

1 Corinthians 6:1-8

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[0 : 00] different. People may change, but the primary focus and the unity of the body is around the person and work of Jesus Christ. He has spoke to them about immorality, which is in the body. He will address it again later on in the sixth chapter. But he pauses for just a moment and he talks to this church that is so puffed up in their knowledge. It is a church that exists in a city that kind of prides itself in its understanding. It is ahead of the times. It is important in the Roman economy. It is a place of prosperity, but it is also a place of rampant sin.

And he speaks to this church. And I believe he pauses here because in writing this letter, they felt that they were so knowledgeable, so puffed up in the fifth chapter. If you remember when it was originally written, it wasn't broken up into chapters and verses. That's for us. So we read it in context as it was a letter that they were so free in Christ that they could do the unthinkable even in society. Paul is going to kind of knock their legs out from under them and show them just how bound they were, that they really weren't that knowledgeable. They weren't really weren't that advanced, that they weren't really operating any differently than anyone else.

And it does it here with this matter of disunity. This disunity that is not necessarily in the personality that you're attracted to. It is really different than that. It is not like, well, I like that preacher and I like that preacher and I like that preacher. We've moved beyond the preachers. Now we're speaking to the people. As some would say, we're plowing a little close to the corn. We're stepping on some toes because now it's no longer about which preacher you like the best. It's about you and it's about me. And he begins to speak of the division that has taken place because people are being wronged. There are arguments going on. Why so much time given to this matter of unity? Why so much importance given to this? Because my friend, make no mistake, we have an enemy that loves to divide. We have an enemy that loves to disintegrate the body from within by creating divisions among its members. And it needs to be addressed. And we see this in particular matters of personal concern. Now, before we get into the text too heavily, I want to kind of caution you and not to read into it more than we should. Paul is not writing about matters which break civil law.

These are not matters which break the law of the land. And therefore, the court needs to decide what happens even though it's breaking the law of the land. That's not what Paul is writing about. Because in the book of Romans, if you remember in the 16th chapter of the book of Romans, Paul says that the government is in place even for the benefit of the believer. That God has established the ruling and the government and the laws of the land so that everyone could know how to operate in society and that we ought to pray for those who govern and pray for those who lead and pray for those who even administer the justice. He says that the government doesn't bear the sword of punishment for no reason. Paul says that we ought to lift those up and we ought to obey the laws of the land. So these are not matters of breaking the laws of the land. These are not, well, if you commit something that is a crime out there, we'll have, we'll take care of it in here. That's not what he's talking about. He's talking about matters of dispute over personal rights and privileges. He's speaking about matters of being defrauded, which implies, well, you've done me wrong in either a business deal or personal matter. Really something that the law of the land has nothing to speak to, but it's very personal to us. And it is here that he begins to lift up the priority of unity in the body. The first thing that we see is this is the responsibility of every member. It is the responsibility of every member. It says, does any one of you. Now we've seen the reality.

Every portion of the new Testament is written to a local church somewhere, which leads me to make this implication. I'm a guy who thinks kind of, I guess you would say linear, like this point connects to that point, which connects to that point, which connects to that point. That's kind of how I think. Some of you are not that way. Some of you think differently. Many of you ladies, Lord, the way the Lord has, I'd say just about every one of you ladies, the way the Lord has blessed your, your mind and the way the Lord has fashioned you, the book of Genesis says in a more complicated manner, you think in spider webs, every point's connected everywhere. And you can talk about it at any given moment, at any given time. That's not how I think, right? I'm very linear. So I move from this one to this one, to this one, to this one, to this one. That's how I think. And so when I read these things and I read the new Testament and I open up scripture and I see the scripture, even if it was addressed to an individual, it was addressed to an individual, which was connected to a local church. And since it was written to a local church, it was to be read in that local church, which tells me that every promise and every right and every, every, even everything that is contained in the new Testament finds its Genesis within the body of believers called the church.

