

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPT //

WINNING & LOSING | CHURCH IN THE WILD

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Traders Point, how are we doing? Good. So good to be with you today as we continue in our series Church In The Wild.

In this series we've just been going verse by verse through the book of 1 Corinthians. We've just been looking at what it means to be the church. What should the relationships inside the church look like and what should our relationships with people outside of the church look like? What does it mean to love everyone well? What does it look like to take on this new way of life that Jesus offers? That's the church in the wild.

And what we've been seeing, pretty much every week, is that to learn what that looks like is to pretty much do the opposite of everything that they were doing in the church in Corinth.

If you were here last week, we got to talk about church discipline, which was so much fun. Right? Yeah, still uncomfortable laughter. Just like last week. That's good. But that was what last week was. We were looking at: Hey, there were problems in the church that the church wasn't addressing. And that created its own set of problems.

This week we're going to see that because they were abdicating their responsibility to judge and judge rightly, to handle the situations that needed to be handled, now justice is spilling over. People are going outside the church to get answers to things that the church should be able to answer for them.

And I'll say that that is still true today. There are so many people who come to our church because they were living a certain way, they were going through life and there were no answers, there was no justice, there was no way of doing things—at least one that made sense—so they come in and then they get to experience Jesus. I hope that is true of you today if this is your first time.

Then there are also the horror stories of people who were a part of the church but they never received any of God's ways and what justice looked like and how to handle problems and then they actually had to go outside the church in effort to try and find those things. And I pray that that is never the case here at this church.

Today, we're going to be looking at chapter 6, starting in verse 1. And like I said, problems are now going outside the church. And Paul, the author of this letter, has a problem with that. Let's just say that. Okay? So look at this in verse 1. Paul says:



“When one of you has a dispute with another believer, how dare you file a lawsuit...”

That’s some real parent language isn’t it? “How dare you talk to me when I am talking to you?”

“...how dare you file a lawsuit and ask a secular court to decide the matter instead of taking it to other believers!” (NLT)

So, here’s the situation at hand that Paul can’t believe is happening. Instead of bringing the problems to the church first, people are going outside the church to the secular courts to get their issues resolved.

Now, it’s important to have some context here of what is going on. One, we know that they weren’t really big issues, issues that didn’t need to go to the courts.

And the second problem is the setting of the courts themselves. The secular courts were placed in the marketplace. So people would be having court there and hundreds of thousands of people would gather around to witness the first ever sessions of reality TV. Right? People were going to hear what was going on in their family, the problems that were happening there.

I’m just glad as a people we have The Vault and we don’t find entertainment in seeing people go to court, right? I’m glad we don’t have anything like Judge Judy or Judge Mathis or Judge Joe Brown or the other 20 court shows that we have.

And why do we watch? And why do we not look away? It’s because we are seeing something that we shouldn’t be able to see. This should be a private matter and now it is public and we can’t help but not look away.

It’s the same reason why when the cop shows up at the neighbor’s house that you can’t leave the window, “I know I shouldn’t but I kind of want to know. I bet it’s what I told you it was. I bet it was.”

Paul is saying, “You’re going here and it’s creating more problems than it is helping. And there should be a better way to handle those problems. So, just keep reading with me here. He says:

“Don’t you realize that someday we believers will judge the world? And since you are going to judge the world, can’t you decide even these little things among yourselves? Don’t you realize that we will judge angels? So you should surely be able to resolve ordinary disputes in this life.” 1 Corinthians 6:2-3 (NLT)

Now, what he’s pointing to here is their identity. If you remember this from chapter 1, when Paul writes this letter he knows who he is writing to. He knows all of the problems that he is going to address, but he doesn’t start there. He starts with their identity.

He gave them a very specific word and it's a word that is true of all of us who follow Jesus. He calls them saints. He reminds them that they have been purchased at a high cost, that they have the very Spirit of God within them, that they have a purpose for their lives. And God is going to use them to do big and great things.

He does the same thing here. He's saying, "Listen. I want you to lift your head up. Remember who you are. Remember the plans that God has for you. He has given you His Spirit. And that one day, you are going to partner with Jesus to judge the world, including judging angels."

