

April 7, 2019

What are You Fighting For?

1 Corinthians 6:1-8

Intro

- It feels like the culture is out-pacing the church in the category of discipleship.

The Unique Identity of God's People (v. 1-3)

➤ *Inside-Out*

- This church failed to address internal things, but then they made external what should have been handled internally.
- This passage doesn't teach that believers are exempt from all outside judgment.

"If someone is peeling out of your driveway in your new car, you need not have a family discussion over the likelihood of the thief being a baptized Christian before you call the cops." –**Douglas Wilson**, *A Justice Primer*, 187

"Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God." (Romans 13:1)

"Paul instructs the church to handle these standard issues internally. This instruction does not imply that all things that happen within the church are necessarily in-house issues. Throughout history churches have made the mistake of trying to handle issues in-house that require the intervention of the authorities. If this had been an issue like embezzlement, abuse, sexual misconduct—any matter with actual [criminal] ramifications—Paul would have called for the intervention of the authorities. The scope of the passage is limited to intra-church disputes that don't need to be elevated outside the community." –**Stephen Um**, *1 Corinthians: The Word of the Cross*, 103

Current Distinction (v. 2)

“To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together” (1:2)

- Unbelievers are not in a place of exercising judgment over spiritual matters.

“The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.” (2:14)

“As James 4:1-3 teaches, prolonged, intense conflict is generally caused or aggravated by sinful desires that war in people’s hearts. This is as true for lawsuits as it is with most other conflicts. When two Christians lock horns over legal issues, there are almost always sin issues involved. These may include honoring your contracts (Ps. 15:4), telling the truth (Eph. 4:15), shifting responsibility and getting caught up in self-justification (Matt. 7:3-5), harboring bitterness or anger toward someone (Matt. 5:21-22), refusing to repair damage done to someone (Num. 5:5-7), or cheating or otherwise doing wrong to someone (1 Cor. 6:7-8). Civil courts can make rulings on legal and property issues, but they have no jurisdiction or ability to address sin or other matters of the heart... Only the church can authoritatively carry out the ministry that is needed to thoroughly resolve a lawsuit between believers. ...If the dispute involves matters of the heart, as almost all lawsuits do, God wants it resolved through the one institution he established to minister to the heart, which is the local church.”
–**Ken Sande**, *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict*, 280

- The trend of believers looking to unbelieving “experts” to explain life...

Future Destiny (v. 2-3)

“You will judge the world”

*“The Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given for the saints of the Most High”
(Daniel 7:22)*

“You will judge angels”

The Sanctified Wisdom of God's Community (v. 4-5)

- The church is supposed to be an alternative to the wisdom of this world. We don't conduct our affairs in ways that reflect the brokenness of our culture.

"Here is one place, however (contrast our comments on 5:9-13), where Christian alternatives are not only desirable but mandatory."

–**Craig Blomberg**, *1 Corinthians*, 87

"One reason our courts have become overburdened is that Americans are increasingly turning to the courts for relief from a range of personal distresses and anxieties. Remedies for personal wrongs that once were considered the responsibility of institutions other than the courts are now boldly asserted as legal 'entitlements.' The courts have been expected to fill the void created by the decline of church, family, and neighborhood unity."

–**Chief Justice Warren Burger** (1982) [Cited in Sande, *The Peacemaker*, 54]

- God's community is to bring its insight and resources to support reconciliation.

➤ *Church Membership*

- The Corinthians were more willing to trust people who had power in this world than those who had the power of God's Spirit.

"God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise... 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world..." (1:27-28)

➤ *Book of Church Order*

➤ *Court of Public Opinion*

The Compelling Beauty of God's Gospel (v. 6-8)

- Bringing another believer to court testifies that the gospel is unable to make a difference in conflict.
- No matter who wins the lawsuit, all lose. (If you're fighting for the right thing!)
- "Why not rather suffer wrong?"
- Expectation: Relationships will cost something of you. They will create discomfort... suffering... the possibility being defrauded...

"If anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name." (1 Peter 4:16)

"When he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly." (1 Peter 2:23)

- Some things do not get sorted through or remedied in this life.

"You remember Dr. Cotton Mather's advice of preparing two heaps of Incurables and Unaccountables. I think I have profited by it. When I have hurt my fingers by attempting to make crooked things straight, I have been constrained to carry them to the Lord and leave them quietly with him. And he, in due time has done that for me, which I could not do for myself. He has all hearts in his hands, and when he is pleased to say to the winds and the waves, 'Peace, be still'; a calm presently takes place (Ps. 65:7).

...The Lord can clear up everything, and make every crooked [way] straight, and he has appointed a day when he will do it. Till then we must wait, and it's better to wait patiently than to break our brains and our hearts, in reasoning and contrivings to as little purpose as if we were to study how to add a cubit to our stature."

–**John Newton**, *Wise Counsel: Letters to John Ryland*, 222, 154