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Fellowship Bible Church Such Were Some of You

Because it's a love letter from the heart of the One who loved you enough to send His Son to die for you—from the heart of Him who came and died for you. Would you open your Bible to 1 Corinthians chapter 6? I want you to read something with me: 1 Corinthians 6 verses 9 and 10.

"9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God."

Now, this is basic knowledge that every Christian has to deal with. Every one of us has to deal with this. We had to accept this as true. We had to measure ourselves by it. And we had to admit where we fell short when we read this. And then we had to call upon the Lord to have mercy on us, forgive us, and give us Christ's righteousness because we had none in ourselves. And to make us a child of God. When we came to deal with these statements, we had to come to God that way. Trusting only in what Christ did. And not in any way trusting in anything we did. It is what Christ did—living a righteous life. Offering himself as a sacrifice to God for us. Never trust in any way in any good work that we did. Because our good works really are as filthy rags. Not trusting in any religious practice. No matter how faithfully we did it. We were not trusting in our good intentions. Though we may have many of those. Through our lives. Or any effort to please God.

Some are pretty strange that people have tried to please God. But you can't trust any of that. We had to become bankrupt before God. We were humbled and broken. We had to open our hearts to him. We had to trust in him. According to the promise that he gave us, he would forgive anyone who called on his name. We had to trust in that promise to be made a child of God. Now. Now we know. What 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10 says.

But. Look at 11a. "And such were some of you." And such were some of us. Read it again. This list of terrible things.

Fornicators. That's a, by the way, that's a sexual term.

Idolaters. Worshipping false gods. And you know it's not always just a statue. It can become a false god. Anything you put in your life before God. It can be a false god. Anything you make as a focus for your life that isn't God is a false god. Could be money. Riches. Property. Fame. Could be another person. There are some that say to themselves, oh, if I only had the love of this certain person. I don't care what else would happen to me in life. And they focus on that. As their very center of thinking. Their center of values. But it's idolatry.

Not only so, but he also says adulterers, which is a violation of the commitment to our mate.

Nor homosexuals. A lot of people today, you know, are very angry when anybody dares to stand up and say that homosexuality is wrong. And you know that laws have been passed, and more are coming. They're becoming more and more powerful. The courts are honoring them. Claim that anybody who would say such

things is being hurtful to this minority. Discriminatory. To dare suggest that homosexuality is wrong. What do we do with this? That God classes it with these awful things that people do. That tells us the vileness of this thing marks them for eternal death. It marks them for judgment. Homosexuality. Sodomites. Well.

You might wonder what the difference is between homosexuals and sodomites. But. And there's been a lot of discussion about that. But. It appears that in Sodom, there was an insatiable. The desire for sexual activity with not only those of the same sex but apparently sunk down to even children. You know, adults with children. Terrible practices to the hurt of the little ones. Beyond our sensitivities. It's so grieved the heart of God that he determined that he would destroy that city when he rained brimstone fire down on Sodom and Gomorrah to Obliterate them—encrusted them with hot molten salt. They burned to death for their awful, awful, appalling crimes.

Thieves. Maybe you don't think that thievery is so evil that it would keep somebody out of heaven. But I think, in a way, probably all of us have been thieves. I've committed, and I've admitted to you. That time, you know, when I used to reach up over. The counters in the dime store we used to call it. I feel around for something that I could put in my pocket. And I wasn't even five years old, you know, and I was. I used to get balloons. Oh man, it was wonderful when I could feel those balloons. I'd go along, you know, some stuff. I could never tell what it was, but when I got to the balloons.

Man, I would get a handful. Put it in my pocket. Thievery, you don't have to be, you know, 20 or 30 years old to be a thief. I got a broken collarbone one time because of my thievery. Yeah, I was climbing up my grandmother's pantry shelves. I don't know how far up I got, but I got three or four shelves up in the pantry because I saw the cookie jar up there. Well, you know, I finally got up there; I had to let go of one of my hands to get into the cookies. And that was the mistake. Because I couldn't hold myself with just one hand and down, I came, and I broke my collarbone. My grandmother came running in. There was a cookie jar spilled on the floor. There I was screaming. You know you didn't need a jury of 12 good people to tell what happened. I was guilty. I don't know about your thievery. But I think we're all capable of it in our hearts. And it becomes more sophisticated as life goes along.

