

1Corinthians 6:11b "We Were Washed, Sanctified and Justified"

1 Corinthians 6:11 but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Last week we left Paul confronting the believers in Corinth with the teaching that a lifestyle of sinful behavior with little or no regard for the things of God was a dangerous place to be, because it demonstrated that the fruit of such behavior was the fruit of the world.

Such fruit is indicative that there is no life being practiced. Again, this doesn't necessarily mean that a person who pursues such sin for a season, may not in fact still be a believer. But, for all intents and purposes, no one around such a person can know with any certainty that he or she is saved. Since the only judgment we can make is an outward one, based on such behavior, we would have to conclude that such an unrepentant person is in need of the gospel.

But Paul is not pulling any punches here in our text when he says that people who practice such sinful behavior will not inherit the kingdom of God. Now, we must keep in mind that the context is dealing with the type of sin which was considered blatantly pagan.

Remember, this was brought on when Paul began addressing the incident of one of the members of this church who had his father's wife. There was a real moral laxity in this church. And now Paul is giving them a wake-up call. And so, when he gives this list of what we might call heinous sin, he's not suggesting that if you don't practice such sin, and yet have not embraced Christ, that you will inherit the kingdom of God.

Like I said last week, you can live a very moral life and be considerate of other people and be doing all sorts of good works, but if you have not humbled yourself before Jesus Christ, repenting of your sin and asking for forgiveness, then all of your good behavior will still fall infinitely short of God's perfect standard, and you will still be found guilty and will pay your own debt, which is eternal separation from God.

No one should be comfortable with the fact that they don't find themselves on this list in verses 9 and 10 of our text, and yet have not sought Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The wages of sin is still death, whether you're on this list or not.

Jesus points this out when conveying actual events which took place in history that concerned the death of a number of people.

LUK 13:1-5 "Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. 2 Jesus answered, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? 3 I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. 4 Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them - do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? 5 I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.""

On another occasion the Pharisees confronted Jesus and asked Him if they were guilty of sin. Their thinking was that since they were the religious leaders they were exempt from such condemnation, because they didn't see themselves like the sinners all around them.

JOH 9:39-41 Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind." 40 Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, "What? Are we blind too?" 41 Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains."

James, the Lord's half-brother, puts it this way.

JAM 2:10 "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it."

Do you have to be one who is a fornicator or an idolater, an effeminate or homosexual, a thief, covetous, a drunkard or a reviler or swindler, not to inherit the kingdom of God? Absolutely not. But, simply because one is in the church and has supposedly made a profession of faith and yet still practices such things, does not mean that you can sin with impunity and still expect eternal life.

The fruit we produce does tell us something of the life we possess or don't possess. But, the point Paul then made was that such an ungodly life was what many in the church of Corinth were involved in at one time. And that's what he meant when he said, "And that is what some of you were." (1CO 6:11)

In a sense he is trying to shame those guilty parties into considering the life they claim they have in Christ in light of their

present behavior. In other words, you no longer belong to the world, why do you walk like the world?

But, the next part of verse 11 is very revealing because it puts into perspective the reality of the work God has done in the life of a believer. "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."

What Paul is doing here is showing how each believer has been touched in a special way by God and has been given a gift which now presents them before God as washed, sanctified and justified. This is the only way anyone can come before God. If you are not washed, sanctified and justified then you are still in your sin and guilty as charged.

And so, Paul is making the point that these people have been washed, sanctified and justified, and as such, no longer belong to that past since they have been delivered from it. So, what's up when it looks like they are still part of that past of guilt and shame?

I've always contended that if believers really understood what it is they possess as a gift from God that they would be much more appreciative of their salvation and would walk accordingly.

I don't know if one teaching on the subject will give everyone the same appreciation, but this morning I will certainly make an attempt. Because this washing and sanctification along with justification is at the heart of such a gift from God.

When Paul speaks of being washed he uses the Greek word *apolouo* which means to wash off or away. Now, when we see the word wash in the N.T. it's often the word we associate with baptism. One such instance is found when Jesus did not wash ceremonially before a meal.

