**Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 6:1-11**

**Slide 1: Introduction**

In this series about Big Words In The Bible, we have been looking at small and easily recognizable words that hold a deep meaning in the life of a Christian. This morning we are going to look at some words related to our **Life in Christ**.

In Robert Wilkin’s book titled “The Ten Most Misunderstood Words in the Bible” he explains the reason for writing his book: **“The truth is, there is a lot of confusion about certain words that occur in the Bible. This confusion is not merely among those in children’s church. It isn’t merely lay people, the people in the pews, who are confused. Even pastors, missionaries, professors in Bible colleges and seminaries, evangelists, and parachurch workers are often confused.[[1]](#footnote-1)**

Here is Wilkins list of ten Biblical words he believes are most misunderstood by Christians: **faith, everlasting, saved, lost, heaven, hell, repentance, grace, gospel and judgement**. In the appendix of his book he addresses eleven additional words. As I looked through my textbooks for specific words, I found an additional four words that theologians say that Christians often misunderstand.

Words are important because they can convey complex ideas, and the world we live in does not have the right idea for what Christianity is all about. When we as Christian believers misuse words, we have the potential to create confusion. 1 Corinthians 14:33 says that **God is not the author of confusion.**

**Slide 2: Groundbreaking**

I am using the word groundbreaking this morning, only to help us get a high-level view of the moment of salvation. This photograph from September of 1980 is Calvary Pentecostal Tabernacle in Orillia invited dignitaries to the ground-breaking ceremony for the new church. It was publicly announced that the old gravel pit is being transformed into something new. During the ceremony, there was cheering as invited dignitaries ceremonially pressed the shovels into the ground, and turned the soil over.In **John 3:3** Jesus says we must be ***born again******to be able to enter the kingdom of heaven.*****John 3:16** says **“*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*** The moment we believe is groundbreaking.

After the ceremony, the work of construction begins, and it will take considerable time. The work requires a unity between the architect, contractor, and skilled labourers. In the concept of salvation, God is the perfect architect and the Holy Spirit is his representative that remains at the job site. Construction sites use a small trailer that serves as an office, but the Holy Spirit requires a temple. You and I are the contractors who make the decision whether we will follow the architects plans. Our friends represent the skilled laborer’s who influence the quality of the building’s construction. Paul said in **1 Corinthians 15:33** “***Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character***”. When bridges or buildings collapse on their own, and people died, the courts determine if the contractor cut corners to save time or money, and they evaluate the competency of the workers.

The goal of salvation is to succeed and not fail. The goal of salvation is to follow the plans of the architect to make the best construction possible.

We must not be that worker that the judge determines is unqualified for the title the worker claimed to be. In matthew 7:21-23, Jesus said ***“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’”***

**Slide 3:** **Repentance - Unrepentant**

In 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, the apostle Paul provides us with a list of behaviours that block entrance to heaven. It is an incomplete list as other verses in the Bible such as **Proverbs 6:16-19** add to Paul’s list. **God hates anything that replaces him in the lives of his people, especially when it is associated with wickedness.** Paul warns us in verse 11 when he asks: ***“do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God?”*** James the brother of Jesus tells us in **James 4:4** that before we received salvation, ***we* (you and I) *were enemies of God.***

In **Matthew 5:43-44**, Jesus says “***You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies”.*** The saying “**Hate the sin, love the sinner**” applies to the Christian believer because Jesus tells us **we are to love our enemies**. But when this saying is applied to God, it downplays our need for a savior. **Psalm 5:5, Malachi 1:3** and **Romans 9:13** clearly say that God hates the unrepentant person and **John 3:17** says that **God’s anger is directed towards those who refuse to repent.**

We are saved by faith, but in **Luke 15:10** Jesus says, **“I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”** Repentance the remedy and cure for God’s hatred and anger. Repentance is that activity where we acknowledge a sin pattern in our life, we say sorry to God, and we don’t do these sin acts again. **The Book of Jonah is often remembered for the prophet being swallowed by a large fish, not that God saw the works of the Ninevites who repented and turned from their evil ways and God relented from the disaster he said he would bring upon them.**

The Bible speaks about believers who fail to repent. The Old Testament prophet Amos warns the Israelites **that God knows how great their sin,** and, God asks the Israelites: ***why do you long for the day of the Lord?***  Amos tells the believers that their ***gathering together is a stench to the Lord*** and that God ***will not accept their offerings or listen to their music.*** **Isaiah 1:15** says this to the unrepentant believer ***“And when you spread out your palms, I hide my eyes from you. Although you offer many prayers, I am not listening;”***. The Christian not only wants their prayers heard, but also answered.

