

A Black Eye For Christianity *1 Corinthians 6:1-8*

Good Morning.

In 2018, the parents of a 30-year-old man resorted to drastic measures to get their son to finally move out, by suing him.

Court documents say Michael Rotondo did not pay rent or help with chores, and ignored his parents' offers of money to get him to move out of their home.

Despite giving him five eviction letters, Christina and Mark Rotondo said their son still refused to move out.

His parents filed their case with the County Court, near Syracuse, New York, after months of urging their son to leave.

The parents' lawyer told the news agency, they did not know how else to get their adult son out of their house.

The Parents finally wrote a legal letter to their son that said, "*We have decided that you must leave this house immediately,*"

When Michael ignored the letter, his parents wrote up a proper eviction notice with the help of their lawyer.

"You are hereby evicted,"

"A legal enforcement procedure will be instituted immediately if you do not leave by 15 March 2018."

Ultimately, the case did go to court and the Judge sided with the parents and evicted the son.

Please open your Bibles to *1 Corinthians 6* as we continue.

Last week, we learned that we are called to disassociate with a Christian, who refuses to repent, while they are under formal church correction;

The goal is for them to miss the **fellowship** and the support of the church to come to a right way of thinking about their sin.

We said, as Christians, living in a **dying** society, we are to **interact** with the unsaved in order to show them a better way to live, and the way to obtain eternal life through Jesus Christ.

But we are not to judge the unsaved with principles of Christianity.

Today, Paul will show what a poor example Christians suing a believer is, being careful not to give Christianity a black-eye.

I. Don't sue a fellow Christian.

Read *1 Corinthians 6:1-2*

The Church was quickly losing its **witness** for Christ in the world; first having open sins and now suing one another.

Local judges in Corinth sat on what is known as the “bema” seat located in the marketplace to decide civil matters, so anyone who wanted to could watch the legal battles as they happened.

Greek culture enjoyed and celebrated civil and legal arguments.

America has become very similar to the Greek culture and we have a law suit for almost anything.

If your coffee is too hot, sue the company; if your coffee isn't hot enough, sue the company. If your coffee is just right, you should sue the company for taking away your right to complain.

Paul starts with some strong words, "***Dare any of you***", this means how dare you or *how could you be so bold as to do this?*

It seems Paul had heard of a certain Christian who had an issue with a fellow Christian, and instead of handling it Biblically, they took the matter to the pagan court.

Notice this instruction has nothing to do with suing a non-believer or a corporation; but it is speaking of litigating a matter between believers.

Paul was telling these Christians what a terrible witness this act was to the unbelieving world.

Can't you just hear some of these saints telling Paul, "*You're not the boss of me*"?

Paul asks, how dare you, go before the ***unrighteous*** i.e., the unjust.

Paul is not necessarily saying these judges were bad in their judgment rather they were unsaved and therefore they are not justified **spiritually**, in the sight of God.

Why would these Christians try to find justice from those who aren't justified before God?

It is a crying shame when a so called Christian **business person** is dishonest and takes advantages of another Christian.

I hired a Christian contractor from a church I was attending and he took us to the cleaners, by not completing work and what he did complete was very poor workmanship.

His story to the church leadership was it very different, and he refused to meet together with me and the leadership to discuss it.

We had photos and all the proof you can imagine, but once he refused to go any further, instead of suing him, we decided to take a huge loss and move on rather than going any further.

Sometimes in life, unfortunately, this doesn't work out this way, and lawsuits get filed because one side will not reconcile.

Paul asks the question, why do ***you go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints?***

In the last couple of sermons, we discussed how we are to follow the procedures outlined in His Word for disagreements with other Christians, from ***Matthew 18:15***

We first allow love to cover the offense and if it is too serious as an offense, so then we go to the person one on one.

If the offender will not repent and reconcile, we are to take two other mature believers with us as the next step.

If the offender still remains stiff necked and unrepentant, then we are to take the matter to the leadership of the church and allow the church to correct the matter.

We are to humbly correct a kingdom sibling; we must refrain from publically condemning or gossiping about the person.

If one of the sides refuses to handle the correction biblically in this way, the church really cannot do anything about it.

If either the offender or the one offended doesn't follow the biblical method it's SIN. Siblings are to handle things biblically.

Paul asks the question, "***Do you not know that Saints will judge the world?***" Some Like J. Vernon McGee believes this means saints will pass judgment on the affairs of this world.

Revelation 5:10 And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth." NKJV

True followers of Jesus Christ will **rule** and reign with Him as judges in the Millennial Kingdom of Christ.

