

Sunday Morning Message

December 2, 2018

Work it Out Yourself

Text for Today's Message – 1 Corinthians 6:1 - 11

Congregational Reading – 1 Corinthians 6:5 - 8

Introduction

The church at Corinth was a troubled church, and most of their problems had to do with carnality. Corinth was a very carnal and worldly church, and Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians was a letter designed to correct the many problems that were hindering the church from fulfilling God's purposes.

Some of the problems the Apostle Paul addresses in the Letter are:

A Divisions (chapters 1 – 4)

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." - (1 Corinthians 1:10)

B Immorality (chapter 5)

"It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife." - (1 Corinthians 5:1)

C Lawsuits among the Believers (chapter 6)

"Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?" - (1 Corinthians 6:1)

D Marriage and Divorce (chapter 7)

"Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." - (1 Corinthians 7:1-2)

E Idolatry (chapter 8 & 10)

"As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one." - (1 Corinthians 8:4)

F Giving (chapter 9)

"Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?" - (1 Corinthians 9:7)

G The Lord's Supper (chapter 11)

"Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." - (1 Corinthians 11:27)

H Abuse of Spiritual Gifts (chapter 12 - 14)

"Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant." - (1 Corinthians 12:1)

I False Teaching regarding the Resurrection (chapter 15)

"Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" - (1 Corinthians 15:12)

This church at Corinth was loaded with problems that were keeping them from fulfilling the Great Commission. As a general rule, the churches in America are also very carnal. Our congregations are often made up of spiritual babies who are intent on getting their way, and will often throw a temper tantrum in order to achieve their desires. Paul calls the people of this church babes:

"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" (1 Corinthians 3:1-3)

When a person is carnal they put their own needs and fleshly desires over the cause of Christ, and above the needs of others.

"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." (Philippians 2:3-4)

Transition – Our text in chapter six deals with the subject of the settlement of disputes among believers within the church. Apparently, some of the people had resorted to suing each other in order to get what they wanted. Paul send a strong rebuke to them about their inability to work out their differences without resorting to taking up matters in a secular court.

Illustration – When we were kids, my brothers and I would often get into disputes: fighting over toys, or over whose turn it was. My mom would sometimes deal with it, but often she would just send a strong rebuke – “Work it Out Yourselves.”

God is telling this church at Corinth that they needed to learn to work out their disputes themselves, and not go outside of the church to fix their problems.

Read and comment upon the text:

I The Problem (v. 1, 6 - 7)

Believers were suing each other in secular courts instead of settling their differences themselves. They were airing out all of their problems and advertising their spiritual immaturity before the lost world.

II The Principle (vs. 2 – 3)

The church is better qualified to handle disputes than the lost world. After all, we have access to unlimited wisdom.

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever." (Psalm 111:10)

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding." (Proverbs 9:10)

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." (James 1:5)

III The Parody (vs. 4 – 5)

Paul illustrates the principle by using a little sarcasm. He states that the least esteemed or perhaps the weakest member of the church should be more equipped as an arbiter or referee between people in the church than some judge out there in the world.

IV The Polarity Between the Saved and the Lost (vs. 9 – 11)

We used to be like the world, but we are saved now. Saved people should behave differently than the world does. The world sues each other in order to settle their disputes, but the church should not have to act like the world in order to make things right.

Conclusion – Practical Principles

- 1. Never sue another believer.** Personally, I have never sued anybody, Christian or not; but, I will not go beyond what the text is clearly teaching here. In Corinth, Paul was dealing with individuals from within the same church. Believers need to be very careful when dealing with each other, carefully considering all possible end results of their transactions. When we enter into an agreement with somebody, we seldom think about anything ever going wrong, but often that is not the case. We need to be able to resolve our disputes among ourselves.
- 2. Be willing to let it go.** *"Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" (v. 7)*

You may not be able to do this in every case, but if it is at all possible, be willing to forgive (and forget) the damage that was caused you by the offending brother. After all, isn't that what Jesus did, and is still doing, for us.

If you were offended by somebody, be willing to face the issue that you may have a spiritual problem:

"Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them." (Psalm 119:165)

Remember, the Christian life is not about you. It is about what Jesus wants, and He does not want you to avenge yourself:

"Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." (Romans 12:17-21)

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5:38-48)

"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." (Ephesians 4:32)

"Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." (Colossians 3:13)

Remember, we are here on this earth to glorify Christ, and He is glorified when His children get along and love on each other. We are supposed to be striving together with one mind and one

heart and one spirit, but we cannot do that if we are each individually insisting upon getting our way.

3. Follow the procedure outlined in Matthew 18:15 – 17

“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.” (Matthew 18:15-17)

According to Jesus’ instruction in Matthew, the offended brother should first go to the offending party and try to work out the disagreement between them. If that doesn’t work, then he is to bring in another person or possibly two to help bring about resolution. If this fails, then the dispute is to be brought before the church for a final decision. The church was the last “court of appeals” for any case.

4. Be a peacemaker yourself. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, “blessed are the peacemakers”. Every church needs to have a few Spirit-filled, impartial people who could sit down with two disagreeing parties and help them come to a mutual agreement.

As long as there are Christians who possess “a flesh” there are at times going to be disagreements within our churches. God prepares us to deal with these disputes in a Christlike way without airing them out before the unsaved world. I think that point two above is the most important instruction out of the four. There are going to be many times in life where we should be willing to give in and just let God deal with the situation. If it is a financial dispute, understand that all money belongs to God and He is well able to replace whatever amount you lost.

Church, you and I need to stop acting like the lost world out there, and start behaving like spirit-filled, and blood-washed children of God. We need to take our spiritual maturity up another notch, and start putting the cause of Christ and the will of God above our feelings and even our financial disputes. If you have been wronged by somebody who refuses to make things right, you can trust that, in the end, God will take care of it. Just give it to Him, and forgive.