

Lawsuits Through The Eyes Of Radical Christianity

by Dean Taylor

This sermon delves into the topic of lawsuits through the lens of radical Christianity, emphasizing the admonition against believers taking each other to court, the call to accept being wronged, and the need to embody the teachings of Jesus in legal matters. It explores Paul's responses in various court cases, highlighting his commitment to truth and justice without seeking harm or retaliation against others.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 6:1, Matthew 5:40, Acts 16:35, Acts 22:24, Acts 25:10, Romans 13:1

Topics: "Christian Conduct in Legal Matters", "Embracing Forgiveness and Justice"

Description

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Transcript

I'm just really amazed by his just he's just harping on this. It's bad. It's really bad.

It's really really really bad that you're doing this. It's an utter failure that you go to law against one another. Today I'm going to be continuing not finishing continuing on the the theme of first Corinthians through the eyes of radical Christianity and today we are getting to first Corinthians chapter 6. I'm going to do verse 1 through 9 and we're going to be talking about lawsuits.

Lawsuits through the eyes of radical Christianity. So let's start with a word of prayer. Dear Heavenly Father, we come before you and I do praise you and thank you for your faith and your your grace and your love that you poured onto our life and your sacrifice of yourself.

And Lord, today we're looking at this passage that requires oftentimes a death to ourself, a lack of us having our own way, our own rights. And Lord, we just pray that you would give us grace to hear these words and not explain them away or not anesthetize them in some way, but oh God to apply them into our lives in this generation. Give us grace, Lord, in Jesus name, amen.

So in the 1990s, early on when I shortly got out of the army, when I came to start fellowship with David Brisseau, at the time we were looking into some ancient churches like Greek Orthodox churches and

some of these things like that. And after we had gone through that and realized the errors of that way and repented of it, we've made some pretty strong, and David in particular made some pretty strong statements and some recordings and things about the errors and the mistakes that we've made as a church like that. Well, we had a young man who had also had his own journey in that way and he was looking at a Greek Orthodoxy and he had an interesting path.

He went from the River Brethren to the Greek Orthodoxy and then he had realized that we had this journey too, so he felt an affinity to us, so he came down and joined with us. He was a great guy, great young man, single, and so and he had really excited a great part of the community. And at the time we were living in a rented building south of Dallas and he had, it ended up that we all had a passion to somehow get into Dallas, get into the inner city.

I had recently started working at Parkland Memorial and so we wanted to be in that area and so we were praying over this and it comes to find out that this young man ended up coming up with an inheritance. His parents lived in Martha's Vineyard, one of his parents died or something, and he ended up with a very significant inheritance. And so one day as we were talking about where we're going to be, he said, hey, I'd like to donate the money for us to buy a church, Inner City Dallas.

And we were like, wow, really? Okay, this is great. And so we started looking around and everything, and then right not far from Parkland, it's a really rough area if you know that side, and there was a government project, there was an old Methodist church right up against the government projects there in the Parkland area of Dallas. And so currently it was, interestingly enough, it was being used as a Coptic Orthodox church and then they had kind of whatever, gone out of business or whatever, and now we're selling the place and so we bought it.

But here's the interesting thing. So he was very concerned that there'd ever be a time that we would go back to be tempted to these sort of Greek Orthodox sort of things. And maybe we were kind of sensitive because of the Coptics when they were, I think it was Coptic, I'm not sure, some sort of Indian or Coptic Orthodox had taken down all their different things and broken them and all that sort of things.

And so it was still fresh maybe in everybody's mind. And so he said, hey, I want to give the money to the church, but I really want to make sure that you guys don't ever get tempted with this Greek Orthodox stuff again. So if it's okay, could I put some stipulations in the gift? You know where this is going, don't you? So he said, can I put some stipulations in the gift? And here's all I want.

I want to say that none of this sort of Orthodox stuff can happen. And so I'm going to put in there at no time can prayers to Mary be done in this building. At no time can you burn incense to icons and several things like that.

You can't leave the faith and you must always maintain the apostolic Christian faith. And so we're like, hey, no problem, right? I mean, we're glad. I mean, we're all going that direction.