LUK 11:38-39 "But the Pharisee, noticing that Jesus did not first **wash** before the meal, was surprised. 39 Then the Lord said to him, "Now then, you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness."

The word for wash in this instance is the Greek word *baptizo*. This is where we get our English word baptize.

In fact, the very act of water baptism is an outward sign of an inward reality of the way in which Jesus Christ has washed us and

made us acceptable before the Father, so that we might have an eternal relationship with Him now that we are clean from our sin.

ACT 22:16 "And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name."

Here in this one verse we have two Greek words which allude to washing; baptized and wash, which is *baptizo* and *apolouo* respectively. But neither are talking about a physical washing in this text, but rather a real spiritual washing.

If you've ever been out in the yard doing some work in the hot sun, or maybe you've worked under the hood of your car. In either case, it doesn't take long before you begin feeling sweaty and dirty. You come in the house and you don't want to touch anything let alone sit on the furniture and relax.

It's not until you've jumped in the shower and let that water pour down on you and you take that soap and begin washing as you watch all of that dirt go down the drain.

It's not until you're clean that you can begin to relax and can put on fresh clothes and now go out into the living room and sit in your favorite chair, knowing that the dirt is gone and nothing will ruin your ability to enjoy that experience.

In a similar way that is what Paul is saying in our text. He's trying to convey to these Corinthian believers that they stand before God as one's who have been washed and cleaned and now can enjoy the fellowship with the Lord that only a clean person can have.

Outside of Christ the dirt and filth of our sin stands in the way of any fellowship with God. But more than that it also stands as condemnation and guilt which, if not dealt with by the blood of Christ, will separate us from God forever.

The idea of spiritual washing is meant to give this impression of being clean. We see it many times in the Scriptures as it relates to our salvation.

HEB 10:22 "let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies *washed* with pure water."

Obviously, physical water is not being spoken of here. Physical water cannot be sprinkled on our hearts to cleanse us from a guilty conscience.

The washing the writer of Hebrews is talking about here is the necessary washing which only God can perform in the life of a person. When we were little kids, we might remember mom or dad getting us in the tub and washing us down. Being one, or two or three, we just couldn't wash ourselves in a way that ensured we got every part clean.

In like manner, the kind of washing we need to stand before God squeaky clean cannot be left up to us. Our heavenly Father says, let me clean you with the washing from above which removes every stain of guilt and sin, so that I can present you to Myself spotless and clean and acceptable in My sight.

TIT 3:5-7 "He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life."

This washing is real, but it has nothing to do with anything we can do to clean ourselves up. It has everything to do with the blood of our Savior cleansing us from all unrighteousness.

1PE 1:18-19 "For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect."

This cleansing allows us to stand before God in clean white clothes, if you will, and to be accepted into His kingdom based on that cleansing. The Scriptures speak of being clothed in clean white linens as we find in Rev.7:9.

But, that is a metaphor for being clothed in the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ, who is acceptable before the Father. That's what Paul meant when writing to the Galatians.

GAL 3:26-27 "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ."

When the Father looks on one of His children, who has been washed by the blood of Christ, He sees that we are now clothed in the righteousness of His Son which is perfect. It is our Lord's perfect righteousness put to our account that cleans us from our sin and makes us acceptable before God.

REV 22:13-14 "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. 14 "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city."

It is this washing which assures us that once we have been cleansed by Christ's blood, there is nothing that can dirty us which has not already been cleansed by the blood. There is therefore now, no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

This doesn't mean that we can't do things which are considered dirty, but that dirt, or sin, does not override the cleansing we find in Christ's forgiveness as we have been washed clean, once and for all, by the blood of Christ. This is what Jesus meant when he washed the feet of His disciples at the last supper He had with them.

JOH 13:5-11 "After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. 6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" 7 Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." 8 "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." 9 "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" 10 Jesus answered, "A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." 11 For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean."

Part of what Jesus was teaching here is that once we have been bathed in the cleansing flood of Christ's blood, that cleansing is for eternity. We no longer need to be cleansed like that again because it covers us entirely as we are clothed in Christ. But, as we walk through this world the filth from it can certainly find its way into our lives.

