

Ephesians 4:17-24

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[0 : 00] Good evening. Good evening. Missed you all this morning. Missed you. We had a good time where we was at though. Be in the New Testament this evening.

The book of Ephesians, chapter 4. The book of Ephesians is a wonderful book for doctrine. In fact, the book of Ephesians really can be divided into two different sections. Chapters 1-3 are all about church doctrine, Christian doctrine.

And chapters 4-6 are the application of the doctrine that you read about in chapters 1-3. So you have the doctrinal part in the first three chapters.

Then you have the practical part in the last three chapters in 4-5-6. Paul has already, by the time we get to Ephesians 4, Paul has already established some very deep things as far as Christian doctrine is concerned, as far as church doctrine is concerned.

[1 : 15] He's established that the main thing He's established is that we are brought out of spiritual death into spiritual life by no merit or no effort of our own, but all through Jesus Christ.

You read that mainly in chapter 2. It's where we find the phrase that I've said many times, I'm sure you all have said and heard many times, that we're dead in our trespasses and sin before that happens.

And you find that in Ephesians 2. It's also where we find that salvation is not of works, lest any man should boast. We are saved by grace through faith.

But Paul has established these things. And we get to chapter 4, and he starts talking about unity within the church. And then he gets to a section where he's talking about the gift of Christ.

And then we get to another section about putting on the new man. And of course, to do that, we must take off the old man. And that's the section that we're going to be in this evening.

[2 : 24] So, all that being said, and without further ado, Ephesians 4, beginning at verse 17, says, This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart, who being past feeling, have given themselves over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

But ye have not so learned Christ. If so, be that ye have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus, that ye put off concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness, and true holiness.

Back to verse 17. Ephesians 4, 17, This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind.

And again, Paul here is speaking, we must keep in mind, he's speaking to the church, he's writing to the church at Ephesus, Ephesus being a predominantly Gentile city, and we can rightfully assume, that the congregation there was mostly Gentile.

But he says, This I therefore say, and testify in the Lord. So Paul here is saying, what I'm about to tell you, what I'm about to say in this letter, that I'm writing you, not only am I telling you, but I'm telling you with a divine weight.

[4 : 19] I'm telling you this with divine authority, when he says, This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord. He's saying, what I'm saying is not just of me, this is not just a recommendation, that I'm making to you, this is something that is taught, throughout the entirety of Scripture, and it's something that is taught, both Old Testament, and New Testament.

And Paul here is saying, I'm telling you this, with apostolic authority, and with the authority of Almighty God, I'm relaying these things to you, I'm conveying these things to you, this I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth, ye henceforth from this point on, from the point

of your conversion on, not from the point of your choosing, but from the point that you're converted, from the point that you are saved, by the marvelous grace of Almighty God, that ye henceforth walk, not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind.

So Paul here is telling them, I'm telling you this, with divine authority, that from the point that you are saved, that you are not to walk, as you formerly did, you are not to walk, as you once did, you are not to walk, in the ways, you are not to act in the ways, you are not to talk in the ways, you are not to do the things, that you once did, just as the other Gentiles, are doing, those that have not been converted, those that have not, been regenerated.

Paul, again here, he says, that ye henceforth walk, not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind. This is the reason, that they walk the way that they do, because everything in their mind, everything in their thoughts, is nothing more, than pure, and sheer vanity.

It is all for naught, it has no eternal substance, it has no eternal weight, it has no eternal glory, it has nothing to do with eternity. They are walking for self, they are walking, in the vanity of their mind.

[6 : 11] And Paul here says, that we henceforth, are not to walk that way. He's writing to the church at Ephesus, but folks, this applies just as much to the church, in 2026, that we are to walk henceforth, not as the other people walk, not as the way that the world walks, not as the way, that the unregenerate walk, we are to walk according to the ways, of Almighty God, we are to walk the way, that He has prescribed, in His word, that we are to walk, and no other way.

The church has no excuse, to walk as the world does. And unfortunately, there's many churches out there, that are doing just that. There's many congregations out there, that are doing just that. There's many individual Christians out there, or professing Christians, that are doing just that. These churches, that invite the world in. These churches, that send out the questionnaires, asking what people want to see, in their church.

What they would like to have, in their church. Folks, you are inviting the world, into the congregation, of Almighty God, when you do that. And God, will not have it.

When that happens, when the world, infiltrates the church, God will remove, His spirit, from that church house. He will remove, His spirit, from that congregation.

[7 : 25] He will remove, His spirit. He will remove, His presence. And then you are left, with nothing more, than sheer entertainment. You are met, with nothing more, than a social club, that meets a couple, of times a week.

