

## Lent Devotional March 11, 2020

### Scripture

1 Corinthians 5:9-6:11

*9 I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral persons—10 not at all meaning the immoral of this world, or the greedy and robbers, or idolaters, since you would then need to go out of the world. 11 But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother or sister who is sexually immoral or greedy, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or robber. Do not even eat with such a one. 12 For what have I to do with judging those outside? Is it not those who are inside that you are to judge? 13 God will judge those outside. “Drive out the wicked person from among you.” 6:1 When any of you has a grievance against another, do you dare to take it to court before the unrighteous, instead of taking it before the saints? 2 Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? 3 Do you not know that we are to judge angels - to say nothing of ordinary matters? 4 If you have ordinary cases, then, do you appoint as judges those who have no standing in the church? 5 I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to decide between one believer and another, 6 but a believer goes to court against a believer - and before unbelievers at that? 7 In fact, to have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded? 8 But you yourselves wrong and defraud - and believers at that. 9 Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, 10 thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers—none of these will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And this is what some of you used to be. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.*

### Devotional

#### **The Rev. Dr. Helsel (Hetz) Marsh '68/'87, Pastoral Ministry (2000)**

The “verse” that immediately comes to mind as I read today’s passage from 1 Corinthians 5 is “in the world, but not of the world.” But there is no such verse! Nevertheless, several New Testament verses make the point: John 15:19, “If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own. Because you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world—therefore the world hates you”; John 17:16, “They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world”; John 2:15-16, “Do not love the world or the things in the world. The love of the father is not in those who love the world; for all that is in the world—the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, the pride in riches—comes not from the Father but from the world”; Romans 12:2, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God”; and James 1:27, “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this; to care for orphans and widows in distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.”

“In the world” is our locus, our location. We cannot influence the world as “light” and “salt” if we are not in it. But we are not to draw from the world as our source of inspiration or behavior. This was no easy task for the Corinthian Christians, surrounded as they were by hedonism. It is no easy task for us either. We are called to be “holy,” to be different from the world. None of us reaches this goal. Thus the need both for forgiveness and for God’s transforming presence and power. We are justified by faith in Jesus Christ, but we are sanctified by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

David McFarland, formerly of the Sewickley Presbyterian Church, defined sanctification as “the process of growing to be more and more like Jesus Christ for the sake of others.” The goal of our journey of faith is the integration of Christ into everything we do. If we do so, the world will see the love of God through us.

**Prayer**

Gracious and loving God, when, as you taught us, we pray “Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven,” we are reminded that the church is sent into the world so that the world will know eternal life, which is to “know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” Continue, we pray, your Spirit’s transformation of us from within. Amen.