

January 10th, 2020

Who Will Inherit the Kingdom of God?

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Christ or chaos in this age

If you are just joining us this morning, we are continuing through the Apostle Paul's letter to the Corinthian Church that he wrote in the first century. The city of Corinth was not unlike the modern West. It was wealthy, self-indulgent, extremely sexualized, and different philosophies were always fighting for dominance. Paul wrote his Divinely inspired letter, because these things were wreaking havoc in the Church. We can boil Paul's letter down to three words: Christ or chaos. Either the Corinthians pursue Christ *or* chaos will ensue. We saw how in the first four chapters because they chose to make divisions among themselves instead of seeing themselves as *one in Christ*, they were given over to jealousy and strife (1 Cor. 3:3). In chapter five because they *tolerated* grave sexual immorality that Christ forbids, their whole congregation became infected with sin (1 Cor. 5:6). Last week in 6:1-8, because they would *not tolerate* the small injuries of other Christians as Christ would have them, they sued each other in court. Christ or chaos. There is no other alternative. The Corinthian Church is a microcosm—a small picture—of the world today. Why did we see those things on the news this week? Why was their violence at the Capitol? Why is our nation choosing political leaders that advocate the murder of babies and theft through socialism? Because we as a whole have rejected Christ. There can only be chaos.

Christ or chaos in eternity

What Paul is going to show us today, is that this principle—Christ or chaos—applies not only to the this life, but to eternity. All who live unrighteous lives—all who reject the Lord Jesus Christ—will not inherit the Kingdom of God, but instead will inherit chaos. Jesus said in **Matthew 13:42** "...throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of

teeth.” On the other hand, those who have been washed of their unrighteousness, in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God will inherit the everlasting Kingdom. **Revelation 7:16-17** “They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” All chaos will end, and we will everlastingly enjoy Christ. Paul’s loving aim in these verses is to make draw a clear line between those who will inherit the kingdom of God and those who won’t.

The Big Idea...

Q. Who will inherit the kingdom of God?

A. Only those who have been washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God

- ☆The Deceived
- ☆The Departed
- ☆The Delivered

I. The Deceived

A foundational passage

At first glance, these three verses are difficult to know how they fit in Paul’s whole argument. In **v.1-8** Paul addresses the problem of lawsuits. In the following verses, **v.12-20** Paul addresses the problem prostitution. But right in in between, in **v.9-11**, Paul speaks about the kingdom of God appear.¹ Some

¹ Helpful insight by Roy E. Ciampa & Brian S. Rosner, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The First Letter to the Corinthians*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), pg. 237

commentators argue that **v.9-11** belong to Paul's argument about lawsuits in **v. 1-8** because Paul's language is so similar. He is still using the label "unrighteous" as he did in **v.1**. He's still using that same phrase "Or do you know know" as he did in **v.2** and **v.3**.² So they conclude, this passage belongs to **v.1-8**. On the other hand, other commentators argue that **v.9-11** belong to Paul's argument against prostitution **v.12-20** because of all the sexual sins he includes in this list: the sexually immoral, adulterers, homosexuals. These were included in prostitution. So they argue **v.9-11** belongs to **v.12-20**. So which is it? Well they are both right and both wrong. This passage is a foundational passage for the whole book. Yes it belongs to the questions of lawsuits *and* prostitution because it belongs to Paul's *entire* argument.

The text that connects the whole book

Virtually every sin on this list is a sin that Paul addresses in this book. So imagine the Corinthians reading this letter for the first time. They come to this list, and Paul says those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. Each offender in Corinth would have felt the sting of Paul's words. Those visiting prostitutes in **6:12-20** would have felt the sting when Paul said that the *sexually immoral* and those *who practice homosexuality* will not inherit. Those who were participating in pagan ceremonies in **10:14-22** would have felt the sting when Paul said that *idolaters* will not inherit. The man sleeping with his father's wife in **5:1** would have felt the sting when Paul said *adulterers* will not inherit. Those who were taking each other to court in **6:1-8** would have felt the sting when Paul said that *thieves*, the *greedy*, and *swindlers* will not inherit. Those who were getting drunk at the Lord's table in **11:21** would have felt the sting when Paul said that *drunkards* will not inherit. Those engaging in party spirit attacking each other with venom filled words in **1:10-12** would have felt the sting when Paul said *revilers* will not inherit. You see this passage connects the entire book together.

