

(1 Corinthians) ch.4:15-6:6

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual fatherhood, the necessity of church discipline, and the serious consequences of tolerating sin within the Christian community.

Duration: 43:36

Topics: "Church Discipline", "Spiritual Accountability"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on 1 Corinthians chapter 4 and verse 15, discussing the importance of being a father figure rather than just a teacher in the Christian community. The speaker emphasizes the need for sorrow and shame when sin enters the church, and the necessity of disciplining those who live in sin. Paul's warning to the Corinthians about coming with a rod if they do not judge themselves as a church is highlighted. The sermon also touches on the idea that believers will judge angels in the future, and therefore should be able to judge and handle trivial matters in this life. The speaker clarifies that while believers should not judge thoughts and motives, they are called to judge external actions and fruit.

Transcript

Let's turn today to 1 Corinthians chapter 4 and verse 15. In our last study we were considering some of the marks of a true apostle and one of the things Paul mentioned in that connection was that he was a father, not a teacher, but a father. He says it's easy to be a teacher.

There are many people who can be teachers, but fathers are very few. Verse 15, you can have countless tutors and teachers, yet not many fathers. And that is a word which is very relevant and true to Christian work as we see it in the world today.

Most people would prefer to be teachers, not fathers, because it is easier to be a teacher than to be a father. A teacher, when you think of a teacher in a school, just teaches the children and then goes home. He has no more responsibility for those children.

But a father has to labor patiently with his children, instructing them, disciplining them, loving them, sacrificing himself in every way for them. And this is what Paul was. And Paul realized that there were other people who were visiting Corinth as preachers who did not have the same spirit.

And he was really seeking to warn against such people. This comes out more clearly in his second letter, particularly 2 Corinthians chapter 11, about false apostles, deceitful workers, agents of Satan, who had no

concern for you Corinthian Christians, he says. And one mark of such preachers will be that their spirit is the spirit of a teacher, rather than the spirit of a father.

A true man of God, a true servant of God, can be identified by the fact that he has the spirit of a father, not the spirit of a teacher. A teacher works for salary. A father does not work for salary.

A father does not care for his children because he gets any salary, because they are his children, out of love. And thereby you can distinguish a true servant of God from a false one. And those who are in the ministry need to examine themselves in this area as well.

What is their attitude towards those whom they minister to? Are you a father to them or a teacher? Are you seeking a salary? Do you work for a salary? Or do you work because you love those whom you serve? And thereby we can distinguish between those who have the spirit of the apostle Paul and those who have the spirit of deceitful workers. Every apostle in the New Testament was a father towards those whom he served. Not an instructor who worked for salary.

And also those of us who are Christians need to discern and distinguish because there are many such people wandering around the world today calling themselves preachers and servants of Christ. We are not to be deceived. We are not to be deceived by the fact, even the fact, that their doctrines are right.

We need to see their spirit. Is it the spirit of a father or is it the spirit of a salaried instructor? And Paul says, because I am your father, I love you, I labour for you, I sacrifice for you. At the same time, verse 21, I can speak to you with the spirit of discipline, with a rod.

There is a rod and love, both mentioned in verse 21, and the spirit of gentleness found in the father. Whereas a teacher will not exercise the rod in the same way. There are teachers who use the rod, but in the spirit of a teacher, not the spirit of a father.

We need to keep that in our minds as we come into chapter 5, because in chapter 5, Paul is using that rod, that rod which he has authority to use as a spiritual father. That rod which if a teacher uses, he will use in the wrong way, but which a father has the right and the right spirit to use. It is actually reported, he says in chapter 5, verse 1, that there is immorality among you.

An immorality of such a kind as does not even exist among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife. Now this is indeed a very sad condition, and it is sadder still that Paul had to write to the Corinthian Christians about it. One would have thought that the Corinthian Christians would have judged themselves and cleansed out this person from their midst, or spoken to him and rebuked him so that he would repent, but no, he was still in the midst of the assembly, fellowshiping with them, and they thought it wasn't a serious thing.