And some of you are like, "I didn't send in a job application to do that. I don't know if I'm qualified to judge angels." What he's really talking about here is judging fallen angels. Right? Like, there are people who rebelled against God, and there are also spirits or angels that rebelled against God.

And we don't know the exact details, but we know that a part of the responsibility that we have, that God has given us, is that one day we will partner with Jesus to judge the world, both physical beings and spiritual beings. And Paul is saying, "Hey, if that's true, if that's who you are, you are over qualified to handle these little disputes. Don't shrink back. Don't act like you don't have anything to offer."

And I think this is still a problem that a lot of us face today with dualism, that God's wisdom is for these areas and then there is secular wisdom for these areas and they never overlap. That godly wisdom is for church on Sunday or small group on Wednesdays, it's for when I serve on Sunday and then I get some other wisdom to use during the week. But can I say this today?

All wisdom is God's wisdom

Don't just hold on to God's wisdom for that serving opportunity, for small group, or that mission trip that you are going to go on next year. Your school needs that wisdom. Your workplace needs that wisdom. The relationships that you have, they need that wisdom. Where else are they going to get it?

Paul is trying to remind them of who they are. And I think the same is true for me and you as well. Are we reminded that the wisdom that God gave us is for so much more than just ourselves? And the world desperately needs it. All wisdom is God's wisdom.

Keep going with me. He says:

"If you have legal disputes about such matters, why go to outside judges who are not respected by the church? I am saying this to shame you."

I've read this wrong all week, "I'm saying this not to shame you," because that's what most people say. He says, "No, I want to be very clear, I am saying this to shame you. I want you to know how bad this is. And then he says:

“Isn’t there anyone in all the church who is wise enough to decide these issues? But instead, one believer sues another—right in front of unbelievers!” 1 Corinthians 6:4-6 (NLT)

So, why go outside the church? That’s what he’s trying to get them to come down to. We’ve already talked about the problems within the church, why they couldn’t do it. But now he’s trying to paint a picture for them of why this is not going to go well.

I do want to talk about what he is saying here, because then I’m going to go into a whole section to be very clear of what he’s not saying.

What he is saying is that, “Hey, you have been given the mind of Christ. You have been given the Spirit of God. Why would you go to people who have neither to judge on cases who are going to bring justice in a way that God wouldn’t bring it? I just want you to think about this. What are you really getting at the end of this situation?”

Here's what he is not saying as we're talking about lawsuits. I just want to be very clear on this.

What Paul is not saying:

- There is no need for lawyers
- Take abuse from others
- Judges are unjust

What he is not saying is that there is no need for lawyers. I want to be very clear with all of the legal teams here who attend our church. I love lawyers. I wanted to be a lawyer. I’m not saying anything bad about you. He’s not saying that there is no need for lawyers. This is all about civil matters not criminal matters. That’s a big thing to notice.

What he’s not saying is take abuse from others. He’s not saying just leave it unresolved, just don’t talk about it. He will give a very specific way of how we’re supposed to deal with it.

And then finally, what he’s not saying is that judges are unjust. He’s not saying, “Don’t go to the courts because they won’t render justice.”

He’s saying there could be a difference between what God would deem is justice in a matter and what the secular courts are going to decide in a matter. And what he’s really getting to is really trying to get them to ask the question: Why?

Why are you going to the courts? Why are you bypassing the church? Could it be that you are looking for a different kind of justice? Could it be that you don’t really want God’s justice?

And I'm telling you what's in these verses and what's filling this Bible and what still plagues us today is that same idea. And it's this: We would rather be right in our own eyes than righteous before God, "I would rather be right by what I deem right. I would rather get what I think I deserve, no matter what, than anything else."

When the whole call of Christianity is a better way and a new way and a different way, and when justice looks differently in this situation than what you would want or what you feel entitled to, are you willing to lay that down if it means being righteous and in right standing before God? That's what he's trying to get them to see.

