

G'Day church family

Today we're **continuing** our look at **Paul's letter** to the **Corinthians** - and we're looking at **chapter 6**

You have an **outline** if you want to take **notes** as we go.

Let's **pray** and ask for **God's help** in understanding His Word.

Intro

I knew of a **Christian School** - I **won't say which one** - where some of the **parents** on the parent/teachers **council took the school to court** - it **cost each parent \$30,000** out of their **own pocket** - and they **didn't win** the case - all it **showed** was **Christians airing their dirty linen in public** - it **damaged** the **reputation** of the **school** - **affected** the **students** - **hit** the **parents hip pocket** badly - and had **one parent give up** on **Christianity**

Is that how **Christians** are **supposed to behave** - when it comes to **handling disputes** with one another?

In **1 Corinthians chapter 6** - the **Apostle Paul** is **dealing** with the **behaviour** of the **Christians** in the **Church** at **Corinth**

[PowerPoint 1a-courting trouble part 1]

The **boasting** the **Corinthians** have been doing **about** following other **leaders** - has **led** to **squabbles** about all sorts of things - and the **Corinthian Christians**

are taking each other to court - they are literally "courting trouble" - we'll²
call this "Courting Trouble Part 1"

[PowerPoint 1b-courting trouble part 2]

Also - the **freedom**, the Corinthians have as **Christians** - has led them to believe they are **free to do whatever they like** - and has them courting more trouble - we'll call this "Courting Trouble Part 2"

Courting Trouble Part 1 (vv1-11)

First then - **Courting Trouble Part 1** - that's in vv1-11

[PowerPoint 2a-Heading]

- Looking at v1 - Paul says the **people** in the **church** at **Corinth** are taking their **disputes** with each other to court - but the **judges** in these courts are non-Christian. **Instead** what they should do is **get one of the Lord's people** (Church family) to **help resolve** these dispute
- Now, these disputes are **civil matters** - not criminal matters
- *Examples of civil matters today: might be: divorce, child custody, child support, probate, being owed money, business contracts, personal injury; property disputes and so on.*
- Paul has not got a **problem** with the **judicial system** as such - in **Romans 13** he says **people need to submit to the authorities** because **God established** them - so there are **times** when even **Christians have to go to court**
- But what **Paul is concerned** about **here** - is the **impression people will get** if **Christians** are going to **pagan non-believing civil magistrates** to **judge** on

matters which could **easily and lovingly** - be sorted out within the church family

- **When was the last time you saw two people go to court - to settle a dispute - and saw them leave the court with their arms around each other - when the magistrate decides in favour of one of them - against the other? Like NEVER!**
- Paul's point in v2-3 - is that **as Christians** - the **Corinthians** need to know that when they are in **eternity**, they will have such a **position** that they will even be involved in **judging evil and good angels** - so they should have no trouble judging a dispute between their church folk
- Paul's saying - **as Christians** they're in a **different category** than non-Christians - they're saved sinners - and made right with God - through Jesus
- And **because** they're made right with God - through Jesus - they're not in the **same category** as pagan non-Christian magistrates - who don't understand how Christian churches work - who don't understand how a church family relates to one another- so **why go to them** to judge these disputes? - v4
- Paul says they're **bringing shame** on themselves and **making the church a laughing stock** - v5
- **Why not** - still in v5 - **find someone wise** in the church to mediate the dispute
- This **agrees with** what **Jesus** said **Matt 18:15-20**
 - **If two people** are in dispute - they try to **sort it out together**
 - **If not** then they bring a **friend** in to **help** sort it out

- If it's still **unresolved** - then they **bring in the church (elders or minister)**
- **Remembering that where 2 or more are gathered in Jesus' name - He is there among them**
- **Remember what Jesus said on the Sermon on the Mount: *Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God* (Matt 5:9)**
- **God's children are peacemakers**
- This is **much better** than going to a pagan court
- In a pagan court - are they **gathering in the name of Jesus?**
- In a pagan court - are they **going to pray before and during and after the hearing?**
- In a pagan court - are they **going to seek the Father's will** in the matter?
- Instead Paul says - v7 - the **fact** they have **gone to court** is an **epic failure** in itself - they have **not** handed this matter over to **God** - **nor** dealt with it in a **godly manner**
- Paul **argues, rather than damage** the reputation of the church and **Christianity**, it would be **better to be wronged (and forgive) or accept** you have been **cheated** (rather than **push the point**). And it's better to **agree to differ** - than having to be **right** about **everything**. **Unity is more important** than being right.
- V8 - the **bottom line** is the **Corinthian Christians** are **not** acting like **Christians** - they are **cheating and wronging each other**

