



# redeemed

bible in 3 & 1 Corinthians 5-7

SCPC term 2 2008

## sunday 8th june 2008

### study 5 COURTING DISASTER 1 Corinthians 6:1-11

KEY VERSE FOR SERIES: "...you are not your own; you were bought at a price..." 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

This week, we see once again that the biggest problem at the church in Corinth is that there's far too much of Corinth in the church. It seems that the Corinthians have received the gospel with joy but have failed to grasp its implications for many areas of daily life—they are continuing on in their old ways and Paul's letter addresses many of these issues head-on. Greek culture was a very public affair and taking your neighbour to court was a bit like sport for nerds. Big crowds would gather to hear two citizens tear each other to shreds (metaphorically speaking) in the hope of winning the case. Paul gives the Corinthians a bunch of reasons for why this is not appropriate behaviour for Christians but at the heart of it all is the plain and simple gospel principle of giving up our rights and being willing to be wronged rather than do any damage to the body of Christ.

#### some notes on questions

Q1. Once again, we don't know all the details (see notes on question 2) but the issue is clear: some members of the Corinthian church are taking others to court over "trivial" matters. While there was obviously plenty of dodgy behaviour in the church (just think about that step-mother again!), Paul is adamant that whatever the problem, the solution doesn't lie "out there", before the ungodly, but within the church itself.

Q2&3. There are some clues in the passage that at least one of the issues causing trouble might have been some sort of dispute over property/possessions. This would make good sense of the reference to being "cheated" in verses 7 & 8 as well as the statement in verses 9 & 10 that the wicked etc. will not "inherit the kingdom of God". Whether this is correct or not, Paul is clearly trying to get them to appreciate the incredible reality of their new identity in Christ—future judges of the world! Even the least of them is far better qualified than the ungodly to judge a dispute between brothers.

Q4. It's possible that this question may get addressed in question 1. The consequences of "going to law" are huge: the Corinthians reveal their lack of trust in the wisdom of God that has been given to them in the gospel; they are pitted against each other in an adversarial setting where the goal is to win at the expense of the other; they expose themselves to the temptation to "cheat and do wrong" to each other (to which they no doubt succumbed); and it all has the effect of dragging the name of Jesus through the muck.

Q5. Paul always sees things clearly because he looks through the lens of the gospel. This is a gospel problem and the gospel is the only solution. "There are worse things than being wronged fellas, there are worse things than being cheated. And you're doing them!" Paul urges the Corinthians for the sake of Christ to imitate Christ in the way that they treat each other when disputes arise.

Q6. Paul urges the Corinthians to see that their gospel-denying behaviour belongs in the past—because of Christ crucified, they are no longer what they once were.

Q9. Encourage your group to think not only of out-and-out disputes (which may not be relevant for all) but also of the grudges and resentments that we can easily hold against each other.

**digging deeper:** true fellowship is based on walking together in God's light which shines ever so brightly in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Sin is a persistent reality in this life and effects every relationship but the gospel is the one and only antidote for sin, reconciling is to God and to each other.

small group bible study leaders' notes