

Being wronged or being defeated

We like to fight for our rights. But when does fighting for our rights overstep the mark, go beyond the boundaries, exceed Christ-like character?

1 Corinthians 6: 1 – 8

1) Taking church problems to the world or to the church (vs. 1, 5)

- Too often believers take their disputes with one another to the world to try and get the problems sorted out.
- One of the big issues that go to court is the issue of land disputes. There are many law suites of believers taking other believers to court over land.
 - Example of a church in Chitradurga where the court closed the church until the matter be resolved.
- We are called to be “the salt of the earth and the light of the world”.
 - How can we be that and take our internal disputes to the world for their counsel.
 - Has light and darkness got anything in common?
 - So the church and the world are not compatible
- We spoke about the wisdom of God and the folly of man
 - If we truly believe that God is wise and man is foolish then why would we be so foolish as to trust in the foolishness of man rather than the wisdom of God?
 - Trusting in the world to solve our church issues would be to deny the wisdom of God in our midst. Or do we not have the Spirit of God dwelling in us imparting the very secret things of God that we have to trust unbelievers to sort out our issues?
- Irrespective of our failings and imperfections we remain the body of Christ
 - Would Christ be honoured if the world has the rule his body?
 - ^{JAS 4:4} You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.
- Ways that we bring our disputes to the world – “before the ungodly” as Paul puts it.
 - Lawsuits – taking each other to court
 - Gossiping or slandering to unbelievers
 - Highlighting church problems in the press
- When we do such things we have already been defeated.
- Are there any times when a believer can take another believer to court?
 - When wrong has been done and the process of church discipline has been completed without resolving the issue. The person in the wrong is then treated as an unbeliever.
 - When a person becomes a danger to the church or society

2) The competence of the saints (vs. 2 – 4)

- The saints will judge:
 - The world (v.2)
 - Angels (v.3)
- Paul asks rhetorical questions based on the fact that God has ordained it that we will judge the world and angels.
 - “Are you not competent to judge trivial cases?”
 - How much more things of this life?
- What Paul is saying is that the issues that we have to make judgments about in this live are very small compared to what he is expecting us to do.

- In other words God has given His church all the resources necessary to settle issues within the church.
 - James 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.
- Paul write that “even men of little account in the church” can be appointed to judge the dispute.
- In other words when we are walking with the Lord the way of righteousness should be obvious. But if it is not God gives His wisdom to whoever asks for it.
- Some guidelines for a person judging a matter:
 - Set ground rules e.g. one person talk at a time
 - Be impartial – don’t take sides
 - Get the people concerned speaking to each other not to you as the mediator.
 - Get them to use “I” rather than “you” language. Don’t attack each other’s character.
 - Be firm when things get out of hand.

3) The right attitude (v. 7)

- Why not rather be cheated i.e. rather than fight for what you believe is yours.
- MT 5:38 "You have heard that it was said, `Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.'" ³⁹ But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. ⁴⁰ And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. ⁴¹ If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. ⁴² Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.
- When we came to Christ we gave up all our rights – we became bond slaves of Christ. A slave has no rights.
- It is the attitude behind the action rather than the action itself that is wrong.
 - Attitude of:
 - Worldliness
 - Self-centeredness
 - Greed
 - Covetousness (remember the rich man who would give up his possessions)
- When we believed in Jesus we died to Self-centeredness, our sinful desires and worldliness.
- It is the person who truly believes that he has died with Christ and it is now Christ who lives in him who will have the right attitude towards possessions and people.
- Jesus always put people before things
 - Being in relationship is more important than being right.