[5 : 17] I believe the church is important. That's just how I wire it. And the letter of first Corinthians is no different. This is the second letter. I know it says one in front of it, but this is the second letter, which Paul wrote to this church and it's addressing matters in this church. And he's addressing matters that this church had asked him about. There were questions that this church had, and Paul is addressing the issues in this church. But now here in the sixth chapter of what we have in the letter, he stops and he begins to speak to the individuals, not just to the body, because it is one thing to say, well, the church needs to take care of that. I love, I love hearing that by the way. And I say that kind of tongue in cheek. Don't be offended when I say this, but take it literally. Okay. I love it. When someone says a pastor, the church should do.

I love that. And the reason I love it is because the one telling me that's the church. You're saying I should do blank. We use church general thinking the church is some big, great organization is going to take care of all that thing when really it's about people. So Paul moves beyond the corporate body and begins to speak to the individuals. He says, each one of you.

Now we're getting personal, right? He says, does anyone of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, now we're neighbors, translated in other translations. I read from the New American Standard, his brother. Brother in scripture can mean neighbor, one close to you. In this context, it's used originally as one close to you, literally. And then later on, it's speaking of a brother in Christ, but it's a brother. It's speaking of in the body. So it begins to speak of something that's going on between two individuals, not something that's going on within the church. Right? So this isn't a matter of, we've got to bring it up at a church business meeting. This isn't a matter of all the church has a problem. It's two members have an issue. That's the issue. Okay. He says, does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare to go to the law before the unrighteous and not before the saints? We'll get to the rest of this text in just a moment.

And he begins to speak of this reality that brother is suing brother and brother and against brother and there's all these matters that are going on, but he is stopping them and showing them that unity is the responsibility primarily of every member. That's how we as individuals deal with it.

Well, pastor, the church needs to be unified. You're right. We do. We need to be one, 10. I love what Paul says when he's writing. He says, I'm intent on one purpose and he focuses the church. But the only way for the church to be unified is this, if each individual part is united with one another.

[7 : 59] And as long as there's a schism or division between any part, then there's always a problem. And when we look at church unity, the reality we see is that this is the responsibility of every member. It's my responsibility, not as a pastor. It's my responsibility as a member. I've had as a member, and then I've had to do it as a pastor too. And I've done it in both aspects to be to have a repentant heart. The Bible says that if you're praying and you realize if anyone is offended, if you've committed a sin against anyone, or if anyone's offended by you, you need to go confess that and repent. And I've had to do that both as a member and as a pastor to go to an individual and say, hey, are we okay? It's not always led to restoration. One time it did, the other time it didn't. But it freed me because I had, my responsibility was to go to that individual and talk to that individual to confess my wrongs, to confess my sins, and to try to be reconciled one to another because it says to be reconciled one to another. When you read the New Testament, if you look at all the one another's, I have them actually somewhere in a folder. I took a class at one time, and it's just amazing when you look at all these one another's. There's all these one another's, one another's, love one another, care for one another, pray for one another, lift up one another, bear one another's burdens. All the one another's, the one another's are not something that the church corporate should do. It's something that the church individuals do. Right? Be reconciled to one another, live peaceably with one another. It's an individual responsibility because it is what we are as individuals is how we're seen as a body. It's making sure that each individual part has the responsibility to maintain church unity, and that's exactly what Paul is saying here. He reminds them this isn't something the pastors and the leaders do, this is something that we do. But then he shifts its focus and begins to speak of the church. So you see the responsibility of every member, but then you see the role of the church body. Now this gets kind of uncomfortable for us, but you need to stay with me on this because here is the role. So where does the church body fit into this equation? And he says this, do you not know that the saints would judge the world? So that's pretty cool, right? The saints, he said, you are saints to the saints, which are at Corinth. You are saints by calling. Do you not know that the saints would judge the world? If the world is to be judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts? Do you not know that we will judge angels? You said, that's pretty awesome. We're going to judge the world and we're going to judge angels. Now, both of these, by the way, are spoken in reference to our position with Christ. Christ says that when he reigns upon his throne, we will reign with him, right? We will rule with Christ. It's not like Jesus is going to say, all right, y'all go judge the angels over here. You go judge the world over there. And that's not because of who we are positionally in Christ. We are in a place of rulership with him. And as he is on the throne, it's one of the most beautiful, again, linear pictures that I see. Jesus says that we are able to sit on his throne, right? To he who overcomes, says it in the letters of the seven churches.