² He is also using the same Greek word translated "wrong" in v.8 as the "unrighteous" in v.9.

Nominal religion will never inherit the Kingdom of God

Many of the Christians in Corinth who said they followed Christ were still living unrighteous lives. And so Paul warns them. Please look at **v.9**. Paul says “Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be *deceived*.” The deception is this: “As long as I confess Christ, it doesn’t matter how I live my life.” That is called nominal Christianity—Christianity that is in *name* only. Charles Hodge once said that Nominal Christianity is the type of religion that looks upon “...God as a being to be feared and propitiated, but not to be loved and obeyed.”³ But Paul is saying here that this type of Christianity—nominal Christianity—will never inherit the Kingdom of God.

Entering the Kingdom is the greatest change a man can make in this world

Over and again in Scripture, entering into the Kingdom of God is always described as the greatest transformation a man can make in this world.

To enter into the Kingdom, you must be spiritually reborn. **John 3:3** “Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see *the kingdom of God*.”

To enter into the Kingdom, you must be delivered from the domain of darkness. **Colossians 1:13** “He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to *the kingdom of his beloved Son*.”

Christianity always results in a transformed life

You see Paul’s whole argument is that Christianity is not a philosophy or a system of doctrine, or a tradition. Becoming a Christian means that everything has changed. “[Jesus Christ] bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin, *and* live to righteousness” (**1 Peter 2:24**). In other words, Christianity always results in a transformed life. Not a perfect life, not a sinless life, not a life

³ Charles Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 2018), pg. 98

that doesn't need repentance, but a life whose priorities have fundamentally and radically changed. **2 Corinthians 5:15** says that 'Christ died for all, so that we who live might *no longer live for ourselves, but for Him* who for our sake died and was raised.'⁴

Paul's own conversion

Paul's own conversion shows this transformed life that I'm talking about. What was Paul like before Christ converted him? **Acts 8:3** says that he ravaged the church, and dragged off men and women and committed them to prison. **Acts 9:1** says that he breathed out threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord. But what happened after he was converted? The whole course of his life changed. He went from a violent opposer of Jesus Christ, to one who said in **Philippians 3:8** "For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, *in order that I may gain Christ.*" He went from a hater of the Church to one who later said in **2 Corinthians 12:15** "I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls." Does his conversion mean he never sinned again? No, he spent his life fighting against sin, just read **Romans 7:15-25**. But his conversion shows that he was a new creation, he who was transformed by gospel of Christ.

Experimental theology

So let's apply this point. You cannot be an *untransformed* Christian. That is living in deception. Paul says do not be deceived. So ask yourself: "Am I in Christ, the way, the only way, to the kingdom or not?...Am I a new creature in him?...Do I study to please Him, as well as hope to enjoy Him?"⁵ Do I long to be more like Jesus? If you are *a true Christian*, you will certainly agree with Paul that you very often fail your Jesus, that you very often do not do the good

⁴ Paraphrased with a change in the pronouns

⁵ John Bunyan, *The Works of John Bunyan Vol. 3* (Carlisle, PA.: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 2009), pg. 166 fn. 5

you want to do, but you do the evil that you don't want to do.⁶ But you love Him, and you do desire to live for him, and it breaks your heart when you don't. But if you are *a nominal Christian*, you will deceive yourself.⁷ You will deceive yourself that there really isn't a judgment to come. Or you will deceive yourself by trusting that your own righteousness will satisfy an infinitely holy God. Or you will deceive yourself into thinking that there will be time to repent, that death will not come for you soon. Dear friend, do not be deceived. What is it in your mind which makes you think there is no final judgment? How could you hope that your own righteousness could ever please God whose eyes are too pure to behold iniquity? What makes you think you will live a long life and have time to repent later? Do you know how many have trusted that they would live to old age only to be cut down in their youth? Do not be deceived, the kingdom of God is coming very soon. And only those who are *in Christ* will have any inheritance in it. That's our **first point**.