We feel very strong about that. And so we went happily ever after we signed the thing and we bought the building and we moved into inner city Dallas and started the ministry there. He moved into the building along with some other young men that moved into the building.

And it was great. We were kind of living there, but as things happen in radical Christianity, people change. And suddenly he started feeling this desire to have more of these Orthodox things.

And so the next thing you know, and I'm seeing he's getting more and more into this until one day I remember going to his house and a whole quarter of his house was dedicated with all these icons and all these things and everything. And he was looking at Gregorthenoxy. And so we began to talk about it and come to him and complain about it.

And finally it ended up where he said, I can't do this anymore. You guys are heretics. This is the best I can remember.

This is a long time ago conversation. But so as we went through this, and then finally he said, and you guys are going to have to leave my building. So wait, wait a minute.

You made us put in the contract. There'd be none of this, none of that. He said, and so we took to him and we brought him this text and first Corinthians chapter six.

And we said that Paul is astounded that about these types of a thing, because he said to us, and if you don't get out of this, I'm going to sue you. I'm going to sue to take this place. We said, how can you in the light of first Corinthians six, that brother goes to law against brothers and unbeliever, how can this be? And he had a conclusion, which is the way that most people read this passage.

And as I began to just, before this message, I started to look, I wonder how these days, how are people interpreting this passage? And it's bizarre that they come up with this. And this is the same thing he did. He said, well, here's the thing.

I put in there that you can't leave the apostolic faith. You guys are not in the apostolic faith. So therefore you're heretics.

If you're heretics, you're not my brother. And since you're not my brother, I can sue you. And that's what he said.

And so this is the kind of reasoning that goes into this passage and there's several problems about it. And it makes this passage kind of interesting on several different levels. Number one, just how we look at it.

And also to ask this big, important question of Christocentric hermeneutic, a Christ-centered hermeneutic, is what stands behind the teachings of Paul? When Paul is speaking, what's behind his teaching? Where is he getting this stuff when he talks? And as we go through that, I'm going to give you a look at what we did with all that. But radical Christianity, I have seen all too often, makes some really silly justifications. And particularly when it comes to things of money, property, and things like this.

I've been very grieved over the years to see the bizarre justifications. And this kind of a thing where say, well, you're not my brother, therefore I can sue you. And by looking at this 1 Corinthians chapter 6, as I hope to see by the end of this, is ridiculous.

So I'm going to look through the nine verses of 1 Corinthians 6. I'm going to then see where Paul got that stuff from Jesus. And then I'm going to go just a little bit of looking at some of the examples of how Jesus stood in court. And then also how Paul did in court at the end.

So let's look into it. Let's look into our text. 1 Corinthians chapter 6, verse 1. Let's go through it expositively through the nine verses.

Starts off pretty strong. Almost maybe the strongest thing. Well, it's been getting, it's been heating up for Paul.

And now it really heats up. And he uses this word. And almost you see this kind of trembling.

Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints? That word dare in the Greek, as you guys know, is Tolman. It's the same word like used in Jude of Moses, who did not dare pronounce against the demons and the Satan. It's a very big word.

It's a very daring word. And he's giving this to them. Dare any of you having a matter against another to go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints? And then he says this curious passage.

Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Then he says another curious thing. Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more than that which pertains to life? When you look at the early church, most people, and I think even today also, would believe that those angels he's speaking of are the fallen angels. And that in judgment day, that we as the saints will be somehow part of this judgment and say these people, these angels vexed us, these demons vex the church and caused us to fall into this error.

And he even says that we are going to be part of this judgment. I don't understand that completely. I don't know how that will work out.

But what does surprise me in all the language is that Paul is presenting it like you better get ready for that day. Not like that day you're suddenly going to be, you know, bing, and then suddenly you're going to be ready to do these things. The curious thing, and I can't prove any of that, but it's kind of the way, maybe he was doing it for just a style of argument, but he seems to act like there's something in us that will carry on into that day that we should be getting ready for, that we should be doing better than this.

The passages that show us that idea of judgment, there's two of them. Second Peter 2.4 states, for if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and deliver them into chains of darkness to be reserved for judgment, then he goes on and how much more. And then Jude also 1.6, and the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, he has reserved an everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of that great day.

