

Ephesians: Good News of the Church

[Ephesians 4:17-5:2](#)

“Putting Off...Putting On”– October 23, 2022



Introduction

In Paul's letter to the Ephesians, he started with a theological emphasis so that we would know what it was like to be in Christ. We were lavished with a reminder of what God has done for us. We are complete in Christ. We have everything that we need. We are blessed with every spiritual blessing. These truths are glorious and gracious.

But Paul isn't just a seminary lecturer, teaching us so we can pass a quiz. He is teaching these things so that we will live in obedience and have a transformed life. He begins chapter four by urging us to walk in these things. The result of knowing the theology should be that we live it out.

Not only are we called to walk in unity but also in holiness. We should not only talk the talk, but walk the walk. It's easy to start well, but then drift and stop growing. We become distracted by other things in this world and become blindly complacent. If we are not careful, we could make a shipwreck of our faith. How can we avoid this?

Sermon Outline

1. Remember who you are in Christ. 4:17-24
2. Be who you are in Christ. 4:25-5:2

Read & Discuss

1) Read 4:17-24

In these verses, we will see a repeated emphasis on the mind. What you believe to be true is not a matter of indifference. It will shape how you live. If you try to make sense of your life apart from God, it won't make sense. If you try to find meaning and purpose, value and significance, and joy outside of God, your search will be in vain - a chasing after the wind. ([Ecclesiastes 1:14](#))

The root problem is the hardness of the human heart. A hard heart is indifferent and unresponsive to spiritual things. This hardness of heart produces spiritual ignorance, and the result is alienation from God. God has revealed Himself in creation. He is not hiding. A hard heart suppresses the truth. Is there something you are chasing for satisfaction? How would you finish the statement: I would be happy if _____.

The old self is who we were in our former manner of life. We are now in a relationship with Christ. He is the one that will satisfy our heart. We don't need the poison-laced scams of this world. Christ lives in us. ([Galatians 2:20](#)) The new self is a new set of attitudes and actions that are recreated in you by God. When it comes to striving for holiness, we don't have to create it - it has been given to us in Christ. God has made us to be holy, sanctified. We are clothed in the righteousness of Jesus. Our job is to put it on display.

Paul used the contrast of vs. 17-19 and 20-24 to remind us who we were and who we are now. He's telling us, "don't go back." Why would we want to go back? Is there something fashionable in the world that tempts you to go back? We are deceived into thinking that going back is a good idea. If deceit is what fuels and shapes the old self, we need the truth of God's word to transform our minds. ([Romans 12:2](#)) As we read the Bible, we must ask God to open the eyes of our heart so that we will be transformed.

The world looks fun and interesting. It is deceitful. We are tempted to have one foot in the world and one foot in Christianity. You cannot have it both ways. Friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God. ([James 4:4](#)) We don't wake up in the morning and decide to ruin our life. It happens gradually. We dip our toe into the world. Nothing happens. We wade further. If no one stops us, you will wake up one day and your life is ruined. This is why we need the church. ([Hebrews 3:12-13](#)) We must speak the truth in love to each other. Has there ever been a time when a brother or sister in Christ came and spoke truth to you?

Additional reading: Romans 1

2) Read 4:25-5:2

In verse 25 Paul begins with "therefore." It connects "remember who you are" with "BE who you are in Christ." He's not telling us to live in self-righteous legalism. He's telling us to live the way we were called with what we have already been given by God through Christ.

Paul continues by speaking to five areas of application of "putting off" and "putting on."

Put off lying and speak the truth. The whole body suffers if we don't tell the truth to one another. The old self says that lying will protect you. It is our former manner of life. We came to know the truth in Jesus. There is a true refuge in Jesus. This frees us from the need to lie. Speak the truth, and trust God. It can be scary, but it is the path that leads to life. Are you known as someone who speaks the truth?

Put off sinful anger – "be angry and do not sin." There is a time for righteous anger, but here is the problem, in a flash, even righteous anger can turn into sinful anger. Resolve issues quickly. Don't hold onto anger. Don't hold a grudge. It's easy for us to justify anger, but most of the time it is governed by our desires. Sinful anger reveals where our idols are. In Christ we have value, acceptance, and joy. Are you controlled by sinful anger or a short-lived, righteous anger by what belittles God and hurts people?

Put off stealing. Stealing to get ahead is not who you are anymore. What do we put on? Hard work! Paul's aim is to transform the way we think about our jobs. Left to ourselves, we work for self, for significance and security. Paul tells us to work so that we may have something to share with someone in need. It shifts from doing something for me to doing something for you. We trust God to take care of us. How does this transform your thinking about your job?

Put off corrupting speech. At its core, corrupting talk is "me" centered. It tears down and gossips to build ourselves up. This command is absolute - No corrupting talk - only what will build up and give grace. ([Proverbs 17:28](#)) If God is blessing us, how can we turn around and tear others down with our words?

Put off bitterness. The old self operated this way because we thought no one was looking after us. But in Christ, we know that God does care injustice. ([Romans 12:19](#)) Forgiving in our own strength is impossible. Paul roots this call to forgive in the forgiveness of Christ. If we try to walk in love in our own strength, we will fail.

When you look in the mirror of these verses, what do you see? We must confess our sin to God and trust Christ. Paul isn't telling us to try harder. He is reminding us that Jesus paid the debt. It is offered freely as a gift. All you have to do is put it on by faith.

Prayer of Response

1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to *confess*? From what do I need to *repent*?

2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand, believe, desire, or do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to come. If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at <https://fbcum.org/sermons-new/>

Next week's sermon text: we turn to 1 Corinthians 12:13-31 "One Body, Many Members"
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