



# THE EXHORTER

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***“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40***

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. ([prchurchofchrist.org](http://prchurchofchrist.org))

October 14, 2018

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***1 Corinthians 6:11 "And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God."***

Brett Kavanaugh is a name that a year ago most people had never heard of. Now, his name leads the headlines of every nightly news. The pick by the President to be the next Supreme Court justice, has been accused of inappropriate behavior decades ago when he was a senior in high school and starting college. The politicians will slug this out and it is not our place here to decide, nor do we even know if what has been said is true or not.

However, Brett Kavanaugh presents an interesting practical issue that has Biblical ties. How does one change their reputation? How does a person change people's perception of himself? This is where our verse fits in. Our verse begins with the expression, "and such were some of you."

There are three statements from our verse that is important to see:

And such-is identified by a classification of ten different kinds of sins. They are not good, none of them. The list includes, fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and swindlers. This is what they were. Rebellious to God. Hell bent and headed towards Hell. Many people may have been hurt by these choices and actions. Items were stolen. Families may have been torn apart. The list is extensive and ugly.

Were- this is what they were, but not what they are. Were is the past. What they are is present. They were no longer those things. A person can stop a behavior, but the tag, the reputation, the image lingers on with people.

But you- is used three times. But you were washed. But you were sanctified. But you were justified. They changed. They were no longer those things. And, in the image of God, they were His people. Washed, implying purity, cleansing, baptism. Sanctified implying special, set apart. Sainly. Justified meaning right, not guilty. Their status had changed with God. Often it may change with God but not with people.

These verses are fitting for us because it is where all of us are. Each of us were wrong with God. We all were sinners. We all have sinned. Our list may be different from the Corinthians, but it most likely involves several sins. Such were some of you, includes us. Our image and our reputation wasn't so hot.

(OVER)

But like this passage, we changed. We started doing what was right. We came to God as believers and through His grace we were made just. Our past is not our present.

And, as this passage continues, our current direction, choices and attitudes are reflect God. I expect for most of us, our high school days weren't something that we are proud of today. Sure the grades, the friends, the sports were all wonderful, but our moral choices may not have been pleasing to God. That was then and this is now.

Reputations change with time and right choices. Being known as an honest, hard working, dependable person does come from one day at work. It won't come from one worship service. But day after day after day, a consistent pattern is formed and people see us in a variety of circumstances and they see that we are not bending the rules to our pleasure. We are the same in stressful situations and with difficult people. Our anger holds. Our tongue doesn't betray us. Time after time, and what that does is build an image. Our social life matches what people know about us at work and worship. At the ballgame, at the golf course, at the theatre, our character shines. This is how images and perception changes.

Those that have known us for a long, long time, may remember those early years when we weren't so noble and righteous. They may continue to see us that way, but what they remember and what they currently see, will not match because we have changed. The problem lies with their refusal to allow a person to change. The problem lies with them believing that you are still the way you were way back then, even though you don't show that nor act that way.

Reputation is built upon our character. We control and shape our character. Our character changes. As we are influenced by the Gospel, our hearts become more and more like Jesus. When that happens, our character changes. We become more patient and forgiving, just like Jesus. We become kinder, just like Jesus. We become more compassionate, just like Jesus. Our character and our hearts are touched and molded by the Savior.

Now, in all of this there is another lesson about how we see others. Just as we have changed and we are not the same person we were before Christ and we are not the same person we were in high school, so we must allow a person to be judged by who they are today, not what they once were. We may know a person from years ago. Maybe he wasn't kind, honest or decent. Is he still that way? Give him a chance. It may be he has changed his character as you have yours. Allow a person to change and with that your image of them changes.

Is Brett Kavanaugh guilty of sexual abuse when he was in high school? I don't know. But is that his character today? Can a person change? Can a person realize that they were wrong? In Amazing Grace we sing, "I once was lost, but now I'm found." To the Corinthians, Paul said, "and such were some of you, but you were washed".

Reputation is what people heard about us or think about us. It may land you a job or it may keep you from getting a job. It may open doors or it may slam some doors shut. What people think about you is either something that they imagined or it is based upon what they see.

Live in such a way that people will say that you are a kind, moral, honest and generous person. They will say this when we act that way. Anyone can talk a good story, people need to see the proof. Our walk must match our talk.

You were, but now you are...reputation. Everyone of us has one. Make yours good.

Roger Shouse (Used by permission)

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