LIFE BIBLE MINISTRY

1 Corinthians 6:1-11

Disputes and Lawsuits

Pastor Paul LeBoutillier · April 27, 2026

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

Hi everybody, we are back with more of our study in 1 Corinthians. So open your Bibles to chapter 6, and we're going to be covering the first 11 verses of this chapter, because this deals with one specific and complete point that the Apostle Paul is going to make in this letter, and it really involves how we treat one another in the body of Christ. So this is a really important section of this letter. Remember, I've said many times, this is a corrective letter, and this is one of the areas that the church in Corinth needed to be corrected about, but there's a great deal here that we can personally learn as we go through these verses. So this is very relevant, very applicable, and I think you're going to see that as we go through this.

What we're going to do is we're going to start by just reading through all 11 verses that we're going to be covering today, and then we're going to go back and unpack them verse by verse, and we're going to look and see what the Apostle Paul is saying. So let's go ahead and read verses 1 through 11. It says, When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases?

Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more then matters pertaining to this life? So if you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church? I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers?

The brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers. To have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded, but you yourselves wrong and defraud, even your own brothers? Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?

Do not be deceived, neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the

kingdom of God. And such were some of you, 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. Let's pray. Father, as we dig into these verses, we pray for your Holy Spirit to lead us, to open our hearts to understand what is being said, and to help us, Lord, to apply these things to our lives today. Use this time to speak to our hearts, for we ask it in the authority that is ours, through the name of Jesus, amen.

Well, as you can see, the Apostle Paul's emotions are kind of showing through as we read these verses. In fact, he begins by asking a question. He says, if you have grievances against one another, and by the way, we're always going to have grievances against one another. That's just natural. It's unfortunate at the same time, but it's natural.

We're going to have grievances. The issue isn't whether or not we have grievances. The issue is, how do we handle those grievances? And so he asks, when one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? And that word dare is actually a strong word.

If we were to kind of change up the way this is said in more, I don't know, modern sort of speech, we might look at two people who were taking out litigation against one another, two believers, and we might say, how dare you take this issue to the public courts and drag the name of Jesus through the mud? It's kind of an informal way of saying it, but it's really what Paul is saying in this passage. How dare you? Do you seriously dare to do this? Now this statement, this question by the Apostle Paul, it assumes a knowledge about something, and that is about who we are in Christ and how we're supposed to treat one another.

If you didn't know those things, you might be kind of taken aback when you read this first verse, you might think to yourself, what's the problem? I had a grievance against my brother and we couldn't figure it out. We couldn't resolve it. So we went to small claims court or even something higher up on the ladder. We had to resolve our issue.

So what's the big deal? Well, see, we go into this, we go into Paul's remarks, knowing that in the body of Christ, we're family. I know it doesn't seem that way sometimes, but that is the reality of the situation. Christ has bonded us together in the family of God and those who call after the name of Jesus and trust in him for their salvation are my brothers and my sisters. They are my family.

And he's assuming that everybody knows this just isn't the way you treat family, right? Well, how are we to treat one another? Well, you go through the New Testament, particularly the first letter of John, and you find out that John has some really strong things to say to believers about loving one another. And he

has a lot to say about the hypocrisy of saying that you're a believer and hating your brother or having an issue with your brother. You see, we're called to love one another.

And Jesus said, they will know that you are my disciples by the love you have one for another. In other words, our love is supposed to be the telltale witness that we belong to Jesus Christ. Can you imagine what happens now to that witness when I take a brother in Christ to court and I sue him in front of the world, in front of unbelievers? Can you imagine what happens to our witness? It just gets shot.

It's like gone. And that's what Paul is talking about. And you can tell that his heart, his attitude is one of sorrow and mourning over what is going on between these believers. He says, dare you go to law before the unrighteous? And that's just another word for unbelievers, those who do not have a right standing with God.

And then he goes on to say in verse 2, and by the way, this is the first of three questions that begin with the phrase, or do you not know? He says, or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? Now you might be thinking to yourself, wait a minute, I didn't know the saints were going to judge the world. Where does it say the saints are going to judge the world in the Bible? Well, it's implied.

It's implied in every statement, every prophecy that speaks of the fact that believers will reign with Christ during the millennial kingdom. Now this is echoed in many places throughout the scripture. One of those is 2 Timothy 2 verse 12, and you can take time after this study to look that up and see that passage where it's just one of many that says we will reign with Christ. Well, it is implied that part of that reigning with him is actually judging, if you will. He goes on here in this passage to say, and if the world is to be judged by you, we're in the middle of verse 2, are you incompetent to try trivial cases?

Now you might not think that some litigation that you wanted to take against someone is trivial, but in the grand scheme of things, in the eternal view of things, I think a lot of the things that really take a lot of our time and attention. that really aren't going to matter, you know. And so that's what Paul is doing. He's comparing our cases, our issues, our concerns to eternity. And in that sense, you know, they are trivial.