II. The Departed

No such sins

As we begin to unpack these sins, it's vital to see that Paul is *not* giving us this list to show us which sins will result in losing your salvation. "There are no such sins."⁸ Beloved you can never lose your salvation. The Lord has made a

⁶ Romans 7:19

⁷ Some of the following questions were paraphrased from Jonathan Edward's sermon "The Vain Self-Flatteries of the Sinner" in Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards Vol. 2.*, (Carlisle, PA.: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 2009), pg. 218

⁸ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 1 Corinthians*, (Chicago, IL.: Moody Publishers, 1984), pg. 141

unbreakable covenant with you (**Hebrews 6:17**). Even when you fail your Lord, Jesus has said “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (**Hebrews 13:5**).⁹

Whoever makes a practice of sinning

No, Paul is *not* giving us a list of unpardonable sins. As we are going to see in v.11, some the Corinthians themselves were guilty of *these very sins*. No Paul is arguing that those people who make a *practice* of these things, are people who will not inherit the kingdom. John said it like this **1 John 3:7-8** “Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. Whoever makes a *practice of sinning* is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.” In other words, those people whose lives are *characterized* by these sins,¹⁰ are people who have *never* been converted.¹¹ So what are these sins that Paul mentions?

The sexually immoral

He begins half-way through v.9 with the *sexually immoral*. The NASB uses the word *fornicators*. Sexual immorality includes any sexual activity by any *unmarried persons*. The reason why sexually immorality is *wrong* is because God designed sex *only* to be enjoyed within a one-man one-woman marriage (**Genesis**

⁹ That's why we sing those words:

When I fear my faith will fail, Christ will hold me fast;
 When the tempter would prevail, He will hold me fast.
 I could never keep my hold through life's fearful path;
 For my love is often cold; He must hold me fast.

He will hold me fast, He will hold me fast;
 For my Savior loves me so, He will hold me fast.

Source: <https://sovereigngracemusic.bandcamp.com/track/he-will-hold-me-fast> Accessed January 9, 2021

¹⁰ “The ten terms used...are nouns that stand for individuals whose lives are characterized by the sin in question.” Ciampa & Rosner, pg. 243

¹¹ John further argues in v.9 “No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's[b] seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God.”

2:24).¹² Therefore sexually immorality dishonors Him.¹³ And it damages human beings because our souls were not designed to be sexually intimate with anybody besides our spouse. **Ephesians 5:5** says “For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is *sexually immoral*...has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.”

Idolaters

Next Paul mentions *idolaters*. An idolater is anyone “...who worships any false gods [or hold to] false religious systems.”¹⁴ Next to the sexual sins in this list, this is the most offense thing for modern ears to hear. The spirit of our age, just like the spirit of the age in Nebuchadnezzar’s day, and in Caesar’s day was that you can worship whatever god you want, but you can’t say that your god is the only true god.¹⁵ But idolatry is a personal attack upon God because it is a rejection of Him. In Scripture idolatry is always compared adultery. Just as a husband is betrayed by an adulterous wife, so God is betrayed by the person who refuses to worship Him alone.¹⁶ And so those who refuse to worship the Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—will not worship Him in the next age. **Revelation 21:8** “But as for... idolaters...their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

¹² Genesis 2:24 “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”

¹³ This contradicts the spirit of the age which says "I can do whatever I want with my own body." No you can't. God alone determines what you can and can't do with your body. Objection: "But what if there is mutual consent?" Mutual consent cannot make any action right if God say it's wrong—Romans 3:4.

¹⁴ MacArthur, pg. 141. Or those who are devoted to anything more than God

¹⁵ The spirit of our age, just like in every other age, says that every road leads to Rome, or that everyone really worships the same god, just by different names. The Bible totally contradicts that sentiment.