And we read the book of revelations that he who overcomes, I will grant him that he may sit up on my throne. It's pretty cool, right? We'll sit upon the throne of Christ. But then we read a little bit further. We find that Christ sits upon the throne of the father. He sits in the throne of heaven. So we get to sit with Christ because of positionally, not because of who we are personally, but because of the position we have in Christ. And we are in a positional place of authority, which by the way, is a returning to what creation was supposed to be. God created man in a place of authority to rule over the earth. Man gave that up, forfeited that, gave it up in the garden when we chose to live in open rebellion because rulership is not possible when we're living in rebellion. So when we are united with Christ and we live positionally in him, then we return back to what we're supposed to, we rule. It's pretty cool, right? It's pretty amazing. And we judge not the world standards, but the world leaders, the world rulers, right? And those who have forsaken. We're not anyone's judge, that's Christ, but we will judge the angels, the fallen angels, more than likely. It seems to be implied in the book of Jude. We also know that 1 John chapter 5, that the evil one is over the principalities and the forces of this world. So he's the ruler of this world, and we'll be there when he's cast into the lake of fire. It's a pretty amazing thing. But it's just this position that we hold. Now stay with me.

So Paul makes this implication. If that's who we are as saints, then how do we not have, as a corporate body? I mean, think about this. Look around you. For all of us that believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, those who've been redeemed, those who've accepted him, those who've given our life over to him. And this is why when we sing, I surrender all, I don't like us to sing it with a downcast face. I don't like us to be all, you know, walking on our bottom lip because we had to surrender things. Because when we realize what we give up and compared to what we gain, I gave up my worldly rights and my worldly inheritance so that I may gain heaven and his glory, right?

He forsook it to come to me, so I forsake it to go to him. And he is at the right hand of the Father. So when we look around the room, and for those of us who have surrendered everything and have inherited Christ, he is our inheritance, and we are joint heirs with him to sit upon the throne alongside of him, and we will sit in positions of authority upon the millennial kingdom and all those other things that happen. What an amazing thing. But then we say, but I don't know how to decide between the dispute between brothers. It makes no sense. Because here's the role of the church.

Paul says, I say this to your own shame, is it so that there's not even one wise man among you to decide between his brethren?

[13 : 49] Let me blow your mind just a little bit. The role of the church is that when you have a problem, I didn't say if, I said when, because we are mankind. When you have a problem with a brother or sister in Christ that the two of you cannot reconcile with one another, because it's your responsibility to be reconciled to one another, the role of the church is when it is irreconcilable between the two of you, you just can't come to an agreement. You go to the church and let the church speak into your situation. You say, wait, wait, what? I don't necessarily want the church to know everything that's going on. Why? I mean, honestly, why? If the Savior we serve knows it all anyway, what difference? You say, well, then the church is going to judge me. Then woe upon that church. The church is to be able to speak into your life wisdom for your situation. The problem is in our society is that we have forgotten that that's the role of the church and we've made it the responsibility of the world. We started having problems with one another and we took it to the world to let the world give us. Worldly wisdom does nothing to give spiritual insight. A worldly wisdom will never bring spiritual reconciliation ever because the ruler of this world does not speak into our world. It is the role of the church. This is why when Paul is writing to Timothy and even when he's writing to Titus, he says, let the older men teach the younger men. Let the older women teach the younger women. We say, oh, wait a minute. That's starting to get a little personal, right? But this is called discipleship. It's messy, but that's what it's called. It's something that you're supposed to walk beside people and you're supposed to speak into their life and you're supposed to give them wisdom and say, well, you know, I've been looking and I see a problem going on over here.

