

Jason Upchurch - 1 Cor. 6:9-11 - No Vice Is Too Great For Jesus - Part 2

We continue this morning through this vice list that Paul gives us. There are many vice lists in the Bible - basically they are lists of sins that are easily recognizable. These aren't necessarily the worst of the worst sins, they're just common sins.

And I want to remind us from last week, the point here is not to simply clobber people over the head with this list of sins. It's not a list just to rant about sin. There is a place for simply showing people that certain things are sins, but that's not the primary reason for this list here.

This list is here as part of Paul's encouragement to believers who have been washed and justified and sanctified to solve their financial disputes in house. Don't go to unbelievers in the legal system. Why not? Because unbelievers are defined by sin. You used to be defined by sin, but no more. Now you're in Christ, don't go back to the pagans to resolve things that should be resolved in the church.

And he gives this list as a reminder of what God had saved the Corinthians from. **Vs. 11** is really the controlling verse of all these sins: **Read**

And so we are working through these sins through the lens of grace. What can the grace of God wash away? The answer is that for anyone who trusts in Jesus and turns from their sin, the grace of God can forgive absolutely every single sin. There is no sin so greater than the grace of God.

If there's a sin you struggle to trust has really been forgiven, know that in Christ it's gone. And if there's someone in your life you think is too far gone to ever come to Jesus, don't give up. Don't lose hope. God loves saving the worst of sinners because that's how his grace shines the brightest.

Remember Jesus's words: He who has been forgiven little, loves little. But he who has been forgiven much what? Loves much. Those who have been forgiven much usually shine the brightest in the Kingdom where grace rules.

With that, let's keep looking at this list. And then we'll unpack what all those terms mean - washed, sanctified, justified - at the end.

1) The grace of Jesus washes away thieves. Read 10

So thieves don't make it into the Kingdom of God. Theft is the wrongful taking of someone's property. It's a violation of the 8th commandment: you shall not steal.

And this includes property, money, possessions. But it also includes all kinds of other things in our day as well including intellectual property and ideas.

Plagiarism is huge these days. Plagiarism is usually pawning off someone else's writing as your own, whether intentional or not. I had a professor in Bible college who wrote a commentary and a year after the publication the publisher pulled the commentary because he wasn't thorough in his citation of other sources. He didn't intentionally copy them. He wrote a lengthy and heartfelt apology. But he didn't give credit where credit was due. I know that he's in the Kingdom, but nowadays this can be easy to do unintentionally.

A thief takes God's place in the bigger scheme of things. God gives and he takes away. And so they are, in some sense, taking the place of God and deciding who gets and who receives at the expense of others.

Interestingly, there are several places in the NT where God specifically describes his coming in terms of how a thief operates. Just to be clear: Jesus is not a thief and is not sinning. But how Jesus destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD and how is described at his second coming are described as how a thief operates.

Matt. 25:43-44: But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

He's talking about the destruction of Jerusalem. Jesus said that that generation would see Jerusalem destroyed - not one brick would be left on another. So they had a general timeline, but no specifics.

His second coming will be the same way: **2 Peter 3:10**: But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works done on it will be exposed.

That's his second coming. In both of those situations, the coming of Jesus is likened to how thieves operate. Thieves attack the vulnerable - those who can't protect themselves. And it comes on those who are not ready.

Thieves prey on vulnerability. That's part of what makes it so heinous. They do actions that no one in their right mind would do in broad daylight. They sneak around when no one can see them.

But you know who sees? God sees. And you know what else? God offers grace to thieves. As such **were** some of you. There were former thieves in the Corinthian church. People who had stolen what was not theirs. People who had exploited others. But who had found mercy from God in Christ.

You know what I want with whoever stole my stuff? At first I wanted 2-3 years in prison for 1st degree felony theft. But what I think I really want is that one day they would come to their senses. That in heaven I'll bump into some guy who's giving me his testimony about how he used to steal stuff at night and how the Lord transformed him. Because that's what the Lord does. He transforms sinners into saints by his grace.

2) The grace of Jesus washes the greedy. Read 10

Let's be honest, greedy is a hard sin to peg down. Greed does manifest itself in actions, but sometimes the actions of those who are greedy are the exact same actions of those who are wise stewards.

Two people invest in a stock, one because it's a good value, the other because he wants it to go supernova and wants to be rich.

I knew a guy once who's big dream in life was to go to Vegas and just blow \$100k because he wanted to live the life of the ultra wealthy for just a night.

Well, let me tell you, most of the ultra wealthy are nowhere near Vegas. Vegas is surrounded by poor people, people enslaved to debt and corruption.

What is greed? BDAG: one who desires to have more than is due (πλεονέκτης). It's the old joke that "All I want is an honest week's pay for an honest day's work."

It's someone who thinks they are owed more than they are paid. That God or their employer or their parents or the cosmos owes them more than what they have.

It's perpetual discontent. The paycheck is never big enough. And it comes down to a love of money.

Turn to 1 Tim. 6:6-10. Paul is warning his young pastoral Associate Timothy to not be greedy. But these principles apply to all of us. **Read 6-10**

There's a lot we could say here but the bottom line is that we don't get to take anything with us. And a person who is pursuing stacking it up in this life is missing the eternal perspective.

And the warning in **Vs 10**, which we all know is not against money, but the love of money. What's the problem with the love of money? It is at the very heart of a whole myriad of other sins.

People will lie to get money, steal to get money, become workaholics and forsake their families to get money. Once you go down that road, sin is everywhere.

Ecc. 5:10: He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income.

But as such were some of you. Greed can be overcome. Greed can be forgiven. And, actually in the gospel, there's something we desire even more. **Look at 1 Tim. 6:17-19. Read**

Here's the cool thing about the gospel. The problem is not that we desire riches too much. It's that we don't desire true heavenly reward enough.

As CS Lewis said: we are far too easily pleased. We're happy playing in mud puddle in the city when we could have an all expense paid vacation at a villa on a beach in the Caribbean. Notice, that Paul doesn't just say "Stop being greedy" - he says go be generous and so that you can store up riches in the next life.

There's actually only one way our bank account will have any affect on our eternal situation: spend it generously for the Kingdom. The way we get treasure in heaven is to give away treasure now. So what that means is that in the gospel we have this retirement account that is better than any IRA we can imagine because it follows us to the next life.

And Paul isn't calling us to be greedy for eternal treasure, that would be a contradiction. But he is saying focus on it. Because stacking up eternal treasure is only done in faith. You gotta really believe that God will reward you in order to give to others generously. And if you're operating in faith, it will cancel out the greed.

In the gospel, Jesus washes greedy sinners and turns us into those who seek real treasure in heaven.

Turn back to 1 Cor. 6.

3) The grace of Jesus washes away drunkenness. Read 10

What is drunkenness? I think we all have some kind of vague idea about it. We imagine the guy who can't quit the bottle. He's got alcohol on his breath in the morning. It's the lady who is sloppy all the time.

The word in Greek - methusos - means to drink to the point of intoxication. It is to take in beer or wine in such quantity that our basic functions are impaired. Just having a beer or wine or shot of whiskey is not sin. **Deut 14** even tells the Israelites to come to Jerusalem and drink wine and beer in the presence of the Temple in enjoyment and praise to God who gave them the crop. Have a beer to the glory of God - seriously. But don't get drunk. Don't become intoxicated.

Now, what I'm about to tell you about drunkenness is very countercultural. It's very offensive: Drunkenness is a sin that people choose to commit. It is not a disease. It is not a mental illness. It is not something outside of one's ultimate control.

Drunkenness **can** affect the brain. Drunkenness **can** be committed in a social setting. Or in loneliness. There are people who come from a long line of drunks in their family and those who pick it up all on their own.

By the way, the application here is not just alcohol. The issue is not a liquid that has intoxicating effects. It's anything that has intoxicating effects. Marijuana, heroine, prescription drugs, anything that alters your brain's ability to function in sobriety.

But drunkenness in the Bible is always framed as a sin. Can I tell you something? That's good news. Why is that good news? Because that means you can repent of it. If it's a sin it can be turned from. If it's a disease, there's nothing you can do but maybe manage it. If you have diabetes - a disease of the pancreas - you can't repent and get better. You can only manage it.

When we talk about drunkenness as a disease we're actually robbing people of the biblical hope that we have in Jesus. You guys have heard me say I am firmly against Alcoholics Anonymous "Hi, I'm So-and-So, and I'm an alcoholic." Listen, in Jesus, we are no longer defined by our sins. We are no longer alcoholics, or greedy, or sexually immoral. If you're in Christ you are defined by Christ.

Hi, my name is Jason, and I am Son of the Most High God, imputed with every ounce of the righteousness of Jesus that our Lord himself has, and I am destined to rule and reign with Jesus over all creation.

You guys, that's our identity. Drunkenness is a pattern of sinful behavior. Does it have affects on the brain? Sure. Does it ensnare some people? Obviously. Can the grace of Jesus overcome it? 100%.

Faith in Jesus washes us from this filthy sin.

4) The grace of Jesus washes us from reviling. Read 10

What is reviling? The NIV has slanderers. Some have abusive speech. Really, what this gets down to is simply badmouthing people.

It's a broad category for insulting, sinful speech that tears people down. You ever been around people and they never have anything good to say about anyone or anything? They constantly complain and constantly bicker and insult and criticize? They put people down, they're always negative. They're passive-aggressive. That's reviling.

You know what the Bible says? Those people go to hell. They do not inherit the Kingdom of God. That might come across as shocking but we need to understand just how depraved God views revilers.

When the Bible talks about revilers, the example that is most often used are those who stood at the foot of the cross when Jesus died and they hurled insults at him.

They are of the same exact stock as people who insult the Lord Jesus as he hung on the cross.

1 Pet. 2:23: When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but he continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

All those people insulting Jesus as he is gasping for air on the cross, a bloody mess, saving the world - those are revilers. Jesus didn't respond.

Peter goes on to say: Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary bless for to this you have been called that you may obtain a blessing (**1 Pet 3:9**).

Reviling is the exact opposite of blessing someone. It's the exact opposite of encouragement and helpfulness and sober speech.

Before Christ, that was our identity, but in Christ we have been changed. We have been washed, justified and sanctified. Even our mouths are now a fountain of blessing because where does all of our speech come from anyway? Our heart. And if our hearts have been transformed, then our speech will be transformed as well.

Look at Eph. 4:29. This is the gospel transforming us. Paul talks about how a Christian becomes like Jesus kind of like changing clothes. We put off our old selves, renew our minds, and then put on newness of life.

Read 29

So we put off corrupting speech - speech that is moldy and disgusting, like spoiled rotten food. And we put on speech that builds people up. Why? **Read 29**

Do you realize that as a Christian you are the conduit of God's grace to people. What people see in you and hear from you is the closest thing they will ever hear and see of Jesus. Jesus never had corrupting talk come out of his mouth. He never reviled anyone - even when he threatened them with judgment it was always done in a serious and sober manner.

I've told you before, prior to being saved I was a reviler. I used filthy language, my life was how I could tear people down verbally, I loved witty and biting insults. I was the kid you never wanted your kids around simply because of what came out of my mouth.

As such was I. As such were some of you. But we were washed and sanctified and justified. Now our mouths sing the praise of Jesus who saved us and we lovingly call others to do the same.

Turn back to 1 Cor. 6.

5) Last on the vice list here, then we'll unpack the theology: The grace of Jesus washes us from swindling.

Read 10

We don't use the word swindling much. It's basically someone who takes advantage of someone financially through deception. We'd call it fraud or cheating. It's a type of theft - like what we looked at before but more but subtle.

It's the stereotypical used car salesman who sells a car but hides that it has an electrical problem. I've bought and sold my fair share of vehicles over the last few years and when I buy I pay cash. And about half the time the seller asks what dollar amount I want them to write on the title. If I buy a car for \$3,000 and they write \$2,000 I pay a lot less in taxes. You know what that is? It's swindling the government. I don't like taxes, but I'm not going to lie to get out of them.

Did you know in 1987 7 million children simply vanished from the USA? It was like the pre trib rapture, they just disappeared. You know what happened? The IRS required that you provide a SSN for every child you list as a deduction. Somehow in 1 year 7 million children died. What were people doing? Swindling the government.

It's a deceptive theft. It's lying to get financial gain.

It's the guy in **Prov. 20:14**: "Bad, bad" says the buyer, then goes away boasting. Why does he boast? Because he ripped off grandma by convincing her the item she was selling was junk when it wasn't.

The issue isn't bartering and offering a low amount on an item. I offer people less than they're asking all the time. You guys know me, I want a deal. Like a **deal**. But I'm not going to lie to anyone to get it.

But in Christ that's who we **were**. We're not swindlers anymore. We've been washed and justified and sanctified. We've been cleansed from that stuff.