So, keep reading with me starting in verse 7. He says:

"Even to have such lawsuits with one another is a defeat for you. Why not just accept the injustice and leave it at that? Why not let yourselves be cheated? Instead, you yourselves are the ones who do wrong and cheat even your fellow believers" 1 Corinthians 6:7-8 (NLT)

So, what he's beginning to show is that, "Hey, I just want you to know that in the way that you are doing life, with you taking these issues to the court, you can't win. It doesn't matter when the judge brings down the gavel and decides that you did win; you already lost just by showing up because what you gave up was worth so much more than any petty amount that you got on the other side of it.

"Yeah, you won the case, but you lost the relationship. You lost your witness. You lost the unity of the church. Let's put it this way, no one was showing up to these court sessions and then leaving going, "You know what I want to do this weekend? I want to go to church. After what I saw was happening between them, I want more of that."

No one was leaving the court thinking, "I think there is more to Jesus than I've been letting on. I think I want to know more about Jesus." It was actually doing the opposite. People were thinking less of Christians and less of the church, and ultimately less of a need for God.

And what Paul is showing us here is there is a difference between winning and losing. Sometimes when we win, we actually lose. You know what I mean? Have you ever been in a situation, maybe you won the argument, but you lost the relationship? Bro, you lost. You lost.

I love the way Gloria Clemente says it. She says:

"Sometimes when you win, you really lose, and sometimes when you lose, you really win, and sometimes when you win or lose, you actually tie, and sometimes when you tie, you actually win or lose. Winning or losing is all one organic mechanism, from which one extracts what one needs."

That's good. Right? Heavy—it's deep. That comes from the great American classic *White Men Can't Jump*.

When I tell you all wisdom is God's wisdom, this is what I mean. It shows up everywhere.

But it's that last sentence; you do it to extract what you need... What do you need? There is a reason why you take someone to court. There is a reason you seek revenge. There is a reason you retaliate. What is it that is in us that needs that, that needs to be justified, that needs to be right?

Paul says we have to be able to get to that and to show that now, because of Jesus, that is not the most important thing. The goal is not to win a case. The goal is not revenge or retaliation or to get them to pay for what they did.

The goal is to restore the relationship. No matter what happened, no matter how I was wronged, am I willing to suspend judgment in a way that I'm able to lay that down and not take revenge or retaliation and to still offer love and to have an option of reconciliation? Is that possible?

Here's what Paul is not saying, "Hey, just let it go. Just lay it down. Don't confront anyone. Just be wronged and let it lie." No. He wants us to address it. Jesus wants us to address the issues, but He wants us to do it in His way.

The problem wasn't that they weren't dealing with the problems; it was how they were dealing with the problems. They were bypassing the church and going over here to get their own brand of justice.

We have a way to handle problems in the church. If you were here last week we talked all about this:

THE PROCESS OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE

- Go privately
- Take one or two other people with you
- Take it to church leadership.

It's the same process that should have been applied to these legal matters. If there is a situation where I feel like you wronged me or that I took advantage of you, what happens first is you and I have a private conversation. We sit down and we talk about it, "Here's what I'm saying. Here's what I'm seeing. Here's my story. Here are the facts."

And then we get to go back and forth. And if we can solve it there, we won. That's great. Let's go back to it. The relationship has been reconciled.

If we can't get to a place of understanding, then it says we bring in one or two other people. And now all of us gather into a room and do the same thing. We talk about

facts. We talk about what happened. We talk about what we think should be done. And now we have more voices, more wisdom to make this thing happen.

If that works, perfect. If it doesn't it says, "Now take this small group and take it to church leadership. And now the leadership is going to sit in on this and try to make sense of what we should do and render judgment.

That's the process that it should have followed, but all of that was bypassed and they went straight to, "How can I get what I think I deserve?"

Now, I know maybe you've been sitting up unto this point and going, "I really don't see this connection. I don't... It's not for me. I could never picture myself taking someone to small claims court. I'm not in a lawsuit with anyone. I don't know if this really applies to me. I'm kind of relieved."

