

1 CORINTHIANS 6

DR. KEITH B. MCGEE I, PASTOR

INSTRUCTOR



Be Intentional

Philippians 2:12-13

Annual Theme 2023

1 CORINTHIANS 6

THIS CHAPTER DEALS WITH THE TWO REMAINING PROBLEMS THAT HAD BEEN REPORTED TO PAUL.

I. DISPUTES IN THE COURTS (6:1–8)

IT WAS PROBABLY THE GENTILES (GREEKS) IN THE CHURCH WHO WERE THE GUILTY PARTIES IN THIS CASE, FOR THE GREEKS WERE VERY MUCH WRAPPED UP IN COURTS AND LAW. EACH GREEK CITY HAD ITS COURTS AND COUNCILS, AND IT WAS NOT UNCOMMON FOR A SON TO SUE HIS OWN FATHER! OF COURSE, THE BASIC PROBLEM WAS CARNALITY (3:1–4); WHEN CHRISTIANS ARE IMMATURE AND NOT GROWING, THEY CANNOT GET ALONG WITH ONE ANOTHER. THEY LACK THE SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT TO SETTLE AND SOLVE PERSONAL PROBLEMS. HOW TRAGIC IT IS WHEN A LOCAL CHURCH IS TORN ASUNDER BY LAWSUITS AMONG THE MEMBERS! WE ARE LIVING IN AN ERA WHEN LAWSUITS ARE THE “GOING THING” AND A QUICK WAY TO TRY TO MAKE MONEY. IT SEEMS THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE COURT IS NOT JUSTICE BUT INCOME.

PAUL IS NOT CONDEMNING COURTS OF LAW (SEE ROM. 13), FOR THE GOVERNMENT IS INSTITUTED BY GOD FOR OUR GOOD. BUT MATTERS BETWEEN BELIEVERS MUST NOT BE EXPOSED BEFORE UNBELIEVERS, AND CERTAINLY AN UNSAVED JUDGE LACKS THE SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING TO DEAL WITH SPIRITUAL MATTERS (2:14–16). BY DRAGGING ONE ANOTHER TO COURT, THE CHURCH MEMBERS AT CORINTH WERE RUINING THE TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH AND DISGRACING THE NAME OF THE LORD.

HOW SHOULD CHRISTIANS SETTLE PERSONAL DIFFERENCES? THEY MUST FIRST HAVE THE RIGHT SPIRITUAL VALUES. HOW TRIVIAL THESE PERSONAL DISPUTES BECOME WHEN COMPARED TO THE GREAT ETERNAL MATTERS WE WILL DECIDE IN GLORY! THE CHURCH IS GOING TO JUDGE THE WORLD AND THE ANGELS! THIS REALIZATION MAKES WORLDLY DISPUTES RATHER INSIGNIFICANT. TOO MANY CHRISTIANS HAVE WARPED VALUES; THE THINGS OF THIS WORLD (ESPECIALLY MONEY) ARE MORE IMPORTANT TO THEM THAN THE GLORY AND PRAISE OF GOD.

MATTERS BETWEEN CHRISTIANS SHOULD BE SETTLED QUIETLY ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPLES OF MATT. 18:15–17 AND 1 COR. 6:5. IF THE TWO PARTIES CANNOT REACH AN AGREEMENT, THEN THEY SHOULD INVITE SOME SPIRITUAL BELIEVERS TO MEET WITH THEM AND HELP DECIDE. IF THE MATTER BECOMES KNOWN TO THE CHURCH (OR OUTSIDE THE CHURCH), THE MEMBERS SHOULD APPOINT A GROUP TO EXAMINE THE MATTER AND GIVE SPIRITUAL COUNSEL.

FAR BETTER THAT A CHRISTIAN SHOULD LOSE MONEY THAN LOSE HIS SPIRITUAL STATURE AND BRING SHAME TO CHRIST’S NAME! WE CAN FIND THIS SAME ATTITUDE IN MATT. 5:38–42. OF COURSE, THE CHRISTIANS IN CORINTH WERE SO CARNAL THAT THEY LACKED SPIRITUAL VISION AND WISDOM, AND THUS THEIR CHURCH WAS SPLIT INTO WARRING FACTIONS. “YOU ARE BRETHREN!” PAUL CRIED. “SHOW LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER!”

