

Jeff Corinthians 11

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[0 : 0 0] Well, chapter 6, we're on the third outline, and here Paul deals with an issue that strikes the attention of the great apostle, and does it deserve 11 verses in this letter, not to mention the New Testament? And I alluded to this earlier when we began chapter 5, but there's another puzzling aspect to it. He's dealt with incest, chapter 5, now he turns to lawsuits, then he's going to turn again to issues of sexual immorality. Some in the church appear to be visiting prostitutes. So, again, we see that strange arrangement.

Why does he interrupt that teaching? And the reason for including lawsuits is, after the case of incest, is that both issues touch upon the same fundamental shortcoming in the church. The church is failing to act as a community. Just as they fail to discipline the incestuous man, so are they failing to take responsibility for settling their own disputes. Instead, what are they doing? They're taking legal cases before nonbelievers. Chapter 6, verse 1, when one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to the law, or go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? When Paul, what he means by unrighteous there, he means nonbelievers. You're taking these matters before nonbelievers. In other words, people who have not experienced the transforming power of Christ, people who do not make their judgments in light of the true wisdom revealed in the cross, people who operate in a system immersed in the values and worldview of a fallen world. See that larger context. You're taking your issues to people who have not had this experience, who do not have the Spirit, who operate in worldly wisdom.

That's why it's such a big deal to Paul. By doing this, the Corinthians are declaring an allegiance to the pagan culture superior to their allegiance to the church.

So, the underlying topic, in one sense, hasn't really changed from chapter 5. In both chapters 5 and 6, the issue is that the church is not acting like the church.

[2 : 5 4] Now, the context here is important to understand. What's in view here is the Corinthian equivalent of what we might call a small claims court. These aren't criminal courts dealing with serious crimes.

These are, this isn't even criminal activity. This is civil lawsuits. Things like breaches of contract or fraud or different kinds of damages.

Do you see? Those terms make sense to you? You even see hints of that in the text in verse 1 and again in verse 5. When one of you has a grievance against one another.

And then verse 5. Can it be that there's no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers? Verse 2, he mocks them for not being incompetent. End of verse 2.

To trial trivial cases. Verse 3. Matters pertaining to this life. You see, all those phrases help us see what is actually involved here.

[4 : 0 9] Grievances, trivial matters, things having to do with this life. And it does appear that greed is at the root of much of this. In verses 7 to 8, Paul challenges them to be willing to be...

Be willing to be what? Yes, wronged or defrauded. And I do think it's suggestive that in all three of the vice lists, there's a vice list in chapter...

There's two, actually, in chapter 5. Sexually immoral of the world, verse 10. Greedy, swindlers, idolaters. And then in 11, there's another vice list. Sexual immorality or greed, idolater, reviler, drunkard, swindler.

And then chapter 6, verses 9, there's another... Yeah, 9, there's another vice list. Sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, men who practice homosexuality.

Thieves, greedy, drunkards, revilers, swindlers. I think it's suggestive that in all three of those lists, greed appears. So, again, what's in view here is civil litigation, not criminal litigation.

[5 : 23] Civil litigation in secular courts. And so, don't picture here... We have this phrase in English or in American jurisprudence. Equal treatment under the law.

Everyone deserves their day in court. Equal treatment under the law is not what's happening here. These courts were notorious for their injustice.

And they were shot through with advantages based on status and power of the prosecutor, of the defendant, or both. The key factor for legal privilege in the Roman world was social honor derived from power or wealth or lifestyle.

And in these courts, the judges were known to be open to bribes. That's how it worked. And they themselves were members of the privileged class. They gave preference to their social peers.

And in this setting, in Roman Corinth, the overwhelming majority of lawsuits were brought by the wealthy and powerful against people of lower status and wealth.

[6 : 32] Even going to one of these courts was out of the reach for most people. But the wealthy had the funds to do so. To hire professional representatives.

Sophists, again, who would argue their case. Even jotted down a quote from Cicero, the Roman statesman. Actually, the most renowned Roman rhetorician.

Writing a few decades earlier, he complained about the justice in the provinces east of Rome because of bribery in the upper class. So, you see what's happening.

By the way, that helps to explain the apparent discrepancy between this text and a text like Romans 13. In Romans 13, he is much more deferential to the state.

