

1 Corinthians 6:1-7

I. Intro

- A. Need I really mention the fact that we live in a highly legalistic society
 - 1. Feb 1992 – Albuquerque NM – Stella Liebeck was holding McDonald’s coffee between her legs in the passenger seat of the car, pried the lid off which didn’t want to come off, and when the contents spilled – she was amazed that the contents of the drink were... HOT! Apparently without a warning label, people wouldn’t know this about coffee – This seemingly was the start of the amazing number of lawsuits
 - a. At the time, Stella wanted to settle with McDonalds for approximately \$20,000 – which they refused – it was ludicrous to think that they owed money to her when it was she who put the coffee where she did – makes sense right?
 - b. Not when it comes to the jury – who awarded Stella with nearly \$500,000 in compensation for all she had to go through because of the McDonald’s conduct regarding their coffees that the judge called, “reckless, callous, and willful”
 - 2. Did you realize that it’s not just the coffee that’s hot at McDonalds? In 2001, Veronica Martin claimed she was disfigured by an extremely hot pickle
 - a. She and her husband were eating hamburgers when a scalding hot pickle landed on her chin causing second degree burns
 - b. She filed for over \$100,000 reward, and her husband also jumped in as well for \$15,000 b/c he had to deal with losing the services and companionship of his wife
 - c. This one was not refused by McDonald’s as the previous one was nearly 10 years previous, this one was settled out of court knowing full well what could happen when left to jurors in the court of law
 - 3. There are many other examples of incredibly ludicrous lawsuits that have occurred in our society where everyone is out get whatever they can from our court system and the court system seems ready and willing to give it
 - a. Common sense isn’t the most important factor – sometimes one has to wonder if it’s even there at all
 - b. And I also would suggest that this concept of courts and law is nothing that is new with us – this has been the case since the concept of law began
- B. 1 Corinthians 6:1-7 – Christians taking other Christians to court
 - 1. Started with divisions (1-4), then arrogance with the incestuous man (5) – now, the next problem
 - 2. It seems that the next problem addressed by Paul is that Christians were allowing non-Christians to resolve issues between Christians
 - a. When disputes arose between them – and I’m going to assume that it was happening judging by the main problem of divisions – they were taking those problems to the courts

- b. Paul insists that this is something that shouldn't be done
 - c. According to Paul, with Christians, things should be settled in-house
 - C. And then he proceeds to point out why
- II. Christians Will Judge the World
 - A. To be honest here, I have no clue as to what this is referring
 - 1. There is another mention of the apostles judging over the house of Israel – while seated on thrones with Christ (Matthew 19:28, Luke 22:30) – but not much else beyond that
 - a. In fact – most mention of judging is that Christians are not to do it – and to leave it to God to do when the time comes
 - b. Almost every discussion about judgment has it reserved for God to do the judging
 - c. So I am at a loss as to how Christians will judge the world
 - 2. Another view is that our faith will judge those without like the Ninevites talked about by Jesus in Matthew 12:41
 - a. When we learned of the truth – we turned to it
 - b. When they learned of the truth – they did not
 - c. So we are set up as the standard that would be used to judge
 - d. I'm not certain that's what Paul is saying here – and though I'm sure if I stretched it I could, I don't think that really fits the context of the passage in that Christians shouldn't let outsiders be their arbiters, it should be done by fellow Christians who can judge fairly
 - e. So I'll just leave it at this – I do believe he IS referring to the final judgment, and in the same way that we will reign with Christ in some way, we will also judge with Christ in some way – and suffice it to say that Paul intended Christians in the first century to understand this concept enough that he didn't have to elaborate much – and that understanding has been lost with time
 - B. Perhaps even more perplexing is verse 3 – we will judge angels
 - 1. Even if you understand this to be fallen angels – it is still incredibly mysterious to me and I'm sure many other people
 - 2. I just chalk this passage up to one of those passages that I think of as a “wait and see” passage – I'm just going to wait and see how everything finally plays out and hope that it makes more sense on the other side
 - C. Putting the perplexities aside, let's focus on the point
 - 1. He intended for his audience to know what he was referring to
 - 2. And just b/c we *don't* know, that doesn't mean that it's no longer valid
 - 3. The point is – we should be able to judge matters well enough to take care of our own problems
- III. Why Can't We Judge Our Own Matters?