And so he says, are you incompetent? Is there no one in the body of Christ who has shown any sort of competency to be able to render a verdict for you in a case, you know, such as this? And that's an actual question, by the way, he will go on to ask. But here in verse three, he goes on to say, do you not know, and this is the second occurrence of that, that we are to judge angels? That's a pretty crazy thought, isn't it?

I mean, the idea of us judging the fallen angels, you know, pretty crazy. How much more than matters pertaining to this life? If we're gonna be involved in reigning with Jesus and making decisions on issues

related to the fallen angels that perhaps went on for thousands of years, he says, you guys can't take care of something like what you're dealing with, the temporal, much smaller issues. So here's what he goes on to say in verse four. So if you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church?

Okay, this is another very penetrating question that Paul is asking, because he's not just saying here, if you have such cases, why are you not bringing them in front of people, you know, who you go to church with? Or why are you bringing them before people you don't go to church with? It's not about going to church. When he talks about being part of the church or not being part of the church, he's talking about people who aren't even saved. He's talking about people who don't have the Holy Spirit.

They don't have a biblical and heavenly worldview. They have an earthly worldview. And he's saying to them, these are the people you're entrusting. You are entrusting your most important issues for the time being to these people who don't have the Holy Spirit or the wisdom of God. Why are you doing that?

Wouldn't you much rather bring your cases before people who, like you, have the Spirit indwelling them and have the wisdom of God, who know the Word of God and know how to apply it? Wouldn't you be much more comfortable in a situation like that? Verse five, I say this to your shame. Can it be that there's no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers? Isn't there anybody in your fellowship?

Isn't there anybody in your knowing who is mature in Christ? You know, this is a good question. Do you know mature believers? Do you know people that you can go to and you can get a sound piece of advice from or a sound judgment, even in a case like this? This is what pastors and elders in the church ought to be doing.

This is one of the blessings that it is for others to be able to go to these individuals and say, I need advice. I need help. I have a brother. I have a sister. We don't agree.

And we don't wanna take this thing before the secular courts. We don't wanna ruin our testimony. So would you help us resolve this issue? That's what pastors and elders are for. And they ought to be used for that sort of a thing.

That's why Paul asked the question, can it be that there's no one among you wise enough to settle this sort of thing? Instead, he says in verse six, but brother goes to law against brother and that before unbelievers. Again, he's reiterating. You're blowing your testimony. You are literally taking the name of Jesus and what we are supposed to be like as believers.

And you are dragging that through the mud. And that is a serious matter. Verse seven, to have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Wow. Now this is, okay, they just got spanked.

And you know, as believers, we have to be prepared whenever we open our Bible to get spanked. And this is a spanking. Paul says, you know what? The fact that you have these kinds of lawsuits among you, it tells me that in this area, you've already been defeated. I wanna tell you what Paul means by that.

As believers, as followers of Christ, there is expected that a transformation is gonna take place in our hearts and minds. And that through the renewing of our minds, we will be transformed from all of the influences that we have picked up over the years from the world. And we will be transformed and our minds will be renewed toward the things of God and the things of the kingdom of God in such a way that, you know, we think differently, we act differently, we speak differently. That's the transformation that God is doing in all of our lives. Paul has an expectation that there is going to be enough of a transformation in the lives of these people that they would recognize that going to court against one another is counter and contrary to their calling, their standing, their very position in Jesus Christ.

He has an expectation. He has an assumption that they already know that. But because these people were taking out lawsuits against one another, it kind of proves to the apostle Paul that they have not shed those worldly thought processes, the way of getting even, the way of getting theirs, you know, by going to the secular courts. And that's why he says, you know, the fact that this is even happening among you, it shows, it proves that in this area, this transformation has not taken hold. The word of God has not taken hold in your hearts and lives.

And this is a defeat. I think the apostle Paul, speaking as a pastor, probably even took it a bit as a defeat for himself. You know, when a pastor hears that someone has done something that is very ungodly, and that person has been sitting under that pastor for maybe months or years, hearing the word of God, and then it comes to light that such and such of a thing has been done. I can tell you that as a pastor, I would take those things very personally, very personally. And I would feel like it was a failure on my part.

Didn't I teach the word of God properly? Didn't we convey in the scriptures how this sort of a thing is to be handled, you know? So Paul says, you know, this is a defeat. This is a defeat for you. He goes on, we're in the middle of verse seven, and here are, I think, probably the most powerful questions that he asks in the entire section.

He says, why not rather just suffer wrong? Why not rather just be defrauded? Do you see what Paul's saying? He's saying, you did have an option here. I know there was a situation you couldn't resolve.