Much more sober about the state. All authority comes from God. Remember that text? God institutes all governments. The ruler is actually God's servant for our good.

[7 : 45] The ruler, the government, carries out God's wrath on evildoers. So, we should be subject to the authorities. Well, his instructions here seem very different.

But the context makes all the difference. For Paul, there's a fundamental difference between the valid right of Roman government to administer criminal justice. Between that and, on the other hand, the morally questionable machinations of these minor Corinthian courts dominated by socially connected locals.

Totally different setting. And so, this text, by the way, should never be used to justify avoiding the criminal justice system. Or covering up crimes.

Or delegitimizing appropriate authorities. That's not what Paul is attacking here. So, what's the setting? In all likelihood, what you had here were privileged members of the church, more wealthy members of the church, taking advantage of poorer and less influential members of the church. Perhaps a wealthier member who employed a poor member in the church. And so, he's suing him over his work, the quality of his work, or the quality of the service that he was hired to provide.

[9 : 12] Possibly two members of the higher class, but one using his advantages over the other. And all for financial gain. Most likely tainted by injustice.

And all with no regard for another church member. Especially less well-off, less privileged church members. And this wasn't just an ethical breach.

This had the effect of bringing further division to the church. And clearly, in Paul's mind, compromising the witness of the church.

You see? So, that context helps to broaden the application of the text. And the inescapable implications of the text. Behind the lawsuit stands the principle of love between members of God's people.

Behind the lawsuit stand the principle of equality among the people of God. The rich and the powerful are not to take advantage of the poor and less influential.

[10 : 22] They're rather to care for them. Even help provide for them. That's what's at stake. Now, the way Paul deals with this is, again, fascinating and pastorally instructive.

He shows the absurdity of this by, once again, reframing. You won't be surprised. Reframing the issue eschatologically. You first see how incredulous Paul is about the situation.

Verse 1. When one of you has a grievance against one another, does he dare? *Tamao* is the word. Does he dare go to the law before the unrighteous?

Instead of the saints? And in that, if you've got your Greek Bible, the word *dare* there is emphatic. The verse begins, does one dare who has an agreeance against one another to go to the law before the unrighteous?

That's how you could translate it literally. Does one dare to do this? In other words, how dare you? They're meant to feel his outrage and his disappointment.

[11 : 32] And Paul gives a hint of where he's going to go at the end of verse 1. Instead of the saints? Instead of the holy ones?

And so you should hear an echo of what? The opening of the letter. But Paul addresses them in terms of their true identity before God. Instead of those holy ones that God has called out?

Paul then presses in verse 2. He presses his case. So, let's read it. Do you not know? Here's his response. Do you not know that saints will judge the world?

And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more then matters pertaining to this life?

Again, on the surface, the issue wasn't theological. But Paul deals with it theologically. The theological basis for not taking others to court is eschatological.

[12 : 42] Believers are going to judge the world. Not something modern Christians tend to think much about.

But it's not unusual at all biblically. Some think that this was a catchphrase that the Corinthians used.

And Paul is using it against them. That's uncertain. I'm not sure about that. But what is certain is that biblically literate believers would recognize this.

Especially from texts like Daniel chapter 7 verse 18 and 22. In Daniel's vision, when the ancient of days comes, perhaps you recall that phrase, judgment was given to the saints of the Most High. Remarkable. And it appears in a number of post-biblical Jewish texts as well. Jesus himself mentions this in Matthew 19, 28, Luke 22, 30.

[13 : 45] And of course, the exalted Jesus promises this in Revelation 3 verse 21. So it's not a foreign idea or a strange idea.

And so Paul once again addresses their behavior in terms of their identity in the wake of the gospel. They are eschatological people. They've tasted of the powers of the age to come.

They've received the Spirit. Someday they're going to judge the world. And if that's the case, then these trivial matters, this should be easy for them. And the values informing these issues should be clear.

Think about it. If you're eschatological people, if all of your hope is in Christ, then property and possessions and social rights, these trivial matters, those weigh little for those who are going to inherit the whole kingdom.

Why are you so lathered up and grasping and greedy, just making sure you get your rights, you make sure he pays you, you're going to inherit the kingdom.