¹⁶ “Idolatry is a personal attack upon the honor of God, just as adultery is a personal attack upon the honor of one’s spouse, for in both cases one despises the person to whom one owes great love and wastes that love on one to whom it does not belong.” RHB on [Ezekiel 16](#)

Adulterers

Next Paul mentions *adulterers*. “Adulterers refers to *married* people having sexual relations outside marriage.”¹⁷ Whereas sexual immorality lies about marriage, adultery lies about the gospel. Marriage ultimately points to Christ—the perfect Husband—and the Church—His beloved bride. Paul says “this mystery (that is, marriage) is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.” That’s why adultery is so profoundly wrong, because it gives a false image of the gospel. It portrays an unfaithful Christ or a Church that He can’t hold on to. Therefore **Hebrews 13:4** says “Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the... adulterous.”

Men who practice homosexuality

Next Paul mentions “...men who practice homosexuality.” This phrase has two Greek words in it that the ESV combined into one phrase. The two words represent both parties in a homosexual act.¹⁸ But the focus here is not to be narrowly understood to mean only those who *identify*¹⁹ as homosexuals but any and all homosexual activity including lesbianism, transgenderism, bisexuality, etc. God uniquely created male and female to reflect Him, and any perversion of that image is expressed condemned. **Leviticus 18:22** says “You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.”²⁰

Excursion: objections against disallowing homosexuality

Now since this particular vice is the most contested in our culture next to idolatry, it's necessary to answer some objections raised against this text. **First,**

¹⁷ Ciampa & Rosner, pg. 241

¹⁸ “Rather than referring to “male prostitutes and practicing homosexuals they are better understood as referring to those who willingly play the passive and active roles in homosexual acts.” *Ibid*

¹⁹ “The Romans did not think in terms of sexual orientation or identities...” *Ibid* pg. 242

²⁰ cf. Leviticus 20:13

it has been said that ‘Paul was only condemning homosexual prostitution²¹ and promiscuity, he didn’t have in mind monogamous relationships. Only those relationships that exploited others were wrong.’²² How do we answer? Well all such activity is exploiting others because they are against the design that God intended. That’s Paul’s argument in **Romans 1:24** when he described all such activity as a “dishonoring of their bodies among themselves.” To dishonor your body in such way no matter the circumstance is to exploit. In other words, there is no such thing as non-exploiting homosexual activity.²³ **Secondly**, a more contemporary objection came at what was called The Revoice conference in 2018. They claimed that Christians can maintain a homosexual orientation as long as they are committed to celibacy.²⁴ Now we readily confess that someone might have all sorts of temptations and proclivities in his heart that he is fighting against and still be a true Christian. But that’s not what they are saying. They are saying, you don’t have to fight against who you really are if God made you that way, it’s only sinful if you act on it. But this is where there only logic breaks down. If God made a person that way, then it wouldn’t be sinful to act upon because everything that God made in the beginning was good and very good.²⁵ **Thirdly**, it is said that to use the Scripture “...as a basis for threatening people

²¹ Paul indeed does address prostitution immediately following in v.12-20.

²² Gagnon points out that this is not how Paul’s contemporaries like Philo understood the Greek words. “The issue of sex-for-sale or prostitution never even comes up in Philo’s critique.” Robert Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, (Nashville, TN.,: Abingdon Press, 2001), pg. 308. Gagnon was extremely helpful in this section. To be clear he is not for the “Christianizing” of homosexual practice, but argues very ably against it.

²³ A variation of this objection says that ‘Paul is only condemning male rape here, not male sex.’ But as Gagnon points out, that’s “...like saying that the only type of adultery being condemned here is adultery involving deception or coercion.” *Ibid*, pg. 319

²⁴ “The conference is advocating the position that sexual orientation is a core part of human identity so that we can speak of “gay Christians”—Christians who profess faith in Jesus Christ while maintaining a homosexual orientation or identity (but also a commitment to celibacy).” Source: <https://www.challies.com/articles/the-controversy-behind-the-revoice-conference/> Accessed January 9, 2021

²⁵ That's why this position is a trojan horse.

with eternal damnation...[is] cruel abuse of religious power.”²⁶ In other words, this very passage is hate speech. But the shoe is on the other foot. If someone’s eternal destiny is in the balance, then it is cruel to *not* tell them that God condemns such behavior. It is hate speech to lie to such people and give them false assurance to tell them ‘Peace, peace’ where there is no peace.

