

The Old Paths

Volume 14, Issue 19

July 8, 2007

“And Such Were Some of You ...”

Jarrod Jacobs

The title above comes from the first phrase in I Corinthians 6:11. In context, I Corinthians 6:9-11 stands as a warning against Christians engaging in various sins, and the reminder that many of the Corinthian Christians had been guilty of these sins. This section also shines because it reminds them (and us) that it is Christ who made forgiveness of sins possible. Let us read I Corinthians 6:9-11 and make some applications.

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (I Cor. 6:9-11). Our study will focus upon the statement in verse 11, *“And such were some of you”*. To me, this statement speaks volumes.

Such

In context, this word means “of like manner.” After reading the list of sins from verses 9 and 10, some might be inclined to look down on others and say, “I would never want to be around people like that!” The apostle Paul’s statement reminds the Corinthians that this church was made up of folks who *had* committed such sins, but were now

forgiven (v. 11).

In history, Corinth was known as a very immoral city. They were so wicked that those in the first century who lived a life of drunkenness and immorality were said to “live like a Corinthian.” It is in this climate that the apostle Paul entered Corinth and preached the gospel, converting many people to Christ (Acts 18:8; I Cor. 1:14-16).

There is no question that the Corinthian Christians had been guilty of various sins (v. 9-10)! Perhaps they were taught to be like that by their parents. We know it was encouraged in their society; but these people learned better through the preaching of the gospel (Acts 18).

Were

Though the people had been guilty of sin (Rom. 3:23), they were now forgiven in Christ. They had repented (Lk. 13:3; Acts 17:30) and had been baptized into Christ (Acts 18:8, 2:38). Therefore, they “were” in sin (including sins listed in I Cor. 6:9-10), but had been forgiven by Christ when baptized (Acts 18:8).

No one can escape his past! Even the apostle Paul, though forgiven and looking forward to a “*crown of righteousness*” (II Tim. 4:6-8), said he was the “chief” of sinners when he reflected upon his past life (I Tim. 1:15). The Corinthians were reminded that they “were” in sin, until they received the forgiveness of Christ!

Some

This word lets us know in no uncertain terms that the sins listed in I Corinthians 6:9-10 entangled

the members of the Corinthian church. This is significant for three reasons:

1) It says something about the apostle Paul who went to Corinth! He was willing and ready to preach the gospel to whomever would listen! (Just like he did at Rome - Rom. 1:16.) He understood Christ’s words to preach the gospel to “*every creature*” (Mk. 16:15), and this includes preaching to folks who have committed some of the most heinous sins! They needed forgiveness, but could not be forgiven until they are told what to do to be saved (Mk. 16:16).

2) It also tells us that people engaged in sins can come out of sin and do what is right! Sometimes, we are told that folks’ sins are a “disease,” or that they are somehow inbred into their genetic code. This is wrong. This passage makes it clear that regardless of the sin (one’s choice, Jas. 1:14-15), one can be forgiven when he willingly listens to and obeys the gospel of Christ (Acts 18:8; Heb. 5:8-9).

3) We see that God considered this church as “His” even though it was made up of such former sinners (I Cor. 1:2, 14:37). Truly, God is forgiving, loving, and “*not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*” (II Pet. 3:9).

Of You

This phrase speaks not only to the Corinthians, but also to the other readers of this letter. May all Christians beware of arrogance and pride! “You” may have been guilty of the very sins mentioned here! No one can say that he has never sinned (I Jn. 1:10). Therefore, let no one look down upon one who repents of sin and is baptized, or is restored as an erring Christian (Acts 2:38, 8:22; I Jn. 1:9). We, like the Corinthians, need to be “*washed ... sanctified*” and “*justified*”; and we will be when we do only what the Lord says!

“Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.” (Jer. 6:16)

In The Interest Of Truth

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"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." (Jn. 17:17) "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (Jn. 14:6) "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (Jn. 8:32) These passages are but three within an abundance of scriptures, testifying of **who** is truth, **what** is truth and **why** is truth. John 1:14 and 17, 18:37, Romans 15:8, Galatians 3:1, Ephesians 4:21 additionally show forth the **when**, **where** and **why** of truth: the very truth that is able to save our souls (Rom. 1:16-17; Jas. 1:21). Among the most important "rules of journalism" is the rule, "Convey the 'who, what, when, where and why' of the matter first and foremost. If possible, explain the 'how' of the action." To this latter, we would add Hebrews 1:1-2; 2:1-4. Obviously, one cannot approach the reading and studying of Scripture without this "rule" primarily captivating the mind.

Strangely, it seems many of today's "scholars" concern themselves more with the "about" matters of truth. Such an approach however, never reaches the core of the most valued, for it ignores the needed **facts**: who, what, when, where, why and in this case, **how**! At its very best, things "about" the truth are generalized matters; "attributes" if you will, of the needed facts. Often, such "about" matters modify the truth – and not always in a fair and honest fashion. As adjectives and adverbs modify the subject and predicate, such "about" studies might intrigue some students who find such material "intellectual"; yet, "what says too much says noth-

ing." While historical data, archeological data, definitions, etc. have their place and value (at times), emphasis on these matters simply does **not** convey the **factual** "who, what, when, where, why and how" of **truth**.

This reality generates "opinions" and through constant nurturing of these "about" items, roots of dissension arise. Many force an acceptance of man's UNinspired conclusions as if they held the same authority as the **inspired of God** scriptures (II Tim. 3:16). Frankly, while things "about" the scriptures are not necessarily an exercise in futility, what does it **truly** add to our **commanded** need of **truth** itself? Answer: **nothing**!

Paul said, "Preach the word. Be instant in season, out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." (II Tim. 4:2) Two words of this verse tell us the exactness of the matter: **word** and **doctrine**. We don't need Mr. Strong's or Mr. Young's definition of the word "doctrine," for inspiration furnishes it via the writing of Paul (I Tim. 1:3). We need only to reexamine the passages in the first paragraph to learn the meaning of "word." Where in Paul's inspired directive are we privileged to convey matters "about" this **truth** in attempt to convey man's intelligence? Using Paul's inspired directive, how can one place man's accumulated data on the same level of God's proven **truth**? Read again Galatians 1:6-9.

In the interest of **truth**, preachers and teachers of God's Word must be

extremely careful (Jas. 3:1). It is a privilege to preach/teach; one which when accepted, demands adherence to the validity of **God's** truth – regardless of man's "valid" findings "about" this same truth! (Gal. 1:10) As Paul conveyed to Corinth, "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified," (Read I Cor. 2:1-5) we preachers/teachers shout, "No book but the Bible, no creed but His word within its sacred pages. Give book, chapter and verse for all we say and do." We can prove the truth of this declaration with Colossians 3:17; 2 Peter 1:3; 1 Thessalonians 5:21; et al. Is it not a bit hypocritical of us to include the obviously lesser values of man's findings as if they prove God more than God proves Himself? (Rom. 10:17; 12:1-2; Heb. 6:18). Granted, much of man's findings confirm the truth of God's word. Nonetheless, upon what are we to build our faith: on God's Word or man's word? I choose God's – Romans 10:17!

In the interest of **truth**, all Christians must let the word of Christ dwell in us richly in all wisdom (Col. 3:16). Whose wisdom? We accept every sermon preached, every Bible class taught, and every article written, of necessity contains "oral commentary." Yet surely, we can see the difference of what expresses **God** more than man – yea, **instead** of man! "But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." (Matt. 5:37) In the interest of **truth**, that's enough said!

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