So there seems to be, and I don't know how it all works out, but there seems to be somehow at the last judgment, a big judgment of these demons, and that we're going to be somehow part of that. And Paul is letting, don't you know that is the way he's acting. And then verse four, if then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you, if then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge? And it's, I gave two different versions of that.

The ESV read, that was a new American standard. The ESV reads it. So if you have such cases like this, why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church? And the NIV reads it this way.

Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, do you ask for a ruling from those whose way is life is scorned in the church? And each of these things he's saying, all right, y'all have some issues in the church. You have some divisions. You have some things that you're fighting about.

Why would you give it to people over here who we don't even esteem, who we don't even trust their judgment. We don't trust their system. We don't trust them.

And yet we're giving them the ability to take over and settle these things. I think there's an interesting two kingdom concept there. It's not like he's rejecting the whole legal system.

And we see with Paul, he doesn't indeed, but he's, he's using it as a very much an understanding of how we consider that law, those, that other kingdom. And that's why in Romans 13, we see, of course, this same type of a thing coming out. And he's saying, why would you take these issues and bring it over to a group of people to judge who we don't even respect their, their way of thinking.

Verse five, I say this to your shame. And here, I think he really gets sort of, really kind of gives a rebuke to the men of the church. And to me, it's sort of a wake-up call and sort of a kick in the pants to manliness and leadership and everyone being involved with this in the church.

I say this to your shame. Is it so that there is not a wise man among you, not even one who will be able to judge between his brethren? You know that the path, the Bible, we have this, this amazing thing revealed to us that God has all these power, all authority in heaven and earth, all the things that he wants to do. But yet he wants to accomplish those things through the church, through human beings, through people, men, women, trying the, what they can do to have faith in God.

And here he's saying, I don't know, I get kind of like, there's a passive thing going on in the church that maybe, you know, in our days we get sort of the thing, everyone just kind of watches the preacher and let everyone else isn't involved. And he's saying, isn't there somebody, aren't you men there that can have wisdom, that can talk through these things? Isn't there someone like that there? And I see kind of a very serious rebuke with that. It made me ponder the passage in Ezekiel.

So I sought for a man among them, Ezekiel 22, 30. So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall and stand in the gap before me on behalf of the land that I should not destroy it, but I found no one. And he ends, Paul ends this whole 1 Corinthians 16, in verse 16, 13, he ends the letter practically with, watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.

So I look at this and I think that it's, I think of the, just the dynamics of Corinth and why I chose this whole thing through the eyes of radical Christianity is because, I don't know, it's, I relate so much to Corinth. It's, I feel like, you know, I kind of like been to Corinth, you know, it's the kind of things, the wranglings, the passion, the factions, the things, you know, that, but yet I believe, I don't know, I get the idea that they're all incredibly sincere. They're incredibly passionate and they want to serve God.

And he's trying to help them along in this. And now he's touching on things like this. How could it be that people are actually suing? Now, therefore it's already.

So then, okay. Verse six, but brother goes to law against brother and that before unbelievers. Verse seven.

Now, therefore it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. I'm just really amazed by his, just he's just harping on this. It's bad.

It's really bad. It's really, really, really bad that you're doing this. It's an utter failure that you go to law against one another.

And then here's the thing that I want to caution us as radical Christian. Here's the thing I want to caution us. There's a tendency, I think for us, and I did it when I was pondering it.

There's a tendency for us to kind of make the lawsuits kind of like a church getting sued or a ministry getting sued or something like that. And we think of examples of kind of like what I gave of that, that young man suing the church or, or, you know, all these types of the thing. That's probably not what's happening.

They didn't have those kinds of things. We're having disputes inside the church of people in contracts or different things or different disputes are going on. And that's probably what's happening.

Let's not make it too external, but bring it out to common conflicts. And I'll say this, I, I've been very disappointed that what the, the idea within the church, that these disputes and these problems and things that happen over contracts and financial things and, and things like that. It's amazing how many offenses there are like that.

I remember talking to a brother years ago and he said, Oh, I never do business with anybody in the church. Never do any business with anybody in the church. I said, why is it? It's always, it's always a mess.

I said, well, it shouldn't be that way. I have noticed, I will give you this caution just from, from experience when you deal with things on legal or contractual, and particularly if there's any money involved, I'll just say this. It's best to get it written on paper.