Thieves

Beginning in v.10, Paul mentions the next class: *thieves*. A thief takes the property of another wrongfully, either secretly or by violence.

The greedy

Paul then mentions *the greedy* or as other translations say *the covetous*. The greedy is the person who must have more, he is never satisfied, never content. Do you see how holy God is? He does not just include outward sins, but things that happen in the heart that no one else can see. Covetousness is wrong because it is complaint against God’s generous heart who gives to all men life and breath and all things.²⁷ The covetous heart says ‘God you owe me more.’²⁸

Drunkards

He then mentions *drunkards* or those addicted to drink. Drunkenness and other forms of drug abuse is wrong because we are supposed to be filled up and intoxicated with God. **Ephesians 5:18** says “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit.”

²⁶ Gagnon, pg.331

²⁷ Acts 17:25

²⁸ Ephesians 5:3 says “But sexual immorality and all impurity or *covetousness* must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. “

Revilers

Paul then mentions *revilers* or “...those who destroy [others] with their tongues.”²⁹ The reason this is such a serious sin, is because it shows a heart full of hate towards others.³⁰

Swindlers

Lastly Paul mentions *swindlers* or those who defraud others of property or rights by extortion or deceit. Another form of theft. Thus ends Paul’s list.

What do these sins have in common?

So here’s my question: Is there something that ties all these diverse sins together? Is there something they all have in common? Three things: all these sins 1) hurt ourselves 2) hurt others and 3) hurt God. **First**, they hurt ourselves because Paul makes it clear that all who do such things will no inherit the kingdom of God. There is no greater harm that a person could do to themselves than to forfeit the next life. We’ll look at that more in a moment. **Secondly**, They *hurt others* because all of these human-exploiting sins. They cause people’s bodies, abuse people’s souls, abuse people’s property. They destroy relationships, friendships, families and society. And they destroy the next generation by teaching children to walk in paths of unrighteousness. **Thirdly**, all these sins ‘*hurt God*’ because He is not honored as God. His worship is cast aside. All these sins are expressions of self-worship. All these sins are saying the same thing: “I will be my own god. I will not be ruled by another. I will not submit. I will worship no one but myself.”

Are you righteous?

I can imagine someone listening who is not a Christian, and they say in their hear: “But I’m not guilty of any of these things, so I will be ok. I’m not in

²⁹ MacArthur, pg. 143

³⁰ This also shows an inner defilement that has taken place. Matthew 15:18 says “But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person.”

any danger.” Ok my friend, but the question is this: are you righteous? “To be righteous means that you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength; and that you love your neighbor as yourself. Are you righteous? Are you living to the glory of God and to His praise? That’s righteousness.”³¹ No my friend, it matters not if you have not committed these specific sins. The question is are you righteous? And the Scripture says “There is none righteous no not one.”³²

The inheritance of the unrighteous

What will become of such people? In other words, if the unrighteous will not inherit the Kingdom of God, what will they inherit? They will inherit the most dreadful sentence from Jesus Himself “Depart from me I never knew you.”³³ And where must they depart to? To that place that was prepared for the devil and his angels. **Matthew 25:41** “Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” Oh the misery of that place. It’s miserable for two chief. 1) The torment and 2) The duration of that torment.³⁴

First consider the torment of that place. In this world even the most unrighteous person is comforted by God’s goodness. But in the future world, God has removed all comfort.³⁵ In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Jesus said that the rich man was in anguish and asked that Lazarus could but dip the end of his finger in water to cool his tongue.³⁶ But no such comfort was

