

Judges and Saints

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- [0 : 0 0] James 4, 1-2 teaches us about the root of all conflict. It says, What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?
- You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. So we like to blame our circumstances and situations when we get into conflict or when we're offended by someone.
- However, Scripture teaches that the root of all conflict is our own desires, passions. The circumstances, situations present an occasion for those desires to surface and to manifest in disappointment and anger.
- But those are just occasions, context for that desire to be expressed. And that desire, whether it's for love, respect, or profit, when it's unfulfilled, it leads to disappointment and disagreement.
- So desire leads to disappointment. And when our sinful pride, at this point, it leads us to believe that we deserve whatever we didn't get. So it's that desire to disappointment to a sense of deserving.
- [1 : 0 5] And then after that, this sinful downward spiral diverges into two paths. Either we go to denial, where we, at this point, say, act as if nothing happened, nothing's wrong, there's no conflict, it doesn't exist, or you simply flee the situation by either ending a relationship, quitting a job, or changing churches.
- The other path is to demand it, whatever you did not get, to demand it of others. And you do it by fighting to get it. You lead to at least verbal abuse. It leads to intimidation, threat of violence, or even litigation.
- So that's really the trajectory of all conflict, really. It starts from desire, goes to disappointment, and then you demand it or you deny it. Now, in the Corinthian church, there was a believer who desired fair treatment and an equitable transaction that he wanted some kind of profit with the fellow believer.
- But this desire was disappointed when he was defrauded by the other believer. And believing that he deserved better, he proceeded to demand restitution by suing the other believer within the Roman legal system.
- And so the biblical, Paul addresses this messy situation here in 1 Corinthians 6, 1-11. But instead of taking us toward the downward spiral of sin, he points us to a better biblical approach to resolving such a situation.
- [2 : 2 2] And his main point in this passage is this, is that justified saints ought to live justly and judge disputes among themselves. So justified saints ought to live justly and judge disputes among themselves.
- The first point will be about the saints' judgment in verses 1-6. Second, about the saints' justice in verses 7-10. And lastly, about the saints' justification in verse 11.
- So look with me at verse 1-6 first about the saints' judgment. So Paul concluded the previous chapter in chapter 5 about, he was commanding the Corinthian church to expel the incestuous man from their fellowship because he was teaching that they are supposed to not judge those who are outside, but judge those who are inside.

But in the same way Christians are not to judge those who are outside, they are also not to be judged by outsiders regarding its internal affairs. And so he says in this passage that judging the internal matters of the church is a saint's prerogative.

And that's the first point, the saint's judgment. And right from verse 1, Paul voices indignation at the situation that was reported to him. He says, When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare to go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints?

[3 : 33] So in the Greek, the verb dare is the very first word of that sentence for emphasis. It goes, dare do you have grievance against another to go to the law before the unrighteous instead of the saints?

So Paul's kind of horrified by what he's heard of happening. And the unrighteous are contrasted with the word saints in verse 1, right? So the word saint means holy one, someone who is set apart or consecrated.

It's the designation of Christians who have been consecrated to belong to God. So by referring to the Roman courts as unrighteous, Paul's not necessarily commenting on their corruption, that they're corrupt legal authorities, but rather he's designating their status as people who do not follow God and don't belong to God.

So this is confirmed by verse 6, where the unrighteous people are referred to as unbelievers. That's really what Paul is essentially saying. But by choosing the word unrighteous, he is kind of highlighting the irony of what the Corinthians are doing here, because he's basically asking, do you, because the word unrighteous also means unjust, he's basically asking them, do you seek justice from the unjust, right?

Do you seek righteousness from those who do not know true righteousness? That's what Paul is asking here. And Paul gives two parallel reasons why taking a case between two believers to an unbeliever for judgment is so unthinkable in verses 2 to 3.

[4 : 52] Or do you not know that the saints, follow with me, verses 2 to 3. Do you not know that the 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? So first reason that is given in verse 2, the saints will judge the world, right?

So now, at this point, if you have been with us for the whole series, you're wondering, wait, didn't you just tell us in the last chapter that we're not supposed to judge the world? And so the key to answering that contradiction is looking at the tense, because he says the saints will judge the world.

