form of entertainment.
    2. So many trials that a system had to be created to handle them:
      - a. All men 60 years of age had to become “arbitrators” for one year.
      - b. All “small claims” required three arbitrators to hear the case.
    3. Larger courts consisted of a judge and up to 6000 jurists!
- II. “It is wrong for a Christian to sue another Christian in an “unrighteous” court.
  - A. Verse 1—“Dare” = shame: *Shame on you for having a matter with another Christian before an unrighteous court!*
  - B. “Case” = *pragma = pragmatic*: unclear situations of life (2 Timothy 2:4).
- III. Three arguments.
  - A. Believers are more competent.
    1. The argument from “greater to lesser”.
      - a. Believers will judge the world (Verse 2).
      - b. Believers will judge the angels (Verse 3).
    2. “The *matters* of this *life*.”
      - a. life = bios – one’s livelihood or occupation—the mundane things.
  - B. Believers are more capable (than the world) to make decisions.
    1. The “matters” of this life.
      - a. We have clashing world views.
      - b. Example: decisions regarding the termination of life.
    2. “*There’s not one wise man among you...*”

- a. James 3:13-18
- C. Believers lose their case going outside regardless of the outcome.
  - 1. Nobody wins! Just the act itself is failure.
    - a. Failure to resolve problems God's way—the way that pleases Him.
  - 2. The sin under the sin—self-centeredness.

**Why not be wronged?**

**Why not be defrauded?**

## What's Really the Issue? Pastoral Notes

### *1st Corinthians 6:1-11*

For those visiting us this morning... we are going through the book of 1st Corinthians...I like to go through books of the Bible verse by verse so that I preach on subjects I'd rather not!... we have arrived to chapter six this morning... I recognize that everyone in this room is at a different place in your spiritual walk...some of you have been walking with Christ for decades... others for a few months or years....

Some of you may be just checking out what Christianity is all about...well... what you will hear today and for the rest of the time we will be in this book are some "inside the church issues"... as you probably have noticed.... Christians are flawed people... we don't have it all together...we battle sin in our lives...sometimes Christians don't look much different than the non-Christian... maybe even worse!

So... if you are checking out the Christian faith... sit back and watch us share the dirty laundry...we should not be living fleshly sinful lives.... but we battle with it... down in verse 11 of chapter 6 Paul reminds the Corinthian church and us...that those who are in Christ... those who have accepted Him as Lord and Savior in their lives...

**Have been washed**... by the blood of Jesus Christ shed on the cross... **we were sanctified**... set apart for God... we've been **given the Word of God**.... **the wisdom of God** available to us.... and we've been **given the Holy Spirit** to empower us to live the Christian life...

With all that.... We still battle the flesh... and will until we leave this earth in glory...Already we've seen the Corinthian church being called out by Paul for all sorts of sins and compromised living...

It's really not that large of a church... maybe a hundred...hundred and fifty or so... it has grown but it is nestled alone amongst hundreds of thousands of heathens.... Living pagan lives... the church has been greatly influenced by the culture around it...as you would expect...

We've already seen they had a problem of disunity... when you fill a room with self-seeking, self-gratifying people you will have the opposite of "unity"... they were living in the flesh... by the flesh... seeking to satisfy their unlimited fleshly desires...

They were making celebrities of their pastors...following personalities that pleased their senses rather than being lead in the word.... There was sexual immorality in the church... we will see next week this was more rampant than we might like to think... one of their church members was living with his father's wife...

And though that was bad enough... even worse that the church condoned it... in coming weeks we will find that the church was rife in sexual sin... marriages were messed up... divorce apparently common reality...they messed with idols... they got drunk taking the Lord's Supper... making it a drunken feast.....

They abused spiritual gifts... had disorderly worship services...in other words... just your normal, everyday church!....but they did something else... they had lawsuits among fellow believers.... Christians suing Christians...and for arbitration... for judges... they took their lawsuits to unbelievers... and guess what?... when Paul gets word of this... he becomes unhinged.

So this morning I want to look at this problem within the church... and I'm going to attempt to answer a stack of "why's"...