I don't want that, for this church. I don't want that, for any church, that is out there, that is currently, standing true, to the word, of Almighty God. It's a dangerous thing though.

It's a dangerous thing, and it happens. It happens a whole lot more often, than what we realize. It's all in the vanity, of their minds. They walk in the vanity, of their mind. Verse 18, having the understanding darkened, being alienated, from the life of God, through the ignorance, that is in them, because of the blindness, of their heart.

We've gone from the vanity, of their mind here, to the blindness, of their heart. And the vanity, of their mind, is due to, the blindness, of their heart. Folks, it doesn't start, in the mind.

Christianity, doesn't start in the mind. Salvation, doesn't start in the mind. It all begins, in the heart. It is all, it is all done, through the heart. It is Jesus Christ, speaking to you, and speaking to me, through our heart, and that heart, and the heart, being the seat, of emotion, being the seat, of affection, being the seat, of all these things.

[8 : 40] Folks, that will flow, up into our mind. But they walk, in vanity of mind, in verse number 17, because of the blindness, of their heart, that we find here, in verse 18. Again, having the understanding, darkened.

It's not that the understanding, isn't there. The understanding, is darkened. The understanding, it's not that the light, is weak. It's because the heart, is closed, to the light.

The heart is closed, to what is trying, to shine forth, inside of it. And the only one, that can open that, is almighty God himself. The only one, that can open the heart, is that.

This is like we read, about the circumcision, of the heart, in the old testament, and in the new testament. We read about this, but folks, we cannot reach, inside of ourselves, and circumcise, our own heart.

We cannot make ourselves, born again. We cannot make ourselves, a child of God. Only God can do that, through a supernatural act. Only God can do that, through the Holy Spirit, of almighty God.

[9 : 41] Only God can cleanse us, with the blood, of Jesus Christ. Only God can save our souls, and only God, can keep us that way. It is not, in and of ourselves, having the understanding,

darkened, being alienated, from the life, of God.

What strong words, Paul is using here. And remember, he is describing, other Gentiles, as the scripture puts it. He is describing, though, the unconverted. He is describing, those that, know not Christ.

And he says, having their understanding, darkened, being alienated, from the life, of God. Folks, if we are alienated, from the life of God, if we are alienated, from God, we are alienated, from life, itself.

Jesus Christ said himself, in John chapter 14, I am the way, the truth, and the life. Jesus Christ is the life. He is the one that gives life.

He is not only one that gives physical life, that you and I have right now, but he is also the one, that imparts spiritual life, unto all of those, that repent of their ways, and believe, in his gospel.

[10:46] So, if we are alienated, from God, we are alienated, from life. And if we are alienated, from life, we are, in turn, alienated, from God, himself.

That's powerful words, that Paul is using here. Being alienated, from the life of God, through the ignorance, that is in them. Again, if we read the first part, of verse 18, having the understanding, darkened, but here he says, through the ignorance, that is in them.

Folks, this is willful ignorance, that we are talking about here. You look around, at creation. You look around, at the world, that we walk on. You look around, at the world, that we stand upon.

The world, that we live in, folks, and it screams, that there is a creator. Even when I was an atheist, I never bought into, the big bang theory. Even when I was an atheist, I never bought into evolution. I knew that, it couldn't have been that. I didn't know what it was, but I knew that, it couldn't have been that. But folks, this is willful ignorance. The world, the creation, not only this earth, that we live upon, but the creation, as far as the cosmos, is concerned, as far as the planets, and the stars, and the sun, all of it screams, intelligent design.

[12:01] You look at your body, you look at the body, of those around you, you look at the body, and how the animal kingdom works. You look at the plant kingdom, you look at how the waters work, you look at how the gravitational pull, of the moon, has something to do with the tides, on planet earth, and it screams intelligent design.

So their ignorance, is willful ignorance. Just as the Jews, rejected Jesus Christ, when He came, it was willful ignorance of theirs. They had all the Old Testament scriptures, that pointed toward Jesus Christ.

They had all the Old Testament scriptures, that pointed at His miracles. That pointed at His birth in Bethlehem. Pointed at all these things, about Jesus Christ. And yet, they rejected Him.

And it was willful ignorance. They claimed ignorance. But folks, it was willful. It was willful. And it's because, the way, the way that they walked, in their mind, it was all vanity.

It was all vanity. And it was because of the blindness, of their heart. Again, if we read that, having the understanding darkened. Folks, understanding's there. I'm telling you right now, you can memorize as much scripture, as you want to.

[13:11] You can listen to as many sermons, as you want to. You can go to church, as many times as you want to. You can memorize the Bible, from Genesis through Revelation. You can do all of these things, and have plenty of knowledge.

