

Sermon Notes

Such Were Some of You

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

June 7, 2015

Introduction: Changes

Paul has called the Church in Corinth to change, and he is now pointing out some of the glorious changes which are already present. These are changes which have made them new people. While the Apostle has pointed out that which was wrong—not *righteous*—he now says that participation in the kingdom of God is a certain kind of participation. They are being called to righteousness because “the *unrighteous* will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

A Wondrous (& Politically Incorrect) Passage

What’s so offensive about this passage? The simple fact that Paul speaks in categories of “righteous” and “unrighteous” is enough to throw some people into the offense. Further, some think it is inappropriate for a minister to speak in such a way or of such things, er, ahem, in “polite company.” Paul is no Rev. Collins. Perhaps what is most offensive is that Paul speaks of sin and of change from sin. Some *were* this way; some *did* such things...and they are this way no longer! In our day, this whole idea of change is one of those boundary markers which no one is supposed to violate.

Some of the Wonder...

It is a great wonder, and truly wonderful, that change is possible. Consider the setting there. Consider our own lives. Consider the needs of our day. According to one writer, “There are few more exciting and energizing statements in the New Testament than this little phrase, *And such were some of you*. We have only to recall the moral cess-pit of first-century Corinth to appreciate the wonder of Paul’s assertion...Every single individual rescued from the tentacles of rampant vice was a glorious trophy of divine grace” (David Prior, *The Bible Speaks Today*).

While it gives no thrill to discuss certain sins, there is a wonder to the reality of forgiveness and change. There is a way to live in the King’s kingdom. Not just anything goes. Paul will mention a number of sins, and throughout he is saying that to live in such ways is to live contrary to the kingdom and therefore to reject the kingdom...and so, they are not part of the kingdom.

Still, we admit that no one arrives full-grown, and no one has fully arrived. This is another one of those gospel breathing passages which declares that the Lord takes us where we are, but He doesn’t allow us to stay where we are.

Some Comments on the Sins

Many of these sins are the sticky sins of our day. Historically we’re not alone; nor special.

These are not unpardonable.

Change is possible.

Not being guilty of these sins does not mean that “you are in.”

Why are ten mentioned?

Reminders of ‘the-then-and-now’ provide great encouragement.

These Ten Sins (6:9-10)

Fornicators

Idolaters

Adulterers

Homosexuals

Sodomites

Thieves

Covetous

Drunkards

Revilers

Extortioners

In and with each of these sins, part of what Paul is saying that is what some of you were. He is saying that such things marked and identified you. Such sins were your identity, and each of these sins were self-serving. With each of these sins, self—*yourself*—was placed before any one else. However, there’s more. Paul is saying that you are that way no longer: *such were some of you*. What is true of you *now* is that you are washed, sanctified, and justified in the Name of the Lord and by the Holy Spirit.

In Conclusion

The Church with “issues” (+/-) and the reality of the work of transformation.

Books, not words; movies, not snapshots.

Philippians 3:12-14

