

If you haven't been here for a while, we go through books of the Bible, and we've been going through the book of 1 Corinthians. And what you might have noticed so far is that Paul has been talking about two kinds of people. In a nutshell, he said there's only two groups of people. There are people that are saints, right? In the first chapter he called them saints.

He said there are people that are saints. Those are people that are that we found out have wisdom from above. They have the Holy Spirit. They have the power to understand God's Word. They have the power to live a Christian life. They are no longer slaves to sin. Remember that? But on the other side, there are another group of people. If you divide them up on those people, they are what we would call natural people, carnal people. They are people of the flesh. And they only have earthly wisdom. Because that's all that they have access to. They can only see earthly wisdom. They can only see what they have.

They can only figure out what they get with their eyes and with their ears and what they can rationalize and their heart and in their mind. And so, we have these two groups of people and it's really nice and neat, isn't it? You got Christians and non-Christians. We like to think in terms of this is the way it is. It's just two camps. You go on this side, you're on this side. I'll treat you one way. I'll treat you another.

Here's the problem. We have the Corinthians. Where do they fit? Where do the Corinthians go? Because the Corinthians are living in the flesh. They're living as though they only have earthly wisdom. They're living and doing things that are not of the Spirit. They're completely going contrary to God in so many ways. And yet Paul called them in the first chapter, saints. And you say, what's going on there? What's going on there?

What do these guys have? What do these Corinthians? Do Christians that we see live this way? You see it all the time, don't you? A lot of Christians, they live just fleshly lives. They live not living out with wisdom from above. They're obeying wisdom from the earth. Wisdom that's contrary to God. And you're like, are they Christians? Are they not Christians? It's kind of confusing, isn't it? What do you do with the Corinthians?

What do you do with people that have professed Christ and then they're living a life that is completely contrary to Him? I'm gonna take a little bit of time. I've even made you some cartoons this morning to kind of help you understand. Because that's how I learned when I was growing up. It was all cartoons Saturday morning. Do they have Saturday morning cartoons anymore? I don't think they do. You know what, that's a shame. Because I learned a lot from Wiley Coyote. But this is what it says in scripture. It says, but I, brothers, could not address you. We did all that stuff that we had before with earthly wisdom, godly wisdom. How they're so divided. Now Paul is going back to the people he called saints.

They're living lives that aren't right with God. It's a nightmare. It's a dumpster fire. And here's what he says to them. He says, *but I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people but as people of the flesh as infants in Christ.*

You say, what does that mean? Let's pray, we're gonna dive into it. *God, I pray that you would help us to understand what it is to be an infant in Christ. What it is to be mature in Christ. What it is to be a natural man. And what it is to be a spiritual man. God, what it is to be godly. And how we can, how can we become more godly? And how can we become more like you? God reveal that to us this morning in Jesus' name.*

All right, this is my natural man. Natural man, who's he? The natural man is an, he only has earthly knowledge. He's who all of us were before we became a Christian. Before, there was never a time where somebody wasn't at some point a natural man. Everybody is at some point until they get saved. And the natural man has earthly knowledge from his own eyes, his own ears, his own brain. Positionally, when he stands before God, he is sinful. He is flawed. He is practically, as he lives, he is completely according to the flesh. He doesn't give deference to the spirit. He's living according to what he wants. He's living selfishly. That's the way we all come into the world.

And that's the natural way we go. That person is not when they stand before God, just before God. And that person is also not living in obedience to God. That is the non-Christian laid out according to scripture. But the natural earthly fleshly man can, and this has happened to many of you, they can get saved. Jesus' death on the cross is allowing something to happen. When Jesus dies on the cross, he is allowing you to be able to be forgiven. That's what the cross does. The cross doesn't forgive you. The cross allows God to forgive you. The cross justifies you so that he can offer you grace while remaining just. Because if God was to offer you grace and nobody had died for your sins, he wouldn't be a just God. Because he's just letting sin go with no penalty. And so, he must do that. And when we accept God's grace by faith, we end up being justified by God. So, to be justified by God, something has to happen with us. We have to have faith. We must trust God and accept his grace. And then when that happens, the natural man, the non-Christian, becomes the spiritual man or the spiritual woman. And so, once you're saved, you become spiritually alive.

