

Salvation: From Unrighteous to Righteous

I Corinthians 6:9-11

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Introduction: We read in II Corinthians 5:17, “*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (creation): old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*” I have previously pointed out 3 new things suggested by this verse: the new birth, the new life, & the new song. I want us to examine just one of these things this morning, the new birth (our salvation). I want us to note here in I Corinthians 6:9-11 that salvation is the conversion of the unrighteous to the individual being declared righteous by considering the characteristics of the unrighteous & the cleansing of the unrighteous. Let’s read the text & then pray.

I. The characteristics of the unrighteous

A. Their description:

1. “*Fornicators*” – “ *pornos* ” from which comes “pornography” – here it refers to sexual immorality, particularly that before marriage.
2. “*Idolaters*” – those who worship any false god or in a false religious system (often associated with immorality > temple “prostitutes” whether male or female).
3. “*Adulterers*” – sexual immorality outside the marriage bonds (see Hebrews 13:4).
Application: How are we preparing the next generation to live in this sexual promiscuous & immoral world? Let me suggest 3 things we, particular as parents & grandparents, should do:
(1) Prayer – daily for our young people to be pure & clean for their future mate & their mate to be pure & clean for them (& especially while dating). Are you doing that now?
(2) Precept – teaching them what the Bible clearly teaches concerning sexuality.
(3) Practice – modeling before them the proper relationship between husband & wife.
4. “*Effeminate*” – “passive homosexuality” or those showing its characteristics & tendencies.
5. “*Abusers of themselves with mankind*” – “active homosexuality” or those sometimes referred to as “Sodomites” (see Genesis 18:20; 19:4-5 & see Romans 1:26-27).
6. “*Thieves*” – those who actually steal.
7. “*Covetous*” – those who may not actually steal, but covet or envy what others have.
8. “*Drunkards*” – those who continually give themselves to intoxication.
9. “*Revilers*” – those who are verbally abusive; trouble-makers.
10. “*Extortioners*” – those who swindle & embezzle; take advantage of others; violent.

B. Their destiny:

1. Declared > “*shall not inherit the kingdom of God*” (2 times).
2. Defined > “People who are characterized by these iniquities are not saved. While believers can & do commit these sins, they do not characterize them as an unbroken life pattern. When they do, it demonstrates that the person is not in God’s Kingdom” (MacArthur).
Note I John 3:8-10 which gives us only 2 categories of people in the world (& cf. I Jn. 5:12). Those saved exhibit righteous character; those unsaved exhibit continual & unrepentant, sinful character. Redpath concludes, “It is impossible to live like the devil’s children & hope to go to heaven with God’s children.”

Summary: So how do we “inherit” the kingdom of God? An inheritance comes not by works, but by birth – “*Ye must be born again*” (John 3:5 & see John 14:6). There is hope for the sinner > speaking the truth in love.

II. The **cleansing** of the unrighteous – “*And such were some of you...*”

A. “*But ye are washed*” > saved from sin’s **pollution**.

1. Defined – a spiritual cleansing & regeneration.
2. Declared in Scripture – Titus 3:5; Revelation 1:5; & Psalm 51:7 (cf. Isaiah 1:18).
3. Demonstrated by song – “Nothing But the Blood” (“What can wash away my sin?”).

B. “*But ye are sanctified*” > saved from sin’s **power**.

1. Biblical definition – to “sanctify” means to “set apart.” It carries the idea of being dedicated to the service of God. “Where the reference is to *things*, the meaning of ‘*holy*’ or ‘*sanctified*’ is, simply, set apart for the use of God, or rendered sacred by the divine presence” (Scofield’s note on I Peter 1:18).
2. Biblical demonstration – being ‘*washed*’ – “results in new behavior, which a transformed life always produces. Sin’s total domination is broken & replaced by a new pattern of obedience & holiness” (MacArthur). See Romans 8:12 (& contrast John 8:34).

Summary: This does not speak of perfection but rather a new direction (see Romans 6:17-18, 22). [Remember the bumper sticker: “I’m not perfect, just forgiven?”]

C. “*But ye are justified*” > saved from sin’s **penalty**.

1. Theological definition – “the act by which a sinner is freed through faith from the penalty of sin & is accepted by God as righteous.” It indicates to pronounce or declare righteous & it includes the forgiveness of sin & the imputation (reckoning to one’s account) of righteousness (see II Corinthians 5:19 & 21).
2. Practical demonstration – having been declared “righteous” at salvation, we should live in practice according to our profession. Consider Titus 2:11-12, “*For the grace of God, that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness & worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, & godly, in this present world.*”

Conclusion: Have you been washed? Have you been sanctified? Have you been justified? It is only possible “*in the name of the Lord Jesus, & by the Spirit of our God.*” Romans 10:13 declares, “*For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*” The purpose of John’s gospel is given to us in John 20:31 which says, “*But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; & that believing ye might have life through His name.*” It was Peter who preached in Acts 10:43, “*To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.*” It is the Spirit of God that convicts us of sin & draws us to the Father. We noted earlier Titus 3:5, “*Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, & renewing of the Holy Ghost.*”

Can you say what I heard often from my pastor in N.C, “I may not be all that I ought to be, but thank God, I’m not what I used to be”? Is that your testimony here this morning?