- So, Paul warns - that to **continue** in sins such as **sexual immorality, idolatry, adultery, homosexuality, stealing, greed, drunkenness, slander, swindling** - means they will **not** inherit God's kingdom
- Paul's **not** talking about if **we commit one of these sins** or **have committed these sins** - but **if we continue** in these sins as our way of life - then we might **say** we're a Christian - **but our heart and actions say different**
- To **continue** in these sins is no way of life for a child of God
- In v11 - Paul reminds them - they **used to** have that way of life - **but now:**
 - They've been **washed clean from their sins** - **through Jesus' blood** on the cross
 - They've been **sanctified** (made holy) by the HS now living **inside them** as Christians -
 - They've been **justified** (just as if they never sinned) - **justified** means - they've been **made right with God**
 - All **done** in the **name** and in the **power** of Jesus

[PowerPoint 2b-App1-New Creation]

- **Application** - So the **Corinthian Christians** are a **new Creation** - and so are **we** - **so why would we get involved in fighting amongst ourselves** - and **why would we continue in that sinful way of life?**
- I'm reminded of **Romans 12: 17-18**

¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

[PowerPoint 2c-App1 Ambassadors]

- **Application** - we are **Christ's Ambassadors**. **Non-Christians** are watching us - they **KNOW** how **Christians** should behave - even if they're not one. So, we are **representing Christ's name** - so we shouldn't bring Him dishonour or shame.

Courting Trouble Part 2 (vv12-19)

[PowerPoint 3a-Heading]

- Second then - **Courting Trouble Part 2** - that's in vv12-19
- Here - Paul **addresses another attitude** the **Corinthians** have
- And we see this **same attitude** today
- See v12 - I have the right to do anything I like - basically "*I can do whatever turns me on - whatever floats my boat*"
- What the **Corinthians** did was they took Paul's teaching on **Christian freedom**, (*Teaching like in Col 2:16 - ... do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day*) and they **applied this freedom to areas** that Paul, or the Lord, **never intended**. They used their 'freedom as a license to sin.
- Paul says - just because you can do anything doesn't make it right
- For **example**
 - We can **get drunk everyday** - is that **good for us? Good for our liver? Good for our family?**

- We can take **drugs** and **feel better** or **high** for a **while** - but what happens if we get **addicted**? Or we **accidentally overdose**? How will that **affect** our **family**?
- We can have **sex** with **multiple partners** - and even have sex with a partner of the **same sex**? But is that **good for us**? Is that **good for the others involved**? What, if we **get a sexually transmitted disease**? **What if one of those partners gets pregnant**? What about the **partner we've cheated on**?
- We can have an **abortion** - it's **legal** - but should we be **killing** another **human being**?
- You see the **Corinthians** in their **philosophy** and **culture** saw the **body** as being **nothing** - and it was only the **soul** that **mattered**
- So, they had the **attitude** - *I can do whatever I want with the body as it's only temporary and doesn't matter*
- **Paul's** says **NO!** The **body** is **important**
- See **V14** - In the **same way** that **God's power** raised **Jesus** back to life - we will also one day **get a resurrected body**. So, our **bodies** are **important to God**.
- And **V15** - as **Christians** we are **united to Christ's body** - our **bodies** are **members** of **Christ's body**-
- Now **remember Christ is God** - so our **bodies** are **united to God**
- And **remember God is holy** - so we **shouldn't be doing unholy things** to our **body** - as our **body** is **united to the Holy God**

- Paul's argument is when we do things to our body which are unholy or ungodly - that would totally dishonour our privileged position of being part of Jesus' body
- Paul says V16 - How can you be part of Jesus' holy body - and then at the same time become one flesh with a prostitute in an unholy act?
- Instead - v17 - when we are united to Jesus - we are one with Him in Spirit

So, instead of courting trouble

Paul's advice - v18

Is one word - **Flee!**

Flee from sexual immorality

Like Joseph did in Genesis 39:12 - when Potiphar's wife tried to seduce

Joseph - here's what happened...