The saints do not judge the world here and now. That's not our prerogative. But it is God's prerogative at the end time, at the day of judgment, to judge the world. But at that time of God's judgment, the saints will partake in God's judgment over the world.

And we don't know to what extent or detail, but we do know that saints will partake in that judgment. And then, this is kind of the Old Testament background for this, is in Daniel 7.22, where it teaches that when God comes for judgment, it says the judgment will be given for the saints of the Most High.

[6 : 04] And so Paul is kind of referring to the reality that he taught about in chapter 2, where he said this natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

The spiritual person judges all things, but he is himself to be judged by no one. So Christians are indwelt by the Spirit of God and endowed with the privilege of rendering God's judgment on the final day of judgment.

So if that's the case, then how backwards is it for these believers to seek judgment from unbelievers who do not have the Spirit of God and therefore are unable to discern spiritual things?

And how senseless for a church that will be entrusted with judging the whole world to be deemed incompetent to try such a trivial case? That's what Paul is saying. And he gives a second parallel reason in verse 2.

He says, Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more than matters pertaining to this life? Paul's reasoning is identical to the first one, right? The church will even judge the angels, the heavenly beings.

[7 : 08] How much more than are we qualified to judge earthly matters, right? And then he continues in verse 4. So if you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church?

So there are two problems with what the Corinthians are doing in this current situation. First, they are making such a fuss about what Paul deems a trivial matter. To him, this is not a big deal. So this is a small problem, but you're making such a big deal that you're even taking it to this court.

So they're making much ado about nothing. And then secondly, they are seeking the judgment of outsiders, people who have no standing in the church, right? So even though they're foreign to the church and they don't have a share in God's judgment, they are going instead to God, instead of God's community, going to the outsiders.

So you can kind of think about it this way, right? When a criminal in the U.S. flees to another country, right? The laws of the partnership that they have with other governments and legal systems, the U.S. will request the extradition of the foreign government, right?

So the foreign government will send the criminal back to the U.S. so they can be tried within this legal system to which they are legally bound, right? So judgment has to be rendered by the proper authorities who have jurisdiction, but the Corinthians are doing exactly the opposite, right?

[8 : 22] They have proper jurisdiction. They should be rendering judgment on this trivial case, but they are trying to send it over to someone else for judgment. They're extraditing this case, but even though it's their prerogative to judge.

And so earlier, right, in chapter 4, verse 14, Paul reminded them that he was writing some of the things he was writing, not to shame them, but to admonish them. But now their situation is so bad, Paul resorts directly to shaming them, right?

So he says in verse 5 here, I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers?

Right, this is about as sharp and sarcastic as Apostle Paul gets, you know, in his writings. Because, right, remember the word wisdom is a key word that recurs throughout the book of 1 Corinthians.

And the whole, one of the main problems, the root problem of the Corinthians was their pride in thinking that they were so wise to have advanced beyond Paul's teaching about the gospel. So they claimed to be characterized by this great wisdom.

[9 : 25] But they were really turning to the wisdom of the world. So when Paul says to them, is there, there's no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers? He's being really sarcastic and kind of rubbing it in.

You claim to be so wise, but there's not even anyone, among you wise enough to judge this trivial case. And he continues his rebuke in verse 6. Brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers.

Paul's bringing yet another reason why this is so inappropriate, and that's that this is a matter between two brothers. Paul's accusing the Corinthians, basically, of airing out their dirty household laundry in front of outsiders.

People who are not part of their family, and thereby inviting their scorn and damaging the witness of the church. In the Roman Empire, the civil magistrates took judgment seats at the public marketplace, at the very heart of the public marketplace.

So the judgments were quite public. So really these guys, these two believers from the Corinthian church are making a public spectacle of a household problem, of their internal family problem.

[10 : 32] And this is in stark contrast to what Paul's vision for the church is. The church is the temple of God, as Paul was writing before. It's supposed to be an alternate community in Corinth, a contrast community that showcases God's values and priorities, but instead, they are narrow-mindedly seeking their personal gain, and in doing so, making a public spectacle of church's own sin and problem.

