

# Sermon Notes

## *Courting Judgment*

1 Corinthians 6:1-8

May 31, 2015

### **Introduction: A Real Tragedy**

The tragedy of cold love, or lovelessness, was on display as Christians were taking Christians to court in Corinth. It was just the way things were done. Was (is) there any other way? Their society was famously litigious. The courtroom and the legal profession were arenas of celebrity activity. People were made or un-made in such places, and they were places of rhetoric and argument...truth was supposedly reached through points made or un-made. The courtroom provided much of the entertainment for the society. This is true in our day as well. We are inundated with cases near and far, and our entertainment menu includes a great deal of “courtroom drama.” What about Christians dragging one another to the courts? What about some of the tragic occasions over the years?

### ***Dare any of you?***

**6:1**—The concern is not the existence of courtrooms, nor with those who practice law, nor even with the presence of non-believers. The concern is that Christian A is taking Christian B to court and standing judgment before those who do not know Christ. Paul is appalled. He is shocked. This is shameful behavior. It is evident that this must have become something of a habit for the Christians there. It is doubtful that Paul would have addressed this if it happened only once or twice. Why does it receive this kind of attention?

Paul: At this moment, and with this behavior, you are looking very much like the world—pretty much like everyone else? What’s different about you? What’s different about your community?

**6:2-3**—Paul points to the realities: they are saints, they will judge the world and angels, and this lawsuit practice is contrary to who they are as Christians. Paul challenges them: can you not even judge the smallest matters? Can’t you judge the stuff which pertains to “this life” (βιωτικὰ)?

What is this “judging of the world and angels” and what does it have to do with what Paul is saying here?

**6:4**—Let’s admit it...there’s all kinds of stuff swirling about this life, and you are *supposed* to make judgments about this. (We saw last week) You are supposed to be making judgments inside the church and you are not to be judging outside the Church. Those outside, you are to leave to the Lord. Instead, things have become so twisted that they are not judging those within the church, and those within the church are going outside of the church to have their cases judged!

**6:5**—Paul continues and is rather direct: *I say this to your shame* (ἐντροπή). In English, “entropy” refers to a dissolution, a gradual breaking down into disorder. This ‘entropic shame’ is found in two areas:

*Can’t you find anyone to handle this* (6:5)? In and with all of your wisdom, is this not possible among you?

*This is an utter failure* (6:7)! Or, “a complete loss.” They are not to go in this direction at all.

### ***Some Clarification***

We do need to avoid the simplistic idea that this passage rules out any and all recourse to the judges and the courts. Although this is not the main point of what Paul is dealing with, we should be clear about this.

- Civil and civic rulers are appointed by the Lord (Romans 13), and Paul himself appealed to Caesar (Acts 25:11). This is different than dragging fellow Christians before the magistrates.
- There are areas of legal expertise where you may need counsel.
- When guilty
- Certain crimes, which are also sins, need to be dealt with before both Church and civil courts.
- It’s possible for a Christian to be sued by a non-Christian

Paul’s main point is about Christians wrangling with other Christians and he is saying that they should be able to handle it between themselves, and if not in that way, then within the Church. And then, if not...

### ***Why not rather be wronged or cheated?***

This is something of a granting of the point...at least the point of conflict. Okay, you’ve been done “wrong” and they, perhaps, cheated you. Paul challenges them with that which is most uncomfortable for those who are all about their rights and never allowing any else to cross them or offend them: why not rather *not be right*? Paul is not saying that we should not try to sort things out; after all, that’s what’s he doing as he’s writing to the Church in Corinth. He is saying, it’s better to suffer wrong than to do wrong!

### **In Conclusion**

It’s starts with the small stuff

It’s a demand for rights

Have you ever been wronged? How did you respond?

This is what love on low-flow looks like

Issues in the Church (+/-)

