

You Belong to Jesus! Act Like it.

SCOTT HOEZEE

At a sophisticated cocktail party in New York one evening, a person used the word *fornication*, prompting a proper society woman to say: Isn't it a shame in this modern age that we still use words like fornication or adultery or debauchery? To this, another person rejoined: No, it is not a shame we still use those words; it's a shame people still commit these acts. Well, the Apostle Paul faced a similar situation in the city of Corinth. A lot of the morally terrible sexual habits of Greek culture were carrying over even into the life of the church. Paul knew he had to say something, and today on *Groundwork*, we will see what he said. Stay tuned.

DARRELL DELANEY

Welcome to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Darrell Delaney.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And I am Scott Hoezee; and Darrell, we are almost right in the middle now of a planned seven-part series on 1 Corinthians, and this is the third program of seven. We noted, Darrell, on the first program, that it is pretty obvious as you read 1 Corinthians that Paul is replying to a letter they first sent to him, in which they asked a really, really long list of questions, and in which they listed a fairly long list of issues and controversies that were going on that they wanted Paul's opinion about.

DARRELL DELANEY

Well, it is kind of crazy because I consider it, Scott, to be Paul's FAQ...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes.

DARRELL DELANEY

Where they asked him things and he said: These are the things that you wrote me about. Paul actually is not pulling any punches today. He is going right for the issue they asked about with sexual immorality.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; and this program, and actually the next too, Darrell, will be dealing with a number of things that touch on various areas of sexuality. I suppose the Church could fall into one of two extremes: It says nothing at all about sexuality and just lets things slide, or it says only things about sexuality, and sometimes the Church has the reputation of being obsessed with only one kind of sin, and that is sexual sin, and the Church doesn't care about anything else, but that is not really true.

DARRELL DELANEY

Well, the saying goes that sin has no degrees...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

Sin is all bad to God because he is completely and perfectly holy. I have also seen not only churches that have gone to talk about sex far too much, and emphasized this thing, but I have also seen where churches, Scott, they don't talk about it enough because it is such a taboo subject, and there are people who are struggling that have no counsel or no way to move forward.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right; neither extreme is helpful; but is also good to notice that when Paul...he really doesn't do it here in this part of Corinthians, but there are a number of places in the New Testament, in Paul's letters, where he makes a list of sins that shouldn't be in the Church, and sexual ones are in there, but you know what? They are right next to gossip, greed, jealousy, anger, drinking too much, eating too much—gluttony. The sexual sins are in the mix with everything else. So, if the Church sometimes pays attention to only sexual sins, even Paul seems to say that is wrong. We need to take greedy people seriously, too. We need to take people who are gossips seriously, too.

DARRELL DELANEY

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

All of that...as you said, Darrell...all of that is a problem to God and should be a problem to us.

DARRELL DELANEY

Well, I like to call them grape clusters because he groups a group of things together that are all bad. He also makes sure that there is no hierarchical problem there, but he also does it on the positive side...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

Where the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and such.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, he is clustering these things together so people will know that, if you know these things to be bad, then sexual sin is actually in the midst of that; all of them are bad.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right; but, Paul does need to talk about some sexual sins because in the question letter that the Corinthians sent to him, we find out something in the beginning of 1 Corinthians 5, which is properly shocking, I think. It turns out there is a member of the Corinthian church who has formed a sexual relationship with his mother-in-law. That is surprising...

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

But more surprising is, the church was letting it go, and they weren't saying anything about it.

DARRELL DELANEY

The church discipline is elusive in this category. It is really unclear why they didn't address this. I do know that there is a difference between the way the world addresses things. Sometimes they applaud these kinds of

things; but in this situation, because it is a church member, we have a standard that we need to address, and Paul is in the process of making it clear this is not okay.

SCOTT HOEZEE

This is not okay; and yes, you are right. We don't have any idea why they would let this go. Maybe he was an influential member...

DARRELL DELANEY

A stakeholder?