Even the Gentiles, Paul says, have a conscience about such matters, that a man has his own stepmother and lives in an adulterous relationship with her, and there is one among you who calls himself a believer, who is doing such a thing. And Paul is concerned that Satan doesn't get any power over that assembly through the toleration of sin. And so he says, you have become arrogant and have not mourned instead.

Whenever there is sin in the assembly, it's a sad thing if the assembly is still arrogant and proud of its statistics, proud of its increasing numbers, proud of its evangelistic activity, proud of all its work, and proud of all its successes, if it does not realize that the presence of sin, and that sin can be immorality, or it can be strife, or it can be unrighteousness in money matters, it can be anything. When there is sin in the midst,

there is no room for any type of self-satisfaction. There is only room for mourning.

And Paul says, you should have mourned. And the one who had done this deed should have been removed from your midst. There is a place for discipline in the church of Jesus Christ.

And here is where the devil can come with thoughts of love and tell us to be loving. And we can misunderstand that God is not only love, he's also holy. That Jesus Christ did not only come with grace, he came with grace and truth.

And the glory of God, we're told in John 1, 14, was seen in Jesus, full of grace and full of truth. There is grace, but a grace without truth is a false glory. A God who is only love and not pure, totally pure and holy, is not the God of the Bible.

God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all. And also God is love. So we must not be defeated by the devil's words about love when it comes to sin.

True love, as Paul explains later on in 1 Corinthians 13, is a love which does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth, which does not tolerate sin. A love which can tolerate sin is not the love of God. God's love is one which seeks to remove sin from our lives and which seeks to separate us from sin, not allow us to continue in sin.

Let's keep that in mind, because there is a lot of this false love in Christendom today. And this does not take sin seriously, and therefore they have not mourned. If they had mourned, if they had judged themselves, God could have come in and sorted out that situation.

But because they were carnal, and here is another mark of a carnal Christian, he does not take sin seriously, even immorality. Jesus said that even if you lust after a woman in your thoughts, you have committed adultery. Here were Christians who had gone so far beyond lusting in their thoughts, they had committed the act, sinned, gone below the level even of the old covenant, leave alone the new covenant, and still they hadn't judged themselves for it.

Their conscience had not convicted them about it. It's possible for a new covenant Christian to live at a standard below the standard even of the old covenant, and his conscience doesn't even trouble him, very often, because the leaders of such a church do not lay down the line, the word of God as it is seen in the New Testament. Many have not understood the standard that Jesus proclaimed in the Sermon on the Mount as being the standard for the Christian church today.

And this is the reason for the low substandard level of much of Christianity. There needs to be a mourning for sin whenever it is found in the church. It's easy to criticise that God wants us to mourn, and not only to mourn, but also to cleanse away sin by judging ourselves and by removing people from our midst who continue to live in sin.

And as far as Paul is concerned, he says in verse 3, I on my part, though I am absent in body, but present in spirit, have already judged him. Now, was it right for Paul to judge him when Jesus had said in Matthew 7, verse 1, Do not judge? Yes, certainly. We are not to judge those who are outside, but those who are within.

We see that very clearly in 1 Corinthians 5.12. What have I got to do with judging outsiders? I have no business. But those who are within the church, we are to judge, otherwise the church can never be kept in

purity. Now, this responsibility does not fall upon everyone.

We're not to judge everyone in the church. But those who have authority, God-given authority in the church, such brothers have the responsibility to keep the church pure from sin. And in order to do this, they have to exercise judgment, just like a father.

If a father sees two of his children quarreling, he has to exercise judgment. If one of his children has gone into some terrible sin or disobedience, the father has to exercise discipline. He has to judge there.

We all have a responsibility to judge within the circle in which God has given us authority. If you're a father, you don't have to judge someone else's children, but you've got to judge your own. And if you're an elder in a church, you don't have to judge believers in some other assembly, but you've got to judge believers in your own assembly.

And Paul did not judge believers in areas where God had not given him authority and responsibility, but here in Corinth, God had given him authority and responsibility, and therefore he says, as far as I'm concerned, in my spirit I've judged him, as though I were present. And he must be brought under punishment, because only thus will his spirit be saved, verse 5, in the day of the Lord Jesus. We turn now to 1 Corinthians, chapter 5. We were considering in our last study about the church in Corinth, which Paul had established as a father, a spiritual father to these Christians, and in that church there was immorality.

