

1 Corinthians Series #15
"Dealing With problems" - 1 Cor. 6:1-8

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Corinth

1. A major Greek city
2. One thing you must know about the ancient Greeks; they loved to debate and argue
 - a. in fact, we tend to remember them for two things
 - b. classic art and philosophy
 - c. philosophy = debating
3. This love of debating philosophy carried over into the everyday life
4. Not surprising to discover, then, that they were constantly suing each other; taking each other to court
5. The Greeks were so well known for suing each other, in one ancient play, a man asked a friend to point out Athens on a map. When the friend did, the man protested and said, "That can't possible be Athens. I don't see any lawsuits going on."
6. Their legal system worked like this . . .
 - a. if two people had a dispute, if they couldn't resolve it between themselves, they would enter private arbitration
 - 1) each person an arbitrator
 - 2) then a third
 - 3) they three would decide
 - b. if that didn't resolve it; public arbitration
 - 1)A court of 40 men would listen to the sides, then assign a man over 60 to arbitrate.
 - 2) Everyone over 60 had to serve in this capacity
 - c. if that didn't resolve it, it went to the Jury Court
 - 1) comprised of every man over 30.
 - 2) depending on the case, from a few hundred to several thousand
 - d. so really, every Greek citizen ended up spending a good portion of his time in court, either in a dispute, or solving one.
 - e. One ancient Greek writer said that every Athenian was a lawyer!
7. It got to the point where suing one another became a form of entertainment.

B. Sound Silly?

1. Shouldn't, because our culture isn't much better
2. In fact it may be worse in some regards
3. For entertainment we have LA Law, Perry Mason, Civil Wars, Matlock, and Law & Order
4. Or for a more realistic bent, there's People's Court
5. Our society is every bit as sue happy as the Greeks were
 - a. "Sue Me Sue You Blues"

- b. well over ½ million lawyers in the USA
- c. over 12 million lawsuits filed last year

C. Much To Learn

- 1. We have much to learn then from our passage today
- 2. Because Paul deals with the problem of lawsuits not only in Corinth, but in the church of Corinth

II. TEXT

A. V. 1

1 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints?

- 1. Here again we see how great were the problems at Corinth
- 2. Paul is stunned by the news he's heard about their failure to walk in love with one another
 - a. instead of living in close fellowship and showing the love of God
 - b. they were taking each other to court and suing one another with great delight!
- 3. What bothers him even more is that fact that when they did have a dispute amongst themselves, rather than working it out privately, they were going to the Greek courts to settle things.

B. Vs. 2-4

2 Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

3 Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?

- 1. Paul is looking ahead to our glorious future with Christ
- 2. First = We will judge the world
 - a. Revelation 3:21 "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.
 - b. Revelation 2:26-27 "And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations; He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels'; as I also have received from My Father;
 - c. Revelation 20:4 We shall rule with Christ for a 1000 years.
- 3. Second = We will judge angels
 - a. this is a bit of a tease

- b. scripture does not speak completely here, but we do get some solid hints
 - c. 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6 God has reserved the angels that fell for judgment
 - d. here, Paul gives us the clue that we will be involved in some way or another in that judgment
4. The point is this: As the followers of Christ, we are being groomed to take part in the judgment of the ages
 - a. we have at our disposal all we need to make completely wise, just, and excellent judgments right now
 - b. we are indwelt by the Spirit of God
 - c. we possess the word of God
 - d. what more do we need?
 5. How then, can the Corinthians go to the world which is without these resources for judgment?
 6. Like a refrigerator repairman taking his broken freezer to a counter person at McDonald's for repair: It makes no sense!!!
 7. Paul asks a great question in v. 4

4 If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge?

- a. as believers we acknowledge that the lost are just that = LOST!!
- b. they do not have God's Spirit
- c. they reject His word
- d. yet when the Corinthians fell to fighting among themselves, they were all too willing to go running to the lost for judgment

C. Vs. 5-6

5 I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren?

6 But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers!

1. Paul is again being sarcastic
2. "Isn't there anyone there who is capable of making a wise judgment?"
3. But even more, what bothers Paul is that they cannot resolve their differences between themselves without ever letting it get to the place where they have to call someone else in, even another believer
4. He is appalled to learn that their disputes were so many and so intense.

D. Vs. 7-8

7 Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another.

1. "Failure" = a term that meant a lost court case
2. Paul is saying that the fact they have gone to court against each other automatically means they have lost
 - a. they may win the judgment of the court
 - b. but they have lost spiritually
3. Then he says something that was sure to rattle their cage . . .

Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather *let yourselves* be cheated?

8 No, you yourselves do wrong and cheat, and *you do* these things *to your* brethren!

1. We can all identify with how the Corinthians would have reacted to these words.
 - a. accept wrong? - let myself be defrauded?
 - b. NO WAY!!!
2. Everything within us rebels against this
 - a. it seems only normal and natural to defend ourselves
 - b. we must stick up for our rights
3. It IS normal and natural to react this way, if by natural, we mean the natural man
 - a. it is the flesh which demands it's rights
 - b. it is the flesh which demands that wrongs be revenged
4. But we are not natural men and women; we are spiritual people
 - a. and the Spirit call us not to defend ourselves and demand our rights
 - b. but to defend the honor and dignity of others and to serve them
5. Romans 12:2 - Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.
6. We are to have the mind of Christ, who suffered great wrong, but through it brought us salvation
 - a. Jesus didn't plead his rights
 - b. He didn't demand that His mistreatment be revenged
 - c. He humbly committed Himself to the hand of the Father
 - d. and God turned the evil of man and all the hordes of hell around into the greatest act of hope and redemption eternity will ever see

III. CONCLUSION

A. For Us

1. Our primary concern is not . . .

- a. what's in it for me?
 - b. guarding my rights
 - c. getting my piece of the pie
 - d. looking out for #1
2. Our primary concern is . . .
- a. what will glorify God?
 - b. how can I love and serve others, especially my brothers and sisters in Christ?
 - c. what's best for them?

B. Applied

- 1. Christians are to be the ultimate realists
- 2. We must acknowledge that this side of heaven, there is going to be friction between believers
- 3. The question is: How are we going to handle it?
- 4. Do we divide our lives up into neat little compartments so that
 - a. we go to church on Sunday's and Wednesdays
 - b. but go to court when to get our way when we have a problem with another Christian?
- 5. May it not be!
- 6. First of all, we must be willing to be wronged for the sake of Christ
 - a. we must be willing to be defrauded, and let it go
 - b. esteeming that it is better to face a personal loss than to defame the glory of Christ by airing the dirty laundry of fellow Christians
- 7. Second, when there is a problem that must be resolved, arbitration should take place within the context of the fellowship of God's people
 - a. take it to the church
 - b. if the church can't handle it because they lack the technical expertise, then seek out a Christian arbitration group
 - c. there are many of these now
 - d. there have been some disputes that have risen in Southern California over the last few years that went to this kind of arbitration and things were well handled