Stop your fighting: 1 Corinthians 6v1-11

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Date: 08 November 2015

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[0:00] And that is on page 1147. If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the ungodly for justice, for judgment instead of before the saints?

Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge tribal cases?
Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life? Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, appoint as judges even men of little account in the church.
If I say this to shame you, is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers?
But instead, one brother goes to law against another, if this in front of unbelievers. The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already.
[1:24] Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? Instead, you yourself cheat and do wrong. And you do this to your brothers.

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither do sexually immorals, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor male prostitutes, nor homosexual offenders, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor the drunkards, nor slanderers, nor swindlers.
Will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is, 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. Thank you, Orvita.
Well, we're going to pray as we keep that section of Scripture open, as we've been following along in our studies of 1 Corinthians. Let's pray.
[2:42] Let's pray. Our Father God, we thank you for the work that you have done in our lives through Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

And we pray that we would continually know, as we read and think about your Word this morning, that we would know your Spirit at work in our lives, changing us and bringing us on, individually but also corporately together, as your family.
We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. So, are you a saint?
Or are you a sinner? Well, maybe like me, there's some days you feel like a saint. Maybe there's other days when you feel like a sinner.
Well, if we are Christians, if we're followers of the Lord Jesus, we are actually both. We are saints who sin.
[4:04] Look at how this church is addressed in chapter 6. We see at the end of verse 1 that they were to bring disputes before the saints.

Verse 2, Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? So, the saints are the church, the people of God. You see, a saint is not a dead person with a title.
A saint is a living person who has been made holy, pure and clean before God. So, look at verse 11.
He tells us how that came about. Just the second line into verse 11. He says, You were washed. You were sanctified.
You were justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. It's telling us there that Jesus, who was pure and clean and holy, took our sin on himself, cleaned us, forgave us, so that we could become pure before God.
[5:18] So, the saints are the church of God, the people of God, who have been made holy. But let's not forget, we are saints who still sin.

So, back in verse 1 of chapter 6, if any one of you has a dispute. In other words, it is possible that saints fall out with each other.

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We are forgiven, but we still struggle with our sinful nature. We all mess up privately and publicly. So, in this church, in Corinth, and indeed this church, or indeed any church, we shouldn't be surprised to find saints who are sinning.
And sometimes, there will be sinful disputes. Look at verse 1 of chapter 6.
If any one of you has a dispute with another Christian, another believer, another saint, dare they take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the saints?
[6:36] Now, perhaps this dispute was over a land deal that went wrong. Maybe it was the promise of work between two believers that never got finished. Maybe it was two siblings who were in the church family and they were fighting over an inheritance.

Whatever was going on, it was not just the fact that there was a dispute. It was the way they were handling the dispute.
Rather than deal with the dispute themselves in love and forgiveness, look at verse 6. Instead, one brother goes to law against another.
They've been checking out nowinnofee.com. Bring each other to court, suing and claiming damages. Instead of dealing with the matter as fellow saints, as fellow believers, look at verse 8. Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong and you do this to your brothers, to your fellow Christians. You see, what should have been worked out in a private, holy way has been done in a very public and unholy way.
[7:53] Not very saintly. Well, I hope that none of us ends up in court because somebody has brought us to court.

But I think we can all fall out with each other, can't we? In our own relationships, our family relationships, even within the church family, we can fall out.
She never asks how I am. After all that I've done for her, that's the last time I'm going to offer her help. He really annoys me the way he goes on.
I'm never going to that study again. Well, they didn't vote the way I wanted them to. I'm not. I'm going to stop my involvement now. If they don't choose the elder that I want, then I'm leaving for another church.
Is it possible that we could fall out with each other? I think it is sometimes. But saints who sin are also quick to deal with sin.
[9:02] Look again at verse 1. So if any of you has a dispute with another, dare we take it to the ungodly for judgment, those outside instead of before the saints?

You see, rather than voice our complaints to those outside of the church, unbelievers, we should seek counsel from those inside the church, the true believers.
Listen to this quote. I think it's helpful as we reflect on what it is to bring matters before the saints, before the church.
Unrepentant sin and those who continually cherish it are like cancers that need to be removed if the body to us enjoy health and engage in productive work.
confessing sins to one another makes us bring our sins into the light where they can be dealt with in the context of mutually sanctifying friendships in which people are strengthening each other through prayer, encouragement and application of the word.
[10:18] Bringing our sin into the light by confessing it in the context of personal accountability friendships helps to prevent the sins we struggle with now from becoming scandalous later.

