**Such Were Some of You**

After preaching a lesson on overcoming an addiction, such as alcohol, pornography, or cigarettes, I was encouraged by the those who shared their stories with me. One person talked about how he was able to overcome smoking. Another person said how important it is to make a determination to quit. Here is a warning to quit- “Or 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 effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.”(Cor. 6:9-10).

Reading this passage for the first time, I realized that I had been drunk many times, I was guilty. I fit in this passage. Some of these are my sins. What about you? Have you lied? Then you are a liar. Have you stolen something? You are a thief. Have you committed any of these? If you have, then you are in trouble. You are then in the category of the “unrighteous”, who will not “inherit the kingdom of God”. But Paul was writing to people in the church at Corinth who had changed, repented of these sins. Then they were baptized into Christ, “Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized.” (Acts 18:8). These people too were guilty of the sins just mentioned, but now with a twist. “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 and in the Spirit of our God.” (1Cor. 6:11). They were sinners, but now they are saints. Many people in church have overcome addictions, even in our local church.

Jesus talking about one local church says, “So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you. ‘But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.” (Revelation 3:3-4). So after their washing in baptism, they kept their garments from being “soiled”, they kept them “white”. Like all the local congregations in the Bible, they were filled with unrighteous people, who had stopped being unrighteous.

Jesus says, “But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” (Rev. 21:8). It takes courage to admit your sins. To label them as such. Then to renounce them. Church is not for the cowardly.

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