[15 : 03] It puts our earthly lives in perspective. Then Paul's argument intensifies in verse 3. Do you not know that we're to judge angels?

So believers' judicial authority will transcend people. It will extend even to angels. The church is going to participate in judging matters of cosmic proportion.

So surely you can find a way to deal with these things and so preserve your unity. Now, a further concern of Paul is just who this involves.

It's not just that these are trivial issues. Look carefully at the language in verse 5. I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute before the brothers?

Wise. Wise. See the word wise. But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers. Three times in these two verses, Paul uses the word.

[16 : 14] Did you see it? Brother. To settle a dispute between the brothers. But brother goes to law against brothers. Then again, he's going to say it in verse 8.

But you yourselves wrong and defraud. Even your own brothers. So these aren't abstract legal principles for Paul.

They involve family. They involve the people of God. Yet the people of God are subjecting these things to non-believers. Now, I just wanted just a note, a translation note.

There are certain gender-neutral, so-called gender-neutral translations, like the NRSV, that replaces brother with believer.

So, verse 6 in the NRSV, which is a widely used Bible. Believer goes to law against believer, because we don't want to leave ladies out, even though Paul says brother.

[17:18] What's wrong with that translation? Does Paul mean men and women here? Could this include women too?

I think it could. But by changing that to believer, Paul uses the word believer on purpose. I'm sorry, brother on purpose. Brother goes to law against brother. So, by changing that to believer, you completely lose the idea that the church is God's family.

We have this phrase in English that you don't want to air the family's laundry. In other words, taking family disputes out into the streets and bringing the whole family into disrepute.

You have an argument with your wife on the front lawn, and you're screaming, and everyone's going, man, go inside. We don't want to be part of this, you know. But that's kind of what he's saying. You're airing the family laundry.

[18:26] You've got disputes among yourselves, and you're going to the courts, and you're showing everyone how you feel about each other. You're showing everyone what you really value. You're using social connections.

You're greedy. You want to win. And everyone's watching. I say this, Paul says, verse 5, to your shame.

He wants them to feel shame. It's remarkable in light of chapters 1 to 4, he actually says in chapter 4, verse 14, after that rhetorical, you're kings and we're nothing.

You're rich and we're poor. Do you remember that? Well, Paul says in that context, I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you. So apparently the divisions weren't a cause for shame, but for conviction.

But here, it seems, a degree of shame is appropriate. I say this to your shame.

[19:31] Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers? These Corinthians, remember chapters 1 to 4, these Corinthians who were so enamored of what?

Of what? Status, yes. But what terms was Paul using over and over in chapters 1 to 4? Wisdom, right? So this is a dig. Can it be there's no one among you wise enough? So these Corinthians who were so enamored of wisdom had no one wise enough to handle these matters in a just and biblical way.

Instead, they take all this before unbelievers. The only other place in the New Testament where the expression comes, I say this to your shame, is going to be in 1 Corinthians chapter 15, verse 34. And if you look at the context, the cause for shame is the believer acting like the world. So when you're acting like the world, there's shame in that.

[20:50] So there's really, if you consider it, there's a triple indictment here. First, there's a failure of love in taking these matters before courts, the rich over the poor, grasping for gain, exalting material, concerns over spiritual and relational ones.

You're in my church. We've got a dispute. I'm taking you to court. What a, you see what I'm saying? Forget, he's my brother in Christ. We have way more in common than we don't.

And if there's, and it's this, we're talking money here. We're talking breach of contract. He owes me some money. I think we can work that out rather than saying, no, I'm taking you to court.

You see the greed, the grasping, the materialism that's behind this. So there's a failure of love.

Secondly, verse five, there's a failure of wisdom expressed in immaturity.

And I would say a lack of leadership. Paul doesn't say that, but there's, there are likely elders in this church. Apparently there was no one who would step in.

[22:04] No one who would be able to decide these matters. Such a contradiction to how they viewed themselves. So wise, so sophisticated, so spiritually advanced.

But this, this whole issue shows just how bogus that was. And finally, there's a third failure.

There's a failure in their witness. By, by these lawsuits, they are, they're communicating to their city that we are no different than you.

We're no different than you. They're telling a lie about Christ. That he is not glorious or supremely valuable.