**Slide 4:** **Washed**

God hates the unrepentant but this does not need to be our permanent condition. Paul gives people today great hope in **1 Corinthians 6:11** when he reminds the Corinthians “***And that is what some of you were. But you were washed,”*.** Paul is emphasizing **that there is no kind of sin that cannot be forgiven.**

The proverb ***“A sow that is washed returns to her wallowing in the mud”*** speaks to our need to be washed clean from sin. **Isaiah 1:18** uses the imagery of colour and texture of our lives: ***“Come, now, and let us set matters straight between us,” says Jehovah. “Though your sins are like scarlet, They will be made as white as snow; Though they are as red as crimson cloth, They will become like wool.”***

**Hebrews 9:14** speaks to the purpose of this washing: “***How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!***”

In **Hebrews 10,** we are told that the Holy Spirit assures us that in the moment of our salvation, God forever forgives and forgets our sins and lawless acts. It is because of what God has done for us that we have the confidence to be able to enter the **Most Holy Place**, the place where God sits on his throne. It is the blood of Jesus Christ that **washes away our guilty conscience**.

In Revelation 7:14, John sees a great number of people and the angel explains that they are the Christian martyrs ***who have come out of the great tribulation.*** We know they are Christians because ***their robes*** were washed ***white in the blood of the Lamb.”***

Paul assures the Christians in verse 11 about their salvation moment, ***“And that is what some of you were. But you were washed”.*** But let us not think that when we step out of the shower in the morning that our day is done. We must get dried off, dressed, and complete the rest of our day. Salvation is just a starting point in our life, we have things to do in response to our salvation.

**Slide 5: Translation**

In my sermon on love, I had said that translation is an art, it is not a precise science like mathematics. In the New Testament Greek, there are eight words for love, and only one word in the English language.

Because we only have one word for love in English, we must place words around the word love be able to distinguish the difference between motherly love and brotherly love, and a love for chocolate cake.

The opposite can also be true, where the English language has more than one word for an Old Testament Hebrew or New Testament Greek word.

This is the case for our next big word this morning. As we continue to unpack **1 Corinthians 6:11** it says ***“And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified”.***

The Greek word that is translated as sanctified in this passage is also translated in the English Bible as “**holy, holiness, holy one, saints, consecrate, consecration, sanctify or sanctification”**[[2]](#footnote-2).

**Slide 6: Sanctified**

When Paul tells the Corinthians, as well as you and I today, it is the Blood of Christ cleanses our sins away, it results in our being sanctified. To be sanctified means we are freed from the bondage and chains of sins. God gives us the Holy Spirit to reveal his truths to us, and we are encouraged and empowered by the Holy Spirit to make those conscious decisions to walk away from our sinful behaviours.

Romans 6:6-7 says “***For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.***”

Like the facets that give the diamond its shape and sparkle, another facet of being sanctified is the act of God that sets us apart. In **1 Corinthians 1:2** Paul speaks to this setting apart by saying “**To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people**”. Sanctification means that God has set us apart from the rest of the world and declares that we are his holy people. The act of sanctifying is seen in **Genesis 2:2** where God rests on the seventh day, and God blesses the day and makes the seventh day holy unto himself. Sanctification is a life changing event. **John 15:19** says this about the person who is sanctified, “***If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”***

Sanctification is also used in scripture to mean that we are striving towards holiness, that goal of becoming Christ like which the world objects to. When Jesus’ prays for his disciples in **John 17:17**, he asks God to “***Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth***”. God’s word , God’s truth is found in the Bible. Jesus says in **John 8:31-32**, “***If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”***

Our striving towards sanctification is a lifelong process of striving towards becoming Christ like.

S**lide 7: Justified**

I will read verse 11 again, ***“And that is what some of you were. 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.”***

Justify is a verb that means “to declare or make righteous”. If you have difficulty believing that God hates people as sinners, you must also remember that God continues to love because scripture is clear that God loves us before we love him. Consider the New Testament believers who were already alive when Jesus was crucified on the cross, Paul writes in Romans 5:8 that “God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

If we accept the Biblical doctrine that we are completely unable to save ourselves from sin, we are grasping our need for a saviour and the activity of the Holy Spirit within our lives.

Pastor David summarized Mercy well when he said, “We don’t get what we deserve” and Grace is when “We get what we don’t deserve.” Justification is a legal term and in God’s court of Grace; God shows us Mercy when we don’t deserve it. When we receive our salvation in faith, God Justifies, His Mercy pardons the sin of guilty sinners and God declares us to be righteous. In God’s eyes we are no longer His hated enemy, but we enter that love relationship where we are adopted as His child.

Where our court systems condemn the guilty, **Romans 8:1-2** says ***“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set youfree from the law of sin and death.”***

1. Robert N. Wilkin, *The Ten Most Misunderstood Words in the Bible* (Irving, TX: Grace Evangelical Society, 2012), 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. K. E. Brower, “Sanctification, Sanctify,” ed. D. R. W. Wood et al., *New Bible Dictionary* (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 1057. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)