Now, if you're thinking about this and thinking about how this applies to us, it's important to note that Paul's not advocating some sort of extreme separation of church and state, right? Where we claim exclusive jurisdiction over everything that happens in the church, you know?

I mean, you guys have probably heard of churches like that. It's more cult-like to do that, right? It's like, oh, if there's anything wrong happening in the church, no, don't hide it, hide it. You know, kind of just put it under the rug and try not to let the word get out about it.

That's not what Paul's talking about because Paul is here speaking of a civil lawsuit, right? Obviously, the distinction is modern, but the same concept applies. He's talking about a civil lawsuit which deals with a private dispute between persons and organizations, right?

He's not speaking of a criminal case where the offense is considered harmful to all of society so that the charge is brought not by a private individual but by a government prosecutor or a district attorney.

[11 : 51] You guys know the difference between those two cases? So this is a civil case. So, for example, if one of our members is charged of conspiracy and fraud, that kind of goes beyond just the two private individuals but poses a general threat to the public, right?

Or if one of our members is perpetrating abuse, sexual abuse or assault or possession and distribution of drugs, for example.

So if our members are doing things that are of a public threat to general society, that's a criminal case and yes, the government has jurisdiction over that and they do prosecute that and we will partner with them on that regard because those are actually wrong and Romans 13 teaches clearly that we are to be subject to the governing authorities.

So because of that authority, they've been instituted by God to reward good conduct and punish bad conduct, that's what Romans 13 says, as long as the laws of our land do not violate the higher law of God, we will be subject to them.

That's not what Paul is talking about. This principle of not going to law against other believers does not apply to criminal cases. It applies to civil cases between two believers where one person can theoretically just incur the loss himself and cover it up instead of having to go to get public gain.

[13 : 10] With that said though, right, so when it comes to judging matters of private offense between brothers and sisters, the judgment rightfully belongs to the church and that's Paul's first point, the saints' judgment. The saints ought to judge disputes among themselves.

And then in verses 7 to 10, Paul talks about the saints' justice. By justice, I mean righteousness, both of which are translations of the same Greek word. And not only is it the saints' prerogative to judge fellow believers, the saints' lives should be characterized by justice or righteousness.

And so if these two brothers were pursuing righteousness, they would have responded very differently to this situation. And so in verse 7, Paul first addresses the plaintiff, right, the brother who is suing the other brother.

And in verse 8, Paul turns to address the defendant, the brother who defrauded the other person and is now being sued, right? So keep that in mind, verse 7 and verse 8.

So he says in 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? Defrauded. I mean, this mindset is so foreign to our culture, right?

[14 : 17] It's, our culture, we're all about getting our share, right? We're all about using our rights. And in the mindset of the world, there are a thousand good reasons for why not rather suffer wrong?

Why not rather be defrauded? Because, well, that's not fair, right? That seems like a good reason, right? But why not? Because I didn't do anything wrong. Like, why not?

Because it's all his fault. Why is it not fair for me to get my right and get my share, right? So they, but these are not good enough reasons for the believer because we follow Jesus Christ, our Savior, who himself suffered unjustly that we might be saved.

And if we claim to follow him, then our lives should follow the pattern of the suffering servanthood of Christ. So the Christian life is about humility, right? It's about counting others better than ourselves, not equal to ourselves than we try to get our rights.

No, we're supposed to count others better than ourselves. It's about putting others' interests before our own. So our enthusiastic answer to Paul's rhetorical question should be, why not indeed?

[15 : 24] We would much rather be personally defrauded than defame Christ's name and damage the church's witness. That should be our answer to Paul's rhetorical question.

That's the proper Christian attitude. Note that the Christian brother here was really defrauded, right? I mean, he really was wronged. He really was defrauded. But nevertheless, right, but Paul tells him that he should have rather suffered wrong than to sue.

It's not a question of whether we can get our right. It's not a question of whether you are in the right. Even if you're 100% in the right, suffering wrong for Christ's sake is the distinctively Christian thing to do.

So what if you were cheated out of a lot of money? It's all money you can't take with you to heaven. Why not rather suffer wrong for the love of Christ than out of your forbearing love for a brother?

As Paul says in Romans 12, 17 to 21, repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. He says, we are not to be overcome by evil, but to overcome evil with good.