But then you come to even something like being covetous. Do you know what being covetous is? It is wanting something that someone else has for yourself. Now, you probably think to yourself, well, I've never done that. But most of us might have had that problem. They try to make you have that problem every time they put an ad on television about a car. They're trying to encourage covetousness. Every time, they put some ad on there with something that makes your skin soft and wrinkle-free and gives you the blush of youth. They're trying to stir up a little covetous in you. And every time they put on something to eat that's so sumptuous and delicious looking, you can't stand it. You're going to have to have some of that. Television is good at making people covetous. Did you know that? Yeah. Did you know that Hollywood has that problem? That most of the stuff they put out and try to entertain you with also has built into it, trying to make you covetous? I know that you don't want, if you're a man, you don't want to have all those muscles, and if you're a woman, you don't want to have all those good looks. Yeah, yeah. You're above that.

But God says covetousness, drunkards. Now, I know you might think that's only liquor. And probably the central part is liquor these days. But we know that addiction to substances that alter the mind goes far beyond drink. Man has become very proficient and very sophisticated in coming up with new concoctions all the time. They apply their knowledge of chemistry and come up with things repeatedly. Every year there are designer drugs being brought out. I want to tell you that they haven't thought of one or been able to produce one that didn't ultimately destroy the mind, enslave the person to addiction, twist their life, and sometimes sap it from them, even in death.

Revilers. Well, revilers, oh boy. Sometimes, you have street riots doing this. People are so quick to do it in private to find fault with others. Now again, you may feel that in your heart, you don't do this; you don't find fault. Be careful. The human heart is capable of this. So quickly we could go to this.

Extortioners. What's an extortioner? Trying to get something from somebody, usually riches of some sort. It could be an advantage. It could be anything of value in a society. Trying to unrighteously, wrongly, illegally get somebody to give you these things when you really have no right to them. None of these people will inherit the kingdom of God.

Do you know that the list could be longer than this? Do you know we could list hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of things here from God's Word, God's Word that show us to be fallen creatures? This is a very basic truth that every Christian has to deal with. If you're a Christian, you had to deal with this, that some of this had stained you and that you needed God's cleansing, you needed God's help, that in yourself you weren't what you should be. And that if in any way you wanted God to accept you, if you wanted to be with him, if you wanted to know the joy of being with him, if you wanted to have any fellowship with him, if you wanted any of his blessings, if you wanted any relationship with him, you'd better take care of these things. Sometimes it takes tragedy to bring us to that place. Sometimes, we have to get brokenhearted. Sometimes, we have to get desperate. We look back, and we say, "Oh, that was a terrible, terrible thing, that financial thing that brought me to God, or that physical thing that brought me to God, or that sickness, or that breakup of that relationship, or whatever it was that God finally won your heart through." Then you finally have to admit, "Well, if it took that much to get me to the place where I was ready to lay myself at his feet, as terrible as it was, I thank God he let it happen so that I could come to know him." Heaven is worth it.

Jesus asked, "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul? What if he should gain the whole world?" It would not be enough for his soul. What did you have to pay? You probably have to admit you had to come to the place where you realized you didn't have anything that you could pay for. You were bankrupt. You were empty. You were helpless.

"And such were some of you," he says. Now, the amazing thing is, if you go back to Romans chapter 5, verse 8, the amazing thing is that while we were like that, God loved us. God loved us while we were sinners. Yeah, here's Romans 5, 8, "But God demonstrates his own love toward us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Now, that breaks your heart. He just read a terrible list of things that would condemn anybody to hell, and then he tells us that while we were like that, he loved us enough to send his Son to die for us. He didn't wait until we got better. He did it while

we were sinners. How amazing. He loved us while we were dead spiritually in our trespasses and sins. He listed all those sins in 1 Corinthians 6, 10 and 11. Even people who were in those sins, God loved. He loved homosexuals, adulterers, idolaters, witches, fornicators, thieves, covetous, and blasphemers. I added a few to the list, didn't I? Are you convinced you could add a little more? Paul does.

There will be those in the last days who reviled the governments, stood up against the governments, and rebelled, those who hate father and mother. Disobedient children, unruly, hypocrites. Do you know that while all of those things kind of label some things that are wrong with us, it was while we had those things in our lives that God loved us? That's amazing.

