

Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

You Must be Born Again!

True repentance begins with knowledge of sin. The eyes of the repentant person are opened. He sees the length and breadth of God's holy law with distress and confusion. He sees the extent, the enormous extent, of his own transgressions. To his surprise, he discovers that he has been under a huge delusion by thinking of himself as a good person with a good heart. He learns that in reality he is wicked, guilty, corrupt, and evil in God's sight. His pride breaks down. His high thoughts melt away. He sees that he is a great sinner. This is the first step in true repentance.

Ryle, J. C.. Repentance - What it Means to Repent and Why We Must Do So (pp. 3-5). Aneko Press. Kindle Edition.

www.sermonaudio.com/crc

www.unholycharade.com (blog)

www.lightfordarktimes.com (blog)

Christ Reformation Church – YouTube Channel (Light for Dark Times)

We Will Judge the World and Angels

November 3, 2024

Sermon Text: 1 Corinthians 6:1-8

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor 6

1Co 6:1-3 When one of you has a grievance against another, does he

dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? (2) 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? (3) Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life!

Once more we see that the Corinthians were allowing themselves to be led by the mindset of the world. They were not being who they were now in Christ. They were letting arrogance motivate them and Paul has had to rebuke them and direct them to their new life in Christ:

- There were factions in the church – ‘I am of Apollos....’ Etc.
- They were judging Paul in worldly terms, rejecting him, and embracing false teachers
- They did not know what a true servant of Christ looked like – nor what following Christ looked like
- There was rank and serious sin being tolerated among them – once again they boasted about it.

And now Paul must admonish them for using the world’s courts to settle various grievances they might have with one another.

1Co 6:1 When one of you has a grievance against another, does he

dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints?

Here was their problem – they *did not understand yet who they were in Christ, and they were allowing false preachers to deceive them. They had everything backwards. They did not yet get this:*

Eph 4:20-24 But that is not the way you learned Christ!— (21) assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, (22) to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, (23) and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, (24) and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

In this case, they were turning to the world to resolve differences with one another. They were suing one another in the civil courts – before unbelievers. They were thinking and acting like “mere men.”

Listen to Gordon Fee describe what was happening –

“Apparently one brother (Man A) had defrauded another (Man B) in some way. To redress his grievances, Man B too Man A before the civil magistrates, their court probably being publicly located in the heart of the marketplace. The event is a defeat for the church in every way, for the community as a whole, as well as for the two brothers.”

“Paul’s words begin as though he were addressing the offender, but instead it becomes a word to the church as a whole. It turns out that the failure of the two men is primarily a failure of the church to be the church.

“Crucial to the whole argument is Paul’s view of *the church as an eschatological community, whose existence as God’s future people absolutely determines its life in the present age. In light of these eschatological realities, matters of everyday life are trivial, and pagan courts who concern themselves*

with such trivialities are themselves trivialized. Such people have no standing at all with the people of God.” [Commentary on First Corinthians]

Let’s see if we can sum up what this all means:

Christians are members of the kingdom of God, which is not of this present world. The church is an “outpost” of this kingdom in a world that is passing away. The things which so often consume our thinking and priorities, are nothing to be compared with the glories and eternity of Christ’s kingdom.

“Luk 12:13-15 Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.” (14) But he said to him, “Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?” (15) And he said to them, “Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”

We live in a litigious society. People sue one another for the most minor things. And it is especially

shameful when, as Paul says, Christians “dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints.”

These two men were no doubt consumed with their complaints, and yet Paul calls their case “trivial.” He does not say that there is no recourse when a Christian feels he has been wronged by another believer, but that the judgment needs to be made “before the saints” and not before the world.

NOTE: This does not mean that crimes are to be covered up and kept secret from the civil authorities. Too often local churches have failed to report criminal actions by a church member, arguing that the civil authorities such as the police have no jurisdiction in the church. That is not true. Paul will state elsewhere that we are to be in subjection to the civil authorities. But the case here at Corinth was apparently one of what we would call a “civil” case rather than a criminal one.

Now, let’s take careful notice of what Paul tells them about themselves as new people in Christ:

1Co 6:2-3 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? (3) Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life!

What is he doing? He is point them, and us, to the kingdom of God in the day when Christ comes and His kingdom is established in fullness. *The saints will judge the world and angels!* What an amazing truth! Let’s look at it closer.

Jud 1:14-15 It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, (15) to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that

ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”

Rev 2:26-27 The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, (27) and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father.

Rev 3:21 The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.

Rev 20:4 Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

These words are addressed to the entire church.

“Here are those who will not inherit the kingdom, whom God through His people is going to judge, and you are allowing lawsuits to be brought before them!” (Fee)

We are to live in light of who we are in Christ now, and who we will be when He comes!

We belong to a different age. This world is not our real home. We must be who we are!

Notice Paul’s use of rather biting sarcasm in his rebuke here:

1Co 6:4-5 So if you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church? (5) 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,

He is telling these people who were arrogant and regarded themselves

as wise, that they are behaving like fools. “Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough”?