Churches grow when sin is nipped in the bud. Can we see how that relates to this particular context? You see, instead of running to those outside the church who agree with us and will always take our side if we search long enough we'll always find somebody who will accept our sin, we instead turn to those inside the church to one another to fellow believers who will help us fight our sin and deal with our sin.
It's in the context of personal accountable friendships. We don't go to others we go to each other within the family of the church.
And we're given three reasons for dealing with our sin urgently and quickly within the context of the church family. So here is the first reason why we need to deal with our sin.
First, because saints will be judges of the world. Because saints will be judges of the world. Look at verse 2. Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?
[11:47] And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? Now that should kind of jump out at us as something quite astounding.

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Because of our faith in Christ, we are bound up in what Christ will do. One day Christ is going to come and he's going to judge the world. He's going to bring about justice, correcting all wrongs. And incredibly, look at verse 2. Don't you know that the saints, the church, are going to be involved in that judgment? Not because we are perfect, but because we have been made holy by our repentance before God.
We will be judging with Christ the whole world. Now if we're going to be judges of the whole world, don't you think that we can manage to judge sinful behaviour within the church family?
One author likened this scenario to a high court judge dealing with a case of national consequence, who's ignoring a dispute between his two little children.
[13:01] You can picture the high court judge sitting at home in his armchair, smoking a pipe, reading the newspaper, and in the room beside him are his two children causing war.

Don't you think a high court judge could deal with a simple matter of his two little children? Well in the same way, if we are going to be judging the world, don't you think we can deal with little matters of life here on earth?
Look at verse 3, do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life? The church, the believers are going to be at the centre of a universal judgement.
So can't we deal with sinful squabbles and sinful behaviour now? Verse 4, therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, appoint as judges even men of little account or people who are just young in their faith who can settle these matters between you.
So rather than turning to ungodly solicitors solicitors and counsellors, and I don't mean to say that solicitors and counsellors can't be Christians, of course they're good Christian solicitors and counsellors, but why turn to unbelievers?
[14:21] Turn to the church, to the saints? Because the church here is not just a gathering on a Sunday morning, the church is God's ordained way of dealing with our sinful hearts.

This is the place where we keep each other accountable. This is where we confess our sins, where we build up support and point each other to Christ. That's why we always say, come along on Wednesdays.
Why? So we can have accountability with each other. The church, the saints, are God's means of healing damaged relationships and restoring our broken lives.
so we deal with our sin because we will be judges of the world. The second reason is we deal with our sin within the church because we are witnesses to the world.
Look at verse 6. You see this church here that we're reading about in Corinth. instead, we're told, one brother goes to law against another and this is in front of unbelievers.
[15:37] What should have been worked out in a private holy way has been done in a public unholy way. Rather than the church getting alongside and praying and supporting for one another, the community is looking in, laughing and joking at the church.

church. They're reading about the church on the back pages of their newspaper. Look at this event. Did you see what's happening? Verse 7. The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means that you've been completely defeated already.
In other words, your witness to the wider community is a mess. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?
You see, the church is meant to be a witness, this visible demonstration to the world and the community around us of the cross of reconciliation.
Because when Jesus died on the cross, he brought about our reconciliation to God. Jesus, as he died on the cross with his arms hung on the cross, took our wrongs on himself and was willing to be treated as a wrongdoer for us.
[16:52] He was willing to be cheated for us. Why? So that people like you and me could be forgiven and welcomed and accepted and reconciled to God.

He did not treat us as our sins deserve so that we might be treasured as his child. Now, if God has healed and restored our relationship with him, shouldn't the church family be a place where our relationships are also healed and restored?
What does it look like if we're saying to people, Christ reconciles sinners, Christ makes it possible for us to be friends with God, when we can't be reconciled to each other?
What are we saying? Well, we're just acting as hypocrites. Verse 8, instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong and you do this to your brothers.

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Can you see in the context here of what's going on, how serious it is when we don't deal with sin in the right way? When we take it out into the public realm, we push people away from Christ rather than draw them in towards Christ.
[18:13] Christ. And again, we mightn't be taking people to court or we mightn't be writing about it in the newspaper, but we can sure gossip to our friends and talk about other people behind their backs.