Now let me say something about this. When you were a natural person, before you were saved, you had a spirit. It's not that you're not spiritual at all. You have a soul. When you were born, you had a soul. And that soul will carry on afterwards. Here's the problem. Before you were saved, that spirit was dead. You lived with a dead spirit. You walked around with a living flesh, but a dead spirit. You following this? And so, from here, what we get is we get some scripture. And it says in Romans 5, nine, it says, *since we have now been justified by his blood, how are we just with God? Because it's his blood. Because he died on the cross. How much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him? Or if we look at Ephesians 2, eight, look at this. It says, for it is by grace you have been saved through faith and this is not from yourselves. It is the gift of God.*

So, man isn't just before God until he exercises faith. He says, God, I trust you. That's the factor that you're involved in. I trust you. And we aren't justified until we have faith. We aren't justified by our works. We're not right with God because we do good things. We're not right with God because we have the right attitude toward God.

Romans 3, 28 says, *for we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from works of the law.*

Here's where things get tricky. Follow along with me. There's a difference between our position with God and our practicality with God. There's a position and a practical place with God. Here's what I mean by that. Practically, the non-Christian, here's what we can say practically about the non-Christian. We know positionally that the non-Christian isn't just with God. We know positionally that the non-Christian doesn't have wisdom from God. We know positionally, we know all that. We know he's not righteous. We know he's sinful. We get that. So practically the non-Christian does not have the Holy Spirit. In a practical sense, in real life, the non-Christian doesn't have the Holy Spirit. The non-Christian is controlled by the flesh because that's all he's got. He's controlled by the flesh. The Spirit is dead. So, he's controlled by the flesh. He is also a slave to sin, which means he can't choose not to sin. He's controlled by sin. And he can't free himself from that. So, he's locked into the addiction of sin. And his access is only to human wisdom. He only can know what's available to him. That's the non-Christian person. And that's practically. Practically, the Christian, once they're saved in a practical sense, they have the Holy Spirit. They're controlled by the Spirit. You say controlled by the Spirit.

Wait a second, Dustin. Are you sure that the Christian is always controlled by the Spirit? Because it looks like the Corinthians aren't controlled by the Spirit. Let me tell you something. You are controlled by the Spirit. Whether it shows out practically in your life or not, God, when he purchased you and grabbed ahold of you, he will complete that which he has started. Now, the route to which you get to, that which he has preordained that you're gonna get to, the route of what he has planned for you. I want to accomplish this through you and this through you and this through you. I'm gonna control you. He may have to control you in different ways. He may have to lead you in different ways to get you to where he wants you to go. It may be very painful for you because you're gonna fight him the whole way. But God is still controlling. The believer is controlled according to scripture by the Holy Spirit. The Christian is no longer a slave to sin. He has wisdom from above and still possesses flesh, still sinned.

So that's the practicality of this person. This is the difference between Christians and non-Christians positionally before Christ. This is the Corinthian saint. Now you understand what we're dealing with them. Here's the truth about the Corinthians. Their position before God is that they are saints. When God looks at them, even though they're rotten, when God looks at them because of the love of God, because of the justice that has been fulfilled through Christ on the cross, because they have given their life to Christ because they've believed in Christ,

positionally they are saints. They are without sin before him. Even while they're on earth, while they're on earth, this is you as a saint.

Positionally you are a saint. You are perfectly justified. You're not partially justified on earth before God. Positionally your position before God is you are perfectly justified before God. He looks in you and says, there is, because God doesn't do partial. There's no partial, right? Not in your position with God. Christ didn't die on the cross so that he could justify you a little bit. We're not Catholic, right? He died on the cross so that we would be perfect in God's eyes. There's only perfect and non-perfect. And so, for positionally, we are perfectly justified. Positionally we are controlled by the spirit, positionally. Positionally we are guiltless before God.