The saints will judge angels! This may well have two applications:

1. When Christ comes again and His final judgment will be effected, His people, His church, will participate with Him in that judgment. As to angels, Christ will judge the wicked angels, and His church will join Him in that judgment.
2. “Judge” may also have the nuance of “preside.” Even in the new heavens and earth, the saints will preside with Christ over all things, including the angels. What specifically that will entail we are not told, but we do know this:

Psa 8:3-8 When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, (4) what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for

him? (5) Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. (6) You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, (7) all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, (8) the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

And therefore the Corinthians are to be ashamed of themselves:

1Co 6:4-6 So if you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church? (5) 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, (6) but brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers?

Let’s make a broader application of Paul’s words to our own situation.

Certainly there are far too many instances of professing Christians suing one another in civil courts.

And the entire church is guilty when these things are allowed to take place among them. It is so easy for us to become so accustomed to the world's ways that we begin to act that way ourselves.

But “going to court with a brother” need not be actual filing of a civil lawsuit in a court. We can be guilty of this sin and shame when some grievance arises in the church and we fail to deal with it. How many churches are racked with controversy over some issue, divided into parties, and never resolved in a Godly manner? And how many of these battles are known to the world around us? We know the answer to such questions. It is very common and it is a shame to the name of Christ.

1Co 6:7-8 To have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded? (8) But you yourselves wrong and defraud—even your own brothers!

Now, here is a vital question – how do the next three verses follow from what Paul has just been saying? –

1Co 6:9-11 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, (10) nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. (11) 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.

The key to answering this question is in that label “the unrighteous.” Paul has used it before –

1Co 6:1 When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before **the unrighteous** instead of the saints?

His point is the same in vss 9-11. He is making the Corinthians think

about the world in contrast to the kingdom of God. Something like this:

You are taking one another to court before the unrighteous. You are asking people to judge your case who have no concept of the kingdom of God, no sense of bringing glory to Him, and who in fact belong to the devil.

Think of it. It is shocking. What characterizes this present evil world?

the sexually immoral,
idolaters, adulterers, men
who practice
homosexuality, thieves, the
greedy, drunkards, revilers,
swindlers

And YOU are going to court before THEM??? The thing is ludicrous.

This does not mean of course that every magistrate in the world is corrupt, but simply that the world is of a mindset that is at enmity with that of the kingdom of God. However, we also know that it is far too common for a judge or other

government official to fit the description Paul has given. Sexually immoral, idolater, adulterer, etc. And you Corinthians are going to court with one another before them??? It is shameful.

Paul is no doubt driving home something else here – and perhaps this is his most important point. Namely, *that people whose lives are characterized by sin are not in the kingdom of God even though they claim to be.* That is to say, Paul is calling the Corinthians to self-examination. To a vastly more important question – *am I a Christian at all?*

Because if any professing Christian is in fact a thief, greedy, a swindler who wrongs others, that person is dead in sin and will end in hell. Notice:

Do not be deceived....

This warning to us would give us a sobering call to walk carefully because we are all vulnerable to the enemy's deception. Many professing Christians today are

deceived in this regard. They believe and they are taught in their churches that they can walk in sin and yet end in heaven. They believe that they will one day see the Lord and be with Him in His glory even though they now have no real concern for holiness. Many local churches are characterized by such sin in their own members.

This is the Apostle Paul's message (and thus the Lord's message) to the visible church today. Repent of these sins or you will never see My kingdom.

Finally, Paul brings the Corinthians (and us) back again to our real identity:

1Co 6:11 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.

If we have been justified by faith alone in Christ alone, then the Holy Spirit has effected amazing things in us:

- Our old man is dead
- We have been cleansed from the filth of our sin
- We have been sanctified – made holy before God

Such WERE some of you. I want to end today with what I hope will be tremendous encouragement for us all:

If you are born again, THE OLD SELF YOU WERE IS DEAD AND GONE. That person who was dominated and characterized by not only sin, but in bondage to lies which this world and those who belong to it have told you. Lies you were raised in that made you feel dirty or ashamed. Lies which caused you to adopt certain defense mechanisms such as never admitting being wrong, or always needing to be liked or needing approval from everyone. But what is the truth if you are in Christ? –

And such were 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.

Those old sins and patterns of thinking which you once embraced as you lived in this world – the dirt of them has been washed away. The sins you were soiled by do not define who you now are.

Eph 4:20-24 But that is not the way you learned Christ!— (21) assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, (22) to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, (23) and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, (24) and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

This is the place where I see most of you primarily – in Christ’s church on the Lord’s Day. And I am concerned that every one of you should feel joy and comfort when you come here. Too many times in past years, in the history of this church, there were people who were not of us, and too often they exalted themselves above others. Maybe some of you are still

suffering from those days, and if you are, I want to tell you – the Lord has delivered us from that evil. No one here is inferior, and no one here is superior. We are all one in the body of Christ and we love one another. So put off those lies which perhaps the lingering stains of the old man might still be deceiving you with.

Put on your new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. And “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”