

When You've Been Wronged

Chapter 6 Conclusion: The Privilege of Suffering Wrong

Let's get right to the point. I Corinthians Chapter 6 is saying that it is far better for you to suffer wrong and be defrauded than to initiate a lawsuit in a secular court against another brother. When called to suffer wrongfully, our instinct is not to give thanks to God for it, but we should. God is watching carefully and notes our response. Here are some reasons why we should be willing to suffer wrong.

- When we suffer an injustice from a fellow believer we follow the path of Jesus (See Philippians 2:5-8). There is no greater wrong suffered unjustly than the death of Christ. He suffered at the hands of his own people. Yet He submitted to it for a higher purpose—the glory of God.
- We give God an opportunity to display His grace in our lives. And God promises that His grace is sufficient for every affliction (2 Corinthians 12:9).
- We can display our hope in another world. We rest in the assurance that justice deferred one day will be justice served—when Jesus, the Righteous Judge, returns to rule (2 Thessalonians 1:4-7). There is a day coming where every single wrong will be answered.

In these unresolved conflicts God often gives extraordinary grace. One man wrote to his Pastor. “My angry estranged wife served me with papers intended to sue me for all that I owned. I knew she had an unscrupulous attorney who stop at nothing to destroy me. So, rather than fight, I chose to give her the \$300,000 she asked for—virtually all we ever had. At the age of 55, I had to start all over, also taking care of the two children she did not want. But God gave me grace in my poverty and in my work. Eventually, I was able to earn a decent living, and we will survive. What surprised me the most was the grace that God gave me not to be bitter but to accept this as a trial from His hand, and not the hand of someone who hates me.” God provides now and will one day reward those who obey Him.

The Judgment Seat of Christ

2 Corinthians 5:9-10 tells us that every Christian will give an account for how they lived on earth. It is true that Christians are welcomed into heaven on the basis of Christ's perfect righteousness, but it is also true that we face a rather thorough review of our lives to give account for the way we have lived. Justice will be metered out in that final verdict. The penalty will not be a separation from God—but perfect justice will be displayed for all to see. In some way God will make a thorough evaluation. And it might be that those who lived with selfish, worldly values will find their role in the kingdom of God diminished. That's why Paul says to Christians, "Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay.' says the Lord" (Romans 12:19).

And in the case of the unsaved, they will face the full brunt of their evil for all eternity, as their life is dragged out in the presence of God. That will happen at the Great White Throne Judgment. (Revelation 20:11-15)

I urge you today to give to the Lord that terrible desire to get even with the one who has wronged you. That brother who lied about his dad's will—he will have to answer to God. The mother-in-law who relentlessly meddled in her daughter-in-law's life—she will give an account. The woman or man who wrongly accused you of having an affair—she will stand before God for her deeds. The question is, can you trust God with all of that? It will be better to suffer wrong and trust God's justice to prevail than to live with the pain of bitterness. Remember it is possible for you to be right about a matter and still let it go...earth is not the final place to settle a dispute or decide right and wrong.

Why not take your vengeance, and like a pitcher of water, pour it out at the foot of the cross. There we received endless and repeated pardon, and let us now extend it to others.

Next Week, Chapter 7: From Bitterness to Blessing