[16 : 39] Of course, Paul's dealing specifically with matters between two Christians, but there is biblical precedent for assuming a similar posture even in dealing with unbelievers.

So let me digress for a little bit. This is digressing a little bit from our passage, but to go to 1 Peter 2, 19, 12, where Paul's, well, Peter's speaking about suffering at the hands of unbelievers, and he writes this, for this is a gracious thing when mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.

For what credit is it if when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it, you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this, you have been called because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example so that you might follow in his steps.

He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return. When he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

Christians are to suffer unjustly in the present, holding up for their hope in the future judgment of God, which will be perfect and which will be just.

[17 : 54] Now, this doesn't mean that we never stand up for our legal rights or that we always should get pushed around by everybody because Paul himself used his Roman citizenship to escape imprisonment and he even demanded, used the legal system to demand an audience with Caesar.

But the underlying principle in what Paul did there is exactly the same because Paul was appealing to his legal rights at those times for the sake of his witness. Do you see what the difference is?

He wasn't asking the question to himself, do I have a case? Can I win this? That's not the question he was asking. The question he was asking was, how can I be a best witness to Christ?

How can I make a greater, make the best of this opportunity of unjust suffering to bring glory to Christ? And for him, in those occasions, it was to appeal to his legal rights and other times he suffered unjustly all for the same reason of bringing glory to Christ and following the pattern of Christ's suffering servanthood.

And if we are to behave in that way, even when wronged by unbelievers, how much more then should we be willing to suffer wrong at the hands of brothers and sisters in Christ?

[19 : 07] Paul says, to have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. It doesn't matter what the outcome of the lawsuit is. It's already a defeat for you because you are repaying evil for evil against your own Christian brother and thereby perpetuating the cycle of sin instead of putting an end to it by incurring the loss yourself and forbearing with one another and loving that brother who has sinned against you.

It's already a defeat for you because you are destroying the church's witness by exposing the internal affairs of the church to the public scrutiny and judgment. He would have won if instead he had suffered wrong and been defrauded.

So when a Christian brother or sister offends you let me ask you this question by judging you if they judge you they look down on you or if they unfairly treat you criticize you is your impulse to retaliate by judging them looking down on them criticizing them.

When you incur a loss because of a Christian brother or sister they borrowed money from you and never paid you back. They borrowed your car and got into an accident so they drove up your insurance premium.

These are not these are things very possible things that could happen because we use our property for one another here. Is your attitude in those cases of entitlement of exacting your right from that other person or is your attitude that of Christ-like suffering for the Christian we win by losing?

[20 : 48] Are you willing to incur personal loss for the sake of Christ's glory? Are you willing to incur personal loss for the sake of corporate harmony and unity? That's what Paul is calling us to here and if we don't do that our church will not cohere it will not last we will be divided because this is the only way that kind of humility is the only way Christian community functions as it's supposed to.

Then having addressed the plaintiff the brother who was suing the other brother in verse 7 Paul and then he turns to addressing the defendant the one who defrauded the other brother and is now being sued in verse 8 but you yourselves wrong and defraud even your own brothers right?

We should be prepared to suffer wrong for the sake of Christ but instead the man has himself wronged and defrauded another person and not just any other person it says even his own brother by defrauding his brother this man thought he could gain some temporal advantage maybe get a little bit more of the profit from the transaction than he was supposed to he thought he was gaining he thought he was winning but it's already a defeat for him to have defrauded his own brother because he's suffering spiritual loss on account of his temporal gain which is far less significant and the word wrong used twice here in verses 7 to 8 is actually a different verbal form of the same word unrighteous that was used in verse 1 which was used to describe unbelievers right?

So he's here saying that you are by doing this by wronging your brother and defrauding him you are behaving as an unbeliever you're behaving in the same unrighteousness by which they are characterized that's what Paul is accusing them of here I mean we wouldn't do that to our biological sibling right?

or brother or sister you use things your property like it belongs to them right? how much worse is it in your spiritual family of God to defraud one another it's your brother it's your sister and using the same word the unrighteous the unjust right?