That he has not transformed our lives so that we can work through such issues. That, that Christians are not transformed people who have greater treasures than this world has to offer. Who have higher allegiances than this world has.

[23:16] So it's serious what's happening. Now, so far, Paul's focus has been on their handling of their own cases. His case actually has two parts.

In, in the first six verses that we've been looking at, he argues, basically, you should settle these things yourselves. Right? Then in verses 7 to 11, Paul's argument gets even more ethically challenging.

Even his admonition to believers to decide these matters themselves turns out to be a concession. Look at verse 7.

To have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded? It would be, it would be better for you to allow yourself to be wronged and cheated than to do wrong to each other and to do wrong to the church by taking these things to these secular courts.

I mean, what's the goal of a lawsuit? Winning. It's exactly right. The whole goal of a lawsuit is winning. Paul's point here is basically this.

[24 : 33] We already know the outcome. Whatever takes place at court, whatever the result, it's a defeat. Everyone loses. It's a defeat for both parties. It's a defeat for the church.

To have lawsuits at all is already a defeat. Where else do we see this ethic in Paul?

A willingness to suffer injustice and abuse for the sake of Christ. Romans 12.

Bless those who bless you. Bless those who persecute you. Bless. Bless and do not curse. Right? Good. Where else? 1 Thessalonians 5. Similar. Don't repay evil for evil.

[25 : 38] Romans 12. Repay no one evil for evil. Evil. He already said in chapter 4, verse 12 about his own example, when reviled, we bless.

When persecuted, we endure. The whole concept of forbearance and patience that runs throughout Paul.

When we get to chapter 13, what are we going to learn about love? Love is patient and kind and not jealous. Does not brag. It's not arrogant.

Verse 7. Love believes all things, bears all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Fruit of the Spirit. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

In fact, if you read through 1 and 2 Corinthians, you'll see the theme of suffering righteously and enduring and bearing up under wrong.

[26 : 45] it's laced through these chapters. And most often, it's Paul's own example that displays this willingness to suffer for Christ's sake.

Which dates back to what? What? His very conversion. Acts chapter 9.

I will show him how much he will suffer for my sake. So he knew from the get-go. He's in this for Christ and it's going to cost him.

And we're not Paul and we won't go through his sufferings. But I think we all should know to follow Christ, we're in this for him.

And it may cost us. But there's glory in that. Now, lest we be idealistic, one thing we shouldn't misunderstand, this text does not mean there will not be disputes among believers.

[27 : 56] Obviously, there will be. And scripture addresses how to handle disputes. Yes, we should be willing to bear up under unfairness to suffer loss.

But that doesn't give other Christians the right to take advantage of the more godly among us.

Right? And so, in Matthew 18, we've been speaking about Jesus establishes a process for such things.

going and speaking to the person who offends you. If that's ineffective, bring others with you.

It doesn't appear the Corinthians were following Jesus' words. They're not going. Not going to each other, they're going to the courts to settle these things.

And that's what's a defeat for them. There are no winners here. The individuals lose, the whole church loses. And again, what undergirds all of this is Paul's eschatological framing and emphasis on their identity.

[29 : 12] He's not only asking them to be willing to suffer loss. Given who they are, Christ's people destined to inherit the kingdom destined to judge angels, angels, what is loss in this world anyway?

Money, property, private possessions, reputation, social status, these things should be of little concern to those destined to inherit the kingdom.

So these verses, like all of Paul's teaching on eschatology, they also serve as an encouragement to those who have suffered loss.

a glorious future awaits, which puts all loss and suffering and hardship into an eternal perspective.

So again, another incredibly helpful and brilliant pastoral model, Paul is calling the Corinthians to stop seeing themselves as normal participants in the social and economic structures of their cultures.

[30 : 22] We're not just citizens of Addis or citizens of Louisville and we just happen to be Christians too. No, we're not normal participants in these things.

He's reframing their reality, helping them to recognize their membership in the eschatological people of God, acting corporately in such a way that displays and proclaims the kingdom of God. He's building in them a community consciousness. Okay? And I wanted to drill down on this a little bit because I think it's one of these things we, one of these sections that we can move quickly past because our people aren't taking people to court.

I can only remember one instance in all my ministry where two people were about to go to court. It was many years ago and we were mediating, the pastors were mediating.