We've already seen that in this passage. Positionally we have access to wisdom from above. Positionally we are holy before God. We are God focused positionally. But positionally does not translate always into practical because you still have flesh, right? You're not out of the flesh. You still have a fleshly body. You still have a fleshly brain that has fleshly desires. You have habits that have carried over because you still have flesh. You didn't all of a sudden become just like perfect and everything's gone. Positionally you are. But on earth you're still struggling with the flesh and you're still struggling with that. So practically you're still fleshly so there still can be sin in your life. Now that should change and it shouldn't be all the time but that can change. But you're still gonna see it. You're gonna be becoming more holy. You're becoming more like Christ. Becoming more like the position that you're in. But you're not there yet.

And so, you're gonna have, you know, getting holier and then a little bit of drop down and then spiral back up and then drop down. That's just the way life is. You're gonna live according to worldly wisdom sometimes. You're gonna live as controlled by the flesh sometimes. There's gonna be times when you can't digest spiritual food. You can't understand the spiritual things that are being talked about because you're so engaged with earthly wisdom that the godly wisdom that's being laid upon you is like butterfly driving a truck. It's cuckoo. And practically we are sometimes self-focused. So when they're freedom, the Corinthians, in their freedom, they're choosing to continue in the flesh and in human wisdom. Not because they're slaves. The Corinthians are not slaves to sin.

They are free now and in their freedom, they've decided that feels more comfortable and I like the old way of living. That makes sense? You understanding that? It says for the flesh desires, what is contrary to the spirit?

Isn't that what we're talking about? We still live in the flesh and we still have some flesh. So any flesh that's left, which is still a lot, it is desiring what is contrary to the spirit that has now become alive in us because we've given our life to Christ. Our spirit is no longer dead no more once we give our life to Christ. Now it is alive. And the spirit, what is contrary to flesh, they are in conflict with each other so that you are not to do whatever you want. See, this is the problem.

This is the problem. If we break it all down, we break it all down between the person that is a believer and has a spirit and the person that is fleshly and doesn't, here's, if we break it all down, the difference is that we all have the ability if we want to live according to the flesh and what does flesh mean? Self. Flesh is always about what's good for me. What makes me happy? What's in my best interest? Not concerned about what works as God, right? If you were concerned with that, it would be all the spirit because the God is leading for what's best for all and best for him and for his glory. But if you're not living that way, you're living for flesh. You're living for self. Even as Christians, we still possess flesh and flesh lives as a part of ourselves. So let's get back to this passage we have in first Corinthians. Here's what it says. But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people but as people of the flesh as infants in Christ.

All right, so let's break that down for a minute. This word we have is pneumatikos. It comes from two words, pneuma, which is spirit, right? So, we're talking about spirit, being in the spirit. We have a spirit. Pneuma is spirit. Ticos means controlled by. Okay, so it says, but I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people. I could not address you as people controlled by the spirit. Now, why are they not being controlled by the spirit? Why aren't the Corinthians being controlled by the spirit? It says, but as people of the flesh as infants of Christ. So here you've got the word sarks, which is the word for flesh and a word inos.

Now, inos, it's kind of like English where you've got like little tags that you put at the end that mean stuff. Whenever you have the one before the tikos, that's controlled by. Whatever's ahead of it is controlled by. So, if it

was sarkitos, it would be controlled by the flesh. But whenever you have key noses like that, the word means to be made of. And so, he's saying, I can't talk to you like Christians.

I can't talk to you like I would talk to normal Christians because you are not living like spiritual people, people controlled by the spirit, but you were living by people that are made out of flesh. That's what he's saying. That's what he's saying. So positionally, the Christian is pneumatikos. He's controlled by the spirit. And every Christian is pneumatikos, right? However, our freedom from sin is there. It's gonna still allow the option to disobey God's spirit, the spirit of God that controls us because we still live practically encumbered by flesh. And so, you say, well, what does that mean?