- A. If you will judge the world, and the angels – then why in the world are you putting petty little things that are matters of this life in the hands of the unrighteous to judge?
 - 1. (verse 5) – Is there not anyone wise enough among the Christians to handle these situations?
 - 2. And if there is – then why take it outside the church? Why put it with the unbelievers?
 - 3. It doesn't look good for the church – for Christ – or for anyone if we have to go outside of ourselves to settle disputes and problems
- B. In these situations – the settlements must be done within the church
 - 1. Whether it be finding someone wise
 - 2. Or just taking it before the elders and letting them help things along
 - 3. But situations should not be taken to the court of law among brethren

IV. Why Not Rather Be Wronged?

- A. And Paul's main point on this comes in verse 7 – if you're taking something before someone – then you have already been defeated
 - 1. We usually think of victory and defeat in law cases
 - 2. Paul says that if it's already come to a "I win, you lose" or "You win, I lose" mentality – then both parties have already lost
 - 3. What's the most important thing? Getting what's rightfully yours? Exercising your own rights? Making sure you're holding onto your liberties?
 - 4. Or is it having genuine love for your brother that puts his interest over yours?
 - 5. What's most important?
- B. Paul says, "Why not rather be wronged?" "Why not rather be defrauded"
 - 1. Why make a big fuss over things that will result in this kind of behavior, dragging people into a court and into a big situation in need of arbitration – when it's a situation among brethren?
 - 2. Paul says the Christian thing to do is simply to let yourself be defrauded at this point
- C. I think in theory, we all understand this principle – the tricky part is when we have to put it into practice
 - 1. How many have heard about situations where brethren got into business ventures with one another that turned south – and led to a relationship turning south?
 - a. This is an oft-heard story
 - b. Mainly b/c when we need help, where's one of the first places we look? The church
 - c. And if we need capital to start a business venture, where do we look? To those who we look to for help, others within the church – and we're trying to help them as well assuming that the business venture will take off
 - d. And then comes the time where it all folds up, and things have to be settled legally, and it seems it always works out that somebody owes somebody else money
 - e. It's very sad to hear these stories – but this is what Paul is talking about

2. Well – sort of what Paul is talking about – but I have heard of at least one case that I think is EXACTLY what Paul was talking about
 - a. At a church I used to attend, though it did not occur while I was there, it occurred I believe MANY years previous, but I was asked not to simply walk up and down off the podium, but to use the two stairs that worked up the 1 ½ - 2 foot difference in height
 - b. When I inquired why it made such a big deal, they let me know that there was a man, a brother, who had not used the stairs, had rolled his ankle or something when he came down and had to go to the hospital
 - c. Then he sued the church to cover all of his medical expenses
 3. And I can see in the foreseeable future further complications within the church as the non-checked section of government (the judicial branch that has no part of government to keep them in check) becomes more and more involved in all aspects of life through their judicial decisions – including what is done within churches, and begins to judge cases of discrimination against churches of Christ b/c we uphold what the bible teaches about homosexuality, and other varying sins that our post-modern society calls discriminatory
 4. Or when they begin judging cases of discrimination when women begin suing churches for the right to play a leading role in services and teaching, despite what the Bible has to say about the subject
 5. There are things that could very likely begin to bring the legalistic mindset of the world into the church – which includes resolving problems the legalistic way
 6. This is exactly what Paul is warning about here – we need to settle our problems amongst ourselves and never let them get to this level – or else we have already lost
 7. Why not be wronged? Why not be defrauded? Why drag the church, and Jesus Christ through the mud that comes with these kinds of problems
 8. The “Not Me” Syndrome – bulletin – it could happen to us the same way that it happened to the church in Corinth – we MUST be prepared for it
- V. Invitation – everything in this life is simply a petty issue compared to the life to come – let’s put our focus there