³¹ From Martyn Lloyd-Jones’ sermon entitled: “The Unrighteous Shall Not Inherit”

³² Romans 3:10

³³ Matthew 7:23

³⁴ Much help here from Jonathan Edwards’ sermon “Natural Men in a Dreadful Condition” in Edwards, pg.821-822

³⁵ “All grace will then be withheld from you; all hiding places will have been removed, and all refreshment, change of condition, and relief will then cease.” Wilhelmus A Brakel, *The Christian’s Reasonable Service Vol. 4: Ethics and Eschatology*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: Reformation Heritage Books, 1995), pg. 350

³⁶ Luke 16:24

given. In that dreadful place, the unrighteous will have no friends. “God will be their enemy...the devils and [all] the other damned spirits will be their enemy.”³⁷ In this world, even the unrighteous receive mercy, because they don’t get what they deserve. But in that world, there is no mercy. The sign over hell reads “no mercy.” They will drink the full cup of God’s wrath down to its dregs. **Job 27:22** says “God shall cast upon him, and not spare.” Jonathan Edwards says the torment of that place is “great beyond any words or thoughts. When we speak of them, our words are swallowed up...when we have used all the words we can to express them, how faint is the idea that is raised in our minds in comparison with the reality!”³⁸

But the **second** reason exceeds the first. The duration of that place is everlasting. If a person knew had to endure the worst agony for a day, or a week, or a month, or a year, that would be dreadful. But to say the word eternity makes the heart fail. Again Edwards said “Eternity is that, which cannot be made less by subtraction. If we take from eternity a thousand years or ages, the remainder is not less for it. Eternity is that which will for ever be but beginning...The wicked, after they have suffering millions of ages, will be, as it were, but in the first point, only setting out in their sufferings.”³⁹ **Revelation 14:11** “the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night.” There is greater despair than that. It is miserable to even speak of it, and miserable to hear of it.

The most loving thing

But we must speak of it. Paul is lovingly warning the unrighteous of what is to come. It is the most loving act that he can do. Dear unbelieving friend, what are you hoping will deliver you on that day? Will you heed Paul’s

³⁷ Edwards, pg. 821

³⁸ *Ibid*

³⁹ *Ibid*

warning? Dear saint in the Lord: do you hear Paul's admonition to us?⁴⁰ How can any of us keep living like the unrighteous if we know what their end leads to? That's our **second point**: at the end of this age, the unrighteous will forever depart into that place prepared for the devil and his angels.

III. The Delivered

How is a person *not* delivered?

How is a person delivered from that dreadful future? Let me first tell you how a person is not delivered. A person is not delivered through personal reformation. "I'll just reform myself" a person says. Jesus gave parable showing what personal reformation leads to. A man decided he was going to reform himself, so he swept up his house and put everything in order. The house signified the state of his soul. The unclean spirit that left him, at least temporarily. But then he brought back seven other spirits more evil than itself and they entered the man. And Jesus said in **Luke 11:27** "The last state of that person is worse than the first." Why? Because that is Phariseeism. It's being externally righteous, but it fails to deal with the heart. The person who tries to reform himself is worse off than if he would have stayed the way he was. Why? Because the self-reformer is a self-righteous man. This is why I think AA is one of the most dangerous places for alcoholics to go. Yes it teaches them to sweep up their house and put it in order. But it hardens them against the gospel. They find their righteousness in their sobriety not in the Savior.

How is a person delivered?

So then how is a person delivered? What is the message of the gospel? Paul shows us. After he says the the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of

⁴⁰ "Paul's warning in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 is to the believers at Corinth to remember that those who live their lives under the control of sin will not inherit the kingdom of God." Gagnon, pg. 330-331

God, he says in v.11 “And such were some of you.” Stop. Some of the Corinthians were *these very things* that God forbid. What happened to them? That’s Paul’s point. They were no longer these things. Something happened. They’re different. How? Not through some sort of personal or moral reform. No. Paul says at the end of v.11 “But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” Do you see? Paul “...doesn’t appeal to men to put themselves together, [he] tells them that God will take over them.”⁴¹ The Triune God! Paul says “... in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” My friends our sin is so corrupt, so damning, that only the all-wise all powerful Trinity can free us. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit must take hold of you if you have any hope of salvation.