I'm just going to say this. It's amazing through the years, what you think someone's saying and what you think someone's saying is not what you hear six months from now. And I've made this mistake so many times.

And I mean, every time it sounds right and brother, brother, we got this. Yeah, we'll do this and everything will be okay. And when it's not spelled out, I'll just give you this caution.

Fences make better neighbors. And there's something in it where things are clear. And so I encourage you to go through the trouble to say, okay, now, yeah, you know, we're going to get this car together, but that means I'm going to pay.

I don't know. It's just good to do this. And, and I'll, I'll give you that.

Now, the bigger answer is what's to come here, but I'll just say that as I've seen the divisions and there's been lots of them as I've seen them in the church. And when there, when there's money involved with brothers or sisters, I would just encourage you, jot it down, write up what you say you're thinking. It just, you'll save yourself a lot of trouble.

As a church, we'll save ourselves a lot of trouble. Again, verse seven. Now, therefore it's an utter, already an utter failure for you that you go to law one another.

And then here's this passage. Wow. There's so much in this one.

Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourself be cheated? That's, it's such, are you, are you saying that you're asking me to be a doormat? Is it, no, it's much actually worse than that. It's a cross that the, that the idea of death to yourself, I have found as I ponder the teachings of Jesus and I try to balance them with my life and I try to think of things, every command of Jesus, I don't see possible to be

lived out without the theology of martyrdom. It's without the cross.

It just doesn't make sense. And I, I, this is, this is one of them. So he goes on verse eight.

No, you yourselves. Okay. Why do you not rather accept wrong into verse seven? Why do you not rather let yourself be cheated? No, you yourselves do wrong and cheat.

And you do those things to your brethren. Here's back to that, that contract. Every case in every single case that I could think of through my years in radical Christianity, that the divisions were there and the fights were there.

Nobody that I can think of was deliberately trying to cheat anybody. Even that guy that was suing the church and his mind, he was thinking he was doing right. And I'm, I'm almost guarantee you that's what's happening in Corinth also, that when he's saying you're cheating people, you're doing this evil thing in their mind, like, what are you talking about, Paul? I, he said that he was going to do that.

Well, she said that it was that and those kinds of things, the cure. I think the, the, the prevention is to write it down. That'll help.

The cure though, is, is it not ready? Just let yourself be wronged. Is it, is it not better? Just let yourself be cheated. And if you have that attitude, you're going to have so much, so much more life in you.

He goes on, and I'm going to bring this up the next sermon on purity and goes on to seem that goes on to talk about, do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? And what, where, which way he points to these. Nevertheless, he's saying that these things are very serious. So in that court case with the young man, as we began to talk, we began to say, this is, you know, as David and Briseau and I were talking and the rest of the brothers were, he doesn't have a chance.

I mean, he said in here, you can't have incense. He's got incense. He said in here, you can't pray to Mary.

He's praying to Mary. You know, I think we're going to win this case, but we're really thanked to the grace of God. We said, you know what? Let him have it.

And so he gave him the building, take the building, have it, give it to the Orthodox church, give it to it, make a monastery or whatever. And we let him have it. And we went somewhere else.

I don't remember where we went after that, but we went somewhere else. And I, I blessed the Lord for that. I, my whole life would have been very different.

I'd probably still be sitting there trying to do something in that, in that church building. And the Lord used that in my life. So the, the, the point here is that as I look in this, is that as I look at people and they use this justification, well, you're not my brother, so I can sue you.

It's, it's what I see is like, you know, you have this, this line, this continuum of where there's problems on either side and what you're tethered to matters. What I see modern evangelical thinking and modern, well, we all just intuitively think we start with this, with this Corinthian six thing and say, oh, well over here, then imagine this and imagine that and imagine this. And we never tether ourselves to the very teachings of Christ, which I'm pretty sure Paul got his whole points from.

When one sermon I was listening to just to hear what the perspective was, he said, yeah, well, what we do, we look through first Corinthians six, and if we have a brother, but then if, and if we go, if they don't listen to the church and we go through Matthew 18, and if they don't listen to the church, we, he's what he's as a, he's an unbeliever. If he's an unbeliever, we hand them over and then we can sue him. And I was like, really, what about that Jesus teaching? So let's look at that behind the apostle Paul, behind the epistles, the new Testament is the teachings of Jesus.

