



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

A Sign of a Greater Problem

Tuesday, 25 February 2014

RON J. BIGALKE, PASTOR/MISSIONARY, CAPITOL COMMISSION, 912.659.4212

Ron J. Bigalke, PhD / PO Box 244, Rincon, GA 31326-0244 / www.capitolcom.org / ron.bigalke@capitolcom.org

CAPITOL BIBLE STUDY

152nd General Assembly

- TUESDAY @ 7:30 AM in 123 CAP
- TUESDAY @ 12 NOON in 328 CLOB

Capitol Commission Bible Studies are held Tuesday mornings at 7:30am and again at 12 Noon. The weekly Bible study is nonpartisan and non-denominational. The study for the 2014 General Assembly is the book of First Corinthians.

I pray that this study will be edifying to you. I am here to serve you and to be a resource for prayer and counsel. Please accept my study in the Word of God, as an evidence of my desire to be serving you. — Dr. Ron J. Bigalke, Georgia State Minister, Capitol Commission

Capitol Commission Bible Study is

Tuesday, 25 February 2014

First Corinthians 6 – “A Sign of a Greater Problem”

“I apologize for being the bearer of bad news, but that noise you hear your car making is a symptom of a much greater problem.” Surely, you or a friend has heard those words, at least, once from your automobile mechanic. You take your car for what you think will be a minor repair, and learn that you need to replace the transmission. I am certain you can appreciate the intense displeasure when a little problem actually is the result of a much greater problem.

First Corinthians 6 addresses what appeared to be a minor issue. Some believers were taking other church members to court and allowed unbelievers to adjudicate the dispute. The practice was a symptom of something much worse. The more serious problem among believers is that their practice indicated that they neither entirely considered nor lived the gospel message.

THE SYMPTOM

(I Cor 6:1-11) Chapter 6 addresses the issue of lawsuits against fellow believers. Scripture is not idealistic or naïve in the sense that problems are unexpected; rather, what is scandalous is when Christians do not resolve such issues among themselves. Verse 1 indicates how inconceivable it is that a believer would take “a [legal] case against his neighbor . . . before the unrighteous and not before the saints” (which certainly does not help the cause of evangelism).

The concept of justice relates chapter 6 to the preceding subject matter concerning the immoral individual, the divisions among believers, and even opposition to an individual commissioned by God. Although the Corinthian church regarded themselves as wise, they were divided among themselves, which demonstrated that they lacked discernment. They judged when they should not, and failed to judge when they should have.

Of course, there is nothing wrong with the desire for justice; it is perfectly acceptable to take an unresolved issue “before the saints.” However, it is wrong to take another Christian to court before unbelievers (“the unrighteous”). One reason for this error is “that the saints will judge the world,” thus, believers are “competent to constitute the smallest law courts” (1 Cor 6:2). The ability of believers to judge one another is not restricted to marital and sexual issues, but is applicable to everyday “matters of this life” (6:3).

Christians are those who are saved by grace — through faith — in Jesus Christ, who is both Lord and Savior (Eph 2:8-9). Believers have a vital union with the Lord Jesus (John 15:4), and also with fellow members of the body of Christ. Believers are a kind of family (6:4, 7; 12:12-27), and this relationship allows Christians to make judgments (which avoids embarrassment before unbelievers).

CHRISTIANS ARE THOSE . . . SAVED BY GRACE — THROUGH FAITH
— IN JESUS CHRIST, WHO IS BOTH LORD AND SAVIOR (EPH 2:8-9).

Although the words of verses 1-4 were intended to shame the readers, such disgrace was not the ultimate intent. The goal was to convince the readers to change their behavior and perceptions (which would also include you and me, if applicable). For a congregation that prided itself with eloquence and wisdom, they should have been wise enough “to decide” the disputes (6:5-6). The gospel reconciles believers not only to God but also to one another in Christ.

Wisdom does exist among believers (2:14-16), yet it is also possible to fail to attain that discernment, when one fails to understand the nature of true wisdom. Christians know that the Word of God is supremely wise because it reveals eternal truths; however, worldly standards of justice ignore realities such as unity in Christ and the virtue of forgiveness. Consequently, unbelievers are unable to adjudicate disputes between Christians because unbelieving human law does not manifest true wisdom. The saying “justice is blind” is not true simply because public courts are to treat all people equally but also it could be said that — with mere worldly wisdom — it cannot perceive actual truth.

One misunderstanding from 1 Corinthians 6 would be that law courts will always be “unrighteous” because Christians avoid their

Capitol Commission Bible Studies

Tuesday (25 February) @ 7:30am – 8:00am, 123 CAP

Tuesday (25 February) @ 12 Noon – 12:45pm, 328 CLOB

lunch provided from sponsorship by Walton EMC



Enhancing Trust

Capitol Commission Georgia

A Sign of a Greater Problem

usage (to resolve disputes among fellow believers) and thus the Bible is irrelevant to those courts. Scripture is explicit that Christians are to remind their civil leaders that their responsibilities are granted to them from the providence of God (Ps 92:8; 93:1-2; Dan 4:30-32, 34). Civil leaders are accountable to serve society responsibly and suitably, as ministers of God (cf. Isa 13:11; 14:4-6, 11; Jer 22:13-17; 34:12-22; Amos 2:4; Jon 1:2; Rom 13:1-6).