I get that. But you chose to take that before a secular court system and to do all the things that we talked about that are very negative as it relates to our testimony in Christ, and you rejected the other option, which was just let the guy take advantage of you. Go ahead, just let him cheat you. If he cheated you and you believe he cheated you, then let him cheat you. That's preferable than dragging the name of Jesus through the mud.

Why not just rather be defrauded, he says? Yeah, you say you've been defrauded by this brother? Okay, so be defrauded. It is better to just consume the hurt, the wrong, than to fight about it in the sight of the world and to diminish the name of Jesus and the potential to bring those very people to a saving knowledge of Jesus on the cross. We have to think about that.

We have to understand that our actions could have an impact on someone else's salvation. You know, it's been said that you are the only Bible that some people may ever read. It's not a biblical statement, granted, but I do think it's an accurate one, I do. You are the only Bible that some may ever see. They're looking to you, they're looking at you, they're watching you.

What's this Christianity thing all about? What's this Jesus person all about? Is he different? Is there change, real, genuine change that goes along with following Jesus? Or is this just some religious add-on to the world?

Because those exist, you know, religious add-ons that really don't make any difference in a person's life. We expect transformation. We expect change. I have been saying for decades, Jesus changes people and unbelievers ought to see it. So he goes on in verse eight, after asking those very poignant questions, he says, but you yourselves wrong and defraud even your own brothers.

And then he begins to talk to them about the kind of people they're asking to decide their cases. He says in verse nine, or do you not know that the unrighteous, and again, that's a word for unbelievers, will not inherit the kingdom of God. You are part of an eternal kingdom. They, unbelievers, are part of a temporal kingdom. Unfortunately, you also live in that temporal, worldly kingdom, but we're not to be connected to that in the sense of it's influencing our lives.

But he's saying to them, he's reiterating to them, the people that you are giving the freedom to decide your cases are not part of the kingdom of God. And apart from repentance and faith in Jesus, they never will be. So why would you entrust your case to them? He says, don't you know that these people aren't going to inherit the kingdom of God? And then he begins to talk about the kind of behaviors that are common in the world, the kind of people that the believers in Corinth were entrusting their cases to.

Do not be deceived. Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, covering just a whole host of pornea is the Greek word for all those different kinds of sexual sins, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. So he's reminding them, these are the people. These are the people that you're entrusting your cases to. You're telling them that you want them to make a decision for you.

Right? And these are the kind of people that you're entrusting yourself to. And these are the people that won't inherit the kingdom of God, apart from repentance and faith. And then he reminds them this in verse 11, and this is so powerful. And such were some of you.

Notice the past tense. Such were, not are, were some of you. You guys came out of that same worldly system that they're stuck in. You came to Jesus. You repented of those old ways.

You put your faith in his work on the cross for salvation. And now your life is different. Your life has begun this work of transformation. And this is the kind of life that you were a part of at one time. But you've changed.

You're different. He even outlines what happened to them. He says, you were washed. You were sanctified. You were justified.

Three beautiful words. You know, you were washed. You were washed clean. That hasn't happened to them because they haven't submitted to faith in Jesus Christ for forgiveness, but you, you have. You've been washed.

You know, this is the picture we get from water baptism. When somebody goes into the waters of baptism, they come up out of the water with this picture of cleansing. You've been washed, right? He says, you were sanctified. That means you were set apart.

You are now set apart for God, for his special use. And finally, you were justified. And the Greek word that is translated justified means you have been declared righteous. You've been acquitted, right? You were found guilty and yet you were acquitted because Jesus bore your guilt.

And now you have been declared righteous in the sight of God through Jesus Christ. This is what's happened to you. And all this has come in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the spirit. In other words, through the agency of the Holy Spirit of our God. Wow.

So, you know, these are really powerful verses. And what we conclude from this is that, you know, we're to love one another and love doesn't take a brother or sister to court. Because first of all, that is a

denial of love. That's the first thing. Second of all, as we've said many times in this study, it is really a betrayal of who you are in Jesus and the call that is upon your life in Jesus to love your brothers and sisters.

So this is the responsibility that we have. And, you know, it's a responsibility that obviously God takes quite seriously. We need to take it seriously too. How do I treat my brothers and sisters in Jesus? How do I think about them?

Do I think about them like their family? Well, some things to think about. Let's close our time in prayer. Father, we do thank you for this time that you've given us to go through and look at these verses, talk about what they mean. And Lord, even though they're hard verses and they're very corrective in nature, we need to be corrected.

We need to think rightly. We need to have a biblical view of the family of God. And Lord, even though there are grievances, disagreements, and issues that arise between brothers and sisters in Jesus, I pray that you would help us to be godly about the way we resolve those differences, that we would take great care not to do anything that would besmirch your name or cause people to think badly of believers. Help us, Lord, to walk this out. Give us the strength, give us the courage, give us the grace.

We look to you and we thank you through the authority of Jesus, our Savior. Amen. Amen.