But that knowledge can be darkened. And that understanding can be darkened. It takes a personal experience, with Jesus Christ, to apply any of that, in an eternal way, in an eternal fashion.

Otherwise, you're just walking around, with a head full of knowledge. But it takes an experience, with Jesus Christ. Verse 19, Who being past feeling, have given themselves, over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness, with greediness.

Folks, there's powerful words, that Paul was using, in verse 18. These are scary words, that he's using, here in verse 19. Who being past feeling, meaning, that their conscience, has been so seared, and it is so hardened, and they have resisted, so much, that their conscience, if conviction does come, isn't even capable, of responding, to that conviction.

That's what we're talking about here, when it says, who being past feeling, have given themselves over, to lasciviousness. What is lasciviousness? This is open, blatant, and shameless sin.

[14:30] What do we see, in this time, that we live in now? We see open, blatant, and shameless sin. We see people, parading up and down the streets. We see people, that are half clothed.

We see people doing this, and people doing that. We read the articles, we listen to the news stories, and we say, how in the world, can anybody act that way? I'll tell you why. It's because, they have never received, Jesus Christ, and no other reason.

They've given themselves over, to lasciviousness. They've given themselves over. They've caved to it. They've said, I'd rather have this lifestyle. I'll tell you now, woe to the person.

Woe to the person, that God allows them to have, what they want. Woe to that person, when that happens. The Bible says, it's a fearful thing, to fall into the hands, of a living God.

Woe to that person, when they say, I want my sinful lifestyle. When they say, I want to do this. I don't, I don't want, the church to govern me. I don't want the Bible, to govern me.

[15 : 35] I don't want God, to govern me. And woe to the person, that God grants that to. But they give themselves over, to lasciviousness.

Who being, past filling, have given themselves over, to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness, with greediness. To work all uncleanness, but not only just to work, the uncleanness, to work the defilement, but to do it, with greediness.

In other words, we're talking about, open, blatant, and shameless sin, that they are never satisfied with. That they constantly, want more of. That's what the word, greedy means.

And they are working, all this defilement, all this filthiness, all this nastiness, all this sinfulness, all this blackness, and all this wickedness, greedily, wanting more of it.

How were you, before you were saved? You've done the same thing. You did the same thing. I did the same thing. It was an insatiable appetite, that we had for sin.

[16 : 39] Whether you see that sin as small, or whether you see it as large, it was an insatiable appetite, an insatiable desire, for sin in our lives. But Jesus came.

But Jesus came. That's what we get to in verse 20 here. Verse 20, But ye have not so learned Christ. So we reach a turning point in this short little passage of Scripture here.

We've spent three verses, verses 17, 18, and 19, talking about the world, talking about the other Gentiles, as the Scripture puts it. Talking about the unregenerate, the unconverted.

Then we get to verse 20. He says, But ye have not so learned Christ. My question this evening is, Have you learned Christ? I'm not saying, Have you learned about Christ?

Because I dare say, some of the people that Paul was writing about here, in Ephesus, some of them have learned about Christ. Some of them have learned about His saving ability.

[17 : 39] Some of them have learned about His perfect life. Some of them have learned about His substitutionary death. Some of them have learned about His glorious resurrection from the dead. But their understanding was darkened.

And because their understanding was darkened, they walked in vanity. Their minds were in vanity. But ye have not so learned Christ.

Folks, we must learn Christ. Not just about the Bible. But we must learn Christ. And what is the best way to learn Christ? Let's read on.

Verse 21. If so be that ye have heard him. If so be that ye have heard him. Not heard of him. But if so be that you have heard him. Have you heard him speak to your heart?

Have you heard him speak to your mind through his gospel? Have you heard him speak to your heart through the preached Word of God? Have you heard him speak to your heart when you read his Word?

[18 : 37] That's how you learn Christ. That's how you learn. And folks, what better person to teach us Christ than Christ Himself? What better person? I understand the Holy Spirit has His job.

I understand the Holy Spirit. He guides us. He teaches us. He corrects us. He comforts us. I get all of that. I understand that. You read in John 15, where Jesus, talking of the Holy Spirit, He says, But when the Comforter come, which I shall send you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me.

The Comforter, the Spirit of God, shall testify of Christ. So if the Spirit of God is teaching you something outside of Jesus Christ, or something outside of the Bible, something outside of the doctrines that we find within the Bible, that is not the Spirit of Almighty God.

That may be a Spirit, but it is not the Spirit. What better person to teach us though, than Christ Himself again, verse 20, but ye have not so learned Christ. Verse 21, If so be that ye have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus.