It means this. We talked about justification. We are justified by Jesus on the cross. How do we actualize that justification of him on the cross? We believe, we believe in him. If you believe, you'll be saved. When you believed, what happened? Your spirit became alive. And positionally it changed everything positionally. You are now perfect in the eyes of God positionally. Practically you still got flesh that's holding you back changing the way you live and you're fighting all the time with yourself. I want to do the right thing, but the flesh is holding me back. Sanctification is the process of practical change and actions and thoughts due to the spirit of God in the Christian and obedience to God's revelation that causes them to become more like the person they are positionally. Before God than the natural man that they were before they were justified. Do you understand what that means? You have a position before God which is perfect. But you have flesh down here, and this is how you're living. Sanctification is the process that we're in right now of being sanctified. It's the process of us by obeying God and listening to God. It's the process of us going from the fleshly life we have now to our earthly life becoming more and more and more and more like the actual position that we are with God. We are we are by obeying the spirit. The spirit is getting stronger in us. We are getting we are knowing more about godly wisdom.

We are rejecting earthly wisdom. We are obeying God when he asks us to do things and as a result our actions and our thoughts become more like the position that God purchased when we were justified. Does that make sense that sanctification? I'll give you another word. This is a fun one. Glorification. What's glorification? Well, why are we in the process of being sanctified? We're in the process of being sanctified because we are right with God. Positionally in our position with God. We're right with God.

We're not right with God in the sense of the way we are practicing, right? And we are slowly getting this way. What happens when you die and you don't have flesh no more? All of a sudden you are glorified because now you become what you are in the spirit. What you are you become what you are positionally because there's no flesh now to hold it back. And when you get glorified when you die having a relationship with Christ or when Jesus returns? That's what justification is. That's what sanctification is. That's what glorification is. And there's another step to glorification when eventually you will get your glorified body to which is a body that doesn't have the problems that we have with the flesh now. You'll get it.

You'll get a body that has all of that and it'll be current. So, here's the question. It says in a why are the Corinthians still babies? Some of you were here and you're going well boy. I still feel like I'm one of the babies. I feel like my life is so far from the from the positional. My life doesn't look anything like I am positionally before God and I wish it looked more like that, but it's not why are the Corinthians living like a dumpster fire? When positionally they are like that. Let's look what it says in Galatians chapter 5 verse 16. It says but I say walk by the spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh. Why are they carrying out the desires of the flesh because they won't walk by the spirit? When you don't live your faith when you don't obey it you don't grow. So here's what that means practically. Paul comes to the Corinthians he preaches to him they become Christians. They now are all of a sudden perfectly justified before God. They receive the Holy Spirit. They're walking around they're doing things the spirits saying do this. They ignore the spirit and they just do what they want because the flesh is really strong in them and they're like You know, I don't want to do what God wants me to do. I'd rather do this. So they ignore the spirit. And then this the spirit they hear from Paul or they hear from one of their teachers. This is how you should live and God has said that we should do this and you felt guilty for a while. But you just ignore it because you're like but I like doing this because the flesh is telling me in a selfish way I want to do what I want to do. Right the flesh is telling me to do to disobey God in this the flesh is telling me to leave my wife the flesh is telling me to take a slave the flesh is telling me to say this or to say that which isn't honorable to God. The flesh is going to tell a guy that he's supposed to have an affair with his stepmom. And he does it why because he wants he's concerned about self.

And so why are these people not growing? They're not growing because they ignore God and the more you ignore God the more you can't hear him anymore. Let that sink in for a second the more God speaks to you every time you God speaks to you and you listen to him and you do what he says. The spirit of God becomes stronger in your mind and in your heart and the next time you hear him louder. And the next time there's no question. That's God. Oh, I know that's God. Because I've heard that voice before I recognize that voice, but if whenever God you read something in Scripture you say, ah, that's just forget it. Oh, I you know what that might have been good for then but not for now. Whenever God is teaching you something and you ignore it and you say all you've done is solidified. That you want to live in the flesh and I am going to live in the flesh and it's gonna be about me and not about God and eventually you get people like the Corinthians and like a lot of churches around today where people are living completely selfish lives completely contrary to the position that they have before God? When you don't live your faith you don't grow it says in Ephesians chapter 4 22 to 24 it says you were taught with regard to your former way of life to put off your old self. What is that?