-- Why does this upset Paul so much?...

-- Why are we to handle our disputes with other Christians within the church rather than go to those outside the church?

-- Why is this important for us?

### **1st Corinthians 6:1-8**

So...

-- How many of you have every had a disagreement with another Christian?

-- How many of you are convinced YOU were right and they were wrong?

Don't raise your hands on this one...

-- How many of you have ever had such a serious disagreement with a fellow believer than could not be resolved and the only way it would be resolved would be through the legal process?

- What do you think lies beneath all that?

- What is one's motivation?

Let's face it... Christians getting along with each other is at times very challenging... that little ditty that some frustrated soul chirped out centuries ago... *To live above with saints we love; oh that will be glory. But to live below with saints we know; well that's a different story.*

[when I was in business we had decide NOT to work for anyone from the church...it made it very difficult going to church!]

To live below with the saints we know....well....

This is by God's design... God always grows us through adversity... the only way a church will grow into the beautiful body God desires it to be is through dealing with the adversity between its body parts in a Godly way.

**2 Consider it all joy, my brothers and sisters, when you encounter various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.**

I'm sure James is including the trials in our relations with other Christians!

What usually happens is that when there are factions... the body separates...and the parts go looking for another body...*I'm out of here!*... or we avoid getting into personal relationships within the body...many have concluded that they don't need a body... they can do the Christian life on their own... solo.

I like what Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote years ago:

*“Let him who cannot be alone beware of community... Let him who is not in community beware of being alone... Each by itself has profound perils and pitfalls....Amen?... One who wants fellowship without solitude plunges into the void of words and feelings, and the one who seeks solitude without fellowship perishes in the abyss of vanity, self-infatuation and despair.”*

In other words... Christian community is hard... but Christian without community is ...despair.

The Christian was designed to be in the body of Christ... it is God's design... but living in the body is tough at times... it's that flesh thing... so let's get into this: This passage in chapter six really continues the thoughts Paul was addressing in chapter five... regarding judging others... we learned we are not to judge those outside of the faith... God will be their judge... we cannot know the hearts of man...the true motivations... only God can.

But we are to make judgements regarding fellow brothers and sisters in Christ who are outwardly showing us a lifestyle contrary to their Christian profession...

The idea of making “judgements”...and having “judges” are a part of God's design.... We have an entire book called “Judges” full of God appointed “Judges”...

God knew when He created man that man would have disagreements with each other... and there needed to be a way to resolve these disagreements... this is what the apostle Paul is showing us.

Let's get all this in context... to understand what Paul is saying we need to know the situation... among many other things...Corinth was a litigation happy culture...that is an understatement!...litigation was their favorite pastime... EVERYONE was entertained by court trials.

The way the system worked was that all disputes would go to arbitration... so everyone was involved with the arbitration process... and it was like... *“who’s scheduled for arbitration tonight?... what time?... want to pack a picnic lunch and join me?...”* this was that culture’s reality T.V.

There were so many arbitration hearings that they had to come up with a way to have enough arbitrators (judges) to oversee the hearings.... So what they did was, every man when he turned 60, had to become an arbitrator for a year... this is really big stuff!...when he turned 61 he would hang up his robe.

Each case had three 60 year olds assigned to hear the argument... one would be on one side, the other on the other side, and one would be neutral...if a conclusion and verdict could not be reached there, it would go to a small claims court with a judge and jury.

I said that quickly... but think about this... depending on the case... the jurors could number into the thousands!...there is one case that it was reported to have had 6000 jurors!.. the jurors would be like the audience on Jeopardy... they loved it! It was great entertainment.

In reality... just about everyone in Corinth was involved in this legal process...

This sounds a bit bizarre to us... how could lawsuits and hearings be such a big deal?...so popular?... Well...it’s a big deal here in our culture as well...is Judge Judy still on T.V?... In my extensive research on reality court room shows on Network T.V. and Cable... I counted 232 court room related reality shows.

Judge Jerry, Judge Joe Brown, Judge John Deed, Judge Judy, Judge Karen, Judge Mathis, Judge Maria Lopez, Judge Mills Lane, Judge Rinder, Judge Romesh to name a fraction!