One of the believers had fallen into adultery with his own stepmother, a sort of sin which even the heathen would despise. And Paul, as a father, had to use the rod, just like a true father has to discipline his own children. And so he says in verse 2, You have become arrogant and you have not mourned instead.

Or as J.B. Phillips paraphrases that verse, shouldn't you be overwhelmed with sorrow and shame that such a thing has happened in your midst? When sin comes into the church, it should overwhelm us with sorrow and shame, instead of being overwhelmed with grief. And secondly, disciplining the man who lives in such sin. If we ignore it, what we have is not the love of God, but a deceptive love with which Satan deceives us.

And so Paul on his part said, I'm going to come to you with a rod. He said that in chapter 4 verse 21, Shall I come to you with a rod or will you judge yourselves as a church? And the judgment they needed to exercise in this particular situation was to expel this man from the midst of their fellowship. There is a great necessity for us to understand the importance of this chapter in Christian churches today.

The necessity to expel people who live in open sin. The new covenant calls us to victory even in our thought life. That is an area God alone can judge.

We were already told that in 1 Corinthians 4, 7. 1 Corinthians chapter 4 verse 5, Do not go on passing judgment concerning the things hidden in darkness and the things which relate to the motives of people's actions. But when it comes to external actions, the fruit we see very clearly in chapter 5 verse 3, Paul says, I have judged him. Does this contradict 1 Corinthians 4, 5? It certainly does not.

We do not judge the thoughts. We do not judge the motives. We leave that for God to judge in the final day and expose.

But the external actions, the fruits, indicate the type of person a person is. And when a person sinks to a level beneath that of the old covenant, the old covenant could only judge external actions, then we

certainly have to judge. And there we see the clear contrast between not judging and judging when you compare 1 Corinthians 4 verse 5 with 1 Corinthians 5 verse 3. And here is the big mistake that many Christians make.

They judge people's motives. That is completely wrong according to 1 Corinthians 4, 5. They imagine that they know the thoughts that are going on in people's minds and judge them for those thoughts. That is ungodly according to 1 Corinthians 4, 5. And then there are another set of Christians, sometimes the same set of Christians, who do not judge people for their external actions.

They do not expel a person from the membership of the church for faults and failures. That's also wrong. Because sin that's externally known must be judged.

And the person must be disciplined. In this particular case, he had to be excommunicated, sent out of the fellowship. Paul says, in my part, I've already judged him.

In verse 4, in the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, that is, when you come together as an assembly, in the name of Jesus Christ, I will be present there with you in my spirit. Even though I'm not present in body, by the authority that Jesus Christ has given me as an apostle, I have exercised my judgment. And in the name of the Lord, when you come together, I'll be there with you in spirit.

And with the power of our Lord Jesus, and the same spirit of purity that there was in Jesus Christ, I have decided, verse 5, and you must agree with me here, Paul says, to deliver such a person to Satan. Do believers have to be handed over to Satan? Yes. God himself permits that.

And Paul, as an apostle, exercised his authority to hand over this particular person who was living in sin to Satan's hands with a purpose. Not that he might go to hell. This is the point.

God uses Satan for his own purposes, for the fulfillment of God's will, even in a believer's life. You see, sin is an area which God has allotted to Satan. And when a believer lives in sin, he moves into territory that God has allotted to Satan.

The territory in which God and Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit move is the territory of holiness, and purity, and humility, and love, and goodness. But that territory, which can be called sin, evil, jealousy, strife, pride, arrogance, this is an area over which Satan has power. Sexual lust.

When a believer indulges in that, he moves into Satan's territory, and Satan has power over such a person. When we move into sinful areas, Satan gets power over us. And so, God allows Satan to harass and trouble such a believer.

Jesus spoke about those who do not forgive their brothers in Matthew 18, verse 33 to 35. He said about those who do not forgive their brothers as being handed over to the torturers by their Heavenly Father. A loving Heavenly Father hands over His children to the torturers, to the demons, because they do not forgive their own brothers.