That's the flesh. That's the selfish. Putting off your old self which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires to be made new in the attitude of your minds. So, this is my mind. Am I listening or not to what God says? I'm changing my mind I am about doing what God says listening to God and obeying him to be made new in the attitude of your mind and to put on the new self. What's the new self the spirit of God that he's put in you? Created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness, God wants you, if you do that, to become truly righteous in a practical sense not positionally. You're already perfect positionally. Practically in your life will become righteous and holy because you're listening to God and doing what he says. When God tells you to brush your teeth, brush them!

So, why are they still babies? Why are the Corinthians still babies? Because when you listen and obey earthly wisdom rather than the Spirit of God, you won't grow. Second, you remain like a Sarcinos or fleshly person and you live fleshly and sinfully and what results is your church becomes divided like it is in Corinthians what results as you have sexual sin in your church like they have in Corinth. That's what we end up with.

I made this this picture here of this next one here with chat GPT. Because I was thinking through this and I was like I need a way to explain what this is. It says that the Corinthians can't they can't eat meat. They can only drink milk. What is that? What is meat? Meat are the deeper things of God like the things that I'm telling you in here. There is meat here. Okay? There are things that that can be deep in helping you understand your faith and growing in your faith, but there are also things that some of you will listen to it and it will just be milk, because you can't understand it.

You're like well, I don't understand what you're talking about. This doesn't practically make any sense to me. Here's the way I want to describe this to you is that when meat comes your way, if you have been living a life of selfishness, if you have not been obeying, your throat, your spiritual throat swells up. It's puffed up and your throat now is constricted and now the good stuff of God, the good teaching of God, the things that are going to change your life and make your life wonderful and great, they can't get down there because self is keeping your throat constricted, and the only thing that can get through is a little spiritual milk, because they can get around the meat and they can get in there. And so, the milk flows past the blockage. Oh, my goodness. Now let's go back to first Corinthians. Let's finish this up first Corinthians chapter three.

That was one verse. I'm sorry about, that I apologize. Um, it says *I fed you milk not solid food for you were not ready for it and even now you are not ready for you are still of the flesh*

Why can't they take in the meat? Because they're living of the flesh their throats or their spiritual throats are clogged up. They can't get the good stuff down for you are still of the flesh for while there is jealousy. Why are people jealous? Because they're selfish. *For while there is jealousy and strife*. Why is there strife? Because people are selfish. They want for themselves. They're living of the flesh. *For while there is jealousy and strife among you. Are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way?* You're not behaving like spiritual people. You're not behaving like your position. *For when one says I follow Paul and another I follow Apollos. Are you not being merely human?* The Christians are positional Christians, but practically they can't be communicated to like they are Christians because they're so consumed with the flesh. The Corinthians are still, if you look at this passage it says *you are still of the flesh*. They still have jealousy and strife among them. They are still behaving only in a human way. And now they're all still saying well, I follow Paul. They're not following God!

They're following Paul and all these other people. And so, verse five says *what then is Apollos?* Why is it a problem? Why would a fleshly person say I follow Apollos and Paul and how is that related to the flesh? It says *what then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed as the Lord assigned to each. I planted,, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth so neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything but only God who gives the growth.*

In other words, this may become a shock to some of you. There is no hierarchy within the church of God, There is God and there are his people. There is God and there are servants. There are people that water the plant. There are people that plant the seeds. There are people that go out there and they get the weeds. There are people that are throwing some fertilizer down. All those people are servants. None of those people are making the plant grow. Everything is about the plant growing right, and that are you farmers here in the plant growing the important part Right. I want a yield. I want plant to grow. What are you doing? Are you making the plant grow?