Moving from Reality TV to reality...today... 94% of the world’s lawsuits take place here in the United States....70% of the world’s lawyers live here in the U.S.A!... we are a litigation happy society as well.... But Corinth thrived on it!

Remember the situation in Corinth... the culture around the church was so influential.... So contagious and appealing that the church began looking like the culture around them instead of the culture looking more like the church..... and the area of litigation was no exception.

So the immediate context here is... Christians within the church were hauling off other Christians within the church to sue them in the city’s courts.... And Paul is livid!

We could cut to the chase and just say this....*here’s the principle, “It is a sin for a Christian to sue another Christian in a civil court.”* Anyone having a hard time understanding that?... *Do not sue another Christian....that’s the end of the message except it’s not!...*

I want to uncover the sin under the sin.... What's really the issue here?... I said earlier that Paul is very upset here... we don't see the intensity from the English... but the words he uses in the original language Greek vividly reveals it.

[by the way...time out... a word about the Greek... Most of you notice I will from time to time point out the Greek words compared to the English translated words... and some have questioned me on this... *Why do we need to know the Greek words...it's hard enough understanding the English words!... we have enough to think about trying to figure out what you're trying to say...why are the Greek words important to us?*

Somebody else pointed out that they had heard a preacher on TV dissing preachers who point out Greek words in their sermons.... *They're just showing off... trying to make them look smart.*

Let me tell you my "why I point out the original languages"...a big, big reason is that for every English word... there are ten Greek words.... in other words... There are ten times more Greek words than there are English.

For every 100 English words.... there are 1000 Greek words... on the average...take the English word "Love"...depending on your translation... there are at least 641 times the word "Love" is used in the N.T.... there are at least six Greek words that we translate as "Love

*Eros*, or sexual passion. ...

*Philia*, or deep friendship. ...

*Ludus*, or playful love. ...

*Agape*, or sacrificial love. ...

*Pragma*, or longstanding love. ...enduring love

*Philautia*, or love of the self.

When the English translator comes up to one of those Greek words... he just puts down "love"... so we can get closer to what a passage means.... What the original author was saying if we reference the original language... . ]

This passage is no exception... **Read verse 1**

But in the Greek... the first word is "**Dare**"... **Dare any of yourselves having a matter between another one**... "Dare" gets lost in the English... tucked away... but "Dare" is important... it sets the tone... it reveals Paul's anger.... **Dare any of you!** Dare is to venture... to be bold...but Dare here suggest "shame"... *shame on any of you who when he has a case against another be tried before the unrighteous.*

*It's ASTONISHING...shocking...shameful... that any believer would even consider going to law against another believer before a non-believing (unrighteous) judge.*

Another important word not to glide by is the word we translate as “case”... (1) **Does any of you when he has a “case”...** In English, a “case” could be anything... it could be a possible murder... traffic violation... divorce... but the Greek word here is *pragma* which we get the word *pragmatic* from...

**Pragma**... or the **pragmatic** literally are situations which are not clear as to what is right or wrong...they are minor disputes that find difficulty in resolve... these are not major legal suits... these are not crimes... like murder or robbery or embezzlement... these are minor... civil matters... the issue here is not that someone broke the law..... rather there's a disagreement.

To get a greater feel for the word...2 Timothy 2:4 **No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in affairs of everyday life, but rather tries to please his commanding officer....** That's *pragmateia*... pragmatic...**affairs of everyday life.**

I think I'm correct when I say that most disputes between Christians are very small stuff... probably most disputes in life are small stuff... but small stuff if not dealt with properly can turn into big stuff...

So Paul is reprimanding his church for taking their “affairs of everyday life” that cannot be settled between the two.... To a judge...a court OUTSIDE of the church... unbelievers.... Why shouldn't we?

I mean there are good to great non-Christian attorneys and judges out there aren't there?... what's so wrong with finding an outside of the church arbitrator?... To explain... Paul takes us through three arguments:

1. Believers are more competent.
2. Believers are more capable to make decisions.
3. Believers lose their case going outside regardless of the outcome.