Washed, sanctified, justified

What must this God do? He must *wash* you. Paul told the Corinthians “But you were *washed*.” No soap on earth could wash you and I, because we are black with sin in the inner man, where no one can see. We need a spiritual washing. **Titus 3:4-5** “But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, *by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.*” Only God can wash you and renew you.

Secondly, Paul to the Corinthians “...you were *sanctified*.” If you are going to be saved, God set apart you apart or consecrate you for Himself. That’s what sanctified means here. Just as the Sabbath was sanctified by God and set apart from every other day, so you must be set apart for Him. The great separation must take place. You must be delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of His beloved Son. But only God can do that.

Thirdly, Paul told them “...you were *justified*.” It’s not enough to *merely* be washed and set apart for God. If God *only* erases our debts, we are right back in the garden with Adam. God required Adam to be perfectly righteous, and he

⁴¹ From Martyn Lloyd-Jones’ sermon entitled: “The Unrighteous Shall Not Inherit”

failed. If all we are is washed of our sin, we are hopeless. We need a perfect righteousness. That's what God provides—He says “you were justified.” He imputes to our spiritual account the very righteousness of Christ. We are covered in the brightest, whitest robe in the universe so that as we stand in God's courtroom, He sees His Son when He looks at us.

Conversion!

All three verbs—washed, sanctified, justified—describe the same thing, namely *conversion*. The unrighteous is made righteous. All his sins are made white as snow. That's why we can sing those words:

There is a fountain filled with blood
 Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
 And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
 Lose all their guilty stains⁴²

If you are listening this morning and you're saying to yourself, “Yes I want that to. How can that happen to me? What must I do?” Where there's only one thing you can do. Jesus said “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”⁴³ Therefore my friend go to Jesus Christ by faith. Repent of your sins, and believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved. You can be washed, and sanctified, and justified. You can inherit the kingdom of Heaven. There is no sin so great that cannot be forgiven by the Lord Jesus Christ.

What will we inherit?

Dear congregation, dear loved ones in the Lord: what will we inherit in the Kingdom of God? First you will be welcomed with the most blessed words. You will hear Jesus say: “Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the

⁴² Source: <https://www.hymnal.net/en/hymn/h/1006> Accessed January 10, 2021

⁴³ John 14:6

kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”⁴⁴ In that kingdom, you shall finally find the satisfaction that you’ve been longing for your whole life. That’s what **Revelation 7:16** means when it says “They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore.” It’s not talking about food. It’s talking about the hungering and thirsting of your soul. You’ll never feel that again. You will be filled with so much pleasure, that if God wasn’t sustain you, you would be undone with pleasure. That is because in the Kingdom of God, you will be forever in the presence of the King. Your eyes will never grow tired of gazing at Him. But you will not have to merely look at Him from a distance. You will be as near to Him as your soul is to your body. The union of the saint with Christ in Heaven is described in the most intimate terms. The angel told John in the book of Revelation “Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.”⁴⁵ Who is closer to a man than his own bride? Beloved you are the Bride of the Lamb. You will be as closer to Jesus than the angels. They are not described as His bride but as His servants. But you are brought into the inner most circle. Your eyes and ears will see and hear things from Him that will bring you infinite delight. You will live to serve Him continually with praise, with shouting, and thanksgiving.⁴⁶ And you will never have to leave His presence. It is eternal morning in that Kingdom. “And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.”⁴⁷

Dear congregation, do you see that we have the greatest motivation to never return to our former way of life of unrighteousness? That life is a living death. It’s the most miserable chaos. But we have Christ who has washed, sanctified, and justified us. We must not live like worldlings. We belong to a Kingdom that will never end.

⁴⁴ Matthew 25:34

⁴⁵ Revelation 21:9

⁴⁶ Bunyan, pg. 164

⁴⁷ Revelation 22:5