No, You're watering You're serving the One who's making it grow. I'm digging a hole. Okay. That's great. Praise God. You're doing that. You're doing that because God now. Here's the other thing. Does God need you to plant? I want you to think about this really clearly. Does God need you to plant and does God need you to water? Before man was ever here plants grew. Some of you don't even want the plants to grow that are growing. You got a field and there's a bunch of stuff growing in there and you're like, I don't want that in my plant. How did it get sowed if somebody didn't sow it? God doesn't even need you. God doesn't need me. He doesn't need us to do any of this but he allows us to be a part of the process because He loves us and He wants to do this with us right. He can make corn grow in your field without you planting it. I see corn pop up in beans. I see corn pop out in the middle of a field somewhere. I see a flower pop over here.

Oh, who planted that nobody Right. The point is that we're servants We're servants Paul and Apollos are not divided against each other. They're not fighting against each other. You Corinthians are fighting over who's who and who's important or whatever They're not fighting about each other because they know that they're both servants. They're both the greek word is Diakinos. It's a servant. Actually, the word is waiter. So you go to a restaurant and you have a waiter comes up and they say hey, can I take your order? You're like, yeah, you're gonna get a big tip today, right? That's a waiter. It's a servant. We don't exalt the waiter We don't go into the restaurant. Oh, the waiter. Oh man, this food was incredible. Great job waiter.

Great job busboy. Right, you don't glorify the busboy. You don't glorify the waiter You glorify the one who made the food. You glorify the one who brought it to you, the one who's in charge of the whole thing. That's who gets it. The rest of them are servants. That's who we are. We're the servants and we're all on the same level. Paul's not higher than Apollos. Dustin isn't higher than anybody else in this room. I'm a servant and I have a job. You're a servant and you have a job. And so, verse eight it says *he who plants And he who waters are one and each will receive his wages according to his labor for we are God's fellow workers You are God's field god's building* Their concern is not fleshly accolades. It's not oh, I want people to think oh, I'm paul. So I'm important, right? Or oh, I'm Apollos. I'm important.

That's not their concern. Or you know what? Dustin did a great job. So therefore, he should give some or Paul did a great job planting it So he should have the accolades, or a polis has done a good job growing it. So, let's give him the accolades That's not what this is all about. It doesn't even talk about success Go back to the verse. Let's go back to it. It says *he who plants and he who waters are one and each will receive his wages according to his success?* This is how you're gonna receive your wages. Your reward for what you do on earth. I am going to receive my reward because the church has more people than it did when I came. If the church was smaller and I worked and I was faithful, I would get the same reward or a better reward. It says the *wages according to his labor.*

Are you working and striving to follow him and to be his servant and do what he wants? That's your reward. It's not based on what... Maybe you're like, I'm not going to get any reward because I don't see any success around me. I could say the same thing. What reward am I going to get? I have a little bitty church in a little town nobody's ever heard of. That makes no matter at all. What matters is that we're rewarded by our labor. By our labor. Are we working? Are we faithful in what we do? We've had enough of this.

*God, I thank you so much. God that you love us. You bless us. You've called us in to be your servants. But there are many of us that are in this room that when we live our lives, we look at our position before God and we say,*

*we just don't measure up at all to that. And it may be you this morning saying, listen, I know I don't measure up to what... To what I am positionally. I don't look righteous. I don't look like I'm controlled by the Spirit. But God I really want to. I want to be sanctified. I want to grow in my relationship with God. And the only way that's going to happen is if I start listening to you and I start doing what you say. I start being obedient. I start following you. Even when it's going to negatively affect me. I'm still going to choose You, God, because it's not about my flesh. It's about the Spirit. I'm going to listen to the Spirit and follow. And God if we'll do that, I pray that you would use us in a mighty way. And we pray this in Jesus' name.*