But the question we always have to ask is for our context, "What does that look like for us?" Because, like I said, you may not be taking anyone to a legal court, but there is still a part of you that wants to retaliate. There is a part of you that wants revenge. There is a part of you that wants to get what you think you deserve. So the question I would ask is:

Where do you hold court?

You may not hold court down at the city county building; maybe you handle court in the streets.

And I'll tell you, growing up, raising so many small children, I've seen this. You don't have to teach them. Humans come ready to do this. When there is a problem, a situation, if a kid feels like he is wronged he retaliates and brings his own justice to the situation.

If she has a ball and someone tries to take the ball, she is going to do everything she can to make sure she gets justice. She will claw, bite, fight—anything that needs to happen in that moment to get that ball back.

And that is built into who we are as people. And maybe you were raised like that. Right? If someone does something to you, you have the right to respond accordingly. You handle it right there in the moment.

I remember for me, it makes me think about the first fight I ever got into in my whole life. I was out at a friend's house. My dad called and told me to come home. I come home. My dad and my brother met me in the driveway. My dad begins to explain to me the situation my brother is in, some kids down the street were picking on my brother.

And then he looks at me. He wants me to speak. I'm supposed to say something in this moment, but I don't know what to say. So, I look at my brother and I say, "I'm sorry. I don't know what you want me to do in this moment." And he says, "No, no, no. Not sorry. You go down the street and you make sure they know they can't pick on your brother."

Have you ever tried to process, “Are you asking me what I think you’re asking me to do? Because if I go down there it’s not going to be like diplomatic, we’re not going to sit down and have some tea and talk about the situation. Are you telling me to go fight? My whole life you’ve told me not to hit him. Now I’m supposed to fight for him?”

But I understood. I understood the orders. So, I hopped on my bike and I rode down the street and we handled the situation in the street.

Someone asked me after the last service, “Did you win?” I was like, “I wouldn’t be telling the story if I lost.” But did I really win? That’s my point. You can win or think you win but you really lose. It’s not like we walked away as best friends.

Where do you hold court? Maybe you hold court on social media platforms, the courts of Facebook. The threads are your courtroom. And you go in there and you seek vengeance and justice and you destroy people—one rebuttal after another. You’re just sentencing people to death by comment. And you won. But did you really win?

Or maybe you handle justice in a way... You don’t feel like you have the voice to do it in the room or you don’t want to go toe to toe with people because that never works well. So you found a way to get your own justice through back room conversations and secret texts and you found a way to gossip about someone and to turn their reputation. And you found a way to bring justice to a situation.

Where do you hold court? We all have those places that we look to seek justice, to get what we think we deserve. What is that for you? And why do you need it? Why do you need to be right? Why do you need to be justified? Why’s that? That’s the line that has been sitting on me all week:

Why not just accept the injustice and leave it at that? Why not let yourselves be cheated?

What is it in me that holds onto that? What is in me that makes that the most important thing? And I think it is so wrapped up in us because it’s so wrapped up in our culture—rights and justice. We have the right to do all of these things.

And if I could speak to you personally, I could say, “Yes you do have the right to most things.” But Christianity is about so much more than just your rights. I think we come to this place of understanding that, “I’m okay laying down my sins. I’m okay laying down the bad things that aren’t good for me so that I can pick up the good things of God.”

But growing and maturing in Christ is also being willing to stand in a place and say, “I’m going to lay down what I have a right to. I’m going to lay down what I actually deserve, if it means that I can reconcile this relationship. If I can bring unity to this, I can absorb the cost.”

And this is a new way of handling things. As you begin to follow Jesus you notice that what was a win before, actually feels like a loss. It feels like a loss before it actually feels like a win. And here's the question I've been wrestling with:

Am I willing to "lose" if it means Jesus wins?

Am I willing to take a loss personally if it is for the good of the Kingdom and for the sake of the relationship? Can I do that? Jesus actually speaks directly to this in one of His most famous teachings, The Sermon on the Mount, when He talks about how we should respond when someone hurts us, when someone takes something that they shouldn't have taken.

How do we respond and not seek revenge or retaliate? What if there is a different way? I want us to look at that in Matthew, chapter 5. It's teaching about revenge in the words of Jesus. He says:

"You have heard the law that says the punishment must match the injury: 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say, do not resist an evil person! If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also.

