

“Before And After Jesus”

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

INTRO:

Have you seen before and after pictures? You know what I mean, the kind that are usually found in weight loss clinic or body building ads in magazines. I remember the Charles Atlas ads in the comic books that I used to read when I was a kid. The first panel is a picture of the “98 lb weakling” and the bully kicking sand in his face. The second panel has the same man, muscle-bound, confident, and strong enough to push the bully around. What happened? Charles Atlas' program came into his life.

While it is true that weight loss and weight lifting programs can make a marked difference in a person's appearance and possibly in his life, the greatest change of all happens when the Lord Jesus Christ enters into the life. This change is what the Apostle Paul is showing us in **1 Corinthians 6:9-11**. What happened when Jesus came into our lives? We will look at this in two parts.

I. Before Jesus Came (v. 9, 10)

II. When Jesus Came (v. 11)

I. Before Jesus Came (v. 9, 10)

A. ***“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?” (v. 9a)***. The apostle Paul is issuing another warning to the Corinthian believers that things changed in their lives when God saved them. These changes show in their lives. Paul made a very similar statement in **Galatians 5:19-21**. There he describes the war which wages within every believer between the flesh and the Spirit. The Holy Spirit and our flesh fight over our allegiance. This is no side issue; this fight is front and center in our lives. Paul describes in lists the works of the flesh (the things the flesh produces) and the production of the Spirit. There is a warning at the end of the list of the works of the flesh.

“Envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” (Galatians 5:21).

This is not teaching a works salvation. It is underlining a reality we need to understand. If Christ has saved us, He works in us to change us from what we were to what we ought to be. We must desire the things of the Spirit and as we grow, we must see progress, away from the sins of the flesh to the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. Those, who are saved, should work on growing in that direction. We are to grow up into Him who is the head of the body.

B. On the heels stating the principle, Paul then outlines who these are who cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven. **(1 Corinthians 6:9–10)**

“Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.”

Before Jesus came into our lives we lived in a manner that indicated that we were not heirs of the kingdom of God. Several years ago, I ended up going to my doctor’s office because my asthma had kicked up. He said to me, **“I thought that I would see you today because all of my asthmatics are having trouble.”** I was feeling prickly so my response to him was, **“That is not my name!”** I did not appreciate being labeled by my disease. I am an asthmatic. In the same way, Paul labels these Corinthians by their former sins. They had these titles because they practiced these sins before Jesus came by in their lives.

1. **Fornicators** are people given to sexual sin in general and in specific application to sex outside of marriage.
2. **Idolaters** are folks given over to the worship of false gods rather than the one true and living God.
3. **Adulterers** are people who have extramarital affairs.
4. **Homosexuals** and **Sodomites** are self-explanatory.
5. **Thieves** and **Covetous** are folks possessed of the sin of greed.
6. **Drunkards** are folks who let drink rule their lives.
7. **Revilers** are folks who slander others to build themselves up.
8. **Extortioners** are people who swindle others.

C. We do not need to dwell on these sins. We just need to realize these sins are indicative of what we were before Jesus came into our lives.

1. These names describe the people who do these sins. They were not otherwise good people who happen to fornicate, steal, or gossip. They were fornicators, thieves, and gossips who are practicing our trade. The point then is: We Are Not Sinners Because We Sin. We Sin Because We Are Sinners.

2. Second, before Jesus came into our lives we were not only characterized by our sin, we were dominated by it. Sin reigned over us and we were under its control. Paul paints a clear and ugly picture of this in **Titus 3:3**;

“For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.”

D. This then is our “before” picture. Before Jesus entered our lives, we were sinners completely dominated and characterized by our sin. We might not have indulged in the sins that Paul depicts here, yet, we still were under the dominion of and obedient to the sins and lusts of this present world. We were without hope, because ***“they that practice these things cannot inherit the kingdom of God.”***

II. When Jesus Came (v. 11)

A. Then Jesus came into our lives and nothing would ever be the same again. Look at how Paul puts it. (v. 11)

“And these (this horrible list of descriptive nouns) were some of you.”

1. The idea in this statement is not that these sins that used to dominate and characterize their lives still do, instead, it is that they do no longer rule in the hearts and lives of the Corinthians. The chains of bondage have been broken. Sin no longer reigns in their lives.
2. Why are the chains of bondage broken? What happened? Why are they no longer these kinds of people? Paul explains the situation with three phrases set off by a conjunction that speaks of strong contrast.

B. ***“And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.”*** (v. 11)

The first thing which happened to them when Jesus came is they were washed.

1. They were cleansed from their sins. David spoke of that kind of cleansing in **Psalm 51:2**, ***“Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.”*** David understood that because of the guilt of his sin, he needed to be clean before God.
2. The first thing that Jesus did when He came into our lives is to cleanse us from the uncleanness of our sin. He took away our iniquity and made us presentable and acceptable to God. This is a ***“once for all”*** (**Hebrews 10**) cleansing. Once we put our trust in Christ and have our sins washed away ***“once for all,”*** we must also have practical day by day cleansing from our sins so we may walk in holiness and fellowship with our God and Savior. **(1 John 1:7-9)**

“But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

C. Second, we were sanctified. The Lord Jesus made us *“holy.”* This also has two aspects.

1. First, He makes us holy in a positional sense. When Jesus came into our lives, He “set us apart unto God.” We were set apart as belonging to God, and reserved for His exclusive use. We have a unique relationship with God. We can rightfully call Him Father, a right that no one who does not know the Lord Jesus has. Peter expressed this so well in **1 Peter 2:9-10**;

“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.”

2. Second, the practical outworking. Although we consider these two areas logically separate, they are both part of one act of God. The Spirit of God, who seals us and sets us apart, also works in us to make us in practice what we are in position, He makes us more and more like Christ. The process is described in **Romans 8:28-29**.

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.”

This process is a divine-human cooperative. Philippians describes it as us working out our salvation and God working in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

D. Finally, he tells us, we were justified.

1. God the Father at the moment we believed declared us righteous. It is not that we are righteous in ourselves, but we have the imputed righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:21 ***“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”***

2. This means that when God looks at us, He does not see us. He sees our Savior and then He sees us. Because of this we can approach boldly His throne of grace for He will receive us for Jesus' sake.

These are two very clear pictures of before and after. **Before** Jesus came, sin reigned. **After** Jesus came, sin remains, but we can have victory over it. **Before** Jesus came, we were in bondage and without hope. **Now** we are free and looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of my Great God and Savior Jesus Christ. Which picture do you find yourself in?