

## THE FIRST LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS

Collect Prayer - First Sunday in Advent

ALMIGHTY God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and [the]\* dead, we may rise to the life immortal, through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. *Amen.*

Are there questions or comments from the last session? For those of you following online you may email Fr. Bart at [frfryanssc@frontiernet.net](mailto:frfryanssc@frontiernet.net)

### 1 Corinthians 6

*<sup>1</sup>When one of you has a grievance against a brother, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? <sup>2</sup>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? <sup>3</sup>Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, matters pertaining to this life! <sup>4</sup>If then you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who are least esteemed by the church? <sup>5</sup>I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no man among you wise enough to decide between members of the brotherhood, <sup>6</sup>but brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers?*

*<sup>7</sup>To have lawsuits at all with one another is defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded? <sup>8</sup>But you yourselves wrong and defraud, and that even your own brethren.*

*<sup>9</sup>Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor sexual perverts, <sup>10</sup>nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>11</sup>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 in the Spirit of our God.*

I. Judgment is the focus of this part of the letter

A. In this section Paul revisits his argument that the community has the duty to judge and that going to the law courts was wrong.

1. Law courts are civil not church based
2. Law was a corrupt practice in the Roman Empire - social status and wealth mattered - justice was for sale in the Roman Court

B. Why using the secular court is an insult to the Christian Community

The Nine Questions - summarized

1. Christians should be able to settle their own disputes
2. There is no difference in social status within the church
3. Christians are the ones who should be judging not unbelievers

C. The Coming of the Kingdom - coming full circle Paul returns to the way he began Chapter 6 reminding the Corinthians that God Judgment is coming and the unrighteous will not inherit the Kingdom.

D. He ends this section with another list of vices. Why?

1. To remind the people of the sins of the community members
2. To refocus on their unworthiness to be The Church - both by their corporate inaction and by their individual sin

<sup>12</sup>“All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be enslaved by anything. <sup>13</sup>“Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food”—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. <sup>14</sup>And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. <sup>15</sup>Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! <sup>16</sup>Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, “The two shall become one flesh.” <sup>17</sup>But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. <sup>18</sup>Shun immorality. Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body; but the immoral man sins against his own body. <sup>19</sup>Do you not know that your body is

*a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; <sup>20</sup>you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.*

I. In contrast to the actions of the Corinthian Community, Paul again points to himself

A. The "All things..." is to contrast with the do you own things attitude

B. He begins with the human need for food and then refocuses again on sexual immorality.

1. The body is important and the body is sacred, holy - this contrast the Hellenistic thought and is holistic (body and Spirit)

2. This argument is important for our understanding of marriage and adultery

C. What is the orientation of the human person?

1. Our next meal, shelter, pleasure....

2. The ultimate end - the Kingdom of God

It is the second that Paul develops as his understanding of the fully integrated human being. Aware of needs, but trusting in God - Looking not only to the immediate, but also on the future- And so we return to the Collect Prayer of the last session

O GOD, the protector of all that trust in thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy; Increase and multiply upon us thy mercy; that, thou being our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal. Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake our Lord.

*Amen.*

## 1 Corinthians 7

<sup>1</sup>Now concerning the matters about which you wrote. It is well for a man not to touch a woman. <sup>2</sup>But because of the temptation to immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. <sup>3</sup>The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. <sup>4</sup>For the wife does not rule over her own body, but the husband does; likewise the husband does not rule over his own body, but the wife does. <sup>5</sup>Do not refuse one another except perhaps by agreement for a season, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, lest Satan tempt you through lack of self-control. <sup>6</sup>I say this by way of concession, not of command. <sup>7</sup>I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own special gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.

I. People in Corinth wrote Paul concerning this issue

II. They asked specific questions- problems in the community

A. Asceticism – celibacy was also being questioned

B. Eschatological Issue

1. Connection with the Essenes

2. Connection with Greek Thought – Cult of Isis

II. Marital Sexuality

A. Paul is consistent with Jewish thought

1. Men and Women should marry – be fruitful and multiply

2. Intertestamental Period – 12 patriarchs writings

a. Marry to avoid temptation

b. Patriarchal understanding (Differs from Paul)

B. Paul on Marriage and Sexuality

1. Equality of the sexes

2. Motive for marriage

a. Lesser of two evils

b. Importance of sexual intercourse within marriage

(Philosophical and Hebrew Thought – Social Order)

3. The Issue of Giftedness

- a. Celibacy is a gift
- b. Anglican vs. Roman Priesthood

<sup>8</sup>To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is well for them to remain single as I do. <sup>9</sup>But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion.

<sup>10</sup>To the married I give charge, not I but the Lord, that the wife should not separate from her husband <sup>11</sup>(but if she does, let her remain single or else be reconciled to her husband)—and that the husband should not divorce his wife.

<sup>12</sup>To the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. <sup>13</sup>If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. <sup>14</sup>For the unbelieving husband is consecrated through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is consecrated through her husband. Otherwise, your children would be unclean, but as it is they are holy. <sup>15</sup>But if the unbelieving partner desires to separate, let it be so; in such a case the brother or sister is not bound. For God has called us to peace. <sup>16</sup>Wife, how do you know whether you will save your husband? Husband, how do you know whether you will save your wife?