And while Paul is applying them and walking them out of the radical economics, he walks it out this way, the different things in acts, he walks out this way, the radical, but behind all that he's working with the teachings of Jesus. And if you lose that and you start with Paul and then whatever your imagination comes up with, you're not giving yourself the right part of your systematic theology, which is Jesus and his teachings. So let's look at it.

So I believe Paul is, is applying what he learned from Jesus. Matthew 33 puts it that 533 says it this way, you know it well, you can quote it for me here. Again, you have heard that has been said of those of old, you shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.

But I say to you, do not swear at all, neither by heaven for it is God's throne, nor by earth for it is his footstool, nor by Jerusalem for it is the city of the great King, nor shall you swear by your head because you cannot make one hair white or black, but let your yes be yes. And your no, no, for whatever is more than these is from the evil one. And then this, you have heard that it was said an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but I tell you not to resist an evil person, but whoever slaps you on the right cheek, turn to the other him also, if anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also.

And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with them to give to him who asks you and from him who wants to borrow from you, do not turn away. That I believe is a theology behind Paul saying, isn't it better just to be wronged? Isn't it better? This is his theology. Now I believe that Jesus is the ultimate interpreter of the ultimate teaching and how he lives his life is fascinating.

Let's see how Jesus acted in court. Let's go there. John 18 three.

Let's do what Jesus did. John 18 three. Well, this is right before he gets arrested and then we'll get to court.

Then Judas, having received the detachment of troops and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees came there with lanterns, torches and weapons. Jesus, therefore knowing all things that would come upon him, went forward and said to them, who are you seeking? And they said to him, Jesus of Nazareth. And Jesus said to him, one of my favorite scenes, the new Testament, I am he.

And Judas who betrayed him also stood with them. Now, when he said to them, I am he, they drew back and fell to the ground. Then he asked them again, who are you seeking? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

And Jesus answered. And I, I have told you that I am he. Therefore, if you seek me, let those go their way, that the saying might be fulfilled, which he spoke of those who you gave me, I have lost none.

The point that I'm bringing up here is that Jesus did speak. He did say something when he was being accused. He didn't try to hide because I'm going to spell this out because of when he doesn't speak is interesting.

And it's curious. I don't have it completely worked out, but it's curious to me. Matthew 27, 11, let's go to court now.

Now Jesus stood before the governor and the governor asked him saying, watch this. Are you the King of the Jews? And Jesus said to them, here Jesus said, is speaking, said to him, it is as you say. And while he was being accused by the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing.

And then Pilate said to him, do you not hear how many things they testify against you? But he answered him not one word. So the governor marveled greatly. And there's lots, I think you could unpack that there's reason prophetic fulfillment, the Jewish and the Gentile courts that are going on here and all that type of a thing.

The point that I see in here though, is that there were times that Jesus spoke, are you the King? Yes. Just exactly what you said. I am the King.

But there was also a time when he was being accused. He didn't. And at the end of the day, I see Jesus being, keeping his words.

And in this court, he's defeated and so to speak, and he, and he dies the death and the court. And so these passages of Jesus, as strong and almost very difficult they are, they stand, I think, as our touchstone of how we can apply these things to our life. And it's not easy.

It's not. I'm not going to hear pretend that I have all the answers or all the ways that these things can be spelled out. What if you have a small business and someone's doing this? Or what if this happens and someone's doing that and, and all that, and, and it gets really complicated, but I have a feeling that if we allow Jesus's words to stand and sting, it's going to do something in our life.

And I really appreciate, I know, Malcolm and Sarah, that y'all had gone through this very scene with a very interesting thing of y'all getting sued. And I really appreciated how you are walking through that and seeing how you could apply the scripture to that. And I think it was one of the most fascinating examples.

I want to bless you in that. And then even after the end, how can we bless them and increase them? I just want to bless you for that. It was amazing.

And I think that kind of a thing, although it's really easy to say, okay, Jesus, I mean, in this case, that would be ridiculous. In that case, I'll grant you, I don't have it all figured out, but I'm still challenged by Kierkegaard's quote that I used at the, at the non-resistance thing. Imagine these words now that Jesus has about, about suing and Soren Kierkegaard's quote that I use for non-resistance.