But if you're with me in Romans 5, look at verse 9. "Much more than having now been justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." Please notice the tense of the verbs here. Look at that verse 9. "Having been justified." Do you understand that that verb is speaking of something that not only happened in the past but happened at a time in the past? In other words, it was accomplished in the past. It was finished in the past, having been justified by his blood. If we're Christians, there was a time in our past when God justified us with the blood of Christ.

What does that mean? Justified means for a judge to hear all the evidence against you and for him to bring down an official court verdict. And God's official verdict of the court against us is this. Guiltless, righteous, without sin. That's justification. God pronounces for all eternity that you have no sin. And it tells you here, by his blood. How can God say such a thing against me, you know, or for me? How can he say that? Because even though I may have the filth of sin in my past, the blood of Christ has answered for my sin. He has offered himself up as a sacrifice. God has accepted his sacrifice because he has a perfect life before God. He has offered himself through death by blood. He's offered up his life unto death, unto blood. And by my receiving him as my Savior, I'm saying I want his life to count for me. I want his blood that was shed to count for me. And God says, by that blood, I will justify you. In that he is righteous because you accept him as your Savior, I will pronounce that you are righteous.

Justification. That verb tense, past tense. Do you notice the rest in verse 9? "We shall be saved from wrath through him." Future. Based on what has already happened in the past, based on the fact that in the past, when you received Jesus, God justified you. It's done. It's over. Based on that, as you look to the future, it doesn't say you might be saved from wrath. Or there's a good chance that you'll be saved from wrath. Or most of you will be saved from wrath. Or maybe only everyone, but maybe one in a million, will be saved from wrath. This is a clear statement from the Word of God. We shall be saved from wrath through him. It's universal. It's all. All those who have trusted in Christ shall be saved from wrath.

What's wrath? Wrath is the judgment of God poured out in his infinite anger against sin. Wrath knows no end. It's eternal. Wrath is to the extreme of judgment. In other words, wrath is the very worst that can come from God in judgment. There isn't anything worse than the wrath of God. Do you know that when God judges somebody and condemns them into an eternal hell, do you realize that their eternal judgment, though they are all that are in hell, will suffer? There will be outer darkness. There will be a sense of the flame, you know, we are told. There will be weeping, wailing,

gnashing of teeth. We know that, but here he says he will fit everyone's judgment to their sin.

All men that are in hell will be in terrible torment forever and ever and ever. But in some way, we don't know how God will do this, but he will fit that eternal judgment to each person. It is a personally designed eternal judgment of wrath. Because each person is judged according to their works, God takes into account every last sin that somebody has committed that they have to answer for. There is a judgment for every sin. And God has a perfect answer of judgment for every sin. And it will be required of that person forever and ever and ever.

One little lie, you say? Yes. But for that little lie, there is a judgment that will be required of him forever and ever and ever and ever. Because it's not covered by the blood of Christ, but it tells us this. We shall be saved from wrath. It's not possible that the wrath of God should come down on us. It's not possible in the future. All of us have this assurance it can't happen. Why? Because we're justified. God pronounced us righteous.

How can the judge who pronounced that we're guiltless and then turn around and now say we're guilty? What has changed in the basis for his judgment? I'm going to tell you something. The basis for his judgment was the blood of Christ. The basis for his judgment of righteousness on our part was the life of Christ.

Now, what has changed about that? Has Christ become unrighteous? Has he come back to earth and done some sin? Has he failed in some way? Absolutely not. His work is finished. It's perfect. It has never been found fault with, if that's a proper way of saying it. It isn't, probably. There has never been any fault found with him or anything he's done. And there never will be. There can't be. He's already been judged righteous, and he's been raised from the dead. It's a finished work. And those of us who have received him as our Savior, we have been declared righteous. It's done. Our righteousness rests on Christ. Christ will never change. Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and forever. He'll never change. What we have in him and through him is perfect. We shall be saved from wrath through him. And that's eternal.