## I. State of Life Issues – Single/Marriage/Widowhood

### A. Each Case begins with a specific situation

#### 1. Widows and Widowers

- a. Best is to be like him – not remarried
- b. Realist - post marital celibacy is not for everyone

#### 2. Married Couples

- a. Periods of abstinence was covered in 7:2-7
- b. On the question of divorce - Jesus said NO!

(Paul will develop this further, but let us consider the issue of what he is talking about. "I'm not happy" "Doesn't everyone have the right to be happy?" This reasoning for a divorce is what Paul is talking about. Quitting because marriage is work is not acceptable for the Christian - What about abuse etc. These are not the same issue!)

3. Mixed Marriages - Christian should remain married to non-believers - Why?

- a. Covenant code to holiness code (Jewish Thought)
  - 1. Wife of Jew is Jew
  - 2. Paul expands in equality - spouse can be made Holy
- b. The Children are Holy
- c. Christian partner peace will be affected by divorce
- d. The Salvation Issue - non-believers can be led to belief by

witness of the believing partner

4. The issue of the Non- Believing spouse. -

- a. No advice because spouse is not Christian
- b. practically Christian Spouse is not affected by actions of non-believing spouse - Christian free to marry

### **Comments about Decrees of Annulment or Decrees of Nullity**

<sup>17</sup>Only, let every one lead the life which the Lord has assigned to him, and in which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches. <sup>18</sup>Was any one at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision. Was any one at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision. <sup>19</sup>For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God. <sup>20</sup>Every one should remain in the state in which he was called. <sup>21</sup>Were you a slave when called? Never mind. But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity <sup>22</sup>For he who was called in the Lord as a slave is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a slave of Christ. <sup>23</sup>You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men. <sup>24</sup>So, brethren, in whatever state each was called, there let him remain with God.

**What do we believe in the U.S. "All men are created equal" Does this mean we are all the same?**

I. The Issue Paul is addressing is social status, not state of being

II. State of being changes begin with God's Call to us

A. A three fold argument unfolds - Social Condition is part of God's Plan

1. Circumcision - uncircumcision
  - a. Past life Jew or gentile
  - b. Other religious experience using circumcision
2. Slave or Free
3. All are slaves - to what are you a slave?

B. Slavery in ancient times

1. Part of the fabric of daily life
2. Can not be compared to the North American Experience
3. Slaves were treated as valued members of the Masters House
  - a. Slaves could own property
  - b. Slavery could be for a specified time
  - c. All material needs were supplied by the Master in return for the Slaves work and obedience

**Perhaps the easiest way to explain this slavery is to consider the economic slavery we have in this country.**

1. Hours are set by our employer
2. Wages, benefits and other compensation are set by our employers
3. Our standard of living is dependent upon not only our work, but by the employers success
4. We exchange ourselves, our time, talent and work for money, which we use to buy the necessities of life

**We are wage slaves - in the Hellenistic world much of the freedom we have was experienced by the slaves who received the basic necessities fo life from their masters.**

Paul is not approving of one person owning another person - this passage was used to support slavery in North America and this was a misuse of the Sacred Scripture.

<sup>25</sup>Now concerning the unmarried, I have no command of the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. <sup>26</sup>I think that in view of the present distress it is well for a person to remain as he is. <sup>27</sup>Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek marriage. <sup>28</sup>But if you marry, you do not sin, and if a girl marries she does not sin. Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that. <sup>29</sup>I mean, brethren, the appointed time has grown very short; from now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, <sup>30</sup>and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, <sup>31</sup>and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the form of this world is passing away.

<sup>32</sup>I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord; <sup>33</sup>but the married man is anxious about worldly affairs, how to please his wife, <sup>34</sup>and his interests are divided. And the unmarried woman or girl is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit; but the married woman is anxious about worldly affairs, how to please her husband. <sup>35</sup>I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.

## I. Paul begins by stating not the Lord's Command but his opinion (Gnome)

Gnome vs. *doxa* - Gnome is an authoritative opinion. *Doxa* is a personal opinion. Paul is offering the opinion of an Apostles one with learning, experience and authority.

## II. Paul's argument is about ontology

A. Ontology is your orientation towards your ultimate end.

B. Paul is again appealing to the urgency of the Christian experience - the second coming

C. He is offering not one way to serve God but many

1. The issue for Paul is not social condition, but state of life

2. The person needs to be able to pursue the higher calling if married or single; the issue is to have peace to seek God

<sup>36</sup>If any one thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his betrothed, if his passions are strong, and it has to be, let him do as he wishes: let them marry—it is no sin. <sup>37</sup>But whoever is firmly established in his heart, being under no necessity but having his desire under control, and has determined this in his heart, to keep her as his betrothed, he will do well. <sup>38</sup>So that he who marries his betrothed does well; and he who refrains from marriage will do better.

<sup>39</sup>A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. If the husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. <sup>40</sup>But in my judgment she is happier if she remains as she is. And I think that I have the Spirit of God.

#### I. Continuing his thoughts about Social Condition and seeking the Kingdom

- A. Paul sees Marriage as good
- B. Keeping one free from sinful inclinations good
- C. Fulfilling obligations as good
- D. Freeing oneself from all worldly attachments as Better