

6. 1 Cor 6.9 & 1 Tim 1.9-10 (Opening the Door to Application)

Scanzoni, the non-lesbian coauthor with the lesbian Mollenkott, in *Is the Homosexual My Neighbor* (revised 1994 by Scanzoni) covers these passages in her section on “What does the Bible say?” (56-83) under two headings: Two Problematic Greek Words (74-78) and Law Versus Grace (79-81). Appealing to Boswell as an authority, she concludes: “Clearly [Cor and Tim] do not contain a blanket condemnation of the homosexual orientation or homosexual love. Specific kinds of sexual abuse are under discussion in these passages” (76). We evaluated Boswell’s claims last time and found them wanting. The use of these words in extra-biblical Greek and in Leviticus show that it is exactly the blanket condemnation of same-sex sex that they present. Therefore, there is no good form of same-sex sex in outward act or in the heart. This accords with what we have already seen, namely, that same-sex sex defiles marital intimacy (defiling the marriage bed, Heb 13.4 and violating the standard for sexual intimacy, Gen 1-2) and thus is sinfully impure and unnatural (Rom 1.18-32).

Consequently, we will concentrate on Scanzoni’s discussion of Cor and Tim in her section on Law versus grace. This will be helpful as we now take up the question of application in Christian witness bearing, pastoral counseling, and one anothering love among the saints (Note: on one hand, surely, the church needs improvement along these lines, but on the other hand, there are no doubt many in the church that have shown genuine, albeit, tough love; if you are in the wrong, but do not believe you are wrong, you will probably not see any love but only toughness).

I. Analysis of Scanzoni’s treatment of 1 Cor 6.9

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality,¹⁰ nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.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 (1 Corinthians 6:9-11 ESV)

A. Summary

1. Being under grace not law

She argues that if a change in sexual orientation were necessary to salvation, then that would be works for salvation, but it is by grace.

2. What conversion is not

We cannot use 6.11 as proof that conversion changes a homosexual orientation into a heterosexual one as some claim: that homosexuals are, based on this passage, to cease being such, or at least cease to express their sexuality. The text says nothing about that kind of decisive break with x, y, or z. There is no reference to conversion from homosexual orientation.

3. What conversion is

What then is the change in view regarding those formerly unrighteous but now washed, sanctified, and justified? Unrighteous refers to our old natures and now the change is that we are “made fit” for God’s kingdom by “the acceptance of a new nature” (80). Christ’s sacrifice is the only way to forgiveness, but becoming a Christian does not eliminate the old ego nature. After conversion: homosexual people must certainly learn to cease from unloving abuses of sexuality, as heterosexuals must.

B. Evaluation

1. On her view of being under grace not law

This is really a red herring since the subject of works in relationship to salvation is not in the context nor is it raised by her opponents. She cites no one who uses the text in this way, perhaps some do, but there is no command or imperative regarding any item on the list. The text does not speak to what is required for salvation but to what happens when one is saved.

2. On her view of conversion

Granted, the text does not speak explicitly to the subject of one's innate disposition, interest, attraction, or to use a common word, one's sexual orientation (something rooted in a complicated network of biological and social factors, 194, in both nature and nurture). It makes two significant points: a) **such were some of you** and b) **But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified...by the Spirit**. The important requirement (necessity) of repentance does come up in other passages (i.e., repentance as the opposite side of the coin of faith is required for salvation; thus: a) both faith and repentance are the result of efficacious grace, and b) the fruits of repentance include turning away from sins such as those on these lists in the NT).

Paul speaks to conduct that dominated people's lives with deep roots in the heart from which all forms of sexual immorality arise: **For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander** (Mat 15.19). It is not that all of us were all the things on the lists in Cor and Tim, and the lists are not exhaustive. We have to recognize the fact of the dominance of *a particular sin that predominates to such an extent that a person can be identified by it*. They can be distinguished as such, known as such by their conduct. An adulterer of the heart is not identified as an adulterer; nor is one who commits an act of adultery an adulterer. A thief is called a thief because of his practice in some regular way, and though he may commit a single act of infidelity he is not identified by the sexual sin because it is not something he practices. If in the state of slavery to sin, one is not a slave to the sin of adultery, then he is not an adulterer, even though he may have committed various acts of adultery.

In context, same-sex sex is one of the sins by which some of the Corinthians were identified, while others were marked and known by other sins (drunkenness, theft, other sexual sins, and so forth). Conversion for them meant that they were once people who practiced same-sex sex but who no longer do so: **such were some of you**. He says, you were among the unrighteous who have no inheritance in the kingdom of God and about which you are not to be deceived: those who practice same-sex sex (characteristically as a way of life) will have no inheritance in the kingdom of God. Therefore, when converted, a person that practiced same-sex sex ceases to practice it; he or she is no longer known as such a person (one who practices same-sex sex).

What about the struggles that person's formerly in the grip of same-sex sex may have? Paul gives us a framework by which to interpret the challenges and temptations of converts from various enslaving sins. First, the implication is that most if not all Christians had some sins that were more enslaving than others in their bondage in sin. Second, there is encouragement for the journey ahead through the difficulties with sin in the Christian life that the letters to the Corinthians address: **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** (6.11b). 1) You were washed, cleansed, and therefore forgiven. 2) You were made holy. In a definitive separation from your sinful past, you have been put on a new path in life, the narrow path of holiness that leads to glory. 3) Finally, you were justified; you were declared just before God's throne of judgment in anticipation of the open acknowledgment and acquittal that you will receive on the Day of Judgment. These are true because of the authority of Christ and by the work of the Holy Spirit. This is structural because what happened is decisive and what is anticipated is certain. We have a Christian life to live in the time between the comings of Christ.

Paul gives us the framework for understanding the life of a Christian on the way. Clearly, there is not only definitive sanctification, being put on the path of holiness, which means to be forgiven (washed) and declared righteous (justified), but there is also progressive sanctification, walking on the path of holiness, which means being made holy, increasingly, in a process governed by the Spirit who is sovereign in spiritual renewal.