"If you are sued in court and your shirt is taken from you, give your coat, too. If a soldier demands that you carry his gear for a mile, carry it two miles. Give to those who ask, and don't turn away from those who want to borrow." Matthew 5:38-42 (NLT)

Now, it's important here to know why Jesus was doing this teaching. This was a teaching that was given by God in the Old Testament but it had been warped by the religious leaders at the time. They had taken this teaching that was given to the judges of Israel as a way to discipline the people, because you've got to think, these are people who had lived in slavery for 400 years, they didn't know how to handle disputes among each other.

This rule was given, not in obligation, but in limitation. They weren't obligated to respond this way, but they couldn't respond more than this.

So, situations like, "Hey, we have a problem today. Eric killed Jim." And you are like, "Okay, why did Eric kill Jim?" "Well, Jim stole two of his apples."

"And he killed him? We can't have people out here killing people over apples."

So, then they began to create this space. And eye for an eye was not mandatory it was you couldn't do more than that thing. Like, if someone took your eye, you could take it back. I don't know what you would do with it, but you could have their eye in place of it.

But what Jesus is saying is, "You've heard it say that, but there is actually a better way. You are not obligated to respond like that. There is actually a better way and a more godly way that you could respond. And this is what I am calling you to."

And then He gives a handful of examples right here in these verses. He says, “Don’t resist. If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also.” It’s important to note that a slap on the cheek was not someone trying to physically hurt you. It was about insulting you, not injury.”

So, when someone insults you, someone smacks you in the face, how are you going to respond? You can either respond by smacking them back, or you can offer the other side of your face and you can lean in and still seek reconciliation. That is, technically, an option.

And then he says there is this court situation. Right? Where if you lose give them your cloak too. So what would happen in a court situation back then, if you lost, the winning party could ask for the shirt off of your back.

They couldn’t ask for your cloak, but they could get your shirt. But what Jesus is saying is, “Hey, don’t even just do what you have to do, if you ever find yourself in this situation where you wronged someone, go over the top. Give them more than you have to to make sure that the relationship is reconciled.

And then, finally, there is this situation where if a soldier asks you to carry his stuff for a mile, carry it for two. Well, in the context here, the Roman soldiers as they walked, it was the law, they could go up to you and say, “Hey, I need you to carry my baggage for the next mile. They couldn’t ask for more than a mile, but whatever you were doing you had to drop it and pick up his stuff and walk with him for a mile.

How are you going to do that mile? How would you do that mile? You would be counting every step. How many feet are in a mile? 5,280—you would be counting every single one of them, “I can’t wait until I can drop this off of my back.”

But Jesus says, “What if you got to the end of that mile and you turned to the soldier and you said, ‘No, I don’t mind helping. Can I take it another mile for you?’” What would that have done to this man? His curiosity as to why this person would be responding this way. There is a better way.

And then He says, “When someone asks you for something, respond. Give them what you can if they ask for something.”

That’s just a very different way to handle things. And that is what I want to put before all of us today. How do I respond in these situations? The first one:

How do I respond when I’m insulted?

I think for a lot of us we receive an insult and we give an insult. And growing up the way I did, playing sports, being around a lot of guys, I have a very sharp tongue. And I found out that I’m actually pretty good at insults. So, if you ever said anything about my mother, I could probably say something worse about yours.

But what if that didn't have to be the case? What if we could receive an insult but respond in love? Is that possible? I believe because of Jesus it is. But how do you respond?

How do I respond when I mess up?

How do you respond when you mess up? What do you do when you know, "This one was on me?" Do you down play it? Do you minimize? Do you justify? Do you pretend like it didn't happen and still try to paint the other person to be the bad guy?

What if, when I mess up I realize that the relationship is the most important thing? And I know what it takes to restore it, but I want to go above and beyond to make sure that we're in a good place.

How do I respond when someone asks me for something?