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; yes, a stakeholder; he might have been wealthy. He might have been the kind of person you didn't want to cross, right, because he could make trouble for you...

DARRELL DELANEY

Sure.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Who knows? But in 1 Corinthians 5, Paul talks about that at the beginning, but then here is what he writes, starting at verse 9:

I wrote to you in my letter (by the way, that refers to a previous letter from 1 Corinthians...

DARRELL DELANEY

The lost letter.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes, we said that there are at least three or four letters to the Corinthians, and we only have two. So, Paul is referring to a previous letter.) I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—¹⁰ not at all meaning the people of the world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers or idolators. In that case, you would have to leave the world. ¹¹But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister, but is sexually immoral or greedy... Do not even eat with such people.

So, Paul is saying, Darrell: Look; you cannot break off all your connections to everybody who is not in the church or you could never witness to them; but inside the church, come on; it should be a different ballgame.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, it is pretty hard to be in the world and not of the world if you are not in the world.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, it is not pertaining to people who are not believers. You wouldn't be able to leave your home. You wouldn't even be able to leave and do anything; but if it is the church people, we have to actually address this issue, because if it is a sin issue in the church, it is kind of like a little disease that is going to infect things, and we have to inoculate it and deal with it immediately or it will spread like gangrene.

SCOTT HOEZEE

In fact, just a little earlier Paul writes: Don't you know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the yeast so that you may be a new unleavened batch, as you really are. So, we might say one bad apple spoils the whole bushel. Yes, it is basically the same idea. When Paul says do not eat with such people, he probably means the Lord's Supper or including them in the love feasts that the early Church had, which included the Lord's Supper, because, you know, he doesn't want the whole body to fall into ruin.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, my understanding, Scott, is that there is relationship with God and there is fellowship with God. So, we have a relationship because we are children of God, but this sexually immoral situation breaks the fellowship of the whole body...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

And we must deal with that, because that is going to be even worse if they are not addressing it. So, that is the problem. You don't have a potluck with someone who has a sinful life, and you just ignore what they did and just keep going. You have to address it in that area of accountability.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right; my friend Neal Plantinga has pointed out, Darrell, that the New Testament seems to have this idea that we in the Church are going to be regularly in the process of rebuking each other in love, but we don't do that so much, right? We don't rebuke very well...

DARRELL DELANEY

Not so much.

SCOTT HOEZEE

We are afraid people will leave the church. They will go to the church down the street. So, Paul seems to think rebuking and confronting each other is going to be standard practice, and we shy away from it for all kinds of reasons; but the reason you do it is—now we could think of Jesus, right, in Matthew 18—kicking somebody completely out of the church should be the last resort, right? We want to win this sister or this brother back. We want to confront them in love, show them the error, show them the damage they are doing to the wider body, and then hope and hope and hope that they will say: Forgive me, I will stop; and now they are restored. That should be the goal; but, if that doesn't work, then we are back to that bad apple spoiling the whole batch.

DARRELL DELANEY

And unfortunately people seem to forget the profession of faith that they make when they stand up and say that they will submit to the authority of the Church, and that is what this situation is. Not only is this problem happening, but there are plenty of other problems happening, and in just a moment, we will move on to the next issue in Corinthians. So, stay tuned.

Segment 2

SCOTT HOEZEE

I am Scott Hoezee, along with Darrell Delaney, and you are listening to *Groundwork*, and this third episode in a seven-part series on Paul's letter to the 1 Corinthians. So, we just saw Paul dealing with this man who was living with his mother-in-law in an immoral way. So now we turn to 1 Corinthians 6; here is what's next.

DARRELL DELANEY

If any of you has a dispute with another, do you dare to take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the Lord's people? ²Or do you not know that the Lord's people will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? ³Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life! ⁴Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, do you ask for a ruling from those whose way of life is scorned in the church? ⁵I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? ⁶But instead, one brother takes another to court—and this in front of unbelievers! ⁷The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already.