So it's not like, okay, go to court. All right. I guess we've got bigger things to deal with in my church. But if you look at this carefully and think carefully about what Paul says, I think we find some very relevant application for our churches.

[31 : 35] So, for example, this is an application of this text. How are, for instance, businessmen deferring to outside secular authorities to shape their business practices?

That's an application of this text. Sure, there's common grace wisdom to be learned from skilled businessmen and from books on business and organization, but we must be discerning as to the values that underlie such wisdom.

So what's shaping my business practices? What works? What's successful? What's most profitable? or is it what honors Christ and serves others?

Another application that comes to mind for anyone in the church, are we asserting economic rights that ignore the interests of the church?

In other words, are we conducting our affairs in a way that demonstrates primary loyalty to the people of God or primary loyalty to social, political, economic systems?

[32 : 59] In America right now, there's an increasing divide among the progressive left and some on the right that want to take America back.

These would be Christians. We're going to take America back. Well, where is my allegiance? Is it to Christ and His people? Or is it to my country?

or the economy? Or my bank account? I'm very grateful for numerous men whom the Lord has brought to our church who are successful.

They're running businesses and managing properties and serving in corporate settings. But if they were here, they would be nodding their heads in agreement. And they would be able to tell us, no, there are temptations in those settings to compromise, to capitulate, to go along with what is just accepted business practice in those corporations.

There's temptations people face. Where's your allegiance? Christ, the people of God, or systems, worldly systems? Their allegiance was to worldly systems.

[34 : 30] You see how this, the application broadens when you see the underlying issues. Now, before getting into the second half of the chapter, I just want to mention what are probably very familiar verses to us, verses 9 to 11.

Their meaning, I think, is straightforward, but there's a debate over how they fit. Do they go with the verses before, which we just looked at, or do they go with what follows?

A new paragraph has started in my translation. I think it's probably best to take them with what we just covered, although there's a sense in which they also prepare for what Paul is going to address next.

We've seen how seriously Paul takes this issue of lawsuits and all it's signified. In verses 9 and following, Paul explains just how serious the matter is. Don't you know that the unrighteous will inherit the kingdom, will not inherit the kingdom of God?

There's actually, I think I put this on your outline, there's actually a lexical connection between verses 8 and 9. But you, yourselves, wrong and defraud. You do wrong.

[35 : 48] That's the verb, *adikeo*, to act in an unjust way, to wrong or to act unrighteously. You see that? You wrong, you *adikeo*.

And then verse 9, Paul says, do you not know that the unrighteous, the *adikos*, those who do wrong, will not inherit the kingdom? So you could translate this to get that cognate connection there.

You do wrong, don't you know that wrongdoers won't inherit the kingdom of God? You act unrighteously, don't you know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? And again, Paul is putting it in a large frame, doesn't it?

What's at stake is inheriting the kingdom. Final judgment is in view. They can't, they can't continue to engage in evil and expect a final reward in God's kingdom.

And so what's Paul implying here? he's implying that those Corinthians engaged in these lawsuits have been acting like the unrighteous people who will be rejected at the final judgment.

[37 : 07] Pretty serious, isn't it? Now we do want to be clear what's in view with each of the ten terms.

I alluded to this a moment ago that Paul uses in verses nine and ten which would be consistent with Pauline theology, consistent with New Testament theology, more general, are peoples whose lives are characterized by the sins in question.

I alluded to that earlier, but Paul uses nouns here, so he's speaking of people's, he's speaking about settled character expressing itself in a consistent lifestyle.

He's not speaking of a temporary lapse, he's not speaking of a temptation a believer is fighting, it's persistent rebellion that is in view. As David Pryor, one commentator, put it well, I think, Paul is not talking about isolated acts of unrighteousness but about a whole way of life pursued persistently by those who thus indicate that they would be aliens in the kingdom of truth and light.

So that's not to excuse any individual instance of sin but it is to protect us from applying a text like this and any of Paul's vice lists that we saw in chapter five also in an illegitimate way.

[38 : 27] Don't want to do that. I'm not going to go through this list but I should probably point out two items on this list that create much controversy and speculation at least in my setting.

The ESV which I'm reading from at the end of verse nine look at what it says neither the sexual immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers than the last one nor men who practice homosexuality.