There's an issue. So let me show you. I wish someone at some point, my wife and I will celebrate 25 years this year. That's pretty amazing to me that she has stayed with me. 25 years. 25 years. I wish that about year two, someone had come beside me and said, you know what? You need to listen to me, brother. You need to pay attention to me. I had that by the way, because in year two is when I came to Christ and year two, I came to Christ and I accepted Jesus as my Lord and savior. And I had a very dear friend in the church who had walked through an ugly divorce and year two, he would come sit on my porch and he'd tell me all the things he did wrong and all the things that had happened. And he told me how he wished that he had seen this and he had seen that. I had that, which changed the direction direction and the projection of our marriage.

I wish someone had come beside me when our kids were little and be like, you know what? I know it's hard. I ain't going to lie to you until you're going to get easier. We still 20 something years into it. It ain't got no easier. Right. And I want somebody speak truth into it. That's the goal.

The reason we bring the kids up here and we do the, you know, we do the baby dedication and we present the kids and we have all these families is because we have a responsibility as a church that when we see the parents getting frazzled and they will, and we see the parents wanting to pull their hair out and they will. And when we see the parents tired and worn, that those of us who have went down that road before can walk beside them and be like, I know where yet. Right. I know what it feels like so that they're not fighting with one another. I tell couples all the time and I tell individuals all the time. I've had some people take me up on this. Listen, if you're mad at each other and you feel like yelling at somebody, call me and yell, yell at me. I said, call my phone. I said, wait me up in the middle of night and just scream your heart out. Look at me. They say, why? I said, because I don't care if you yell at me. It ain't going to hurt my feelings. I'm going to hang up the phone and go right back to bed. And that's honest. I mean, that's an honest assessment, but it needs to happen. My neighbor, when I was growing up, the old man told me every man needs a rock to go beat on every now and then. He just needs to go outside and beat on a rock.

Every man needs a rock. Ladies, you don't understand that, but every man needs a rock. Just need to go hit something every now and then. Get something out. Right? And just got to do that. What if we, as men, would be that rock for other men? And what if you ladies would be what every other lady needs for one another? See, the role of the church is to get in the midst of the ugliness and help redeem it. The role of the church is to bring restoration, not only among couples. I'm talking about among brothers and sisters in Christ. That we're to walk with you. I know at Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship where Tony Evans lives, he has a large, he pastors there, he has a large congregation of single mothers. It's probably one of the best examples I've ever seen. He's got single mothers all throughout his congregation. Some of them from inner cities, very rough. So they created what they call a church council. And that is that if a single mother is having problems with a child, she brings that child before the church board. He's got some men who will sit face to face with some rebellious teenagers and let them know what's up. And he will help these single mothers because that's the role of the church is to promote unity.

[19 : 41] This is the role of the church. Why are these things so important? This gives us to the third and final thing. And it is the reputation in the community. Our reputation in the community.

Paul says there ought to be at least one wise man among you. If you're so wise that you're free to do whatever you want to do. And if you're so wise that you have all this understanding, there ought to be at least one wise man among you that can help reconcile brothers. But he says evidently there's not. So he goes in verse seven and says, actually, then it is already defeat for you. Now the problem is this.

Maybe there's a business deal that has went wrong. Maybe there's a personal concern that's went wrong. Someone is defrauding, which seems to imply money. Maybe someone is charging interest rate, an unbelievable interest rate on another brother. Maybe someone feels shortchanged. Maybe the transaction didn't go the way that they thought that it should. That's what the word defraud means.

And so they get upset. Well, you owe me and you should do this for me. Anytime, by the way, we start speaking in personal pronouns, we know we're getting in trouble. And so they would go to court with one another. Paul says the shame is, is that there's not even a wise man among you that can help decide. But the tragedy is that the moment you go to court, you've already lost.

See, it's possible to win the case, but to lose the testimony. He says the moment you go to court, it's already a shame. He said it is already defeat for you that you have lawsuits with one another.

[21 : 25] Now here's where the rubber hits the road. And this is where we have to pay real special attention to this. Because you say, well, I, when I look around the room, nobody here has defrauded me. Nobody owes me any money. Maybe you look around the room and people do owe you money. I don't know.