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, Darrell, here is another one of many moments in 1 Corinthians where you read this and your first response is: What?! So, we add in the last chapter, and it is like: What?! There is a man who is having a sexual relationship with his mother-in-law, and now it is like these fellow Christians...and again, remember what we said in the first program of this series, Darrell, the congregation of Corinth was probably fewer than a hundred people.

DARRELL DELANEY

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

This is not a group of thousands, and they are hauling each other into court on a regular basis? What is going on?

DARRELL DELANEY

Well, they have no shortage of issues; and it is interesting how Paul is showing them this argument. He is like, well, one day you are going to judge angels, one day you are going to judge the world, and you are telling me you don't have enough intelligent people around you to judge these trivial cases? Why can't you handle this in-house as a family of God and not allow unbelievers, who have a whole different standard—a whole different worldview—to judge your cases? That is not going to help the body; that is not going to help your relationship and fellowship either.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly. You know, it is interesting Darrell...I mean, so, the issue of filing lawsuits against each other is strange enough, but what is interesting here, Darrell...Paul does this all through 1 Corinthians...but he does it elsewhere... sort of Paul's rhetorical strategy is this oft-repeated question: Do you not know? He is basically saying do you not know who you are in Christ, right? You are going to judge the world, you are going to judge angels; and what, you cannot settle a property dispute in the church? You cannot settle something about where somebody's loading zone is in front of their store? You are supposed to judge the angels someday...anyway, what he is saying is: You are baptized believers; your spiritual zip code is in Christ. That is where you live. This is who you are. You need to remember that, and then act like it.

DARRELL DELANEY

Identity is going to be central from this point on with Paul talking to the Corinthian believers. I think it is helpful for us to remember, too, we don't do to make ourselves who we are. Out of who we are, we do.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

And so, Scott, if we understand that, then our behavior should address accordingly how to handle situations, and in this case, lawsuits. If we are forgiving one another, if we are confessing our sins to one another, and if we are doing Matthew 18 correctly and bringing my aught to you, that should be something that we can handle as believers who are Spirit filled, but sometimes we need other people in the body to hold us accountable to that; but going outside of the body, that is kind of out of bounds.

SCOTT HOEZEE

A very good point. You know, I think I have mentioned this before on *Groundwork* at some point in the past...or maybe even more than once...but at Calvin Seminary where I teach, we don't ask students to preach on the letters or the epistles in the New Testament, particularly of Paul, until they are in their last year and they've got some preaching experience under their belts...

DARRELL DELANEY

Okay.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Because Paul issues a lot of commands. There are a lot of imperatives—a lot of orders--do this, don't do that—in his epistles; and if you are not theologically sophisticated, that could lend itself to sort of a works righteousness...

DARRELL DELANEY

Legalism.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; God is going to grade you on the curve. You get into heaven if you are better than the next person. You know, it is all about getting the 4.0 grade point average with God, but that is not true, because in Paul, the indicative always precedes the imperative, which is to say: You've been saved by grace, boom! Now that you have been saved...

DARRELL DELANEY

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Act like it. So, Paul never says: Behave so God will love you. He says: God already loves you, so behave and act accordingly. As you said, don't become what you aren't, be who you are.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Which is baptized.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, Watchman Nee wrote a wonderful book called *Sit, Walk, Stand* based on the book of Ephesians. It is one of Paul's epistles; and in that book, he talks about sitting in the fact that God has already forgiven you, that his grace is abundant to you as you walk in the righteousness that he has afforded you; and you get to stand against opposition. So, the idea is that the locus is always in what God has done first, and what he has afforded you in the gifts that he has given you, and out of that, you live a lifestyle; but there also needs to be the understanding that this is actually bigger than me versus you, or one person with a lawsuit against another, Scott; so maybe you could talk a little bit about that.