So, God's reasoning is this. If God would justify you based on Christ's sacrifice while you were still a sinner, if he would justify you while you were still a sinner, filthy, rotten, undone sinner, if he would justify you then, how much more you can be sure that he will never judge you guilty now that you have received his Son as your Savior. He will never condemn you to suffer under his eternal wrath now that you have received his Savior, his Son, as your Savior. Now that you're righteous before him through Christ's blood, through Christ's sacrifice for you, he will never judge you to be a sinner. Because what does it say?

Let me read verse 10. "If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son." That's when you were a sinner, and he did that when you trusted in Christ. "How much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." So God says, look, if God would save you and make you righteous when you were such a rotten sinner, and he would do that through the blood of Christ as you claim Christ as your Savior, why would he not? Now that you're children of God, you're declared righteous; look what he did for you when you were a sinner. What would he do to those who are righteous and his children? He wants you to know that certainly if he would do that for rotten sinners to save them, look what he will do for those who are his children,

those who are righteous, and those who belong to him. That's the reasoning here. Christ's life and resurrection, which is a declaration of his righteousness, is your seal that you, you forever, will never be judged by God as a sinner. You are guaranteed that you will be saved or brought into the fullness of God's deliverance because of that.

Think of the story of the prodigal son from Luke 15. Do you know the story? Two sons with the father. The youngest son decides he can't wait for the father to die. He wants his inheritance now so he can enjoy it. He tells his father, "Give me my inheritance." Amazingly, his father does that and gives him his inheritance. Immediately, the boy goes off to a far country and wastes the inheritance in riotous living.

Now, we learn later in Luke 15, and we learn that part of that was with harlots and prostitutes. Understand that's when it says he's a prodigal son; the idea isn't just that he's kind of wasted his life. You have to understand that he's wasted his life in debauchery. But when the money ran out, that's how it is with the world. You have lots of friends when you have lots of money. You know, one of the things that people who win the lottery hate the most is that people find out that they won the lottery. And a lot of them don't want to, you know, come in and identify themselves as the ticket holder because they know if they do, the word will get out. Every relative they have and everybody they've ever had any business with will be on their telephone telling them that they sure would wish that they would give them a little bit of their winnings. You have a lot of money; you have a lot of friends. Well, they're not really friends. You get a lot of attention.

I told you this, and I've told you this in many ways over the years, but I will state it again. This is a very, very basic psychological principle. Or, if you want me to say it another way, it's a very basic principle in psychology, God's psychology. Remember Paul says we're not ignorant of Satan's devices? Well, here's one of them. Very basic. Satan substitutes attention for love—a very basic truth. You have a lot of money; you'll get a lot of attention. But that doesn't mean you're getting a lot of love. You better be suspicious that the attention is self-centered. I mean, on the part of the people giving you the attention. They will get something out of it; that's why you're getting the attention. That's the way the world thinks. That's the way the world operates. If there's something in it for me, if I'll give you attention, you know, something in it for me, I'll provide you with attention.

Do you want to read Proverbs 7 about how the prostitute operates? Read it. It's all attention. It's not love. All the lies. All the perfumes. All the garments and all the tapestries on the bed. Read all that. It's all surface. It's all "lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and pride of life." It has nothing to do with love. It's attention.

So the man found that he was destitute. Actually, he was starving. Because it says, nobody will give him anything. There was nobody that would give him anything. He was starving. That's the heart of the human race. That's the way people are. The human heart does not want to sacrifice what they have, what somebody has, for somebody else. If you find people giving, it's usually because they have a surplus of money. It's surplus. They can live without it. But when you get down to what they need in order for them to survive, they don't give it.

That's the marvelous part of the story about the widow of Zarephath. When Elijah came to her and said, "Well, bake some bread for me first." And all she had was enough flour, meal, and oil to make two little cakes. She said she could make two little cakes. By

that, they mean two little flat pieces of bread. Don't think that they're Dressel's cakes or something. It is two little pieces of bread. She had enough to make two little pieces of bread. One for her, one for her son, and then she said, "And then we'll die." And Elijah comes along and says, "Well, bake some for me first." When you get down to the place where what you have left you need for your own survival, that's when it's hard to give to somebody else.

The miracle of that day was that that woman took the only thing that was between her and her son and starvation, and she gave it to the prophet. And so God rewarded her. That little jar of meal and that little jar of oil only ran out in the three-and-a-half-year drought was over. God provided for her. And when you read that story, there's a lot in it. It tells you God is looking at the heart. People don't work that way.