CIVIL LEADERS ARE ACCOUNTABLE TO SERVE SOCIETY RESPONSIBLY AND SUITABLY, AS MINISTERS OF GOD.

Of course, there are times in which believers may appeal to governing authorities (cf. Acts 25:9-12). The prohibition of 1 Corinthians 6 is regarding disputes of the Christian family that are made public, and thus damage the reputation and witness of the church. Believers should not go beyond the family to resolve disputes.

The disputes forbidden are those that are trivial in the context of future judgment. Disputes such as divorce between two believers or misappropriation of funds would be quite significant in regards to eternity. First Corinthians 6 does not necessarily forbid significant cases of morality or felonies that require an appearance in court (and such people would likely be charged and taken to court by the authorities themselves). The context of 1 Corinthians 6 is revenge cases in which there is little to be gained ultimately.

Although it is a disgrace to bring unresolved disputes of believers before unbelievers (who have not resolved the reason for human existence), the fact that Christians would conduct lawsuits against one another is simply wrong (1 Cor 6:7). Even when believers cannot resolve problems, it is better to “be defrauded” (6:8) because peacemaking is superior to achieving justice. For one Christian not to demand “justice” could result in resolve for many situations.

Believers are competent to judge matters among themselves, and unbelievers should be considered incompetent to judge when these particular matters arise among believers (6:9-11). The reason is because there is a fundamental difference between the person endowed with the Holy Spirit, and the individual without the Spirit, to determine an overall outlook for matters of this life.

The rule should be to avoid taking a believer to court if the Christian is willing to allow litigation by a local church or, at least, other believers. If the issue is a matter of recovering damages or money, or such a thing as defamation of character, it would be best to end actions or discussions. One should accept the loss if the offender is unwilling to allow God’s people to judge. The testimony of the church is much more important than regaining a personal loss.

The words of verses 9-11 offer great hope to one struggling with sin. The list of sinful lifestyles that have so inundated the person involved make the individual to be defined by the very sin that dominates. The good news is that due to the work of the Lord and the

Holy Spirit such persons can be justified before God so that they are considered “sanctified.” The notion of being “washed” is that the old lifestyle is gone: “new things have come” (2 Cor 5:17).

THE MUCH GREATER PROBLEM

(1 Cor 6:12-20) The reasons why people were engaging in premarital or extramarital relations in the time of 1 Corinthians are remarkably contemporary. The rationalization was “all things are lawful [permissible] for me” (1 Cor 6:12). The false notion of the effect of justification by grace was tantamount to saying, “let us sin so that grace may increase” (Rom 6:1).

Sexual immorality will not condemn a *true* Christian to eternal punishment, thus some thought that because justification is based upon faith alone in Jesus (and not good works), it would be permissible to engage in fornication. The corrective to such thinking is that some things, such as sexual immorality, are not beneficial because they tend to master us. Christians are to be mastered solely by Christ, not bodily appetites (1 Cor 6:13-14).

Another rationalization for immorality was “food is for the stomach and stomach is for food” (6:13), which meant, “sex is designed for the sexual organs, and the sexual organs were created for sex.” Although it is true that God created our sexual organs, we are not to use them as freely as we use our stomach. Bodily needs are secondary to God’s intentions for his people. God established rules for the body so that it can be enjoyed and used for his glory (6:13-14).

Sexual immorality is wrong because the believer’s body is a member of Christ. The Lord who made rules for sex also occupies the believer’s body. God will not tolerate immorality in the body that is joined to Him, and because the Lord instituted marriage to be sacred (6:15-17). Sexual immorality forces the body to participate uniquely in sin (6:18-19). Various other kinds of sin, such as drunkenness, involve a substance outside the body (viz. alcohol).

The believer’s body “is a temple of the Holy Spirit,” and thus fornication causes the temple to commit sin, which is particularly sinful because the body is to be treated as a sacred place of God’s residence (6:20). Believers are “bought with a price,” which means our bodies are not meant to use as we please, such as taking what is God’s and misusing it in a way forbidden by the new owner. Christians have a new identity in Christ Jesus, and this new nature requires appropriate and changed behavior, *which thankfully 1 Corinthians 6 helps us to understand.*

Thank you for allowing Capitol Commission the honor to provide Bible studies to you. If you have any questions, please talk with us, or contact us by email or phone.

About Capitol Commission

The mission of Capitol Commission is to reach Capitol communities for Christ—one person at a time, to disciple them, and to prepare them for a lifetime of ministry, wherever God chooses to place them. Did you know that Capitol Commission is now in 22 state capitols? God is accomplishing more than we could have ever imagined, as our various state ministries and national ministry work together. *Please join us in this ministry!*

**NEXT CAPITOL COMMISSION BIBLE STUDIES:
TUESDAY, 4 MARCH @ 7:30AM in 123 CAP
and again @ 12 NOON in 328 CLOB**

Bible study luncheon sponsored by:



Bible study copies made by:

