

“The Conclusion”
1 Corinthians 6:9-11
(and various other Scripture)

Let's open our Bibles once again and for the last time I might add, in this part of our study through Paul's letters to the church in Corinth, to First Corinthians and chapter 6, verses 9-11. You may have these three verses memorized by now.

⁹ *Or do you not know*, Beloved, you should know by now, and I hope you do, that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God. Do you know this? Or, have you learned to turn a blind eye to what the word of God says?

Paul the apostle was rebuking the church in Corinth for deliberately ignoring the fact that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God. Each occurrence of “do you not know” in this letter is a rebuke of the willful ignorance the church had embraced. And, beloved, willful ignorance is dangerous, for the church as well as for the unrighteous.

What is willful ignorance:

A decision in bad faith to avoid becoming informed about something so as to avoid having to make undesirable decisions that such information might prompt.

That reminds me of the illustration I came across many years ago about a woman who was diagnosed with a very serious ailment. One of her family members asked her why she had not gone to the doctor sooner. She said, “I was afraid of what he might tell me.”

1 Corinthians 5:1 *It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife.*

² *You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst. (1 Cor. 5:1-2 NAU)*

⁶ *Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough? (1 Cor. 5:6 NAU)* Of course you know that.

You know that leaven spreads throughout the dough. Well, sins that are tolerated in a local congregation spread in the same way. Do you not know that the unrighteous in your congregation are contagious?

Willful ignorance is the intentional rejection of known truths. But it doesn't stop there. Willful ignorance of truth means the deliberate acceptance of error...or worse.

Willful ignorance is turning a blind eye to something one finds morally repugnant in hopes of winning the approval of one's peers who approve of such behavior. No one wants to be rejected. That is the definition of liberalism.

Remember, we are doing the unrighteous an eternal disfavor by making them believe they are ok the way they are. "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life" for billions of souls simply isn't true. His plan for those not in Christ is anything but wonderful. I would never and never have told anyone that empty promise.

"Or do you not know?" That question from Paul was a rebuke aimed at people who had chosen to ignore this particular truth about the unrighteous. It was a case of willful ignorance. It was a matter of the saints in this church turning a blind eye to the obvious truth that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God. Compromising with the world has never saved one soul. Accepting the unrighteous as brothers and sisters in Christ and telling them so, dooms them to hell. Any kind of heresy allowed in the local church will spread like leaven in a lump of dough.

The end of willful ignorance is deception. "The ground of willful ignorance is fertile soil for the seeds of deception."

When the church chooses to ignore the truths found in the word of God, deceptions of all kinds will follow, guaranteed. When church leaders choose experience over the word of God, they are no longer fit to lead the sheep of the Lord Jesus. When pastors and elders and deacons choose pop culture over the word of God, the churches they lead will embrace the culture rather than Christ. When pastors and elders and deacons and congregants choose the flashy personalities over God-called

leaders, it is the blind leading the blind, and they will both fall into the ditch, guaranteed.

That explains how men like Kenneth Copeland and Todd White and Benny Hinn and Jesse Duplantis and Steven Furtick and women like Christine Caine and Gloria Copeland and Beth Moore can fill up large halls at every meeting they hold. Willful ignorance and perverting the word of God is the food these people thrive on. And Paul warned the church that the days we are now living in were coming. Days when men and women and teens will turn to preachers who will say what they want to hear. **2 Timothy 4:1** *I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom:*

² *preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.*

³ *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,*

⁴ *and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. (2 Tim. 4:1-4 NAU)*

This from the apostle Peter, **2 Peter 2:1** *But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.*

² **Many** *will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned;*

³ *and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; (2 Pet. 2:2-3 NAU)* And that means made up stories designed to move their followers to send them their money.

And this from the Lord Jesus,

⁴ *And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you. ⁵ "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many. (Matt. 24:4-5 NAU)* And by “many,” Jesus meant many, many, many.

This morning as we wrap up our study in these two verses, I will make observations on each of the remaining unrighteous people groups Paul lists.

First, “The covetous will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

And why, pray tell, will the covetous not inherit the kingdom of God? Here’s why. **Covetousness is idolatry.** ⁵ *For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. (Eph. 5:5 NAU)*

Read this, **Exodus 20:1** *Then God spoke all these words, saying,*
² *"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.*

³ *"You shall have no other gods before Me.*

⁴ *"You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.*

⁵ *"You shall not worship them or serve them; (Exod. 20:1-5 NAU)*

So we can say that no idolater will inherit the kingdom of God. Do you know of any such people? Sure you do. Do you ever see the false prophets and false teachers who rule the airways on certain television networks? They are all idolaters. They are the men and women who want more than their fair share of the money pie. The Greek word for covetousness in our text refers to just that, one who wants more than his share, especially of material possessions. That means they want your share as well. “Thou shalt not covet your neighbor’s possessions.”