THERE IS SOME QUESTION CONCERNING THE MEANING OF PAUL’S STATEMENT ABOUT “THE LEAST ESTEEMED” (V. 4). SOME TAKE IT THAT PAUL IS USING “LOVING SARCASM” AS THOUGH TO SAY, “YOU DON’T EVEN HAVE A WISE, MATURE CHRISTIAN IN YOUR CHURCH WHO CAN HANDLE THESE

MATTERS!" OR, HE MAY HAVE BEEN SAYING, "FAR BETTER TO LAY THESE DISPUTES BEFORE SOME HUMBLE BELIEVER IN YOUR CHURCH THAN TO SPREAD THEM BEFORE AN UNSAVED JUDGE."

II. DEFILEMENT IN THE WORLD (6:9–20)

WHILE WE CANNOT EXCUSE THE CORINTHIANS FOR THEIR TERRIBLE SINS, WE CAN CERTAINLY UNDERSTAND WHY THEY FELL INTO THEM; NO CITY PRESENTED MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMMORALITY AND VICE THAN DID CORINTH. THE VERY RELIGION OF THE CITY (THE WORSHIP OF APHRODITE) WAS NOTHING BUT PROSTITUTION IN THE NAME OF RELIGION! THESE BELIEVERS HAD BEEN RESCUED FROM LIVES OF HORRIBLE SIN BUT WERE TEMPTED TO GO BACK. PAUL KNEW THAT SOME OF THE BELIEVERS WERE LOOKING FOR EXCUSES TO SIN, SO HE CLEARLY REFUTED EVERY ARGUMENT THAT THEY MIGHT BRING UP.

A. "IF WE ARE SAVED, THEN WE CAN SIN AND STILL GO TO HEAVEN!" (VV. 9–11)

CERTAINLY PEOPLE WHO ARE TRULY BORN AGAIN WILL GO TO HEAVEN IN SPITE OF THEIR MANY FAILINGS; BUT THE NEW BIRTH BRINGS A NEW NATURE, AND A NEW NATURE MEANS A NEW APPETITE. THE CHRISTIAN STILL HAS THE ABILITY TO SIN, BUT NOT THE DESIRE. ANY TEACHING THAT MAKES IT EASY TO SIN IS NOT BIBLE DOCTRINE. "BE NOT DECEIVED!" PAUL LISTED THE AWFUL SINS THAT ONCE HAD RULED THEIR LIVES, THEN REMINDED THEM OF WHAT JESUS HAD DONE FOR THEM. "SUCH WERE SOME OF YOU! BUT YOU ARE WASHED ... SANCTIFIED ... JUSTIFIED!" THE CHRISTIAN IS A NEW CREATION (2 COR. 5:17) AND PROVES IT BY BREAKING WITH THE OLD LIFE. WE DO NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD BY REFRAINING FROM SIN, BUT WE PROVE THAT WE ARE GOING TO HEAVEN BY THE GODLY LIVES THAT WE LIVE.

B. "DON'T CHRISTIANS HAVE LIBERTY? AREN'T WE FREE FROM THE LAW?" (VV. 12–14)

CERTAINLY WE ARE FREE FROM RULES AND REGULATIONS, BUT WE ARE NOT FREE TO SIN. CHRISTIAN LIBERTY IS NEVER LICENSE. CHRISTIAN LIBERTY DOES NOT MEAN I AM FREE TO DO WHAT I PLEASE, BUT THAT I HAVE BEEN FREED TO DO WHAT PLEASES CHRIST. FURTHERMORE, "LIBERTY TO SIN" IS REALLY THE WORST KIND OF SLAVERY! WE MUST NOT BE BROUGHT UNDER THE POWER OF SIN (ROM. 6). "BUT," YOU SAY, "IF GOD GAVE US THESE PHYSICAL APPETITES, CERTAINLY HE WANTS US TO USE THEM." THAT'S RIGHT: USE THEM, BUT NOT ABUSE THEM. YOUR BODY IS THE LORD'S; AND IF YOU LIVE IN SIN, THAT SIN WILL DESTROY YOU AND GOD WILL SOMEDAY JUDGE YOU.

