

Text: 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Title: The Way Things Were

Truth: The Christian is saved from unrighteousness *and* its consequences.

Date/Location: May 24, 2020 at FBC

Introduction

The Corinthians had divisions in their church and un-addressed immorality. Chapter 6 introduced a new problem: professing Christians taking other Christians to court. The practice was at best questionable under any circumstances, but when it was exposed that they were going in front of unbelieving judges, Paul had to tell them that this was a sinful situation. It was a total failure that they went to law against one another before unbelievers, instead of accepting the wrong or letting themselves be cheated. Instead, they were doing wrong and cheating—just the opposite! They should have had wise people in the church who could help them resolve disputes.

I. The Unrighteous will Not Inherit the Kingdom

Unbelieving judges may be more sophisticated than the average bear, more educated, more able to handle words, better writers, but they are not more righteous than those who have been constituted righteous and transformed into righteous character by the Lord Jesus. Sometimes in our culture we hear of an unbelieving judge doing astoundingly dumb things. Thankfully that does not seem to be normal for judges in the United States—but then again what do I know? Regardless, Paul's point was that taking your dispute before an unbeliever instead of before God and fellow believers was crazy. Look what you have available, and what you are not doing with it!

In the end, the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God. The Christian will inherit that kingdom. No matter how smart, how highly placed, or how agreeable to reason, an unsaved judge is in a totally different category than the believer. The point is that he (or she) has an entirely different value system than Christians. The kingdom's values are righteousness, peace, and joy. The believer, who is a future citizen of the kingdom of Christ, should be characterized by these things. The unbeliever does not understand them.

Illustration: most people have no clue as to the necessity of corporate church worship. This is evidenced by the common refrain, "Why not just be happy with online church? Don't you care about your fellow man?"

The complete misunderstanding happens because the person doesn't

understand spiritual things. They are clueless when it comes to the fact that our relationship with God comes above everything else. *And* we believe in caring for our fellow man. We just believe we can do *both* worship God and caring for our neighbor. That's because God gives us both as duties, and true duties from God cannot conflict for the believer.¹

Again, the point is that unbelieving people are on an entirely different plane of existence, or foundation of existence, that is not coordinate with your profession, faith, knowledge, character, moral code, etc. How can they properly be judges in your matters?

The inheritance of the kingdom indicates that it is a future reality to be entered (or missed), not a present reality already being experienced. Believers too will inherit the kingdom in the future, but are not presently in it (Acts 14:22, 2 Timothy 4:18, 2 Peter 1:11). Of course, anyone who is to be blessed with participation in the kingdom must be born again (John 3:3, 5).

The little phrase "do not be deceived" can be easily overlooked, but don't do that. Many people today teach that the unrighteous *will* inherit the kingdom of God. By some sophistry, certain Bible teachers suggest that you can live a life indistinguishable from that of an unregenerate person, and still be assured of heaven. Some teach that you may enter the kingdom but not *inherit* the kingdom. Others think that if you are a run-of-the-mill type of sinner you will live on the earth during eternity, but the "good Christians" will live in heaven.² None of this is true.

Do not allow anyone to deceive you. The unrighteous will *not* inherit the kingdom of God. Period.

II. Who are Unrighteous?

- A. Fornicators. This can be a general term for sexual immorality, or particularly concerning unmarried people engaging in sexual activity.
- B. Idolaters. These are worshippers of any god besides the Triune God of the Bible, or any religious system or form of worship of man.
- C. Adulterers are those who commit sexual acts outside of the boundary of their marriage.

¹ There is a sense in which duties can conflict for an unbeliever. God commands all men everywhere to repent. Turning from sin to Christ is a command. Yet it is impossible for a man to do that *of himself* because sin darkens his mind and dulls his moral sensibilities so badly that he doesn't know what is good for him. This requires God to intervene.

² If you have other examples, I solicit your input, especially if you have a source citation.

- D. Homosexuals. A “soft” man or “effeminate” man. Boys need to be taught to be men—hard working, objective, tough, able to discuss hard things, not wimpy. Dads have the job to teach their sons to be opposite of this word. It is a sin to be a soft or effeminate man. In the context of the next list item, the immorality of being involved with sodomy is included.
- E. Sodomites. As the word indicates from Bible history, a sodomite is a person who engages in sexual activity with someone of the same sex. The word particularly refers to males, but both sexes can be involved in similar perversion (Rom. 1:26-27). Regardless of whether it is consensual or “monogamous” or not, it is sinful. This sin is invariably condemned by the Bible at all times and in all places. All perversions such as cross-dressing (Deut. 22:5), sex-changes, etc. fall under this general category.
- F. Thieves. Getting more by taking what belongs to others instead of working hard. This comes in all kinds of forms, from purse-snatching and shoplifting to identity theft and credit card fraud and bank fraud and inordinate taxation, etc.
- G. Covetous. Greed is an almost insatiable desire for more. A greedy person wants more than is honorably due.
- H. Drunkards. Those regularly intoxicated with strong drink, or similar substances like what we call drugs, whether legal or illegal. Obviously, prescribed medication to control pain as at the end of life are not contemplated in this category.
- I. Revilers. Someone who is abusive. Someone who is very critical. There are many revilers today with loud voices.
- J. Extortioners. A swindler or robber; he is someone who uses some kind of leverage or trickery to take something from another.

See the notes on 1 Cor. 5:11 for a few more thoughts on some of these categories. And remember: don’t be deceived!

III. That was the Way Things Were

- A. And such WERE some of you. The verb is key: it is an imperfect indicative verb. There are several ways in which this verb is used throughout Scripture; one of them is this: the customary imperfect. It means that customarily, habitually, continually, and generally the Corinthians were like what the words above describe. That was their ongoing manner of life. But it was that way *in the past*. It is not that way now, because of something that happened to them. Each of the three upcoming key words are passive in form and/or meaning.

B. They were washed. John 13:10 speaks of those who are bathed, referring to cleansing from sin. They are washed with the pure water of the Word of God (Eph. 5:26). They are born of water and the Spirit—forgiven of sin and given new life by the Holy Spirit. See also Titus 3:5, Heb. 10:22, Rev. 1:5. (It is interesting that in English, the word “bathe” only occurs in John 13 in the entire New Testament!).

Illustration: During cleanup after a fire at the golf course, there was a particularly nasty job that had to be done. After that job, a good washing was necessary! That’s dirty in the physical realm. Sin is far worse in the spiritual realm.

C. They were sanctified. They were constituted as saints, “saint-i-fied.” This is definite or positional sanctification, which is not the same as practical or progressive sanctification in which the behavior of the believer is more

D. They were justified. This means that they were declared to be righteous before God. Their record of wrongs had made it only possible to declare them as guilty. This record was set aside in Christ, wiped clean, so that they could be declared and treated by God as righteous in standing before Him. Just as righteous as Christ, so they now were.

E. All of this was because of the Lord Jesus Christ. All of it was done by the Spirit of our God.

Conclusion

More should be said about these great truths of salvation. But they are the answer to the sin problem and the question of “how can a man be right before God?”

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