**Selections in 1 Corinthians**

**Providence Church, Gary T. Meadors, Th.D.**

**Session Two: The Structure and Meaning of 1 Corinthians 5-6**

As 1 Cor. 1:11 introduced chs. 1-4, 5:1 introduces chs. 5-6.

The content flow of chs. 5-6 as a unit (note how the terminal points envelop sexual deviance):

 5:1-13 6:1-11 6:12-20

Sexual deviation reflects Litigation in Roman courts Christian “freedom” is not

Freedom out of control. reflects status and power a crowbar to justify lust

Status out of control. Conflicts out of control

5:1 sexual immorality **...terminal points...** 6:20 honor God with your bodies

 **Ch. 5 Addresses an incident of extreme sexual deviation/incest**

* 5:1-5 The incident and Paul’s judgment
	+ Sexual morality in Roman terms (**5:1**) includes sex with one’s mother as “out of bounds.” There **seems to be a sense of ‘no law applies to me, I’m free,’ among some in Corinth**. Our current culture has some “the rules do not apply to me” attitudes.
	+ Paul’s processing of the problem (**5:3-5**):
		- Apostolic humility and respect for the local congregation (5:3)
		- A **congregational governance model in 5:4**
		- The statement of discipline (5:5)

**TEXTS FOR Chapter 5**

|  |
| --- |
| **Translations of 5:5** |
| Greek | KJV | ESV | NIV84 | NIV2011 | NLT |
| pαραδοῦναι τὸν τοιοῦτον τῷ σατανᾷ εἰς ὄλεθρον τῆς σαρκός, ἵνα τὸ pνεῦμα σωθῇ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου⸆.   | 5 To **deliver such an one unto Satan** for the **destruction of the flesh,** that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. | 5 you are *c*to **deliver this man to Satan** for the **destruction of the flesh**, so *d*that his spirit may be saved *e*in the day of the Lord.*1* | 5 **hand this man over to Satan**, so that **the sinful nature may be destroyed** and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord. | 5 **hand this man overa to Satanb** for the **destruction of the flesh**,*a* ,*b* so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord.c**NOTE CHANGE FROM NIV84** | 5 Then you must throw this man out and **hand him over to Satan** so that **his sinful nature will be destroyed**a and he himselfb will be saved on the day the Lordc returns. |
| 1. Note the variation between “flesh” and “sinful nature.” The “sin nature” is part of our ontology (being), to act “fleshly” are manifestations/characteristics of the sin nature in operation. We can stop “acts” but we cannot eradicate the sin nature until the Eschaton. This is why you can “destroy” the acts and yet save the “spirit” for the Day of the Lord.2. What does it mean to “deliver this man to Satan” ?3. How can you destroy the “sinful nature”? This does not happen until you transfer to Glory!* Is this a statement about “death” of the man? “Flesh” would then stand for the whole body.
* In extra-biblical Greek, the term “destroy” is used in an inscription formula that destroys/nullifies the power of Satan. “...in biblical usage implies ‘ruin,’ the loss of all that gives worth to existence” (MM VocabNT), cf. 1 Thess 5:3. In the Corinth context, this man’s worth was in his status which is being destroyed by Paul’s corrections...freedom is not unregulated.
* If not, then what is it about “flesh” is destroyed? Context must reign: People of status are running the show in the church rather than apostolic teaching. It goes like this,
	+ “...consigning to Satan means excluding him from the community, this spells the end of self-congratulation [the end of status] about their association with such a distinguished patron, while for the offender himself sudden removal from a platform of adulation to total isolation from the community would have a sobering if not devastating effect.” (Thiselton, 396)
 |

* 5:6-8 The false assumption of “liberty”/freedom by Corinth, **5:6**, “your boasting is not good.” Compare 5:2, proud sinning saints! Was the offender a wealthy/high status person? In that culture, they would think he is untouchable.
* 5:9-13 Paul’s previous letter misunderstood:
	+ A naïve assumption by the Corinthians ... Guilt by association? (**5:9-11**)
	+ Ordering the life of sinners (culture) is **not** our business (**5:12**). Our business is inside our community.
		- Cf. 1 Thess 4:9-12
			* Lead a quiet life (i.e. don’t make waves in the larger world)
			* Mind your own business
			* Work hard
			* SO THAT you “win the respect of outsiders” and not be dependent.
		- Issues of cultural (Gen 1-3) and missionary mandates (Matt 28 etc.)
		- What do you think about the current push to manage American culture?