SCOTT HOEZEE

The fact that Paul always has to say, you know, be who you are. Do you not know? Do you not know? I think we all...I think on the last program, Darrell, you talked about kind of looking in the mirror, and when you look in the mirror, do you see a sanctified believer? A sacred person to God, or not? You should. You should see that, and that should change everything, including how you treat a brother, even if you have an argument. Find a Christ-like way to settle, don't haul each other into court, and so forth.

So, I know I need it, I know probably you need it...we all need that reminder: do you not know who you are? So, we have to remember, you know, we are walking around as temples of the Holy Spirit, which is going to come up in the last part of the program, too, in just a few minutes; but the other thing I just wanted to note before we wrap up this segment, Darrell, is that last verse you read, verse 7, where Paul says what the fact that they are having lawsuits means. He says: You have been completely defeated already.

DARRELL DELANEY

Curious.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; I mean, you only talk about defeat if there is a battle going on, right?

DARRELL DELANEY

Exactly; so, that is what I was getting at earlier when I said there is something bigger going on. This isn't just about me suing another believer or a believer suing me, but there is a spiritual warfare battle going on for my very soul. Not only is it external, but there is internal because I have to war over my members now that I am a new believer. The old nature is still trying to take over in me. So, the spiritual warfare battle is on on a variety of fronts, but if I use the world's methods, then I have lost already.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; Paul is basically saying here: You think that property dispute with your brother Joe is a big deal? The spiritual warfare going on with the devil for your soul is a way bigger deal, and how you respond to Joe is going to determine how that battle is going to turn out. You are acting like you are defeated already, Paul says. Don't let that be the bottom line for you. As you said, Darrell, there are much bigger stakes going on here. Our battle is not against flesh and blood, Paul will say elsewhere.

DARRELL DELANEY

What is interesting about that is the reminder that Jesus has already won that battle...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, because he gave us the victory, we actually have the opportunity to address our brother Joe and make sure that we give him the grace he needs in the grievance, or whatever it may be. Maybe I need to seek the forgiveness; but the fact that the victory has already been won in Jesus is something that can comfort him and comfort us.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; well, kind of along the same lines, Paul is going to loop back to some things about sexual immorality from the end of 1 Corinthians 6, and we will take a look at that as we wrap up the program.
Segment 3

DARRELL DELANEY

Welcome to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Darrell Delaney.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And I am Scott Hoezee; and Darrell, let's dig right back into scripture and listen to these powerful words from the end of 1 Corinthians 6, where Paul writes...and now, he is quoting somebody as he begins this, something maybe people say:

¹²"I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything,"—but I will not be mastered by anything. ¹³You say, "Food for the stomach, and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both." The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴By his power, God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. ¹⁵Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never!

DARRELL DELANEY

¹⁶Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.” ¹⁷But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit. ¹⁸Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. ¹⁹Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And another “what?!” moment. Some of the men in the Corinthian church still were doing what they did before they became Christians; and that is, now and again, going to the local brothel, apparently, and sleeping with prostitutes. Well, there is a lot going on here. I mean, Paul does talk a little bit about Christian freedom here, right? People say: I have the right to do anything; but Paul said: Yeah, but not really. Some things hurt people, some things bring other people down; so, you know, you cannot be casual where these matters are concerned. As we said earlier in the previous segment, Darrell, there is something bigger going on than just a lawsuit between these believers. There is a spiritual battle going on. There is something bigger going on with our bodies when we are sexually immoral or visit a prostitute, and Paul points that out.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, Scott, in America we don’t care anything about freedom, right? Freedom is a big priority in the very birth of this nation. The liberties in the Bill of Rights and these things; and so, we could really lean into this whole freedom aspect; if we are not careful, we will realize that we will bulldoze right over our fellow believers who are next to us who need us to be an example; but what God wants from the Corinthians, and I think he also wants it from us, Scott, is that there is an exclusive relationship with God and believers that has to do with our own bodies and how they honor him in everything.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; I think three times in that passage we just read we saw that again: Do you not know?

DARRELL DELANEY

Do you not know?