And the same way, a loving spiritual father like Paul handed over this believer in spirit to Satan, and said to Satan that Satan could have authority over this person for the destruction of his flesh, it says in verse 5, so that his fleshly lusts would be destroyed, that his spirit may be saved, so that his body would suffer, that Satan would bring sickness upon his body. This is the meaning of this verse. And thus, when he came into sickness, he would learn to judge himself.

And when he judged himself, in this hope, we hand him over to Satan, that he will wake up, and his soul will be saved before it is too late. In 1 Corinthians chapter 11, Paul speaks about people who come to the Lord's table without judging themselves, and he says, for this reason, 1 Corinthians 11, verse 30, some of you are sick. Sickness comes to some believers because they do not judge themselves concerning sin in their life.

And very often, there is a close connection between sin and sickness in the case of believers. And we see that again in James chapter 5, where prayer for healing, he says, must be joined with confession of sin. We confess our sins and pray for one another, we will be healed, James 5, verse 16.

So the same thing we see here in 1 Corinthians 5, verse 5. I have decided to deliver such a one over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh. In other words, so that he has sickness in his body, and his body begins to be eaten away with sickness, and maybe that will wake him up. And he will learn to judge himself and stop sinning, so that finally his spirit will be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

And that teaches us in verse 5 that the reason why God permits sickness in the lives of believers at times is so that the person can finally be saved. It's with a good intention. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 12 that he himself needed a thorn in the flesh, lest he be exalted, lest he be puffed up with pride, which is another type of sin, which would have ruined his soul.

So God uses sickness and physical affliction and financial difficulties and various types of problems which originate from Satan. There is no doubt that sin originates from Satan. And there is no doubt that sickness and many other calamities originate from Satan as we read in the book of Job.

But God permits it for the sanctification of his children. And this is why Paul was not hesitant to hand over this believer to Satan for the destruction of his flesh. And Paul says again in verse 6, Your ground for boasting about this case is not good.

He says it's no use justifying yourself. However many advantages you may have as a church. And they had many good qualities about them.

They had knowledge. They had wonderful meetings where they shared the word of God. They had the exercise of spiritual gifts.

But he says it's stupid to boast about these things when there is sin in your midst. If there is sin in the midst of a church, immorality and strife and jealousy, then however many spiritual gifts we may have and however much Bible knowledge we may have, there is absolutely no ground for boasting but only for mourning. Your boasting is not good.

Don't you know that a little leaven, verse 6, leavens the whole lump of dough. In other words, this one person sinning and living in sin, if he was not going to be judged and expelled, he was going to corrupt the entire church. And that's the reason why a person has to be excommunicated.

It's just like a gangrenous hand that a doctor decides has to be cut off. And you permit it to be cut off not because you don't love your hand but because if you don't cut off that hand, it will finally ruin and kill your whole body. That's the reason.

So excommunication is an act of love for the total body of Christ. And so this person needed to be cut off so that the whole church will not be polluted. The whole church is more important than one individual.

Let's never forget that and people don't appreciate that sufficiently. And therefore he says in verse 7, clean out your leaven so that you can be a new lump, uncorrupted and a pure testimony for Christ in Corinth. We turn today to 1 Corinthians 5 and verse 7. We were considering in our last study about the necessity of discipline in the Christian church.

Discipline of individuals who continue to live in sin without repenting of their sins. There is place for repentance and opportunity for forgiveness of sins for every believer no matter how deeply they may have fallen. But when a person refuses to repent and therefore is not forgiven, he continues to live in sin, continues to live in an unrepentant state then he needs to be disciplined.

Even if it relates to sin which he is not continuing to live in but which he has not repented of and therefore not forgiven for there is no sin which God can forgive which a man does not repent of first and which he does not confess humbly and acknowledge. And so here is a case like that in the church in Corinth which Paul as a spiritual father needed to discipline. And so he says clean out the old leaven that you may be a new lump a new unleavened lump of fresh dough so that this leaven of sin leaven in the Old Testament was always something that the Israelites were told to remove from their houses on the Passover day.

