

“Where Wrongs Are to be Righted!”

1 Corinthians 6:1-11

Intro. – Have you ever been wronged for something that was right? A Barbara Cooper thinks she has and is a bit upset. Barbara received a thank-you note from a friend whom she had helped. In the envelope were five lottery tickets. All five of the tickets had been scratched off revealing the #'s or whatever. The note read as follows: “Thank you much for your help. As a gift, I bought you some lottery tickets. Sorry, you didn’t win.”

What’s a person to do when they are wronged? How are matters to be settled and who should be involved? Is there a right way to make wrongs right? Indeed there is and such is the very purpose of this text.

1 Corinthians 5 & 6 cover how to handle controversy in the local church. In chap. 5, the issue was immorality in the church. In 6:1-11, we learn that wrongs are to be righted within the church... A prohibition is given to all Christians – not to settle any differences amongst themselves in courts of heathen judges. Rather, all differences are to be settled within the church. In other words, it would be better to suffer wrong and wait for the Lord’s justice than to quarrel and take each other to court.

Verse one, Paul is not saying Christians should never go to court. It may be necessary to settle a claim with non-Christians... But, when it comes to one another *in Christ* litigation is foolish and shameful. Secular courts are not the place to settle disputes amongst Christians.

Paul uses several rhetorical questions to remind us what our attitude/actions ought to be when wronged by a bro/sis. These questions form 4 exhortations given in text. These clearly show where wrongs are to be righted!

Purpose: to better understand all wrongs will be righted by Christ

I Don’t Forget the RESPONSIBILITY Before Us (vv 2-4)

- the following are reasons Christians are competent to *judge* each other:

A. The Saints Shall Judge the World

1. A basic teaching of Scripture is that saints of Christ shall judge the world (Daniel 7:18-22; Psalm 49:14; Revelation 2:26; 3:21; 20:4)
2. Two uses of the word κρίνω (krino) = deliver a verdict and in v 2 used present and future tense.
 - a. present: saints of X who rightly handle Word “judge” the world presently (Hebrews 11:7).
 - b. future: saints of X will reign with X = ruling/judging righteously (Matthew 12:41).
3. Saints being prepared to rule/reign righteously in the present, as well as, in the future>

B. The Saints Shall Judge Angels

1. Christians will be qualified to see the justice of the sentence pronounced on fallen angels.
2. God is preparing a people who will be so “aware” of the motives of all beings, that it is His will they will participate in judging fallen angels.
3. Again, the Word when accurately and faithfully handled, enables saints of God to judge the world and eventually fallen angels.

C. An Argument from Major to Minor

1. Point is clear – it’s ludicrous to think that those (saints of God) who are being prepared to judge the world and angels are unprepared to deal with minor differences.
2. A couple of analogies will help illus. this further:
 - a. like Supreme Court Justice coming home and find their kids fighting... can’t solve the issue; so, goes next door to get his neighbor to help them resolve the matter...
 - b. like a CPA asking their son/daughter to help them balance his check book...
3. J.W. McGarvey (author/preacher/teacher) wrote: “If called on as a church to judge any matter, would you choose your least competent? I ask you this to make you ashamed, for you do even more foolishly when you submit your cases to worldlings, who are even less competent judges.”
4. We must not forget this responsibility given us... -- such will enable us to know where wrongs are to be righted!

II Don't Overlook RESOURCES Amongst Us (vv 5-6)

A. God Has Equipped the Church

1. Ephesians 4:11-16 = we are equipped by God's power/wisdom and NOT our own!
2. By being Biblical or aligning ourselves with Truth we are equipped to make right judgments... by accepting His grace we are given gift of His Spirit = enabled to make right judgments.
3. Not to suggest we are inherently better... - only by His righteousness imputed to us can we be renewed in mind AND spirit.
4. His Spirit within us ENABLES us to be spiritually discerning and morally discriminating = something the world cannot do!

B. Human Law is Limited

1. By its very nature, human law deals in a limited sphere – e.g. restricted in judging actions and not one's heart or motives.
2. Because of this, Paul appeals that we use the resources available in church = *wise man* certainly doesn't limit but includes elders/shepherds of church (spiritual leaders = men of the Word moved and motivated by it)...
3. Summary - 3 things happen when a brother takes a brother to court:
 - a. harms the church's influence...
 - b. harms the brother's relationship with his brother/sister...
 - c. harms the brother's relationship with God...

III Don't Betray the CALLING Given to Us (vv 7-8)

A. Called to be Saints

1. Paul implies they were betraying their calling as Christian by way they were treating each other.
2. Called to share *in Christ* = to share the wise/strong by the quality of their life together in Christ.
3. Instead, by their attitudes AND actions they were living defeated lives... living/behaving none differently than the world giving into temptations of resentment and covetousness...
4. They may have been winning lawsuits, but at a terrible expense – the expense of each other.
5. In short – it's a no win situation when brother takes a brother to court!

B. Called to Take Wrong

1. Retaliation is the order of the day – ours is a get back, get even time of history.
2. We've been called to demonstrate a different mindset/life style. We've been called to "break the cycle" of *I don't get mad, I simply get even*.
3. Will this cycle... ever be broken? Is it not better to take the wrong than to be covetous? Is this not what our Lord taught in Matthew 5:38-42?
4. Not to suggest we become punching bags or pacifist, BUT Xtians are called to break the cycle:
 - a. Illus. – 1980 Los Gatos, CA man wrong leg amputated. Friends said, "sue!" but chose not to...
 - b. Illus. – David hunted by Saul... 2 times David could have killed... friends urged him to do so... but David chose instead to break the cycle.
 - c. 1 Peter 2:23 – "And while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.
5. Are we willing to give up our rights so others might be healed? Let's not betray our calling.

IV Don't Deny the POWER Within Us (vv 9-11)

A. Remember Who We Were

1. Unrighteous will not inherit "*kingdom of God*" or heaven!
2. List is given: *sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, homosexual offenders, thieves, greedy, drunkards, slanderers, swindlers etc.*
3. "*And such were some of you...*" – remember because of our past each of us deserve anything but the grace of God! Our past speaks for itself (James 2:10 – "...*guilty of one guilty breaking all it!*")

4. By Spirit of God we are assured of the POWER necessary to right all wrongs = all to be done in the confines of Christ's Church!

B. Remember Who We Are

1. Washed, sanctified, justified = all in aorist tense showing all happened at SAME TIME!
2. Saved BY grace, THROUGH faith, AT baptism, FOR good works...
3. "...by the Spirit of our God." – His Spirit empowers us to live beyond world and its selfishness.
4. By Spirit of God we are assured of the POWER necessary to right all wrongs – all to be done in the confines of Christ's Church!

Conclusion: Life can be tough and simply down-right unfair. Well, I found another excellent example of this and will use it as a summary to this text/message.

Take for example a husband who wants to say "I love you" to his wife. A dozen roses cost \$48.95 (I know because I called local florist and found out). That same husband's granddaughter/son can take a fist full of dandelions and accomplish the same thing and probably more. It isn't right! It isn't fair is it?

A new lawyer just opened his office. He saw the door open and thought to himself, "Ah, finally a client. I must impress them." So the attorney picked up the phone, "No," he said, "I'm sorry. I can't take your case, even for \$5000. I'm just too busy." He replaced the receiver and looked up at the man who came through the door. "And how may I help you?" he asked the man briskly. "Nothing really," the man replied, "I just came to connect your telephone."

Nothing against judges and attorneys as a whole, but to be honest, I have a whole lot more confidence in the saints of God making wiser and better judgments. After all, it's the Lord's Church where all wrongs will be righted!