[22 : 52] that he issues a direct threat now in verses 9 to 10 to these believers who are defrauding one another or do you not know that the unrighteous same word will not inherit the kingdom of God do not be deceived neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who practice homosexuality nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor revilers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God right?

again the word unrighteous is the same one that means wrong that he used twice in verses 7 to 8 so Paul's warning that lest any of us get false sense of assurance of salvation lest any of us get comfortable and complacent with sin in our lives Paul warns us issues a direct threat in verse 10 do not be deceived these people will not inherit the kingdom of God and this is essentially the same vice list that Paul produced in chapter 5 to teach that those who behave in those ways have to be disciplined and expelled from the church community if they don't repent but then now he kind of breaks down the general category of sexual immorality and adds two more specific categories he adds adulterers and men who practice homosexuality and I think both of those because they're quite prevalent in our day and have become to be generally accepted I think warrant further attention and comment and I remember reading to my horror and disbelief last year sometime a New York Times article entitled is an open marriage a happier marriage did you guys see that it was widely shared whether the author and in the article the author tried to persuade readers through various profiles of people who have open so-called open marriages that an open marriage is a sign of deeper security and that it leads to greater relational and sexual fulfillment it cannot be further from the truth

God designed marriage to be an exclusive partnership between one man and one woman and the depth of intimacy and trust in that relationship is directly proportional to the exclusivity of it right the fact that people can be happy with an open marriage reveals not the depth of their so-called marriage but the shallowness of it that their relationship is so superficial that it can be freely opened up and shared with others without consequence while God intended sex and marriage to be the supreme the sex to be a supreme act of self-giving to one's partner adultery turned sex into a supreme act of self-taking a selfish and immature pursuit of one's sexual fantasies as unrepentant and unrepentant adulterers will not inherit the kingdom of God similarly homosexual practices are widely normalized and glamorized in our culture today but it too is contrary to God's design God created marriage and sex to be a picture of complementarity right of the diversity and unity within the triune

God himself and of Christ's sacrificial love for the church and for the church is loving submission to Christ that's what marriage is supposed to be a picture of and marriage and sex are supposed to be an intimate mingling of two equal but different interdependent but not interchangeable parties yet our world is marring the image of God that was stamped on the maleness and femaleness of our creation of humanity and they're rendering those gender differences moot and I want to be sensitive to people who may have struggled with this perhaps you struggle in your life with homosexual orientation or you know someone who does I have some dear friends who do but if that's you there is hope for you because look at what it says it does not say in this verse that you cannot inherit the kingdom of God because you have homosexual desires it says that you cannot inherit the kingdom of God if you engage in unrepentant homosexual practices it says in verse 10 nor men who practice homosexuality in the Greek it's actually two nouns that refer to the passive and the active partners in a homosexual relationship so it's referring to homosexual acts not desires it might feel like for you that you were born that way it might feel like for you that you have been that way for as long as you can remember and that may be true but that does not mean that that's how

God created you to be there are now over a half dozen studies there are longitudinal studies and national studies and international studies with a large body sample that show that the sexual orientation is the determining factor for sexual orientation is not biological they studied hundreds of identical twins the same genetic makeup and if one of them turns out to be have a homosexual orientation then it should be almost 100% predictive for the other person to have a homosexual orientation but it has turned out that it is not predictive so it shows that it's not the determining factor is not genetics it's not biology but even more importantly your desire for something that you desire something doesn't prove that you should indulge in that desire the fact that a man or woman has a desire to have multiple spouses does not make polygamy okay the fact that God's ideal for monogamy still remains in spite of it the fact that a husband or wife has a desire to have sexual relationships with another man or another woman does not prove that adultery is okay

[28 : 21] God's ideal for marital fidelity remains so mortifying killing the desires of our hearts the sinful desires of our hearts so that we can conform our desires and our lives to God's standard and design that's what every Christian is called to do every single day that's what it means to be a Christian to die to ourselves to follow Christ and people who have experienced same-sex attraction there are examples of this in Christians they can have a fulfilling intergendered marriage or they can have a life of God honoring life and fulfilling life of celibacy so in addition to the additional categories of adultery and homosexual practices Paul adds a category of thieves to go with the greedy and swindlers and he's obviously thinking of the defrauding brother here he's emphasizing the fact that those who do this in an unrepentant way and continue to wrong one another will prove after all that they are not among the righteous that they are not among the saints but they are among the unrighteous some people some Christians are complacent and completely secure in their salvation in spite of unrepentant and persistent sin in their lives and just because they have professed faith in Jesus Christ and if you don't feel if that's you and if you don't feel the force of Paul's warning here because you're complacent and secure in your salvation and you use your theology to neutralize the warnings and threats of the Bible then there's no there's no excuse for that let me tell you a story that I read from a book written by Pastor John Piper in his book