They were to eat the Passover with unleavened bread because leaven is a picture of sin and it's a very beautiful picture of sin just like leprosy is a picture of sin coming in in a small patch in the skin and finally spreading to the whole body in the same way leaven is a picture of sin in the Old Testament a little bit of leaven pollutes the whole dough it spreads through the whole dough puffing it up in the same way Paul using that illustration says that a little bit of leaven verse 6 will pollute the whole church a little sin tolerated somewhere is enough you don't have to live in great sin you don't need great quantities of leaven to make the dough swell up a little bit is enough and so he says clean out the old leaven that you may be a new lump completely unleavened for Christ our

Passover and he uses the illustration from the Old Testament Passover he says that Passover was a picture of Christ the lamb that was slain in the Old Testament Passover is a picture of the Lamb of God who died for the sins of the world Jesus Christ that pure lamb died he sacrificed himself now we are to keep this feast of the Passover he is using that Old Testament illustration just like the Israelites partook of that slain Passover lamb he says we celebrate the feast in partaking of Christ spiritually but just like in the Old Testament verse 8 there was to be no leaven in the house on the Passover day in the same way there must not be any leaven in our midst no he says that old leaven must be cleansed out completely the leaven of former days the leaven of our old life the leaven of

malice and wickedness malice relates to a wrong attitude towards our fellow believers an unloving, unchristlike attitude towards our fellow believers is leaven wickedness refers to sin and impurity of any sort that affects our relationship with God there are two directions in which we need to judge ourselves and cleanse ourselves from this leaven in our relationship with God and in our relationship with one another Paul was telling these Corinthian Christians that there is fault in both these areas in your life first of all there is fault in your relationship with God you are allowing sin in your midst and you are also allowing sin in your relationship with one another strife and jealousy and malice so cleanse out the leaven and every bit of leaven in both these areas in the Old Testament

the Jews had to take a lamp a lit lamp and search every nook and corner of their house before the Passover day to make sure that there was no leaven anywhere in the house any little bit lying in any corner had to be thrown out thus God was teaching them through symbol the necessity of examining every

nook and corner of our heart to make sure that when we say we partake of Christ the fulfillment of that Passover feast that there is no sin no tolerated sin in any nook or cranny in any part of our lives let us therefore celebrate the feast the breaking of bread where we come together as a church to break bread and drink the cup which Jesus instituted in the last supper with his apostles is a symbol of a perpetual feast that we have in partaking of Christ who is the blood of life and whose

blood was poured out that we might have life so the feast spoken of here is the spiritual feast of partaking of Christ everyday symbolized in the breaking of bread but he says we are to celebrate this feast not with the leaven of malice and wickedness but with the unleavened bread we could use the word unadulterated bread of sincerity and truth here is the contrast sincerity in our relationship with God and with one another truth, righteousness uprightness in our relationship with God and with one another very important that we come to fellowship with one another and to the Lord and to the meetings and to the Lord's table and to the Lord's service always with sincerity and truth we may not be perfect we may have a long way to go to achieve perfection but if we are sincere honest, upright

acknowledging failure confessing sin setting right the things that need to be set right keeping our conscience clear at all times with God and with men seeking to walk in the light according to the light that we have in our conscience then we can celebrate the feast in sincerity and in truth and he goes on in verse 9 to say I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with immoral people in other words Paul had probably already written a letter to them not to associate with fornicators, with those who are living in sexual sin but he said I didn't mean that you are not to associate with the immoral people of this world no, all with the covetous and the swindlers, all with idolaters, for then you have to go out of the world altogether he says, don't misunderstand me when I said you are not

to mix with sinful people, I was not referring to worldly people, because they are all living in sin, the people we mix with in our office, in our neighborhood and unconverted relatives they may be living in sexual sin, in covetousness and miserliness and in a spirit of acquisition of the things of this world, they may be swindling, cheating deceiving bribing, taking bribes and even worshipping idols are we not to have any contact with them Paul says that's not what I meant because then you have to go right out of the world altogether but he says, what I meant was, if a person calls himself a brother then it is a serious thing a person who calls himself a believer and then lives in immorality or covetousness or idolatry or in reviling, which is scandalizing others and speaking evil of