And these men and women will go to any lengths to get your money, well, maybe not yours, but they certainly have carved out a niche for themselves in the hearts of the gullible and deceived masses that follow them like a pack of mad dogs.

And they tell some of the most egregious made-up stories because they know their followers will believe them and send them their hard earned money, even after they say stuff like this.

Second, “Thieves will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

I would guess you have seen the videos taken recently of thieves walking into various kinds of stores and then brazenly and casually walking out the door with loads of stolen merchandise either in their arms or in the stores shopping carts not caring if anyone sees them or if anyone is getting their thefts on video. They know that the police won't bother to hunt them down because of loop holes in our laws these days.

And bringing it close to home, Beverly and I have the Ring Security System and we are part of our community's Ring family so we get videos from our neighbors each time they discover thieves breaking into the vehicles sitting in their driveways. These thieves just don't care. They are being taped in their attempts to break into homes and cars and just don't care.

The Greek word behind our word thieves will sound familiar to all of you, I'm sure. It's the word κλέπτει. You can hear the word kleptomaniac in it, can't you? But in our context it refers chiefly to self-seeking religious leaders. So as angry as the thieves we saw on the video make me, these men and women make me even angrier. And the likes of the Copelands and their ilk know they will get away with their thievery. Until, that is, they find themselves about to be cast into the lake of fire.

Third, “Drunkards will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

There is more to this word than meets the eye...or ear. It comes from the Greek word μέθυστοι. Can you say “meth?” So it covers the entire family of illicit uses of alcohol and drugs. **methamphetamine** is a bizarrely popular and often fatal drug these days. I don't think I would have ever tried back in the day but I am thankful it wasn't around back then. We had enough overdoses and deaths among hippies who did LSD and heroin and cocaine.

And a word from the wise, marijuana is a gateway drug. It is how so many people find themselves getting hooked on heroin and coke and crack. If the words, “the wages of sin is death” were ever true, they are certainly true when it comes to illicit drugs. If pot makes one feel good, the reason goes, then stronger drugs must be heaven.

Fourth, “Revilers will not inherit the kingdom of God”

Honestly, I have never once in my 74 years used the word “reviler.” I don’t know anyone who has, well, except for today. But the idea behind the word has certainly found its applications in our day.

If you have ever known a spouse or parent who abuses his spouse or his or her children, then you have known a reviler.

If you have ever known a malicious slanderer or backbiter or two-faced backstabber, then you have known a reviler. It means one who intentionally abuses another with speech or slander or even physical abuse. It is the primary reason police are called out on domestic abuse incidents.

I’m sure you know that the most dangerous calls cops get called out on are incidents of domestic abuse. Abusive spouses do not like being confronted by cops whom the abuser sees as interfering with his private disputes, and the abuser often turns his wrath on the cops. According to the Charlotte Observer, the Charlotte Police Department has seen a noticeable increase in domestic violence-related 911 calls. In fact, the CPD reports an 18% increase of calls for domestic violence in Charlotte compared to March of 2019. Spikes in domestic violence generally occur during snowstorms or other natural disasters when people are stuck at home together, and North Carolina’s stay at home order has also created a drastic rise in domestic violence calls as a result of COVID-19.”

For those who are victims of domestic abuse, there is help, there are hot-lines for those victims. No abused spouse or girlfriend should ever believe that she deserves the abuse dished out by their spouse or anyone else.

And fifth and finally, “Swindlers will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Have you ever known a swindler? Do you know one right now? I once had a close friend who fit the bill perfectly. He was a smooth talking lying sorry rascal and died that way. He once bragged that he

could talk a nun out of her habit. And since he was Roman Catholic, I guessed he knew whereof he spoke.

Another translation of the word for swindler is ravenous. I like both translations. But ravenous swindlers is even better.

I have never seen a wolf in person and hope I never do. But I have seen a few ravenous coyotes. We have them all over our county and they are known to eat pets and other small animals. That's why God gave us rifles. But as far as the human kinds of wolves and coyotes go, God will take care of them. He will not allow them into His kingdom. We just have to be aware of them and know them when we see them or hear them. We must be on guard against them. They are often found within the walls of local churches.

Paul wrote this to all God-called pastors,

²⁸ *"Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.*

²⁹ *"I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock;*

³⁰ *and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. (Acts 20:28-30 NAU)*

And I close with this word of hope for almost every unrighteous person on planet Earth at this moment. ¹¹ *Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. (1 Cor. 6:11 NAU)*

Salvation is all of grace and all of God. The question is this, have you been washed and sanctified and justified *in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God?*

I invite you this morning to be sure by calling upon the name of the Lord and being saved.

Will you come?