And he says, the matter is quite simple. The Bible is very easy to understand, but we Christians are a bunch of scheming swindlers. We pretend to be a, we pretend to be unable to understand it because we know very well that the minute we understand, we are obliged to take any words in the new Testament and forget everything except pleading yourself to act accordingly.

My, you will say, if I do that, my whole life will be ruined. How would I ever get on in the world? Herein lies the real place of Christian scholarship. He says, sarcastically, Christian scholarship is the church's prodigious invention to defend itself against the Bible, to ensure that we can continue to be good Christians without the Bible coming too close.

Oh, priceless scholarship. What would we do without you? Dreadful it is to fall into the hands of the living God. Yes, it is even dreadful to be alone with the new Testament.

And I was looking for this. I was curious. Is there any witness in the early church of this radical keeping of, of this, these lawsuit things? And I found an awesome quote from Chrysostom.

Chrysostom put it this way in speaking of the Jesus words in this lawsuit thing. He says, let us not therefore suppose his injunctions impossible. Let's, let's not say that it's impossible.

Nay, for besides their expediency, they are very easy. If we are sober minded and the profit of them is so great as to be an exceeding help, not to ourselves only, but to those also who are using us despitefully. And he goes on for as much then, as he set you in the rank of these things, help thou likewise him who is sitting in darkness and teach him that Christ did not take anything by force, persuade him that Jesus never did these things.

And he speaks of give the coat also, but on this phrase, he said, yes, for thus, I love this quote about, you know, if someone sees you for your cherry, give your coat also. Yes. For thus you yourself also will be had in more respect and reverence.

If you signify that you gave freely and were not robbed. And then let's do this quote, make therefore his sin through your moderation and instance of your own bounty. Make therefore his sin through your moderation and instance of your own bounty.

And if you think this is a great thing, wait, and you will see clearly that neither you yet, that neither yet have you attained to perfection for not, for not even here does he stop with you who was laying down the laws and patient endurance, but he proceeds even further, thus saying, and he goes on to the go one mile and compel them. You know, if one compels you to go one mile, go to two. Justin Martyr speaks of these things.

Athenagoras speaks of these things and the idea that we don't go to court. So it's amazing. It's challenging.

It's really challenging. As we look at this, let's be, let ourselves be challenged by it. All right.

Now the last section I'm going to give you and I'll be done. Okay. So then what about when Paul went to court? What about that? And I have the verses here and I'm going to go through those and then I'll be finished with this and we can ponder.

So Paul's the one who gave us these teachings. So what I did is I went and I got, okay, let's see his response in court and how he did. Now, before I do that, can I say something that maybe is wrong? And you can rebuke me afterwards.

All right. Okay. When I look at the apostles, I have their teachings in the word of God, which I consider to be infallible, but their practices, you read and you look and you learn and you say, okay, what is, was Peter when he didn't eat with the Gentiles, what do I do with that? What do I do with some of the counsel that he did in Acts and Peter gave to Paul? And so as I watch all these things, I ponder the different responses.

I actually ponder in second Timothy 4, 14, when Paul says, Alexander, the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works. To me, it does sound a little different than Jesus and, and Stevens at saying, Lord, forgive them.

They don't know what they're doing. Now I'm not saying that, that this is not true. And I, and I, that these words are not true and that they're extremely important.

I'm just pondering it, but I also don't want, I think it's too sloppy of a hermeneutic to explain it away. It's too convenient because some of the things he does in court, if I'm able to just use this sort of a Paul, I can put over here and Jesus over there. I think it's a very dangerous hermeneutic.

All the only reason I'm giving you that, what I just said is because I want you as we ponder extrapolations of what Paul does from here to here, which we don't know, be more tethered to Paul from here to Jesus Christ right here. And so these, do you see what I'm saying? We're going to take Paul's words and what he did in court. And then I've seen all kinds of things imagined that you can, you can explain from it.

Just like he, he talks in Romans 13. I've heard people defend atomic warfare, but if you tether Paul to Christ this way, it'll help interpret you. And it puts Paul, I believe in the right way, not explaining them away.