It is in this sense that we need an occasional washing of our feet as we recognize our sin and repent of it as we look to Christ. We've already had the bath, but from time to time we need to turn from sinful behavior as we allow Jesus to wash our feet as He conforms us into His image. That is part of the sanctification process of the Holy Spirit.

And that is the word that Paul uses back in our text as it's associated with our salvation. But you'll notice that Paul doesn't say that you are being sanctified, but that you were sanctified.

In this case Paul is not talking about that lifelong process whereby, as we submit and humble ourselves before God, that we are becoming more and more like our Lord and Savior. That is certainly true, but that's not the point Paul is making here.

Rather, what he's talking about is how God has sanctified us as He washed us in the blood of Christ. The whole context in 1Cor.6:11 has to do with how we have been brought from the darkness of sin to the light of our salvation. It's something which has taken place the moment we believed.

But, if sanctification is a process of becoming holy in our behavior as we represent our Lord in this world in the power of the Spirit, what then does Paul mean that we have been sanctified in the past, the moment we believed?

Well, the Greek word for sanctified not only includes the idea of being holy in our behavior, but also to be separate from the world to be dedicated to God. In other words, God has set us apart for a holy purpose. That certainly was accomplished when He chose us before the foundation of the world, but it didn't work itself out in time until we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ as the Spirit of God opened our eyes.

And so, from day one of our salvation, as we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, we were sanctified, set apart for God to represent Him in this world. But, that setting apart was the result of the very act of being declared holy by God, or without sin, which has come through the righteousness of Christ put to our account.

This is what Paul means by the phrase, having been justified, when writing to the Romans.

Romans 5:1-2 ^{NAU} Therefore, *having been justified by faith*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

The word justify or justification means that one has been declared righteous. This is different from actually being righteous. Remember, Paul is addressing things which happened in the lives of these people in the past, when they came to know Christ. "You

were washed, you *were* sanctified, you *were* justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”

Again, this is not something we can do on our own. How do we justify ourselves before the bar of God’s throne? And by the way, we are dealing with a legal term here when we talk about justification.

This is a term which could be used in a court of law. And if you think about it, the problem with sin is a legal problem. Man was originally given a covenant commandment from God not to eat of a certain tree. In the day they ate of it they would certainly die.

This is a covenant judgment from God. From a legal stand-point both man and God are bound by these terms. If God does not punish sin then He proves Himself not to be a just and holy God. If man violates these terms he must suffer the punishment which God clearly laid out to them.

Keep in mind that man was created perfect. He had not been created with a sin nature, nor did he commit sin. Therefore, from a legal stand-point he could stand on his works before God as being acceptable and having fellowship with God.

It wasn’t until Adam sinned that death entered into the world and his relationship with God was cut off as a result of sin as his life took the form of a sinner. Man violated the commandment and the judgment was carried out by God. Man was no longer righteous. In other words, he was no longer right before God because sin now got in the way, and there could be no fellowship because light cannot dwell with darkness.

The problem is, how do we become righteous once again since there is a legal problem that has to be overcome? The legal problem can only be overcome once we have been made just or righteous. But if we are sinful men and women how does that actually take place?

Well, the only way that can take place in a sinful world is to be declared righteous or just. Does that happen when God waves a magical righteous wand over our heads? No, remember that God is also bound by His own rules which He gave to man in the beginning. If you eat, then you die.

So, the penalty still has to be paid for. Someone has to pay that debt. This is the beauty of our justification. It meets all the legal

requirements which God demands to be just or righteous in His sight.

And this was the promise that our Lord extended to Adam and Eve and that they embraced by faith.

We see this promise as justice was being meted out to the serpent.

Genesis 3:15 ¹⁵ And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."

Justice will be served as God will meet those requirements.

The problem, of course, is that for these requirements to be met, one must already be righteous or perfect to be able to take the penalty for someone else. Since no one in this world can meet this requirement God Himself must step in and take our place. This is why Jesus Christ can be our Savior. He is fully God and fully man.