Future Grace he said a few years ago you see him writing in quote when I confronted a man about the adultery he was living in I pled with him to return to his wife then I said you know Jesus says that if you don't fight this sin with the kind of seriousness that is willing to gouge out your own eye you will go to hell as a professing Christian he looked at me in utter disbelief as though he had never heard anything like this in his life and he said you mean you think a person can lose his salvation?

so I have learned again and again from first hand experience that there are many professing Christians who have a view of salvation that disconnects it from real life and that nullifies the threats of the Bible and puts the sinning person who claims to be a Christian beyond the reach of biblical warnings I believe this view of the Christian life is comforting thousands who are on the broad way that leads to destruction hear Paul's warning one more time do not be deceived neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who practice homosexuality nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor revilers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God yes I affirm wholeheartedly that we are saved by faith alone but we are never saved by a faith that is alone true saving faith is always accompanied by good works true faith is always accompanied by good works it's never alone so if you are taking false assurance of salvation if you are taking comfort in your so called faith that is not born out by your works then take Paul's warning seriously this morning the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God the saints instead ought to live justly that's the saints justice but Paul can't get himself to conclude this section on such a pessimistic note it's unlike apostle Paul his intention is not to cast into doubt your salvation if you are truly saved but his intention is to galvanize you into justice into right living that befit your identity as saints so in verse 11

Paul reiterates the spiritual reality that they have been justified by Christ already and that's my third and final point the saints justification Paul writes in verse 11 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 that's the true reality the spiritual reality that characterizes you were sexually immoral you were idolaters adulterers and men who practice homosexuality and thieves and greedy drunkards and reviled and swindlers but now you have been washed sanctified and justified notice Paul does not say wash sanctify and justify yourself so that you can be saved it says you were already happened and in the in the Greek the adversity of conjunction but is actually repeated three times even the ESV is only written once here for emphasis so it says literally and such were some of you but you were washed but you were sanctified but you were justified that's not who you are anymore that's who you once were but now you are saints so Christian morality is always rooted and first and foremost in the Christian identity who we are in Christ as saints of God and Paul just told us this is the same pattern that over and over again we see in the Apostle Paul he said last week right in chapter 5 verse 7 cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump as you really are unleavened for Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed so now he tells them that they should live in purity and sanctity and justice because they have already been washed sanctified and justified through Jesus

Christ and by the Holy Spirit once again Paul's telling them how they should live on the basis of who they are in Jesus Christ become what you are act the miracle live as the new creation that you already are because you have been born again in Jesus Christ and wonderful words of assurance here right the first thing that Paul reminds us of is that we have already been washed right the word washed refers to spiritual cleansing right that takes place when we are regenerated made new born again by the Holy Spirit Paul puts it this way in Titus 3 5 to 7 God saved us not because of works done by us in righteousness but according to his own mercy by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit right sometimes as Christians we mistakenly think that you know we are still our old sinful selves and that God loves us in spite of our sins yes God did love us while we were still sinners but God didn't leave us as sinners he cleansed us he made us he didn't just accept us he made us acceptable he cleansed us and washed us by the

[35 : 23] Holy Spirit and in God's sight we are not currently wallowing in our sin and guilt whether we haven't cleansed sometimes as Christians we act like children who don't understand they don't have a concept of washing this drives me crazy with my kids over and over again right I just brushed their teeth and they're like oh can I have this cookie hey we just brushed your teeth that's not the point right of the washing or we just took a shower and they'll go jump in a mud puddle with the fresh clothes on right we have been washed we have been cleansed that's who we are why return to the filth of sin second Paul reminds us that we were sanctified right this is a verbal form of the word saint which Paul has already used to describe the Corinthian believers and as I said before to be sanctified means to be made holy which in turn means to be set apart to be holy is to be set apart or consecrated we often think the opposite the antonym of the word holy is wicked which is true by implication but the bible when it contrasts the word holy the word that usually contrasts the word holy is not wicked but it's common what's opposite of what is holy is what is common so you see that in