The 1,000-year reign of Jesus after the tribulation and before the Great White Throne Judgment of the wicked, is where Jesus rules a perfect kingdom and as His followers we reign with Him.

2 Timothy 2:12 If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us.

2 Timothy 2:13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself. NKJV

Someday, Christians will judge the world; *so why would believers, allow non-believers to decide matters between Christians?*

II. Christians will judge the angels.

Read *1 Corinthians 6:3-4*

Ephesians 3:10 to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, NKJV

God wanted to educate the angels, principalities and other heavenly being through the church.

David Guzik said, “God *doesn’t* use the *angels* to reveal His wisdom to the saints, but *He does use the saints* to reveal His wisdom to the **angelic beings**,

...both faithful and fallen angels.

This reminds us that we are called for something far greater than our own individual salvation and sanctification.

We (the Church) are called to be the means by which God teaches the universe a lesson, and a beautiful lesson.” (Guzik)

I have said before, “*We don’t go to church; we are the Church*”

Imagine for a moment being one of the eternal beings around the throne of God; learning the lessons of God’s grace by witnessing fallen men being redeemed.

Angels are created beings and they are not created in the image of God, nor are they all knowing like the Lord.

But they were there when the Lord created everything else;

The time of the creation of angels is something the Bible does not specifically mention, but we know through scripture that they existed before the creation of humans.

So it seems as if the angels **witnessed** the Lord make the stars, space, the planets, earth and everything on it.

Imagine being an angel being, after witnessing the goodness of the creator and seeing Him make man in God's image.

Think about the jealousy this must have caused to Satan and the other fallen angels;

Especially after Adam and Eve sinned and rebelled against the Lord.

I read an article about the jealousy and fall of Satan.

“Many argued that the devil was the leader of a group of angels who were jealous that Adam has been given such an elevated status in God's creation.”

Can you just imagine the accuser of the brethren, (Satan), rubbing this failure of man in the face of God?

Satan may have said, *“You made these weak, worthless beings in Your image and now look, they have failed You Lord.”*

So we are witnesses of God's grace **to** the angels and now here the Apostle Paul says *we will judge the angels*.

Man was made in the image of God, but after the Fall in *Genesis*, man is a little lower than the angels in the flesh.

Hebrews 2:9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. NKJV

By taking upon Himself flesh in the Incarnation Jesus was made “*a little lower than the heavenly beings*” but at the same time having the very nature of God.

Paul said *Philippians, Jesus “made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant” when He took on human flesh*

The apostle Paul was telling believers that we will not only rule the world with Jesus some day; but also judge angels some day.

The Greek word for “**judge**” is “*krino*”, which means “*to rule or govern.*”

We will have authority over the holy angels, for they have no sin for which to be “judged” in the sense of “condemned.”

We know from some Old Testament passages that the Lord judged the fallen angels, but in glory, God's children will be given a higher position than the angels.

Unlike the angels, man was created in God's image and once saved; people are **redeemed** by Jesus Christ, and restored.

Angels are not created in His image and nor redeemed by Christ. Christ is exalted above the angels and we are made in His image so we will share in His authority, as we rule and reign with Him.

G. Campbell Morgan said, "*How great is God's destiny for redeemed men and women!*"

"Is there any statement in the apostolic writings in certain senses which has more definite and tremendous implication of the union of the saints with their Lord?"

Re-read ***1 Corinthians 6:4***

Someday, Christians will judge the angels; *why would believers, allow non-believers to **decide** matters between Christians?*

III. Realize the error of the decision.

Read ***1 Corinthians 6:5-6***

Paul had said in ***1 Corinthians 4:14*** "***I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you.***" ***NKJV***

But in this matter Paul wants to ***shame them*** and make them aware of how bad suing one another in secular courts, really is.

Remember the people at Corinth were proud of how much wisdom they thought they possessed, but here Paul plainly asks them, if there is really a ***wise person*** amongst them.

Brother goes to law against brother; again, this instruction has nothing to do with suing a non-believer or a corporation; but it is speaking of litigating a matter between believers.

This also does **not stop** Christians **against another** involving a **criminal** trial. If someone commits a crime it must be dealt with

Leon Morris said in this instance, “***To judge***’ means to give a ***decision*** rather than conduct a trial.” (Leon Morris)

If someone who is a Christian commits a crime, I do believe Law enforcement and the courts will need to be involved.

Some can take this teaching to an illogical conclusion and allow abuse to go unreported and that is not what Paul was saying.

Paul himself, when he felt his rights as a Roman Citizen were being infringed upon, appealed all the way to Caesar.

Acts 25:9 Festus, wanting to do the Jews a favor, answered Paul and said, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and there be judged before me concerning these things?"