Just, just looking at it and tethering it to the right thing. Y'all can comment on that afterwards. Tell me where I'm off on that.

All right, let's look at the passages. The one in Philippi is the first one in Acts 16, the miracle of the jailer. This is when they're in there, you know, they're locked in the far off jail and, and they're singing and all this.

And Acts 13, it's 35. It's pretty, it's pretty impressive thing that he does. Acts 16, 35.

And when it was day, the magistrate sent the officer saying, let those men go. So the keepers of the prisons reported those words to Paul saying, the magistrates have sent, has sent to let you go now, therefore depart and go in peace. But Paul said to them, so remember they just came up and said, okay, you can go.

But Paul said to them, like, wait a minute. They have beaten us openly, uncondemned Romans and have thrown us into prison. And now do they put us away secretly? No, indeed.

Let them come themselves and get us out. And the officers told those words to the magistrates. And they were afraid when they heard that they were Romans, then they came and pleaded with them and brought them out and asked them to depart from the city.

So they went out of the prison and enter the house of Lydia. And when they had seen the brother, they encouraged them and departed. What I see in this is that even though Paul gave us this very strong words about, very strong words about it, wouldn't it better to be wrong.

And we see Jesus' very strong words about not defending ourselves. Coming to this point, Paul and the way he would interpret that said, I'm not just going to walk out of here quietly. And he called for something to happen.

He challenged the magistrates to an act there. And I find that at the very least, very notable, very notable of his attitude. He could have just said, I'll just leave quietly.

Let's go, guys. No, I'm not leaving. This is the way he did that.

Let's look at the next one. Acts 18.12. So now he's in prison and well, I guess he still is, but then now he's, you know, traveling. And Galileo was pro-council of Achaia.

Oh, this is just in the Corinth scene there. The Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him to the judgment seat saying, this fellow persuaded men to worship God contrary to the law. And when Paul was about to open his mouth, Galileo said to the Jews, and he goes on to explain to them, if this was, this is your matter, this is not my matter.

And then they ended up beating the head of the synagogue. The only point that I'm bringing out there is that he was about to open his mouth. He was about to speak.

It was a court setting. He's being accused and he's about to speak. And I just think we should make note of that.

And Acts 22. This is one of the bigger ones. Acts 22.

Acts 22.24. The commander had ordered him to be brought into the barracks and said that he should be examined under scourging so that he might know why they shouted so against him. 25. And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who stood by, is it lawful for you to scourge a man who was Roman and uncondemned? And when the centurion heard that, he went and told the commander saying, take care of what you do for this man's a Roman.

Then the commander came into them and said, tell me, are you a Roman? He said, yes. The commander answered with a large sum. I attained this citizenship.

But Paul said, I was born a citizen. Then immediately those who were about to examine him withdrew from him. And the commander was also afraid after he found out that he was a Roman and because he had bound him.

And then the last one that I wanted to get you is, I think is the most important one, is Acts 25.10. And that one, the one before that I just read, it's curious that he owns this disadvantage of a Roman citizenship. He knew he had this, this right. He knew he kind of could figure out what's going to happen back to Jerusalem.

Granted, Jesus appeared to him in the jail. And so there's a lot of things that are happening that he can get a prophecy that he's supposed to go to Rome and that's possible. But I'm at least noting that these court cases and how he responded.

Acts 25 is the last one. So Paul said, I stand at Caesar's judgment seat where I ought to be judged. To the Jews I have done no wrong.

Oh, excuse me. I'm sorry. Yeah, this is before Festus.

I stand at Caesar's judgment seat where I ought to be judged. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you very well know. For I am an offender or for if I am an offender or I've committed anything deserving of

death, I do not object to dying.

But if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. I appeal to Caesar. Well then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, you have appealed to Caesar, to Caesar you go.

And so it's just fascinating this whole process. And then after some days in King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to greet Festus. Now these guys are very interesting.

Josephus mentions of Festus that the Jews didn't like him that way. Josephus says that he made it his business to correct those that made disturbances in the country. So he caught the greatest part of them as robbers and destroyed a great many of them.