others one who is a man with a foul tongue, a slanderer a drunkard or a swindler, that is one who cheats others that is a thief not even to eat with such a person so we see very clearly as we read verse 9 to 11 that Paul says it's a serious thing when sin is found in a person who calls himself a believer but when sin is found in people who call themselves unbelievers that's only to be expected well, they are sinners what else do you expect from people who are sinners Jesus has come to save them we can have contact with sinful people who are out in the world, but we must avoid contact with people who call themselves believers and who live in sin if only we would understand this distinction I believe we could obey the word of God as found in 1 Corinthians 5 verses 9 to 11 more clearly, in

fact in the letter to Timothy Paul says in 2 Timothy 2.22 that he was to pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart not with anybody who calls on the name of the Lord but he said very clearly, with those who call on the name of the Lord from a pure heart and where a person lives in sin and calls himself a believer we are to not to associate with such a person we are not to break bread with such people they must be disciplined from our church and we must not seek fellowship

with them unless they repent if we meet them, we must urge them to repent what am I to do with judging outsiders, he says in verse 12 I've got no business to judge the people out in the world they're under the control of the devil but do you not judge those who are

within the church but surely it's your business to judge those who are inside the church who live in this way those who are outside, God will judge it's not that those people who live in sin in the world are going to get away with it God will judge them but this person who is in your midst as J.B.

Phillips says in his translation, it's your plain duty to expel that wicked man from your church notice what Paul calls him, not a believer but a wicked man a believer can descend to the level of being a wicked man when he lives in sin or when he sins and does not repent and we must not hesitate to use apostolic language and to call such a person a wicked man and we must not hesitate to expel him because we love God and we love the purity of his church we turn today to 1 Corinthians chapter 6 in our study through Paul's letter to the Corinthians we said that this letter gives us a description of the characteristics of a carnal Christian the attitudes and behavior that are found in spiritual babies carnal Christians who have not grown to maturity and we've been considering a number of them

in our previous studies in the last few studies we considered chapter 5 where we saw the toleration of sin in the midst of the church the ignoring of sin the unwillingness to excommunicate and discipline a believer who lives in sin is another mark of a carnal Christian because the devil has deceived him with a false understanding of God's love in 1 Corinthians 6 we see another mark of carnal Christians that when they have a problem, a difficulty with a fellow believer they take the matter to the law courts to unbelievers to justify themselves 1 Corinthians 6 verse 1 would any of you having a lawsuit against his neighbor go before the unrighteous a person who has a matter against his neighbor, that's the literal meaning, that a person has a difficulty a dispute, a problem with his brother

his neighbor a brother in the church dares to go to law before the unrighteous, that is a sinful pagan court, a court of unrighteous men, instead of committing the matter and laying it before God's people, the saints now this verse teaches us that when two believers have a problem that type of thing can easily arise because we all have a flesh in which dwells nothing good and not all believers have understanding of how to walk the way Jesus walked of putting the flesh to death and the way of the cross the new and living way and therefore they can have problems there are babies in every church and babies have problems spiritually minded people know what to do when they are tempted by a particular action or difficulty that comes up through another behavior, another believer's attitude or

behavior, but carnal Christians do not know what to do a spiritual person knows that he must put his flesh to death and behave in a godly way but a carnal person is all worked up, he is at unrest inside and he decides to backbite, gossip justify himself before other people he may not go to a law court but when he goes to other carnal Christians or other unbelievers and speaks evil about a believer behind his back and justifies himself, he is doing exactly the same something that is spoken of in verse 1 and the multitudes and multitudes of believers who are living like this shows that there are multitudes of believers who are carnal Christians, every person who when he has a problem with another believer goes to some other carnal Christian or to unbelievers and speaks evil about that

brother and justifies himself, is very clearly a spiritual baby and a carnal Christian without a shadow of doubt because he does not understand God's way to the solution to such a problem and Paul says to these Corinthian Christians he says that's a terrible thing don't you know that one day the saints are going