Now behind that phrase are actually two words and I put them on your outline. Ute malakoi utte arsenikoitai so there's two names there that the ESV translates men who practice homosexuality.

Now Paul is clearly addressing homosexuality but or homosexual behavior but modern exegesis here gets into a fair bit of hermeneutical gymnastics I would say to escape the implications.

The TNIV do you know that translation? It's today's new international version. New international versions was one of the most popular for decades and then it was updated a few years ago.

[39 : 58] It's now the TNIV. It translates this way. Male prostitutes for malakoi and practicing homosexuals are arsenikoitai.

Some commentators more radically want to use Greco-Roman parallels to argue for a very narrow set of activities here. Or maybe Paul is just drawing from vice lists which are removed from a biblical ethics.

So this list some commentators go this way. This list is not so much moral but they reflect a stoic distaste for excess.

Or a platonic devaluation of the senses. So in other words if you go that way do you know what you're saying? Oh the issue here is not moral it's about what's acceptable in culture.

Which means you bring this into a modern setting we have to adjust for our own cultural settings and standards. You see where that goes? And so you have statements by influential people who say well what Paul has in mind here bears no resemblance to homosexual relationships and marriages marked by love and commitment.

[41 : 33] That's where they go. Some commentators say well what malikos means here is unmanly.

and there were Greek youths who would who would utilize feminine appearance and lifestyles thus acting like male prostitutes.

So what Paul is talking about here is male prostitution not two homosexuals that are committed and love each other. Or yet another no what Paul is talking about here is pederasty meaning sexual relationship between a man and a youth.

Because in these settings you would have men of high status who would often attach boys to themselves for their own sexual pleasure. people get do all kinds of things to get out of the clear implications.

Suffice it to say those are imaginative interpretations which completely they misunderstand Paul and here's one of the things they do. They divorce Paul from the entire system of Old Testament

ethics that informs his own ethics specifically on the topic of homosexuality.

[43 : 02] texts like Leviticus 18.22 or Leviticus 20.13 So Paul doesn't get his ethics from the Stoic philosophers.

Paul gets his ethics from the Old Testament seen in the light of Christ. And it also misinterprets the specific meanings of the very words Paul uses.

The terms quite clearly refer to without being too graphic the passive and active partners in a homosexual act. So the point is what's in view here is not some narrow strange deviation but no homosexuality itself.

That's what he's condemning here. So the root of Paul's condemnation isn't Greco-Roman sensibilities but the very clear teaching of the Old Testament which uniformly identifies homosexuality as a sin.

and all you have to do is look closely at Romans 1 26 and 27 which by the way was written from Corinth to see Paul's deep reflection on homosexuality.

[44 : 12] Some people say Paul hasn't reflected on this. He's just drawing these things from other lists. No Paul has reflected on homosexuality and there he condemns both male and female same sex conduct.

So I just want to mention those because in this list those are the debated ones and they've never been debated more than they are now. Well then finally after detailing yet another list like he did in chapter 5 verse 10 5 verse 11 another list of rebellious sin noting the consequences the eternal consequences given to those who are given to such sins thus providing a warning Paul then uses the list as an encouragement.

He once again reminds them of their new identity in Christ and concludes on a note of hope. And such were some of you 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.

So Paul celebrates the change these Corinthians had undergone. These were former pagans enmeshed in the vices of their culture. Immorality, idolatry, greed, drunkards, revilers, swindlers but they have made a break with their past.

And Paul doesn't just mention the break, he's emphatic about that break. Most translations don't capture this but before each of the three saving experiences verse 11 but you were washed you were sanctified you were justified before each of those three verbs there is the strong adversative Allah.

[46 : 06] Remember that word? So Paul is stressing and hammering home how decisive this transformation was.

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. So they were washed cleansed from the defilement of sins like Paul just described in verses 9 and 10.

They were sanctified so they were separated from their godless lifestyle and set apart for God and his purposes. That's now their holy status.

And then they were justified declared righteous before God in spite of their sins. So all three of these refer to a break from the past.

All three imply the beginning of a new lifestyle and all three together point to the same reality their conversion. God has acted upon the Corinthians he has acted on behalf of the Corinthians and now they are to live differently in light of all that God has done and who they are.