 **Ch. 6 Addresses dealing with grievances in the assembly. Ignorance is not bliss (“do you not know”)**

* The **repetition of “do you not know”?** (5:6; 6:3, 9; 15, 16, 19; cf. 9:24) indicates a “knowledge” failure.
* **Roman courts** were the historical context and they are not analogous to the American judicial system.
	+ Roman court structures covered “civil” and “criminal”/capital crimes. Civil courts were operated on a local level for breaches of legal possession, contracts, damages, fraud and injury (Winter, Welfare, 107). “Trivial cases” (KJV, ESV, NIVs, NLT = “these little things”) in 6:2 indicates civil cases.
	+ **Local, civil courts were dominated by local conventions of status and power**. A person of low status had no hope, even if right, against a person of high status. Going to court was “not a right” to all.
	+ The unrighteous in 6:1 is not a reference to “unbelievers” but to the very character of those who presided over the courts and to the juries that were used. Even Augustus complained about local courts as “cliques” with personal agendas rather than justice. (Winter, Seek, 110).
	+ The scenario in 1 Cor 6 is primarily descriptive but is more easily “contextualized” than other texts.
	+ The most prolific scholar on 1 Corinthians as a Roman setting is Bruce W. Winter. His summary in *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* (Eerdmans, 2001), captures the cultural context of 1 Cor 5-6: “The previous chapter [3] noted how Roman criminal law provided legal advantages for those of social status. Roman jurisprudence was further devalued because of vexatious litigation in the civil courts which became a legitimate arena for the elite in their own struggles in *politeia* [= “the whole order of political relationships in a [Roman] city”] and private associations. This chapter gives information on civil litigation and how the Corinthian Christians resorted to the courts for vexatious purposes by examining (1) the role of civil litigation in Roman society; (II) the unrighteous judges and juries who presided in civil courts; (IV) private arbitrators and conflict resolution; (V) those of ‘no account’ in the church; (VI) defrauding a ‘brother’; and (VII) shaming others in Roman culture. Christians in Corinth took the same attitude towards competitors in the church as their compatriots took towards their competitors in associations and *politeia* generally.” (p. 58)
* The sandwiching of lawsuits in the middle of sexual deviation raises the question of just what were they going to court about? Could it be related to the “family” issues caused by the incestual relationship?
* The context reflects status along with honor/shame and corrupt judges and juries in the culture.
* 6:9 contains language about homosexuality that needs definition

**TEXTS FOR Chapter 6**

|  |
| --- |
| Translations of 6:9 |
| Greek | KJV | ESV | NIV84 | NIV2011 | NLT |
| 9 Ἡ οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι ἄδικοι θεοῦ βασιλείαν οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν; μὴ πλανᾶσθε· οὔτε πόρνοι οὔτε εἰδωλολάτραι οὔτε μοιχοὶ οὔτε **μαλακοὶ** οὔτε **ἀρσενοκοῖται** | 9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor **effeminate**, nor **abusers of themselves with mankind,** | Or do you not know that the unrighteous*2* will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: *x*neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, **nor men who practice homosexuality**,*3* |  Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor **male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders** | 9 Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God?a Do not be deceived:b Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterersc **nor men who have sex with men***a* d | Don’t you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don’t fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery, or are **male prostitutes, or practice homosexu-ality,** |
| * **6:7-11 contains a “vice list.”** These were common in ancient literature and in the NT. There are usually 2 lists, a “virtue” list and a “vice” list (cf. Gal 5 fruit of the Spirit and works o the flesh).
* **6:9** is highly discussed in the **homosexual debate** because of two terms: malakoi and arsenokoitai.
* Since our tradition accepts the Bible’s condemnation of homosexual practice, I will only define these terms rather than dive into that debate. (See Thiselton, 440-455, for biblical details; there is also a “views” vol in the church library)
	+ **Malakoi** = in non-sex texts, it literally means “soft.” In NT times it came to be applied to effeminate men (only here in NT), the **subordinate person** in a homosexual relationship.
	+ **Arsenokoitai** = Only occurs 2 times in NT, here and 1 Tim 1:10 (1:8-11 is a vice list), is translated (NIV2011) as “those who practice homosexuality.” This term in extra-biblical Greek applies to the **dominant person** in a homosexual relationship.
* The two terms together may be translated as “sexual perverts” in a broad sense.
* **WHY** are there sexual deviations from the Bible view throughout history? How do you evaluate the paradigms of “nature” or “nurture”?
 |