And then finally, how do I respond when someone asks me for something? It could be someone at work. It could be someone in your family. I could be someone at school. When someone comes to you and asks something of you, what's your first thought? Is it, "I would love to, thanks for asking.?" Is it, "How much can I give? How much grace can I show in this situation?"

Jesus is saying that that could be our response. But I think for a lot of us, and this is where there begins to be a breakdown, when we get into these spaces of, "How do I respond," here's the question that usually comes into a lot of our minds:

Where is the line?

"Just tell me what I need to do when someone asks me. Tell me when I can take someone to church. Tell me how I should respond in this way."

And: "Where is the line?" is not the right question. "Where is the line?" brings us down to this really small space of what do I have to do? And Christianity is about so much more than what I have to do. It's so much more than succumbing to duty. It is responding in love because you have been loved.

It's what makes it so hard when you talk about things like love and grace and forgiveness. Where is the line? There is no line. I think the only lines I see in Christianity are on the cross. And what do those represent? Dying.

When I come to this space, instead of asking, when I in a problem and someone has offended me, when someone has taken something they shouldn't have taken, when someone has done something to my relationships or tarnished my reputation, instead of looking at: "Where's the line?" what do I have to do, here's a better question:

What would it look like for Jesus to win?



What would it look like for Jesus to win? What would it look like for God to get the glory in this situation?

Do you understand that the glory of God is often portrayed in seeing a sunset or a sunrise or a mountain? It's this idea that when you look and you see something so beautiful you can't help but think of God.

Even atheists, when they wake up in the morning and they see all of the beautiful colors of the sky and the sun, they sit back and they are like, "I don't believe in God, but when I see this I can't help but think: maybe."

The call here is for us to live in such a way that even when people who don't know Jesus see the way we live and the things we do and how we do them they can only respond with, "I don't even know if I believe, but it seems like there is something more behind their actions. The only way you can make sense of what they are doing and how they are living—maybe there is something supernatural, maybe there is a God behind what they are doing."

What does it look like for Jesus to win? It means unity. It means reconciliation. It means that that is the most important thing. When we are dealing with things and we have issues and real problems and we offend one another and we hurt one another and we do something we shouldn't have done, what does it look like to say, "Hey, I know what I could get out of this situation legally, but I want to lay that down in the moment. Because what I value most is this relationship, the unity of the church."?

And what would it look like for us to all do this together in such a way that everywhere we went people began to ask the questions: Why and how? Why are they doing that? How are they doing that?

I don't know about you, but I want to live in such a way that you can't make sense of my life without Jesus. The only way that you could make sense of love like this and grace like this and forgiveness like this... "How does he keep getting hit but keep moving forward? How does he keep getting hurt but is still spilling out love?" It is only because of Jesus. I want to love in such a way that is only possible if Jesus shows up and gives me something that I don't have.

So, I want to ask you again:

Am I willing to "lose" if it means Jesus wins?

How? Supernaturally—this isn't something that you are going to be able to do, it isn't something you can reprogram yourself to do, but it is something God has enabled all of His followers to do. How? We have the mind of Christ—through reading His word, through reading Scripture. We have the Spirit of Christ, the very Holy Spirit to lead us in all wisdom in how to handle each situation.

And then this is the one that is forgotten. But it needs to be brought back to life. And I think that this is what this book is doing such a good job of. We have the mind of Christ, we have the Spirit of Christ, and we have the body of Christ.

The body of Christ is me and you. It is all followers coming together to be the body. We cannot forsake that. We cannot downplay it like it's not that big of a deal.

If there is a problem we need to address it and we need the shared knowledge and wisdom that all of us are bringing to the table. That's the only way we're going to be able to live out God's call for our lives and His call for His church to be led by the Spirit and to be led along by one another.

Are you willing to "lose" (I put that in quotes) if it means Jesus wins?

Here's the motivation I want to give you and I hope it is enough. When it came down to it, Jesus was willing to lose when it meant you would win.

Think about His whole life. And think about those three claps when we get to it. And you decide if that was enough.

