

Thorsten Evans / General

The Church Built Up / Quarrel / 1 Corinthians 6:1–11

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We are continuing a series of messages from the book of 1 Corinthians titled “The Church Built Up”. When I was praying about where to preach next, I sensed God wanted us to be Built Up in preparation for what He has next for us.

I cannot say with certainty right now what God has next for Crossroads, but I know there is something coming. He is preparing this body of believers for something.

The book of 1 Corinthians was written as a letter to the church in Corinth that was dealing with a lot of issues. Paul starts the letter off addressing not only the church at Corinth, but it is also written to all who call Jesus Lord.

That means this letter is for us as well. The intent of the letter is to renovate the hearts and minds of God’s people. We need that from time-to-time. Just like carpet gets worn in patterns based on traffic, we can get complacent with areas of our lives that need freshening up.

Today we talk about disagreements in the body. Really, we talked about this last week as well when we covered chapter 5 and the idea of church discipline.

The passage this week deals with lawsuits and in effect disagreements. So, what do we do when we disagree? Notice I didn’t say if we disagree. Disagreement will happen. There’s a saying that in a room of 3 people, you’ll have 4 opinions. Church is no different. How do we handle disagreement?...let’s read

**1 Corinthians 6:1–6 NIV**

<sup>1</sup> If any of you has a dispute with another, do you dare to take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the Lord’s people? <sup>2</sup> Or do you not know that the Lord’s people will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? <sup>3</sup> Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life! <sup>4</sup> Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, do you ask for a ruling from those whose way of life is scorned in the church? <sup>5</sup> I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? <sup>6</sup> But instead, one brother takes another to court—and this in front of unbelievers!

Paul wants us to handle our disputes internally in the church. Really this is the model of Matthew 18 that we read last week. Here is the pattern: If something is wrong, talk to the person. If the person won’t listen or the issue is not resolved, take a trusted person with you. If that doesn’t work, bring the issue before the church.

Paul is encouraging us that we will one day have this duty to judge even angels. And if that will be our job one day, why not practice on each other as we negotiate our way through disputes.

The goal is to judge the disputes with competence and fairness. We should be able to expect that from Christ followers.

I think there are some churches that have taken this scripture too far and have silenced those who have been wronged and claimed that a dispute was settled when it was really only hidden from public view.

Let's keep reading and see the result of not taking care of our own disputes:

**1 Corinthians 6:7 NIV**

<sup>7</sup> The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?

By not dealing with our disputes, we have shown ourselves defeated in the culture that is in desperate need of hope and a better way.

Paul starts here with the plaintiff - the one who has been wronged. Paul says that we should be willing to be wronged or cheated than to not take care of our disputes within the church.

I want to clarify here that this does not mean we don't speak up when something is wrong. The right thing is to speak up within the church, and for the church to deal with and judge the matter fairly.

Again, this is likely a verse that some churches have quoted in order to silence those who have been mistreated in the church. I am not advocating that, nor do I believe Paul is advocating that. If that was taking place in the Corinthian church, I expect Paul would have spoken harshly about that.

Remember, this letter was written about the circumstances and situations that were taking place in the Corinthian church. According to commentators, they were likely suing each other over property disputes, business dealings and possibly matters of slander.

Given that context, it makes sense that Paul would tell them to accept being wronged or cheated than to bring a public lawsuit.

Having admonished the plaintiff, Paul turns his attention to the defendant:

**1 Corinthians 6:8 NIV**

<sup>8</sup> Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers and sisters.

He doesn't let the person doing the wrong off the hook. He calls out their behavior as well. There is no place for this in the church...

### **1 Corinthians 6:9–10 NIV**

<sup>9</sup> Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men <sup>10</sup> nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

People with these qualities active and present in their life will not inherit the kingdom of God. Notice it doesn't say that if you have ever done or been these things, this list is present tense, here and now verbs and qualities.

### **1 Corinthians 6:11 NIV**

<sup>11</sup> And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Pre-Christ some of us were all of that previous list and then some. Some of you found Christ before you got to check any of those on that list. Praise God for all of us though that we can say that is what we were, BUT.

I am so grateful that our story is different now. Paul tells us that it is different because of these 3 words. washed, sanctified and justified.

We were all (or some) of those bad things, but then we were washed and we were sanctified and we were justified, all because of Jesus.

This week one of my girls had an English lesson on passive versus active verbs. An active verb is something that the subject is doing. Example: The dog ate food. The dog is actively doing. A passive verb is one that is either being done to or done for the subject. Example: The dog was fed food. In both sentences, we have a dog and food, but the dog had no control over the food in the second. There is someone else in the second sentence.

Heading back to our verse, we see that the verb tense here is also passive. You is the subject, but 'you' didn't wash or sanctify or justify, those were all done for you.

They were done for you in the name of Jesus, and it was done for you by the Spirit of God.

I know some of you strive to do all the right things, make all the right choices and obey, but there isn't enough obeying and right choices that can fully wash you, sanctify you or justify you.

Let's look at those three words - wash, sanctify and justify.

First, you were washed by the Spirit in the Name of Jesus. This means that all that filth that resulted from your sin. You have been made clean, spotless.

Second you were sanctified by the Spirit in the Name of Jesus. To sanctify literally means to set apart as holy. Sanctified objects got a special role and place. They are no

longer common, but get an elevated status.

Thirdly you were justified by the Spirit in the Name of Jesus. Have you ever tried to justify something that you couldn't. It's a common thing people TRY to do. We are always trying to be right. Only Jesus was able to justify us before God. We have literally been made righteous before God.

Church, it is important that we lean into what the Spirit has done for us in the Name of Jesus. We're clean, we're set apart, we're made right. When we lean into our identity in Christ together as a church we can then more easily settle our disputes. We can judge right from wrong and help heal the wrongs. We won't have need to go to outside courts to settle our arguments.

**\*\*Title Slide\*\***

Invitation to be washed, sanctified and justified