

Ephesians 4:17-32

Author: Paul

Recipients: Church in Ephesus

Location: Western shore of modern day Turkey; Aegean Sea

Key Theme: "The Body of Christ is Blessed"

v. 17-19

No Longer

- Paul instructs the Ephesian church to walk in a manner that is different from what they were before.
- The Ephesians were Gentiles therefore were not privy to the things of God before Christ.
- Not because they weren't eligible but because they had not heard of them.
- Paul tells us that the Gentiles walked in the futility of their minds.

As the Gentiles do...

- The Gentiles were pagans as a general rule.
- Many did worship Almighty God but the overwhelming majority followed false gods.
- They walked in the ways of their gods and of their own whims.
- They are alienated from God because of the ignorance that is in them due to their own hardness of heart.

Attributes of the Gentiles

- 1) They had become callous
- 2) They had given themselves over to sensuality
- 3) They were greedy to practice every kind of impurity

They were eager to follow their own way instead of following the way of the Lord.

Romans 1:18-32

- Here in Romans 1 we see a picture of God giving people over to their sin.
- Here in Ephesians 4 we see a picture of people giving themselves up.
- One shows things from God's side of the equation and the other shows the human side of the equation.
- The hardening of human hearts can be done both ways.

v. 20-24

A New Way

- Here is the pivot point.
- Once a person is in Christ they are now a new creature.
- It is expected that sinful people will come to Christ. We should always want and welcome that.
- It is also expected that when sinful people come to Christ they take off the old man and put on the new.
- The idea of this is like taking off a worn, dirty, tattered garment and putting on a fresh, clean, beautiful garment.

The Old Self

- It is the former manner of life.
- Paul explained what that looked like in v. 17-19.
- Desires are deceitful and therefore corrupt.
- Jeremiah 17:9-10
- The heart is wicked and a liar.

The Turn

- We go from all of that to renewing our mind and spirit.
- Romans 12:2
- This is a daily exercise in which we deny ourselves and are obedient to God.
- In doing this we put on the new creation that has been created in the image of God in true righteousness and holiness.
- This new man is that of Jesus Christ.
- He traded us for our old sinful nature for His perfect righteousness.
- Because we have been given such a great gift we are not to squander it by delving into sin.
- Romans 6:1-2
- Our old nature has been crucified with Christ. How can we continue on in our sin and still claim to be one of His people?
- Pursuing personal holiness is the will of God for our lives.

v. 25

Speak the truth

- Falsehood, or lying, is something that God hates. He despises dishonesty.
- What are some ways that we can be dishonest?
- We are to speak the truth because we are members of one body. No longer are we individual entities. In Christ we have become part of a collective body known as the church.
- Imagine if the eye began to lie to the rest of the body? That's when big time problems occur.

v. 26-27

Righteous anger

- This is an interesting command. Being angry is something that is not often attributed to God and His people but anger is an emotion that God created and has enabled us to feel.
- There is a right way and a wrong way to be angry.
- God displays righteous anger throughout the O.T.

Do not let the sun go down...

- Often misused
- The Bible isn't saying that we cannot let our anger go through the night. There is nothing mystical about this.
- The point is to not let the issue that is causing problems to go unaddressed.
- If we hurt one another and we do not resolve it then we give Satan a foothold to sow bitterness, envy, and division amongst us.
- He will use this to weaken the effectiveness of the church.
- He knows that he cannot stop or destroy the church so he works to slow us down or make us ineffective in our work.

v. 28

Honest work

- Let those who are thieves put away that type of sinful behavior and learn to work honestly.
- Why does it say that we need to learn to work honestly? So that we may share with those in need.
- This is a great verse on how to deal with wealth and prosperity.
- We all must work but not only to care for our needs but to care for the needs of those around us so that the Lord may be glorified in us.

v. 29

Watch your mouth

- Corrupting talk: dirty jokes, slander, gossip, putdowns,
- James 3:1-12
- So what about profanity? Establish what profanity actually is.
- Varies from culture to culture.
- As a general rule, our language and speech should be used to build up and edify, not tear down and destroy.

V. 30

Do not grieve the Holy Spirit

- Often misapplied to resisting the call of God to salvation
- This verse is written to people that are already saved and sealed.
- This is an instruction to be obedient to the direction of the Holy Spirit.

- That means when the Spirit convicts us of sin we are to repent. To continue in that is to grieve the Holy Spirit.

v. 31-32

Be kind to one another

- Who is Paul talking about? The church. Does that give us license to be unkind to unbelievers? No.
- We must put away all bitterness and anger from among us in the Church. There must be no room for those things. These are things that will eat us from within.
- We must forgive others when they hurt us.
- We must also be willing to ask forgiveness to those that we hurt.
- That means even if we don't think we did anything wrong we must work with those who feel wronged to correct the situation.
- IT. IS. NOT. ALL. ABOUT. YOU.
- We are all in this together for eternity. We better start acting like it.

Small Group Questions

- 1) What is dishonesty?
 - Anything that is untrue.
 - Get them to give some examples of borderline dishonest things and discuss them.
- 2) What is unGodly anger?
 - Get them to give some answers
 - What we are looking for is any form of anger that would tear down the work of the Gospel.
- 3) What is Godly anger?
 - Get them to give some answers
 - A response to evil that aids in the sharing of the Gospel
- 4) When are we to deal with issues that arise in the Church?
 - Immediately. Do not let things fester. If we do then Satan is given the opportunity to do destructive work.
- 5) How are we to use our speech?
 - For the building up of others within the Kingdom.
 - Read James 3:1-12
 - Share with them about the importance of getting the tongue under control because the damage that it can do is unreal.
- 6) What does it mean for a believer to grieve the Holy Spirit?
 - To be disobedient to the leading of the Spirit as well as the commands found in Scripture.

- This is a command for believers. Unbelievers do not have the Holy Spirit therefore they do not grieve Him.

Small Group Questions

- 1) Paul tells us in verse 17 that the Gentiles walked in a specific way. How does he say that they walked?
 - In the futility of their minds. Their minds were blinded and hardened by their sin and disobedience that their thinking had become futile or worthless.
- 2) What were the 3 attributes of the Gentiles?
 - They had become callous. This means that they felt no remorse or conviction for their sin against God.
 - They had given themselves over to sensuality. Notice the phrasing “given themselves over”. This is a complete devotion to sensuality. They were ruled by doing what felt good at the time.
 - They were greedy to practice every kind of impurity. They longed for the sin that they had grown to love. The sad thing is that sin is a cruel master that does not love back.
- 3) Go over Romans 1:18-32 and talk about how God will give people over to their sin and then talk about how humans will give themselves over to their sin. They are two sides of the same coin.
- 4) Can we trust our heart?
 - No! It is wicked and deceitful to the core.
- 5) Go over Romans 12:2 and discuss what renewing our mind looks like on a daily basis.

6) As God's people are we to continue on in our sin? Absolutely not! We have been given such a precious gift in the righteousness of Christ that we cannot remain in that sin that sent Him to the cross. Personal holiness is the call of God upon our lives. Xfg