Acts 25:10 So Paul said, "I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you very well know.

Acts 25:11 For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying; but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. I appeal to Caesar." NKJV

But here, Paul teaches it was wrong when a brother goes to the secular courts with disagreements against another Christian.

Within our modern laws we have what is known as Ecclesiastical Abstention Doctrine.

According to the Dallas College of Law, it basically means that courts cannot decide a dispute involving the internal management of a religious organization.

The idea is that secular courts should not be involved in religious disputes as it would inherently “chill” religious freedom.

It prevents judges and juries from deciding the merit of a religious belief and whether someone was correctly abiding by those beliefs.

On its face, it appears straightforward and clear that courts should not decide who should or should not be a minister.

However, religious organizations often serve secular functions.

Churches are not immune to all laws and Courts can expand the use of neutral principles of law in cases involving a crime.

Guzik said, *“It is 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 today, even as in Paul’s day, there is no reason for Christians to sue one another.”* (Guzik)

IV. Your win in court is a loss.

Read *1 Corinthians 6:7-8*

Wiersbe said, “*The members suing each other had already lost. Even if some of them won their cases, they had incurred a far greater loss in their disobedience to the Word of God.*”

“*Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you*” can be translated, “*It is already a complete defeat for you.*” (Wiersbe)

A lot of us have a hard time being taken advantage of, we hate to be used or fooled.

As the Who has said, “*We won’t be fooled again*”.

Notice what Paul says about the importance of our Christian witness verses insisting on our personal rights.

1 Corinthians 6:7 Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated?

But Paul, I am an American and I have rights that our forefathers died to grant me.

Paul would say in *Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. NKJV*

He would also say, ***Colossians 3:3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. NKJV***

Guzik said, “*It would be better to accept wrong.*

It would be better to let yourselves be cheated than to defend your “rights” at the expense of God’s glory and the higher good of His kingdom.”

Then notice, ***1 Corinthians 6:8 No, you yourselves do wrong and cheat, and you do these things to your brethren! NKJV***

Not only were these Christians not willing to suffer a wrong for the sake of Christ; Paul actually accuses them of being **guilty** of the same wrong doing themselves.

My sin looks terrible when you do it.

It is a crying shame when a Christian cheats someone in a business transaction; it can cause such a black-eye for Christianity.

Again, I personally had a Christian contractor cheat me on a home we were building and it was such a poor witness for not only other Christians, but especially for the unsaved.

We should never cheat anyone, but we should especially treat brothers and sisters well, knowing we have the same Father.

Galatians 6:10, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith. NKJV

Many people have rejected Christianity because of things they have witnessed among God's children.

After reading about the life of Christ, Gandhi especially admired the Sermon on the Mount.

To his dismay, Gandhi did not feel as if Christians lived up to the standards preached by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount.

The Christian missionary E. Stanley Jones asked him: "*Mr. Gandhi, though you quote the words of Christ often, why is it that you appear to so adamantly reject becoming his follower*"?

Gandhi said, "*Oh, I don't reject your Christ. I love your Christ. It is just that so many of you Christians are so unlike your Christ*".

We can never live Christ like, until we **die** to **self** and allow the Holy Spirit full control of our lives.

V. Practical Application.

Remember the story I started with where the parents had to evict their adult son and ultimately, the case did go to court and the Judge sided with the parents and evicted the son.

Who was at fault? Does it really matter, that case was a crying shame of how family members treat each other.

Again, we must realize Paul was speaking to people who were already saved; he was not telling people how to get saved with these instructions.

Christians, even after salvation, sin and behave in ways that are not pleasing to Christ when acting in the flesh.

Our pride can easily lead us into situations where we fail to represent the Lord in a way that shows the lost world there is a better way.

If all Christ followers surrendered to the Spirit and **humbled** ourselves, these issues would not exist in the body of Christ.

Paul is instructing these followers to ask themselves, “*How are we treating each other?*” because the world is watching and wondering what makes us different.

Have we been transformed? Are we different? Do we love each other the way Jesus told us to?

With love and compassion for each other, we should resolve the issues between us without involving the world.

The best way for that to happen is to sit down and talk; using the Word of God and allowing the Holy Spirit to have control rather than insisting on our own rights.

By our example and testimony, Christ will be so appealing to the lost because of the love and the grace we show to each other.

After all, this life is simply a dress rehearsal for eternity, so at the end of the day; our possessions, rights and positions should all be given to Christ as an offering.

We hold on loosely and allow the Holy Spirit free reign in our lives as we live for Jesus everyday in a dark, lost world.