

## OUT WITH THE OLD IN WITH THE NEW

WILLIS 8/28/11

Ep4:17-26 (MSG)

So far in our study of Ephesians we have seen Paul writing as an Apostle. His words have been pregnant with vision and purpose. His intent has been to reveal the manifold wisdom of God and underscore how each one of us fits into God's master plan.

- Now beginning in v.17 Paul takes on the mantle of a Pastor and begins to address a problem specific to the Church in Ephesus and one quite applicable to the Body of Christ today.

Ep4:17-26 (NAS)

v.17 "This I say therefore and affirm together with the Lord..." Contained in the statement is one of those life defining questions that each one of us must settle and order our lives accordingly.

### **What or who is our life affirming?**

- Whether by intention or by default our life is an affirmation of someone or something.
- **By created intent man is to be an affirmation of Christ not an origination of self.** Our goal is to say what Christ has already said, do what Christ has already done...thereby affirming the will of heaven on earth. Our lives are to be an affirmation.
- **That doesn't eliminate creativity it simply directs it. Creativity is not the freedom to originate it is the enablement to emanate.** As Michelangelo said, "I see what is already inside the marble and I let it come out."
- Daily life is to be the affirmation of God's will by seeing what is already in the heart of God then letting that come out.

What we see is to order the direction of our daily walk. Paul says, "We are to no longer walk as the Gentiles walk..." Lest it just pass us by please note our faith is to be a walk...that is something that is moment by moment not week by week or event by event.

- To walk every second must be intentional. **Without intentionality every step is a potential fall. If we walk with purpose every step is a potential fall interrupted by another step.** Intentionality and purpose are what keep us from falling.

- The Gentile walk is a walk without purpose or intention. To walk as the Gentiles walk is to forget who we are and walk out our daily lives forgetting who we are to be affirming.
- Keep in mind Paul is writing to Christians. Christians who had apparently forgotten who they were and started living again as if they were Gentiles. **Though we go to Church on Sunday some of us have forgotten who we are and live as Gentiles on Monday.**

So Paul says “Don’t walk as the Gentiles walk...” Gentiles by definition are those who live without Christ or those in Christ but still live for themselves by themselves through themselves. He then defines 3 characteristics that make a Gentile a Gentile.

1. **The Futility of Mind:** Living by reason not by faith. Living in the seen not the unseen. Futility is the embracing of any practice or lifestyle that fails to produce the desired result or fails to affirm our created intent.
2. **A Darkened Understanding:** Letting darkness shape our worldview not the light. Its decisions made while in seasons of rebellion or dark reaction.
3. **The Hardness of Heart:** Allowing the heart to petrify through offense, negativity and rejection of the truth. To be hearers of the Word and not do what we hear petrifies the heart. Familiarity petrifies the heart.

The result is we become calloused and give ourselves over to sensuality, impurity and greediness...ie. We start living for ourselves. **Our lives were created to be given over not kept for ourselves.**

- We either give ourselves over fully to God or our lives will be given over to self or any other manner of practice that misses the mark.

So Paul’s answer in vs.22-24 is to “lay aside the old self, be renewed in the spirit of our minds and put on the new self which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness, holiness and truth.”

- The picture is that of laying aside the old self as we would a pair of dirty clothes. Though perhaps still comfortable the old self is no longer profitable, so it must be put off for the new.
- **The laying aside of the old and the putting on of the new is what the Bible defines as the sanctification process.** There is a big difference between what the Bible defines as justification and what the Bible defines as sanctification.

- **Justification is a positional work accomplished by Christ which we freely receive once and for all. Sanctification is a practical work enabled by grace accomplished through the process of obedient surrender.**
- Justification changes my standing before God. Sanctification changes my standing before man. John Calvin said, “He whose life differs not from unbelievers has learned nothing of Christ for the knowledge of Christ cannot be separated from the mortification of the flesh.”

Putting on the new man has nothing to do with age or time. The new man is new in respect to condition. We are to be new in relation to form and quality. What Paul is pressing for is new in character, new in personality, new in nature. We are to think new...see new...speak new...entertain new.

- “Put On” means “to sink into.” This is not a cosmetic change or a surface adjustment. It is a deep inner transformation. The old comes off before the new can be put on. We are to be out with the old attitudes and negative mindsets so we can be in with the new.
- **The new self which we are putting on is created for and defined by righteousness, holiness and truth.** It is not religious to be righteous nor is it legalistic to be holy. We are never more alive than when we are alive to what we were created for...righteousness, holiness and truth.

I want to call us as a congregation to lay aside the old...be done with gentile ways...agree no longer with the hardness of heart. Instead, let’s sink into the new...in the likeness of God let’s put on righteousness, holiness and truth.