### **1. Believers are more competent.**

Competent = having the necessary ability, knowledge, or skill to do something successfully.

#### **Read verse 2**

This is very important... Paul is using an argument technique right from philosophy and logic... we could simply call it *The argument from greater to lesser*... another way to say it... from *higher to lower*....



**The greater here** is that the saints.... All believers of Jesus Christ...you and me if you're a believer...all those in the Corinthian church are going to become the highest of courts... The highest of judges... way higher than our supreme court justices... they...we...all true Christians will be judges of the world!

Paul's not talking about now... he's looking into the final eschatology of the church...[won't dive into this now, but...] several places in scripture tell us that God's people will eventually rule and reign over all the world.

Daniel 7:22

**22 until the Ancient of Days came and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom....**talking about the last days...

Matthew 19:28

**28 And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**

Revelation 20:4

**4 Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their foreheads and on their hands; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.**

The point is... *"hey church...if God is going to appoint you as judge over all the world... all unbelievers... why on earth would you take your unresolved pragmatic...your simple everyday matters of life to them??!!"*

Do you see the greater to lesser argument?...the church is the greater...the church is the supreme entity of the world!..... Why would you take your matters to the lesser.... The world... the unrighteous... the unbelievers.

I think this is a very important principle for all of us to understand and implement in our own lives...I would go so far to say that if you are a Christian... when it comes to your personal issues... you should always seek the greater.

**Illustration:** You're a Christian couple... been married for seven years... and now you've got some marital issues... and you just can't seem to work them out...you need some outside advice... so the wife goes and talks to her friends at work about it... after all she works with

them every day... they've never stepped a foot into a church or even own a bible.... But they're your good friends.

*I'm really having trouble in my marriage... my husband doesn't communicate with me... he doesn't pay attention to me like I need...*

What are they going to tell you?... what will be their counsel?... *Dump the smuck... get rid of him!... don't waste your life putting up with that!... go and enjoy life... there are many fish in the sea!...life is too short to put up with that....*

Or you could seek some solid Christian counseling... someone founded in God's word... that knows that God works through our adversity right?...knows the true meaning of marriage... as God designed it to be.... you dump your spouse for a new one just carries with it a plethora of new problems and unresolved old ones...

You go to the greater... you go to the "church"

That's the picture here in Corinthians... not only are they.. the saints... the believers going to eventually judge the world.... Look at verse 3

### **Read verse 3**

This has puzzled many over the years... what does it mean?... some say it means not so much that we will assess and dish out rewards and punishments for angels... but rather we will rule over them.. again in the last days...

Some think this refers only to the "bad angels"...the fallen angels.... Or we know them as demons.... I wouldn't mind getting to rule over the demons some day!... of course however we rule or judge the angels it is all because of our status with Jesus Christ... Jesus speaking in Revelation 3:21

**21 The one who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat with My Father on His throne.**

The point is... Greater to lesser... If believers are going to rule over angels.. they should be able to resolve the "pragmatic" of their ordinary lives...

One more thing before we move on.... One little Greek word not to miss... the end of verse 3 **Do you not know that we will judge angels... how much more the things of this life.... life...** from the Greek word *bios*... or *biotika*... we get biology... but bios in the 1<sup>st</sup> century was not about animals or plants...

It means one's livelihood or occupation...*means* of livelihood... 1<sup>st</sup> John 2:15-17

**15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful *pride of life*...**

The same word... bios = life... "**pride**" here is "confidence" not conceit... this is the boasting of having confidence in the means of your livelihood... the idea of placing your confidence in your bank account... the material stuff you have acquired... your health plan... your retirement fund... 401K... all that stuff that you highly value BUT is going to turn to dust.... That is your *bios*.

So now you can really see the greater to the lesser..... don't you know you will judge angels!!! You will sit on the throne with Jesus and rule over the world... the angels,... the demons!... don't you think you can handle the puny bios of your life!?..... all that seemingly important stuff that in the long run dissipates forever?!

So... believers... because of their status with Jesus Christ... are more competent to judge than is the world.... Not only that...

