



PRODIGAL

CHURCH

SERIES: THE PRODIGAL CHURCH

DATE: SUNDAY, AUGUST 16TH 2020

SPEAKER: CRAIG VERNALL

SERIES TITLE: CALLED UP AND CALLED OUT

SCRIPTURE: 1 CORINTHIANS 6

The rubber meets the road when our faith challenges us to take a different approach to life. Especially when it comes to dealing with the tough stuff. Throughout the scriptures we find records of God's people dealing with the tough things. This is where God steps in to help us live life the Kingdom way. This will often run against our natural instincts. Especially when we've been wronged. So, in today's study we find the Apostle Paul describing a better way forward when some in the church are in conflict over legal differences.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 6:1-2, AND VERSES 5-6.

"If any of you has a dispute with another, do you dare to take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the Lord's people? ² Or do you not know that the Lord's people will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases?"

⁵ I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? ⁶ But instead, one brother takes another to court—and this in front of unbelievers! 1 Corinthians 6:5-6.

Q1. Why is Paul so upset about Christians taking each other to court? If this legal process is available why was he wanting Christians to avoid it?

Q2. Have you ever been in or observed a situation where Christians have had their conflicts resolved in a secular courtroom?

Q3. Under what circumstances would you see it necessary to seek court action?

Almost by way of an aside in this conversation Paul offers an eternal view that takes us by surprise. In verse 3-4 Paul describes our responsibilities in heaven. To act as judges with God over angelic beings. Read this below.

"³ Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life! ⁴ Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, do you ask for a ruling from those whose way of life is scorned in the church?"

Q4. How do you respond to the idea of this future role? Do you feel adequate for this position as judge?

The apostle now takes a position that alludes to Jesus' own sacrifice for us.

"⁷ The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? ⁸ Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers and sisters."

Paul says that this sort of conflict leaves you as defeated. It's a sad summary but it's true that when we cannot reconcile our own problems then somewhere in the mix someone is not behaving in a Christ-like manner. The problem is trying to determine whom that is and why. So Paul appeals to something very familiar within the Christian story when he says "Why not be cheated?"

Undoubtedly, the story of Jesus taking our punishment on the Cross is a powerful example of how we can generate peace.

Q5. How do you feel about being wronged in this way? That is, sucking up the pain, loss or insult to avoid conflict between Christians going public and bringing shame upon the Christian community?

Q6. Can you interpret this being wronged as the Jesus way of being right?

Paul's not downplaying the level of sinfulness that's present within the Corinthian church. He realises that some of these court cases are about serious matters. He goes on to remind them that many of the Corinthians came to know the grace of Christ when in very sinful lifestyles, habits or attitudes. Paul names these for what they are.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 6:9-11.

⁹ Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men ¹⁰ nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Paul is essentially reminding the Corinthians that there is a greater and more important judge over our lives whom we must face. God Himself.

Q7. Therefore, let's ask the implied question that Paul is asking: Whom or what do you fear more? A secular court or God's ultimate judgment? Is there evidence in your life to prove this?

Q8. In verse 9 Paul says "Do not be deceived" Four words which are sharp a reminder that we intentionally sin at our peril. How do you respond to these four words?

Again, Paul wants the Corinthians to be reminded of who they are in Christ. Paul is always reminding the Corinthians about the grace that saves them. By doing so Paul calls them out and calls them up. All by reminding them that they're "washed and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

Q9. Do you think Paul's continuous (even incessant) reminder to the Church of this wonderful grace will ultimately bring out the Christian behaviours Paul is after? Has this worked for you?

Every blessing!