to judge the world and you are going to the world and asking them to judge the saints this is exactly the opposite, there is a day coming when God's people are going to sit on thrones to judge the world but he says if you people behave like this you are certainly not fit to be sitting on those thrones in the reign of Jesus Christ on earth during the millennium and he says if the world is to be judged by you in that final day are you not competent to constitute the trial of these

smallest matters to adjudicate and to try these most trivial cases, he says if you can't sort out these small problems in your midst how are you going to rule the world one day and that teaches us that all the problems and situations we face on earth today are being used by God to prepare us to one day rule the world we are told in Revelation chapter 2 in the last few verses of that chapter that he who overcomes to him will be given power and authority over all the nations that is God's will the Lord wants to give us authority over the nations, but he has to train us and make us fit to rule, we read about King Saul in the Old Testament that he came straight to the throne without any period of testing or of trial or difficulty he came straight to the throne and he made a useless king, but

David on the other hand who succeeded him came to the throne after a long period of trial and testing and difficulty and being proved by God and therefore he made an excellent king both reigned for 40 years, but there was a vast difference between those two reigns in the same way there are people who are unfit to rule there are others like David who are fit to rule and so God allows us to go through trials and difficulties and problems of all types so that we can be fit to rule this world one day by the law of love and by the law of purity God is light and God is love and to understand that and so he says further not only the world he says in verse 3 we are also going to judge angels that's an amazing truth that believers are going to judge the angels, perhaps the angels who sinned are

going to be finally judged by God's people and this is something that Satan realizes and is part of the reason for his fury against believers, because he knows that one day God's people are going to judge him and the fallen evil spirits, and if this is true how much more we should be qualified to judge in matters of this life how much more we should be able to deal with these trivial matters that relate to material things if we are going to judge in spiritual matters in the final day, how much more we should be able to judge in material things and therefore he says in verse 4 if therefore you have such disputes in things pertaining to this life, material matters do you set to judge then those who are least esteemed in the church who are no account in the church are you going to entrust

the jurisdiction to men who count for nothing in the church or as the living God says why go to outside judges who are not even Christians to sort out these problems this is completely wrong it's completely against the word of God when a brother has a difficulty with a brother to go to a non-Christian judge and ask him to sort out that difficulty what then is the solution he goes on to say what the solution is in verse 5 he says I say this to your shame deliberately he says to rouse your sense of shame think of your calling, one who is called to judge the world and to judge the angels in the final day and now you are taking these matters of judgment to people who are children of the devil in law courts, judges who are not even Christians who are not born again is it really true he says in

verse 5 that there is not one wise man among you they had many gifts and one of the gifts mentioned in the letter to the Corinthians 1 Corinthians 12 is the gift of the word of wisdom it's possible to have the gift of the word of wisdom and yet not be a wise man because the word of wisdom is a word given at a particular time but to be a wise man one has to have walked the way of the cross for some length of time it is through self denial and humbling oneself that one becomes wise and the sad thing is that there is not

one wise man in the entire church in Corinth they had plenty of bible knowledge that did not make them wise they had all the gifts of the spirit as we saw in 1 Corinthians 1 verse 9 but that did not make them wise that teaches us that bible knowledge and the gifts of the

spirit do not necessarily make us wise it does not make us spiritual the characteristics of true wisdom are listed in James chapter 3 and verse 17 where he says the wisdom that is from above is first of all pure then peaceable, gentle easy to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering and without hypocrisy these are the marks of a truly wise man, of a truly spiritual man, but such a man was not found in the list of the Corinthians but brother goes to law with brother and that before unbelievers and all the unbelievers he says are watching this that's going on in the local law court in Corinth one brother accusing another brother what a shame, the dishonor comes to Jesus Christ, it's exactly the same today, when unbelievers see brothers fighting with brothers, brothers accusing

brothers he says this is a defeat for you you are defeated when you have lawsuits with one another this is something we must bear in mind, that Satan has got the victory when one brother is having a difficulty with another brother and he doesn't know how to resolve it and he goes and backbites to someone else about it, or takes the matter to unbelievers instead of taking it to the elders of the church, he says this it's so clear that Satan has got the victory and you are defeated when he says you are defeated what he means is Satan has got the victory and therefore let's take care that we do not make the same mistake in our life

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