Our attitude toward money now is that everything we have is God's anyway. It's not ours, we just manage it. And since we follow Jesus who is the way, the truth and the life - we can truthfully talk to people about financial matters knowing that all our actions are on behalf of Jesus.

And get this: we own it all anyway. We're co-heirs with Christ. There's a sense in which we're in the will, we're just waiting for the settlement. What do we get? We get everything Jesus gets. What does Jesus get? He gets it all.

Rom. 11:36: From him and through him and to him are what? All things.

If you've swindled people, if you've cheated people on money, if you've not been honest in business dealings know that in Christ your sins have been washed white as snow.

Part of your repentance might be that you need to go make some things right. You need to settle up. Some dealings we can't do that on. There's no way to make it right financially. Jesus forgives us anyway.

Now, we've been talking about these 3 theological truths over and over: washed, sanctified and justified. What do those mean? Why use those terms? Give me a few minutes to unpack those because I think it's important.

Washed. Washing is obviously a great metaphor for what God has done for us through faith in Jesus. Our dirty, filthy sin has been absolutely cleansed.

Isa. 1:18: Come now, let us reason together says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they are like crimson they shall be white as wool.

The washing that happens in our hearts when we come to faith in Jesus is absolute. By the way, this is part of what baptism represents: the washing away of sin.

Acts 22:16: Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.

Baptism itself doesn't save or wash away the sins. But when we call someone to faith in Jesus we also call them to be baptized because that's the way the Bible calls people to respond in faith. That faith is shown through obedience in baptism because what we are seeing is a washing on the outside that mirrors the washing on the inside.

Whatever sin you've committed, whatever ugly past you have is washed away in the blood of Jesus.

Sanctified. This is an interesting word. Usually when we talk about sanctification we're talking about the slow process a believer goes through becoming more like Jesus. Sanctification is the process where we put off sin and put on holiness and become mature in our walk with Jesus.

But sometimes - like here - it's used as a synonym for salvation. What sanctification means is to be set apart for a special use. When you were saved God set you apart for a special purpose.

When I was doing sales for remodeling it was pretty cool to talk to people about their project. Because they already had - in their minds eye - what their kitchen looked like. They already had the tile picked out. They had the cabinets and they had the appliances already laid out in their mind.

So when we started a project, yeah there's a process to go through. But there's a sense in which that kitchen was complete in the mind of the customer on day 1.

When God saves us, you need to understand, God has set you apart for a special purpose in his Kingdom. He already knows the endgame. He knows what the final product of our lives will be. He's already planned where and how we will reign with him. He knows what our glorified state will look like. I'll be able to use hair spray again.

When you came to faith in Christ, God set you apart. He drew you out of the slime and repurposed you for his glory. He no longer looks at your past, he looks at you with an eye to how his ultimate plan for you.

Justified. Justification is a legal term. It means to be declared righteous in a legal setting. It's where God Almighty who knows everything about you and every thought and every word bangs the gavel at your salvation and says: "This person is 100% righteous in my estimation."

How in the world are we possibly righteous? Because when we trust in Jesus and follow Jesus there's the great trade. He takes our sin upon himself, and he imputes his righteousness to our account.

Martin Luther: we have an alien righteousness. It's not our own, it's Jesus's righteousness that God recognizes.

That righteousness that has been placed on our account is just as real today as it was the first moment we believed. You understand that Jesus is *infinitely* righteous. And that infinite righteousness has been placed on our account.

What's infinity minus 1? Infinity. What's infinity minus 20 billion? It's infinity. Our sin will never, ever exhaust the grace of God in Jesus. It's like taking a cup of water out of the ocean of mercy.

How did that happen? **Read 11**

It happened in the name of Jesus, or we could say by the work of Jesus. Because of what Jesus has accomplished we are washed, sanctified and justified.

And he says that happened by the Spirit of our God.

That great exchange, that great transfer of guilt and shame from our account to Jesus. And the transfer of righteousness and holiness to our account. You know who made that transaction happen? The Holy Spirit.

He's your banker. He's the teller. He's moving the spiritual goods around to bring you into the Kingdom.

Tit. 3:5: the washing of regeneration and renewal we have come from the Spirit.

John 6:63: It is the Spirit who gives life, the flesh counts for what? Nothing.

You guys, your salvation, from beginning to end is a work of God's grace. Who you were and what you've done has been so swallowed in grace there is no trace that sin ever existed.

Now, go and live like that's the reality. Because in Christ it is.

Pray