You haven't brought that before the church and we hadn't been able to speak into that. You say, well, I'm good with everybody. We're square. Maybe, maybe someone's just hurt your feelings a little bit. And you need to reconcile that one with another. If you can't, you can bring it before the church and help us to speak into it. Maybe we can find some brothers and sisters that walk in a nonjudgmental way that are what we would call neutral parties that could speak into that and help you be reconciled because unity is important. But here's where the rubber hits the road before we start going out there. We don't necessarily take it to court today. Now today we take it to the internet. We, we let the public judge for us. He said, this is already defeat. Because as soon as you go public with it, you've already lost. Now here's where he makes this, this great application. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded? He draws the line and says, what's more important? Your personal rights or the name of Christ?

What's more important? What you deserve or who he is? Because the moment you start going after what you deserve, Paul says, you're pushing down the name of Christ. You're bringing shame to his name.

And you may be winning your battle, but you're bringing shame to his name. He says, oh, on the contrary, you yourselves wrong and a fraud. And yet you do this even to the brethren. He said, the tragedy is this, that when we, we go public with it and we, we take it out of the realm of the church. And, and even if you're in the church and if someone comes beside you and ask you to walk with them, don't take that matter and make it public. Don't go outside the walls. He said, because the, the moment we go public with it, what's happened is we've taken a trivial matter and made it a big matter and we've defamed the name of Christ. You don't have to read very much church history and you don't have to get very deep before you begin to figure out this small little scuffles between brothers and sisters in Christ created great divisions and started resonating within the world. And people said, well, I want nothing to do with that Jesus. He says, why not rather be wrong?

Why not rather be defrauded? See, the question is, and we'll begin to wrap it up here, but the question is this, what's more important, the glorious name of our savior, Jesus Christ, or what we deserve? What's more important that I get what is mine or that Christ be glorified?

[24 : 32] Because if my getting what is mine belittles the gospel and the person of Jesus Christ, I've already lost. He says, it'd be better to be wronged and to be defrauded and to suffer loss, to make sure that the name of Christ is magnified. It all, the, the heart of the matter is this, and this is where it gets real personal. The heart of the matter is this, when any issue arises and there's a division, the heart of the matter comes down to what is the most important thing? No, that's not it. Who is the most important person? If you and I have a disagreement, and I say this with all disrespect, or not disrespect, I said that the wrong way, right? I say this with no disrespect.

I say this with all respect. Careful your words there, pastor. I say this with all respect. If you and I have a disagreement, I'm not the most important person. You're not the most important person. Jesus Christ is the most important person. We must be reconciled in that.

And if either one of us getting our way belittles and defames the name of Christ, then we've already lost. Again, we're not talking about breaking civil law. We're talking about having a disagreement, and we're going, we are a family. We're going to have disagreements. That's okay.

That's okay. But the most important person in the room at any given moment is Jesus Christ.

So if anything takes place, defames his name, we've already lost. Here we see the priority of church unity, and church unity is only possible when Jesus Christ is glorified and magnified. If our actions are not doing it, then it cannot happen.

[26 : 50] It is a united body. Jesus, in the high priestly prayer in John 17, says, Father, I pray that they may be one as you and I are one.

Because our oneness and our unity is that which attracts the world to the Savior. And we see Paul addressing this in 1 Corinthians 6. Let's pray. Lord, I thank you for this day.

God, with a full understanding and a true realization, we know that there are going to be problems that arise in the body of believers. But Lord, I pray that we would walk beyond those.

Lord, as Paul admonished the church at Corinth, that we would walk in godly wisdom. That we would find brothers and sisters in Christ who would walk beside us to give us understanding.

Lord, in the end of the day, we pray that it would be your name that is magnified. Lord, we ask that our lives would be set according to your course and your plans and your purposes.

[28 : 00] As we sing this song of invitation, Lord, we pray that you would work on every heart and mind. If reconciliation is needed, Lord, we ask that it would take place. If restoration is needed, Lord, help us to be restored with one another.

Lord, help us to be united for the sake of the King and the Kingdom. And we ask it in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Amen.