## **2. Believers are more capable (than the world) to make decisions.**

### **Read verse 4**

My Bible says "matters"... some of yours say "judgments"... so what are some "matters" of this life?... Let's take just one of a gazillion... we might begin with life itself.... The value of life... do you think there might be a difference between how the world views a life compared to how God views a life?

Who's more Capable to make decisions regarding life?.... do I have to give examples?... what about the decision to terminate a life?.... in the womb before birth?.... outside of the womb after birth?

What about one desiring to end his life?.... The "world"... the judges in Canada recently made a judgement saying a sixteen year old boy who is depressed and finding life futile can be given drugs to end his life..... no parental consent...

We know what God thinks about that don't we?... here's the problem... some things can be legal but not moral.... Some things may have been deemed as "right" under human authority but wrong under God's authority.

All things may be "lawful" but not all things "edify"... build up the body.... 1st Corinthians 10:23... something like it just a few verses down in 6:12 **All things are lawful for me but not all things profitable...**

The point is.... God's world runs on a completely different standard... higher standard than the world's... God is the designer... the creator... the maker of the world... He has designed every

part for a purpose and a reason... who is better to make decision on the “matters of this life” than those who embrace His Word?

Are we going to seek counsel from people who have such a different world view...one that goes in the face of the God we love?

### **Read verse 5**

Paul is ticked!...You should... we should... I should be ashamed to take my matters to the world!.... they do not come close to the standard that the world operates at its greatest efficiency.... God’s design.

And he twists the knife by saying **is it really this way?... there’s not ONE wise man among you who will be able to pass judgement between his brothers?....** after going through five chapters of 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians we have learned that one thing the Corinthians prized and cherished.... The idea that they were wise!

James takes up the same issue.... Turn to James 3:13-18

First... how many of you have an unresolved conflict with another person and you know you are right?..... how many of you have an unresolved conflict with another person and you know the other person is right?

We always believe WE’RE right!...listen to the difference between wisdom from above to wisdom from below.....

### **Read James 3:13-18**

*Is it really this way?... there is not one wiser man among you?.... who will be able to pass judgement... able to look at two opposing views that are at a stalemate.... Between his brothers?...not one of you?*

**(6 NIV) But instead one goes to law against another—and this in front of unbelievers!**

What kind of testimony is that?...it is always a negative to have the dirty laundry of Christians displayed to the world!.... nothing good ever comes from that!...It defiles the very name of God!

So.. Believers are in a position to be more competent and more capable than the unrighteous... the unbeliever....finally...

### **3. Believers lose their case going outside regardless of the outcome.**

You only engage in a lawsuit to win... right?... Paul tells the Corinthians and us... if we take our dispute between a brother or sister to the outside world.... We have already lost our case...

### **Read verses 7 and 8**

Here's the thing... nobody wins... Paul says "**it is already a failure for you...**" you have failed to take care of your disputes in a godly way... a way that honors God... a way that puts other's interests over your own...

What's really underneath these disputes?... the same thing that is under all of our sin... it really is an elevation of the self...

Our problem is that we are overly SELF-INTERESTED.... WHAT IS THAT?... IT IS SIN ORIENTED.

A need to be right

A need for MY rights

A need to be first

A need to be recognized

A need to have all desires met

A need to protect MY stuff

A need to have my needs and desires satisfied FIRST

A need for entitlement

The sin under the sin.... The leaven in the church.

Are we really supposed to love your enemies?...pray for those who torture you?... those who persecute you?... someone sues you for your shirt give them your tunic too?... really?....

Everything Jesus said had eternity in view...MUCH LARGER THAN OUR MATTERS... this world is so very temporal! Why would we fight for the things of this world?... WHEN WE DON'T HAVE ETERNITY IN VIEW.... When all we see is what is in front of us...

**Why not be wronged?**

**Why not be defrauded?**

Application: Whenever we focus on the eternal (keep you mind above not on the things on this earth) there is a real perspective and peace in our hearts... the degree in which you allow your heart and mind to wander off into the eternal.... The less you will be concerned with the matters of this life!