Back to Luke 15 - Nobody would give that young man anything to eat. So he went to a man of the country, and he hired himself out, basically as a slave. The man sent him into the field to take care of his pigs. You can't get any lower than that if you're a Jew. You can't get any job lower than taking care of pigs because it's vile. It is an abomination. It was against God for Jews in those days under the law to take care of pigs. They're unclean. It's like saying, "I'm going to be the caretaker of all rattlesnakes, but I'll throw in some water moccasins, cobras, and asps." That may not strike you. Maybe you don't mind taking care of snakes.

But anyway, he was taking care of pigs. And he got to where he just said he was willing to eat the pigs' food because he couldn't get anything else. And while he was eating pigs' food, the Scripture says, "He came to himself." That was a moment of decision. That was his salvation moment. That's what happened to you back there when you said, "I'm going to receive Jesus. I'm going to receive Jesus." That was your moment in the pigsty when you said, "There's no sense in me going on in this life eating pigs' food. I'm done with it. If there's any hope for me at all, I will cry out to God and beg him for mercy." He came to himself and he said, "There's no slave in my father's house that isn't better off than I am. I'm going to go back to my father, and I'm going to tell him I have sinned before God and before him, and I'm not worthy to be called his son. And all I ask of him is that he just let me live in his household as one of his slaves. At least I won't starve if I just could be at the lowest level in my father's house."

So he went home. Amazingly, it did amaze him that as he came down the road, his father was looking for him and recognized him. The father ran to him, threw his arms around him, kissed him, and commanded the servants to bring a robe and a ring and prepare the fatted calf for celebration.

But the elder brother came home, and he was angry, angry, angry. How dare the father recognize that boy, that filthy, rotten sinner, as his own child. See, we're supposed to see ourselves in that boy. We're supposed to say, "That's what God did for me." I was lost, undone. And I went to him, and I told him I'd be willing, if he would forgive me, I'd be willing just to take the lowest place in his house. I just wanted to be with him. But I would be a slave. I would be the doormat so that I could be with him. But God had bigger plans. God's plans were that anybody that would come that way would not be a slave, would not be a doormat, would not serve in the lowest position in the house, but anybody that would come to him that way would be elevated to the highest rank of heirship with his sons. And his son, the Lord Jesus, would be treated as

royalty forever. He would never lose his status as a son. He would forever be a joint heir with Christ.

But there are some who trust in their own righteousness. They're religious, they're kind, they're good. How dare God take into his family some who have been adulterers and fornicators and witches and homosexuals and sodomites and thieves and covetous and on and on and on. How dare God do that? After all, they received Jesus when they were three years old. They never had a chance to really get into much of that stuff. They certainly ought to have a better place in heaven than some of these people, some drug addicts, some adulterers, and fornicators. Why? They've walked with the Lord Jesus since before they could read. And God says, "Wasn't it proper that my son who was dead?" See, we were all dead in our trespasses and sins. "Who was dead is now alive?" He's come back asking for mercy. Now he can be made alive. Isn't it proper that we celebrate this?

You know, you ought to thank God that you're a child of God, that you've been forgiven, and that you will never lose it because Jesus will never change. The blood that you were saved by will never change. The righteousness of Christ that you were justified by will never change. The life that God displayed in resurrecting Christ from the dead will never change. And that's your assurance that you'll be with him in heaven because Jesus is there, and Jesus said that where he is there, you're going to be. Even though we have terrible things in our past, God's mercy, God's grace, and Christ's blood have cleansed us and made us righteous and made us children of God, and we forever will be. On the basis of his promise, on the basis of his word, and on the basis of the indwelling presence and seal of the Holy Spirit of God, we are his forever.

Now, I wanted to talk about what happens when Christians mess their lives up, though. They fail God, they sin, but I don't think you want to stay here for all that. We'll have to wait for next time because I'm going to talk about what happens when you've messed up your Christian life. But this one thing you better be sure of: I don't care how far you've messed it up; you're His.

Father, thank you for your wonderful love, grace, and your mercy. Thank you for loving us enough to send Jesus to die for us and that you have accepted us into the family of God, though we were filthy sinners and will never be separated from you. Thank you, in Jesus' name, amen.