What are we saying? We're dragging Christ through the dirt. But, when we apply the work of Christ to our lives, the church becomes this visible demonstration of Christ and his cross.
As people look in, they see the power of Christ at work within our lives. As they look amongst us, they see relationships that have been healed between one and another.
They see friendships that have been renewed. They see family relationships that have been broken for years, put back together again. They see wrongs forgiven. Instead of revenge, they see grace and love.
Now, doesn't that look like something beautiful to you? Isn't that something very attractive where relationships are healed and friendships renewed?
[19:20] We are witnesses to the world as we apply the gospel to our lives and live out what it is to forgive and work with each other. So we deal quickly with our sin and urgently to reflect the beauty of Christ to the world around us.

sins. So we deal with sin because we'll be judges of the world and because we are witnesses to the world and third because we are to be holy in the world.
You see, there is a serious matter to all of this. There's a serious matter when we don't deal with disputes or any other kind of sin.
Look at what it is in verse nine. Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God?
The wicked there being the unrepentant. Don't you realise that unless you face up to your sin, you too will be judged.
[20:31] Look at the rest of verse nine. Do not be deceived. Don't think that God is just going to overlook it and say, it really doesn't matter how you behave, it's all right. No, it does matter.

Do not be deceived. Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor male prostitutes, nor homosexual offenders, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor slanderers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.
God. Now, the shocking thing is, as I read through that list, is not that these are kind of big sins, but if we look and read carefully enough, we're all in that list, in one way or another.
But this is not talking about people who are repenting of their sin, and people who are seeking to change their lives. This is addressing those who claim to be followers of Jesus, but continually persist in their sinful behaviour.
The reality is those who claim to be followers of Jesus, but show no sign of change, no desire for accountability within the church family, there is no genuine repentance, look what it says at the end of verse 11, will not inherit the kingdom of God.
[22:05] The evidence is simply not there. If we are not taking sin seriously, if we are not dealing with it in our lives, then we do not inherit the kingdom of God.

It's a serious matter. So if that's you here this morning, if there is sin that is undealt with, do not leave without getting your life right with God.
Do not leave without talking to another believer and seeking their help and support for the things that you struggle with in your life.
But this is not the full story. Look at verse 11. verse 11. And that is what some of you were.
That is what some of you were. You see, we all have a past, don't we? We've all fallen and failed. We've all got skeletons in the cupboard that we don't want anybody to know about.
[23:13] We've all sinned in all kinds of different ways. But, look at the rest of verse 11, sinned, but you were washed. You've been made clean before God.

Jesus has taken your sin and he's washed you and cleaned you on the inside. But you were sanctified. You've now been set apart for God, to live for God and for his desires.
But you are now justified. You've been put right with God in that relationship where you are now his child and God is your father.

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And all of this in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the spirit of our God. Isn't that incredible? Washed and sanctified and justified.
But notice the change here that's taken place. Look at verse 11 again. That is what some of you were. This is the kind of life you used to live.
[24:18] This is the way you were. So this church was made up of people who were sexually immoral, adulterers, male prostitutes, homosexual offenders, thieves, greedy drunkards.

This church in Corinth was full of all these kinds of people, but now they've been changed. They've been transformed by the grace of God.
And now they live a new life completely. Not that they don't struggle with their sins, they're still struggling and still working it out, and they're bringing it before God, and they're working it, and they're trying, and they're accountable to one another.
That's the difference. Again, look at verse 11. To be sanctified means to be set apart for God. You've now changed your direction of life.
You're no longer seeking to go this way. You are now seeking to live God's way, a holy life. no longer ignoring sin, but dealing with it in your life.
[25:23] No longer tolerant with sin, but repentant. You see, we are a church that quickly and urgently deals with our sin because we have been made the holy people of God.

It's not saying we are the perfect people of God, but we're working on it. with one another, accountable to each other, going to the saints.
So let me ask the question that we started with this morning. Are you a saint or are you a sinner? Well, if we are Christians, we're both, aren't we?
We are saints who sin. But the saints who sin are those who deal with their sin.
Instead of running to those outside the church who accept our sin and who will agree with us and take our side, we seek support from those inside the church, the saints, those who will help us fight our sin, those who will confront us and hold us accountable.
[26:39] And it's within the community of the church family where we begin to confess our sins to each other, where we seek that personal support, where together we walk alongside each other, hand in hand, not looking down in superiority, but walking as equals towards the cross of Christ, seeking forgiveness for all of our lives.

We are saints. but sadly we sin. But we're saints who deal with our sin. Let's pray together.
Our Father God, we thank you that when you show us our sin, we are not in despair, for we have a saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us on the cross, who has washed us, who has sanctified us, who has justified us.
We thank you that we are now your children through faith, faith, and we ask for the help of your ongoing work, the power of your Holy Spirit to deal with our sin, that we might become the Holy Church of God.
We thank you for one another. We thank you for the people that you have placed around us, the people sitting next to us, in front of us, and all around, your fellow saints, to support us and to encourage us.
[28:36] We thank you, Father, for your church, and for your family. In Jesus' name we all pray. Amen. We're going to sing together.

If you know the forgiveness of the Lord Jesus Christ, then what can we say then to say thank you for saving me. You took me to me.

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