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right; do you not know...Paul is reminding them who they are; and in this case, the *do you not know* is you are one with Christ. It is sort of like you are married to Jesus...you are one flesh with Jesus. So, what Paul says is, if you go make yourself one flesh with a prostitute, not to be too crass about it, but you bring Jesus into bed with you with that prostitute, and I am pretty sure you don’t want to do that. That is a little bit on the awkward side, to put it mildly. So, again, reminding people who they are in Christ means that there are things you just cannot do, and must not do, because you are going to bring Jesus low. So, don’t you know? You are one with Jesus; act like it.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes, Scott, that is very important, and I teach this when I am preaching and I am teaching to not only teens and youth, but also everyone else, that your decisions—your behaviors—your actions—and even the locations in where you go because the Holy Spirit lives within you, you are actually involving him in these actions and these thoughts and these behaviors; and why not do things that will honor him with your actions, with your words, with your thoughts, instead of doing things that you know are totally against what he wants for us*, and in this case, it is adultery, it is fornication. He doesn’t want us to unite our members with these old practices that were never beneficial in the first place, even though we have the “liberty” to do so.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; when I was a kid, I was still close enough to the time when, in my particular tradition, we had made going to the movies okay after decades and decades of not being allowed to go to the movies; and I remember my mom before we had started to go see movies, said something I suppose her mother probably said to her. It was like, you know, would you want to be in a movie theater when Jesus comes again? It is sort of like, you know, it was a scare tactic, right? But what you are saying is that you bring Jesus with you into the movie theater anyway, so if you are going to see a bad movie or something, you shouldn't do that anyway. You shouldn't have to be startled that Jesus would come again in the middle of the movie. You are bringing Jesus in with you anyway. You are bringing the Holy Spirit in with you anyway, and that ought to influence where you go and where you don't go, because, Paul says, you do not belong to yourself anymore. We could think of the great Reformed confession, the *Heidelberg Catechism*...

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

What is your only comfort? That I belong, body and soul and life and death, to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ. I am not my own. I was bought with a price.

DARRELL DELANEY

The fact that I am not my own, it lets me know not only do I belong to him, but he belongs to me. So then, I have to live my life as an example because he is calling me to live that life of union with him. So, we make a profession and we make a confession and we repent, and things like that, Scott; but when we live a union life with Christ, we realize that everywhere we go he is, and that he is with us. This is why Paul is trying to make the point that they need to make sure they honor God in their mortal bodies, because if God has the receipt, so to speak, because he paid for your body, you cannot do what you want to do with it, you have to do what honors him with it because it is his now.

SCOTT HOEZEE

You know, I think I've quoted this before, but Samuel Johnson, the great writer, said one time that all of us need more often to be reminded than instructed. In other words, most of the time, we know what is right; most of the time, we know what is true; we just need to be reminded to do it, and to follow through on it; and that is what Paul is doing here. He is reminding the Corinthians: Look, when you signed on to follow Jesus, when you submitted to the waters of baptism, you became someone else's property, as it were. You became, not a slave, but a brother to Jesus...a child of God...adopted into the divine family. Remember who you are, Paul says, remember who you are, and then act like it.

So, do you know who you are, we could all ask each other and ourselves? We must say: Yes, I know. I belong to Jesus, and thanks be to God.

DARRELL DELANEY

Thank you for listening and digging deeply into scripture with *Groundwork*. We hope you will join us again next time as we dig deeper into the book of 1 Corinthians and look at the issues Paul addresses in Chapters 7 and 8.

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SCOTT HOEZEE

Groundwork is a listener supported program produced by ReFrame Ministries. Visit reframeministries.org for more information and find more resources to encourage your faith. We are your hosts, Scott Hoezee and Darrell Delaney.

***Correction:** In the audio of this episode, host Darrell Delaney misspeaks and says "instead of doing things that you know are totally against what he doesn't want for us," when he means to say "instead of doing

things that you know are totally against what he wants for us.”

<https://groundworkonline.com/episodes/you-belong-to-jesus-act-like-it>

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