This is also why the Son of God had to become a man. It was a man who sinned and it must be a man who pays the debt owed to a righteous God.

Jesus Christ meets all the requirements for being our substitute. He is perfect, He is righteous, He is God, He is man and He is willing to die in our place. You talk about love. There is no greater love than this that He would lay His life down for us.

When Jesus Christ went to the cross to die for our sin, He was the perfect sacrifice. We're told in Isaiah that "it was the LORD'S will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand." (ISA 53:10)

All that Jesus did was righteous and just as we're told in the gospels, to the point where our heavenly Father said of His Son that He was well pleased with His righteousness.

MAT 17:5 "While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"

God's Son is His gift to us. God's Son is the only way anyone can be justified as we believe on the Son, which means that we embrace the work that the Son did on our behalf by faith and receive the forgiveness which the Father extends to us.

But this forgiveness only comes through Jesus Christ. And we are only forgiven once we have been declared by God as justified. Just as when the Father said of His Son, I am well pleased in Him, so too, as we are justified in Christ, the Father says of us, I am well pleased with the sacrifice put to their account.

And because our legal status has gone from "guilty" to "not guilty", we can now enter into the peace of our God and know for certain that we have a place with our God and Savior forever.

As sinners we could never justify ourselves; we could never take away our guilty status. And even though we still struggle with sin in this world, our legal status before God in Christ stands. Not guilty. Christ has taken our sin and given us His righteousness. That's the reason we're justified before God. Paul deals with this issue of justification all throughout the letter written to the Romans.

ROM 3:22-24 "This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are ***justified freely*** by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."

ROM 4:25 "He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our ***justification***."

ROM 5:16-19 Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought ***justification***. ¹⁸ Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was ***justification*** that brings life for all men. ¹⁹ For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made ***righteous***."

We have been washed, we have been sanctified, set apart for God's holy purpose and this all because we have been justified. Our legal standing of not guilty before God is only because of the love of Christ who came into this world to die for the penalty we owed to a holy God.

But our legal standing is not the only thing considered in justification. Being justified brings life where there was previously

death. It's not simply being left off the legal hook, it's having a new nature and life in Christ.

This new nature, this new creation is the direct result of the triune God in the person of the Holy Spirit, giving us this new life as He opens our eyes and ears to see and hear the voice of God as the Spirit takes that heart of stone and gives His people a heart of flesh. This is seen in the last part of verse 11 of our text.

1 Corinthians 6:11 but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and *in the Spirit of our God*.

It is the Spirit of our God in cooperation with the work of the Son, who atoned for our sins, as the Father justifies us to Himself and it is this very thing that Paul teaches Titus when writing to him.

Titus 3:5-7 ⁵ He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, *by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,* ⁶ whom He poured out upon us richly *through Jesus Christ our Savior,* ⁷ so that *being justified by His grace* we would be made heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life.

What God has done for us is something we should consider every day of our lives. Had He not come into this world and taken our place we would still be in our sins and bound for the lake of fire to be forever tormented as we are separated from our Creator.

How thankful we should be. How desirous we should be to give our lives to Him. He has purchased us and given us a place in His Kingdom to enjoy His inheritance and blessings forever.

And yet, we often treat this salvation as though it was just another thing to do to pass the time. And sometimes, in the trials of life we may even take for granted the relationship which was purchased for us by the blood of our Lord and Savior, and find ourselves traveling our own path as these Corinthians had done, which is why Paul was writing in the first place.

The enemy would try to use anything to take our eyes off of Christ with the express purpose of defiling the name of our God through our lives. We've been washed, sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God, so that we might bring glory to God in everything we do and say.

The Lord Jesus Christ has purchased our new life; the Spirit of our God enables us to live in this life to the glory of God. Sin is no

longer an option. We have not been given life to live like the world. We have not been redeemed and justified and sanctified to walk in the darkness.

This is what Paul has been saying all along, and it's what God says to all of His people today. Let me end with an exhortation from Peter who knew what mercy and forgiveness was all about.

2PE 1:3-11 "His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. 5 For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; 6 and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; 7 and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. 8 For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. 10 Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, 11 and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."