C. "CAN I NOT USE MY BODY AS I PLEASE?" (VV. 15–20)

OF COURSE NOT! TO BEGIN WITH, IT IS NO LONGER YOUR BODY; IT BELONGS TO CHRIST. HE PURCHASED YOU WITH HIS OWN BLOOD. BACK IN PAUL'S DAY, A SLAVE COULD SET HIMSELF FREE BY SAVING HIS MONEY AND DEPOSITING IT WITH THE PRIEST AT THE LOCAL HEATHEN TEMPLE. WHEN HE HAD ENOUGH MONEY TO PURCHASE HIS FREEDOM, HE WOULD TAKE HIS MASTER TO THE TEMPLE AND THE PRIEST WOULD GIVE THE MASTER THE MONEY AND DECLARE THAT THE SLAVE NOW BELONGED TO THAT PARTICULAR GOD. CHRIST PAID THE PRICE TO SET US FREE FROM SIN, AND WE MUST USE OUR BODIES TO PLEASE HIM.

FURTHERMORE, WHEN WE SIN AGAINST THE BODY, WE SIN AGAINST CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO HAS MADE THE BODY HIS TEMPLE. GEN. 2:24 STATES THAT TWO PERSONS JOINED PHYSICALLY BECOME "ONE FLESH." HOW CAN A CHRISTIAN JOIN HIS BODY—WHICH IS A MEMBER OF CHRIST'S BODY—IN SUCH HORRIBLE SIN? HOW CAN HE DEFILE THE TEMPLE OF THE SPIRIT?

CHRISTIANS ARE TO GLORIFY GOD WITH THEIR BODIES. THIS MEANS THE WAY WE CARE FOR THE BODY, THE WAY WE DRESS THE BODY, THE PLACES WE TAKE THE BODY, THE DEEDS WE DO IN THE BODY. IT IS DANGEROUS FOR CHRISTIANS TO USE THEIR BODIES FOR SIN. REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED TO SAMSON AND DAVID!

IN THESE LATTER DAYS, WE SEE A SHAMELESS INCREASE OF SEXUAL SINS. WE DARE NOT CLOSE OUR EYES TO IT. (SEE 2 TIM. 3:1–7, AND NOTE THAT V. 5 STATES THAT THESE SINNERS WILL BE PROFESSING CHRISTIANS, AND NOT PEOPLE OF THE WORLD!) THE ATTITUDE OF THE WORLD IS, “EVERYBODY’S DOING IT, SO WHY BE DIFFERENT?” IT IS SAD WHEN CHRISTIANS THINK THEY CAN VIOLATE GOD’S MORAL CODE AND GET AWAY WITH IT. SEXUAL SINS ARE SINS AGAINST CHRIST (WHO PURCHASED OUR BODIES), AGAINST THE SPIRIT (WHO INDWELLS OUR BODIES), AND AGAINST OURSELVES (V. 18). SINGLE PEOPLE IN PARTICULAR NEED TO READ AND PONDER PROV. 5:1–23, 6:20–35, AND 7:1–27. THESE ARE PLAIN CHAPTERS, BUT THEY WARN AGAINST SEXUAL LICENSE.

MARRIED CHRISTIANS NEED TO READ AND PONDER 1 THES. 4:1–8, WHERE GOD WARNS CHRISTIANS IN THE CHURCH AGAINST BREAKING THEIR WEDDING VOWS.

THIS CLOSES THE FIRST SECTION OF THE LETTER DEALING WITH THE SINS IN THE CHURCH. KEEP IN MIND THAT ALL OF THESE PROBLEMS—DIVISION, IMMORALITY, DISPUTES, AND DEFILEMENT WITH THE WORLD—COME FROM ONE COMMON SOURCE: THE BELIEVERS IN CORINTH WERE SPIRITUAL BABES AND WERE NOT GROWING IN THE LORD. THEY HAD THEIR EYES ON MEN, NOT ON CHRIST; THEY WERE FEEDING ON MILK, AND NOT THE MEAT OF THE WORD; THEY WERE UNWILLING TO ADMIT SIN AND DEAL WITH IT. MOST SERIOUS CHURCH PROBLEMS BEGIN AS PERSONAL PROBLEMS AND SINS IN THE LIVES OF CHURCH MEMBERS.