There's a story that in his time, the Jews built the wall by his palace so he wouldn't just be able to see the different things that they were doing. Eventually Festus had that order to be gone. Agrippa is even, Marcus Julius Agrippa II was the son of Agrippa I and the great grandson of Herod the Great.

And Bernice was the sister of Agrippa II and she became the mistress of the Roman general Titus. Some people say that she was almost like a mini Cleopatra, a very powerful woman. So there was a lot of pomp and the scriptures mentioned they came into this court with a lot of pomp and a lot of things and you could imagine this scene with these very powerful people.

All right, down to verse 14. When they had been there many days, Festus laid Paul's case before the king saying, there's a certain man left a prisoner by Felix about whom the chief priest and the elders of the Jews informed me when I was in Jerusalem asking for a judgment against him. To them I answered it is not custom for of a Roman to deliver any man to destruction before the accused meets the accuser face to face and has opportunity to answer for himself concerning the charge against him.

Therefore when they had come together without any delay, the next day I sat on the judgment seat and commanded the man be brought in. When the accuser stood up they brought no accusation against him of such things I suppose but had some questions against him about their own religion and a certain Jesus whom had died but Paul affirms to be a lie and because I was uncertain of such question I asked whether he was willing to go to Jerusalem and there be judged according these matters but when Paul appealed to be reserved for the this but but when Paul appealed to be reserved for the decision of Augustus I commanded him to keep till I could send him to Caesar. And so I find these these things interesting.

Those are the court cases. That's the way we see it. Now as I look at Paul the way I've seen people interpret these court cases and say okay so you can see that we can use the the governments of this world we can use the lawsuit system we can use this citizenship I've seen people say we can use this warfare and all these different systems because of Paul's response here in these court cases and I'm thinking that's not the case.

What I see in Paul is the ability to speak truthfully. I do see an allowance to be able to appeal to the court system but I don't see Paul ever trying to harm the Jews. I don't see him ever trying to bring us a countersuit or to bring pain against someone else and so those are the takeaways that I look at it.

So in conclusion as we look at these that looking at lawsuits through the eyes of radical Christianity. Dare any of you having a matter against another to go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints. And verse 7 now therefore it's an already an utter failure for you that you go to law to one another.

Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourself be cheated? I believe that the conclusion that I would have of this this passage in 1 Corinthians 6 that it is sinful very sinful for Christians to take other Christians to court and to justify it in any way that we could possibly do is wrong. The other takeaway that I have is that I believe that behind the teachings of Paul is Jesus's words from Matthew 5 verse 40 if anyone wants to you and take away your tunic let him have your cloak also and whoever compels you to go a mile go with him to give to him to ask you and to him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away. And as far as the different nuances of the different legal things I do see in Paul the ability to use the legal system to be able to use lawyers and courts and these types of a thing.

I don't see the whole thing as being innately sinful like we're not allowed to let ourselves to go there and this is an important point let me throw this right in right at the end I almost forgot in our radical Christianity there is a tendency then to say is it okay even to ask a lawyer's advice is it okay to understand the law or to or to understand this and and I to me I see with Paul's application that I can understand the court system I can be in that court system and it's it's how they using this for for harming others is where I see as being wrong but but I don't see it wrong to understand law to use that law to to to show that we're not criminals and to to stand in that way and I think that that's also an important point in radical Christianity. We believe in a strong two kingdoms and since we do that we do believe that the government has been instituted by God to do punishment of evil doers and so again that two kingdoms allows me to to be blessed with that happening and not try to mix that together on the but at the end of the day let's let this concept of allowing ourself to be wronged and having this this spirit of Jesus Christ in us to guide through this very difficult teaching that we see of the Apostle Paul and Jesus Christ so let's pray dear heavenly father we thank you for this this difficult teaching and I do pray for grace to walk it out and even more so lord and and not even just all the way to court but just in divisions that we can have amongst each other we see this in Paul his constant talking and and rebuking and exhorting to the church of Corinth that I want you to be one I want you to walk in peace I want you to have love for one another I want you to have these things and and that when I get to this point he says it's already an utter failure so lord prevent us here as a local church not to get into utter failure but way before that to have love for one another that we will have the spirit and we will walk like you walk and have the kind of love for one another that you want in our church we ask this lord in Jesus name amen

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