[Potiphar's wife] caught him by his cloak and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house.

(pause)

Paul chooses to focus on the sin of sexual immorality because v18 - all other sins are committed outside the body - but sexual sins are against our own body (Paul's argument is our bodies do matter - because our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit - see v19)

When we became a Christian, we received the Holy Spirit

As John 3 tells us - Christians are born again - born from above - with the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit has come and set up residence in each Christian

[PowerPoint 3b-App]

Application - Even though the **Corinthians** and many people today are technically **right** - that we can do whatever we like

Christian bodies are **temples** of the **Holy Spirit**

Holy shouldn't and mustn't go with **unholy**

Oil and water don't mix - **holy and unholy** don't mix

We need to **flee everything** that is **unholy**

The great truth of our Christian faith - is not that a Christian has the freedom to sin - but that a Christian has the freedom NOT to sin.

(pause)

Response (Psalm 139)

So **how** can we **flee** from what is **unholy**?

Well - that's where our OT reading **Psalm 139** comes in

Psalm 139 reminds us **who God is**:

This psalm tells us

[PowerPoint 4-Ps 139]

- **God knows all** about us
- He **knows** our **thoughts** - no one else knows them
- **Before** we **speak**, he **knows** what we're **going** to **say**
- Basically - He knows everything - He really is a **know it all**

And Psalm 139 tells us

- There's **nowhere** we can go to **hide from God** - the **highest** mountain the **lowest** valley - or everywhere in **between** - God is there

- God is everywhere

And Psalm 139 tells us

- God is all **powerful**
- As v13 says - He **knitted us together in our mother's womb**

[PowerPoint 4b-App]

You see when we remember who **God** is -

Out of obedience and respect and honour to the all-knowing, ever-present, all-powerful, Holy and Living God - we must flee all that is unholy

Conclusion (vv19b-20)

If we turn back to 1 Corinthians 6

The Apostle Paul drives home his argument why the Corinthians and us should not court trouble in v19b-20 - he says

[PowerPoint 5-Conclusion]

You are not your own, you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies

Paul's argument goes like this:

- As **Christians** - Our **bodies** don't belong to us - they belong to **God**
- **Jesus** traded in our old sinful bodies by His death on the cross
- Our old body - our old self- died with **Jesus** on the cross
- We **now** have a **new self**
- That **new self** was bought at a price - it cost **Jesus** His life
- So, if our **new self** belongs to **God** - we need to look after it.

Illustration - I don't know about you - but if someone lets me use something valuable of theirs - I'm more careful with it - than I am with my own stuff

A while ago - I used my son in-law's brand new V8 Holden - I was petrified of having a crash or damaging it - I drove it like I was paranoid - making sure I returned it to him in one piece

- In the same way - our bodies are not our own - they belong to the Holy Living God
- So, Paul says honour God with our body (v20)
- How do we honour God with our body?
 - Our hands should be used for God. We have no right to use them in the service of Satan, the world, or sin. Idle hands do not glorify God, nor mischievous hands, nor dishonest hands, nor unkind hands, nor careless hands.
 - Our feet. They should go only on God's errands. When we see our feet kicking or stamping in anger, or venturing into forbidden and dangerous paths, or loitering when they should make haste, we should think "*These feet are not for God.*" Instead remember "*How beautiful are the feet, when they are for God!*"
 - Our lips. Should not produce profane words, untruthful words, coarse and vulgar words, angry and irritating words, unholy and impure words, slandering and gossiping words? When we are about to speak to anyone, ask these three questions first - "*Is it true? Is it helpful? Is it kind?*" - if we can't say Yes to all three - then don't say it.

- And so, **with our whole body**. The **ears** should be **for God**, listening to **nothing** of **which He** would **disapprove**; and the **eyes**, turning away from **all** that **He would not look upon**. All should be for God.

Let the **Apostle Paul** have the last word - from **Romans 14:8**

If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

Let's pray...