Leviticus 10 10 1 Samuel 21 4 Ezekiel 22 26 so to be holy actually is to be uncommon and to be sanctified means to be set apart for a special purpose and so do you understand that you are a special vessel of God as believers in Jesus Christ that you have been set apart by him for a special purpose do you put on your nicest dress or your nicest suit to go to the grocery store or to the fish market of course not it's for a special purpose that's what you wear to go to a wedding why should we who have been sanctified set apart for God's special purposes as the bride of Christ Christ the righteous son of God why should we live like we belong to some common sinner why should we who have been sanctified for the eternal purposes of God and the joys of heaven live for the temporal purposes of man and the pleasures of earth we've been sanctified we've been set apart third

Paul says that we have been justified to be justified means to be declared righteous from a judicial standpoint it's a declaration of right standing with God who is our ultimate judge we were not righteous but God nevertheless declared us righteous on the basis of his son's death on the cross as 2nd Corinthians 5:21 says for our sake God made Christ to be no sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God because Jesus paid the penalty for our sins because he satisfied fully the demands the righteous demands of God's law we are declared righteous by God our judge and that was brothers and sisters the correct ruling that was the correct ruling because Christ satisfied it sometimes we as Christians can live as if God made a mistake and he could reverse his decision any minute right that's what guilty criminals who are wrongly exonerated do right that's how fugitives live in a state of perpetual fear and insecurity that they're going to be found out in the end but that's not us our verdict was right it was correct we have been justified by the blood of

Christ we are declared righteous because Christ bore our punishment there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus no one can bring a charge against us because it is God who justifies and he has justified us if you are not yet a follower of Jesus Christ this morning this righteousness that we speak of today can be yours Christians do not boast in our own righteousness we do not boast in our own righteousness but we boast instead in the righteousness of another of Jesus Christ and we do not believe that we are better than you by virtue of our merit rather we believe that we have been saved merit but of God's grace and mercy that's why verse 11 says and such were some of you and it's some not all because there are some Jews in the midst who have continued to have faith in the same

God and have come seamlessly to faith in Jesus Christ but for us we can read that but such were all of you such were all of you but you were washed you who is the subject of those verbs it's not we we did not wash ourselves or justify ourselves or sanctify ourselves so the verbs are passive to show the fact that the implied agent of all of these verbs is God God washed us God sanctified us God justified us and by what means did God do this in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the spirit of our God God does not mean the name of the whole personality and character of the person what that person stood for who he is so it represents the person the name the stands for the person so the statement that we were washed sanctified and justified in the name of the

[41 : 21] Lord Jesus Christ means that those things happened when we entrusted our lives to the Christ who lived died and rose again on our behalf and when we entrusted our lives to him and aligned ourselves with his life and teaching that's when we did that by faith that's when we were washed by and filled with the Holy Spirit it's basically what Apostle Peter says in Acts 2 38 repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit if you have not committed your life to Jesus once and for all and you do not know what it means to have the life of the Holy Spirit within you then we plead with you to do something about it this morning repent believe be baptized please talk to me afterward talk to anyone of the members of this church they'll be happy to talk to you and walk through that process and if you are already a father of

Jesus Christ then let us live in keeping with our identity in Jesus Christ we are saints we have been washed we have been sanctified and justified and as such we ought to live justly and judge disputes among ourselves as saints let us live in a manner that is consistent with the verdict we have received and the status we have been given as saints of God let's pray together God it's an amazing testament to human forgetfulness and cynicism that such amazing realities that we have been washed sanctified and justified can be taken for granted that it can be forgotten that we can return from that to our old squalor and filth to our old manner of living

Lord forgive us Lord change us help us to be a church full of saints that live according to your will who are willing to incur loss to die to ourselves for the sake of your glory for the love of the church in Jesus name we pray amen