

"Such Were Some of You"

1 Cor 6:9-11

Celebrating the Centrality of Christ in the Local Assembly

The cross has the power to free people from the chains of sin.

Our paragraph follows on the heels of a strong statement against defrauding and wronging someone through lawsuits (vv. 1-8). Verses 9 and 10 describe for us people who "will not inherit the kingdom of God." The list is interesting with the addition of "swindler" in the context of "idolaters" and "men who practice homosexuality." This is especially interesting because of the previous paragraph. I would probably describe "swindlers" as those who defraud their brothers and sisters in Christ through inappropriate lawsuits.

Paul's thoughts in verses 9 through 11 are a part of what has preceded in chapter 5 and in 6:1-8. The idea set forth in 6:9-11 is a consistent part of the New Testament record. Listen carefully to the following passages (1 Cor 5:11-13, Gal 5:19, Eph 5:3-5).

PAUL'S WORDING IN VERSE 9 IS TROUBLING. It is like being awakened from a dead sleep or having cold water thrown in your face unexpectedly. The fact that he says, "Be not deceived," would suggest that they were being deceived.

Have we been asleep for so long that we no longer know what the cross looks like in the life of God's people? Paul's contrast is between those who do not know Christ and will go to hell and those who know Christ and the power of the cross.

Do we love humanity at large? Yes, and we stand with open arms inviting all to come to the Father through the redemptive work of His Son, but let us not be deceived. In our passage there is a contrast between verses 9 and 10 and that of verse 11.

I. The pattern of the condemned (vv. 9, 10)

I believe such passages as these show the real difference between the believer and the unbeliever. A believer may commit such acts, but they do not show persistent patterns of behavior with an unrepentant attitude. When a believer is engaged in these kinds of activities, it is a form of bondage and they are miserable. Listen carefully to 1 John 3:4-10.

First, when someone is professing Christ but in bondage to a persistent sin, they are miserable.

Second, it is impossible to determine what "persistent" is.

Third, it is impossible for anyone this side of heaven to determine who is or is not saved. Yet, Paul's warning rings clear, "Be not deceived."

Fourth, church discipline is an inclusive action that has as parts: (1) confrontation, (2) disassociation and/or restoration, and (3) discipleship. Each one of these actions can extend over a protracted period of time. There is no easy answer or solutions to real life

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problems.

It is crucial to understand the nature of the actions in verses 9 and 10. Paul is not referring to a point in time action, but rather patterns of life. People are **either** 6:9, 10 **or** they are 6:11, **but** they are not both at the same time.

Paul's statement in verse 11 stands in stark contrast to verses 9 and 10. "Such were some of you!" Paul now turns to the impact of the cross in the life of the converted.

II. The power of the cross (v. 11)

Notice how Paul turns the corner in verse 11, "Such were some of you." What they once were, they no longer are, but still have." Any believer can act in such a way as to reveal what they once were. But this no longer identifies us as the people of God. These actions no longer identify our character or person.

Why does Paul lay this before the fellowship? Why does he call them to remember?

First, he wants to remind them of the exceeding grace of God that could recover even such persons from sins so debasing and degrading.

Second, he wants to show that we are not to despair of reclaiming the most abandoned and wretched men.

Third, and by reflecting back on what we once were it produces: 1) humility, 2) gratitude, 3) a deep sense of the sovereign mercy of God, and 4) an earnest desire that others may be recovered and saved in like manner.

All three descriptions, washed, sanctified, and justified, are pieces of the same grand thought. All who are washed are sanctified and justified and this is equally true for the other two. No one is washed who is not also sanctified and justified. Paul is celebrating the greatness of what they now have and who they now are in Christ.

As believers, let us not kid ourselves into believing our practice can ever be separated from our position. Just as sanctification follows justification, so also practice follows position. How thankful we should be to know that there is a past tense to the believer's life . . . "Such were some of you." Hallelujah!