If you look at the life of Jesus from a worldly standpoint, it was a loss. He gave up heaven for earth. He wrapped Himself in flesh and bones. He grew up in a life of poverty. He faced so much hate. Everyone was trying to trap Him. Everyone was trying to kill Him and ultimately doing it. He would take all of that. He would be willing to lose.

He would be beaten and mocked and spit on and taken to a cross and dying the death of a criminal. The gospel looks like a loss. Isaiah 50, verse 6 says, "I offered my back to those who beat me." This is talking about Jesus. He offered His back to those who were beating Him so that He could offer us eternal life.

That's what I'm talking about. Am I willing to lose if it means that Jesus wins? Am I willing to take that on if it means Jesus wins? Am I willing to lay that down if it means that I am now righteous before God? Jesus is our example.

I love the way that 1 Peter, chapter 2, verse 23 says it. He says:

"He," talking about Jesus, "did not retaliate when he was insulted, nor threaten revenge when he suffered. He left his case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly." (NLT)

Guys, we all have an option. Whenever someone comes against us, whenever someone does something unfair we have two options. We can make them pay. We can hold them accountable. We can take them to court (and I'm not saying that there is never a place for that). We can even take more than what they took. We can retaliate. We can take revenge. That's option one. We make you pay.

But option two is: I pay. Because of my identity, because of what God has given me, I can absorb the cost. You might have wronged me financially. I may take a loss in this

dispute, but I'm not storing up treasure here on earth. I'm storing up treasure in heaven where no one can steal and nobody can get to it. And it is what is really worth the most to me. So, I'll take a loss here if it means that I'm winning there.

When we step into a place where we are wronged in a relationship and someone hurts us or we lose a relationship or someone speaks badly about us, we can respond accordingly because we know our relationship with God is secure. We know who we are even if other people disagree. We don't need to be right in front of everyone because we know that we have right standing with God.

When I forgive you it's not saying that what you did was okay. It's saying I'm no longer going to make you pay for it. I'm going to absorb the cost.

And because of what we have been given, which is so much, because of our new identity, because of the fact that we are saints, we have what it takes to absorb that. We have what it takes to live in such a way that the world may think that we're losing but we're actually winning in the things that matter the most.

As we close today I just want to ask you to stand to your feet. I know that this is a heavy one. And I know it even seems like it's pretty out there and to say, "I don't know how to be that person. I have so much in me that wants justice, that wants things to be right." I get it. But what I want to ask you to do is let God do a supernatural work in you.

Guys, take sin seriously but handle it gracefully. Get to a place where we can say, "I truly want God's justice. I truly want God's best in this moment."

And I can tell you the way that you get filled up, the way that you get to be in a place where you can respond like that is that you are filled up with gratitude. That's where grace comes from.

The more time we spend in God's word, the more time we spend in prayer, the more time we spend worshipping and praying we are reminded of how good our God is, how gracious He is, how He paid for all of our sin, how we were against Him, how we were His enemies, how we spit in His face, and when we had the nerve to turn around He welcomed us with open arms.

When we begin to get lavished in that kind of love, when we remember that kind of grace, when we know that's what we're living for, it allows us to absorb the little things that we face day to day.

What I want to do right now is pray for a spirit of gratitude. So right where you are, at all of our campuses, just close your eyes, bow your heads, and let's pray for gratitude.

Father, we thank You so much for today. Father, we are grateful for You. God we are grateful for what You did and what You continue to do. God, thank You for giving us Your Spirit, giving us Your mind, and God, giving us one another, giving us Your body.



God, I pray that we could live in such a way where You would win, You would get the glory, unity would come, love would be dispersed, and God, little by little we would see Your Kingdom advance.

But, God, we can't give to people what we don't have. So, God, I pray that You would overwhelm us right now with gratitude. Bring us to that space when we first saw You, when we first experienced Your love, when we were right there with our sin and we knew what You saved us from, we knew the lengths that You went to. And, God, how we would never be able to repay You. But, God, You went first anyway.

So, God, I pray in this moment as we lift up your name, as we worship You, as we celebrate You, God, I pray that a spirit of gratitude grows in this room.

Father, we ask all of these things in Your perfect name. And the church says: Amen.

