

Washed, Sanctified, Justified

1 Corinthians 6:9 – 11

Central Idea: Christians have had their past erased, their direction reversed, and their status before God totally changed.

Aim: To not be deceived about the terribleness of sin, but to be excited about the solution for sin.

Introduction: What if, in your school setting, you could have all of your bad grades erased? Not only that, but given a new ability, new study habits, new attitude about it? And, imagine also being treated by the higher authorities as if you've never made any mistakes before.

That's nothing in comparison to what we have in Christ, as shown in the Scripture that will guide this study:

*Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God?
Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers
nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards
nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.*

And that is what some of you were.

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.

1 Corinthians 6:9 – 11

For this lesson, you will be encouraged to paint three **word pictures** inspired by the words in verse 11: *washed, sanctified, justified*. (Or you might even want to paint actual drawing pictures.) Use your imagination as these three paintings will be described to you.

1. The first word painting is entitled: **Washed**.

Note from this Scripture two things about our past:

- a. The past (theirs and ours) is terrible.

We see in this Scripture a catalogue of sins. Immorality, idolatry, adultery, homosexuality, greed, drunkenness, slander, and theft were just as rampant then as they are now. It is a comment on society, then and now. Corinth of that day was a center of idolatry and immorality.

Except for the effects of Jesus Christ, society has not changed.

God tells us here to not be deceived about this (verse 9). Sin cannot be compromised with. It will keep us out of the kingdom and it is a hopeless situation – if we stay in that sin without Christ.

But there is a second emphasis that this Scripture teaches Christians about our past.

- b. The Christian's past is erased by God, washed; no matter how terrible it was.

The past is terrible, but it can be overcome. Don't be deceived about that either. Note that he reminded the Corinthian Christians that this described what some of them were like before Christ (verse 11). God never in His Word just condemns; he gives us **hope**. None of us are any worse than they were.

So, don't be deceived by doubting either one of these:

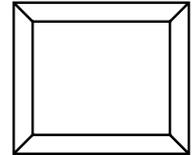
- There must be a change.
- There can be a change.

Which one of those truths are you more likely to be deceived into doubting?

That is a powerful four-word sentence: *Do not be deceived*. Satan, the full-time, professional deceiver, will try to deceive you both ways – either to think that sin is not all that bad or that your sin is so bad that it can't be washed. Resist both deceptions.

God tells Christians, no matter what their past was, that they have been washed! A thought that is emphasized in so many other Scriptures is the way God is able to put us in the position of being washed; cleansed; past wiped out; erased. See, for example, *Acts 22:16; Ephesians 5:26; Titus 3:5; and Hebrews 10:17, 22*.

So, in this first word painting visualize yourself in a pool of water, with your sins painted all over you. But God's hand is coming down with a great sponge erasing those sins.



Washed

How does that feel?

2. The second word painting is entitled: *Sanctified*.

That carries with it the idea of having the direction of your life changed; being set apart from the meaningless and hurtful life and consecrated to a purposeful life devoted to and directed by God.

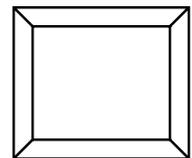
Instead of going in the "nowhere" direction, there is a new direction – set apart by God.

This is the work of the Holy Spirit; we are His temple. See also *Romans 15:16; 1 Corinthians 6:18 – 20; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; and 1 Peter 1:2*.

God is not just erasing the past, as amazing as that is, he is also changing our future. Sanctification is an on-going process. Since our past is erased, we have a new direction in life. Scripture clearly points out that this is nothing for us to boast about to ourselves, to others, and certainly not to God. But it is a blessing that we recognize, are truly grateful for, and passionately want others to experience.

Do you see the new direction God has given to your life?

So in this second painting, picture yourself in the middle of a crowd. They are all going one direction, headed off of a cliff, and you are turned around headed in the right direction. You are not condemning the others or bragging to them, but you are thankful and determined to stay in the right direction no matter what everyone else is doing. At the same time, you are trying to show anyone who will listen how they also can turn their lives around.



Sanctified

How does that feel?

3. The third word painting is entitled: *Justified*.

Your status before God has been changed; he declares you to be righteous and held guiltless. Not held back by the past. That settles our legal status before God – turned from a position of condemnation to one of righteousness.

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:1

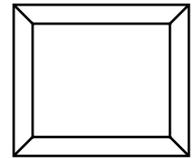
Knowing what you know about your sins, how great is this promise of "no condemnation"?

See *Romans 3:21 – 26; Romans 4:25; Romans 8:33; and Titus 3:7* for more references to justification.

Our theme Scripture (*1 Corinthians 6:9 – 11*) makes two very important points about all of these amazing blessings:

- It is accomplished in the name of the Lord Jesus, as *Acts 4:12* tells us. It is by his authority, and it follows his pattern. There is no other name that can accomplish our salvation.
- It is done by the Spirit of our God. Not by our works, initiative, or power, but by the Spirit of God.

So, in this third painting, picture yourself in the court room scene. The devil is your accuser, and you are obviously guilty, but the Judge is beaming with a smile as he says "*not guilty*," all on account of your lawyer's action to take your punishment.



Justified

How does that feel?

Conclusion: Remember this gallery of three paintings often.

Don't be deceived. No sin is small enough to sneak into heaven. But no sin is great enough that it can't be overcome.

No sin you have done deserves any worse punishment than what we have all done. But you can thank God if you have been

washed – past erased;

sanctified – direction changed;

justified – status reversed.

John Sullivan

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