Folks, truth is not an abstract idea. Truth is a person. Again, we can quote John 14, 6. Christ says, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

[20 : 02] Christ is the truth. His Word is the truth. And His Spirit will teach you nothing more than the truth. I get so sick of hearing people say, well, the Holy Spirit of God had me do this, or the Holy Spirit of God told me to do this, or told me to do that.

And it does not line up with, thus saith the Word of God. It is an impossibility that the Spirit would teach anything along those lines. Be cautious.

Be cautious what Spirit we're listening to. If so be ye, have heard Him, and have been taught by Him. What a teacher we have in Jesus Christ.

What a teacher we have in Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit of Almighty God. And what does He teach us? Himself. Himself. And His doctrine.

And His teaching. And His righteousness. And His holiness. That's what He teaches. Because that's what He is. Is righteous and holy. How could He teach something that He's not?

[21 : 02] He's not evil. He's not wicked. He's not sinful. He wouldn't teach us those things. But yet many people say, the Spirit of God told me to do this. Told me to do that.

The Spirit of God told me to leave my wife and go with this other woman. You wouldn't believe that many times I've heard that in my time as a Christian. And then that one falls apart.

We won't get into that. That's a whole other sermon. If so be that ye have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus Christ. Have you heard Him?

Have you been taught by Him? If not, you are not saved. You are not saved. If you have not heard Him. You are not saved.

If you have not been taught by Him. You are still walking as verses 17 through 19. Whether you admit it or not. Whether you even realize it or not.

[21 : 57] You are still walking as those verses. If you have not heard Him. And He has not taught you. Verse 22. That you put off concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to deceitful lust.

You put off concerning the former conversation, the former life of the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lust. What is the former conversation of the old man?

Again, we can go back to verses 17 through 19. That's the former life. That's the former life that you and I came out of before God ever saved our souls.

And that's what we must put off. That's why He said, that's why Paul commands here, that we henceforth walk. We henceforth go. We henceforth go in the way of Jesus Christ.

We go in the way of Scripture. We go in the way that Almighty God has told us to go. There's no other way for a Christian to go. Folks, I understand that we get discouraged.

[23 : 01] I understand that sadness comes. I understand depression comes. I understand anxiety. I get all these things. They come in the life of a Christian. But folks, we have no choice but to move forward.

No choice at all but to move forward because Christ has already won the victory. The victory is already there. It's ours for the claiming.

It's ours for the taking. And Christ has won it for you and for me. Move forward. Keep your head up. Keep trudging on for Almighty God.

Hallelujah. Amen. That you put off concerning the former conversation. That you put off concerning the former conversation, the old man which is corrupt according to deceitful lust.

It's deceitful lust. It's a former conversation. It's a former life. That we are commanded here in Scripture. Not suggested to. We are commanded in Scripture to put that off.

[24 : 05] Now folks, when regeneration happens, when we are saved, and we are washed of our sin, and Christ has made us whole. We are a new creature in Christ.

For if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away. Behold, all things are become new. I praise God for that verse. And that is one of the most affirming verses to salvation in all of Scripture.

I'm not the person I was. I don't go to the same places. I don't do the same things. I don't talk the same talk. I don't walk the same walk.

And it's not because of me. It is because of Christ. But notice the commandment here. It's to the church. It is to believers. That ye put off.

Not that ye wait for God to put off. Folks, some of this lands in our lap. Some of this as per Scripture is our responsibility.

[25 : 05] My question is, what sin are you hanging on to? What sin are you not putting off in your life? What sin has got a hold of you?

Not what sin, so much what sin are you hanging on to, as I said, but what sin has got its grip on you? Put it off. Put it off. Don't negotiate with it.

And don't try to manage it. Put it off. Get rid of it. Because it will destroy your Christian walk. It will destroy your Christian testimony. It will drag your name.

It will drag the name of the church. It will drag the name of God through the mud in the world's eyes. That you put off concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to deceitful lust.

Whatever sin you may be holding on to is lying to you. It's a deceitful lust. What is lust? Lust is anything that you're desiring.

[26 : 09] Anything that you're desiring. If you're desiring something, anything, more than Almighty God, folks, that is an idol in your life. Put it off.

And don't try and blame God on it. Don't try and say, well, God shouldn't have allowed this to happen. God shouldn't have allowed me to see that. God shouldn't have allowed me to enter into this place.

God should have put a stop to this. Folks, the book of James makes it abundantly clear. In James 1, we read that God cannot be tempted, neither tempteth He any man. But every man is drawn away of his own lust.

And lust, when it is conceived, bringeth forth sin. And sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Don't take my word for it. Read the first chapter of James. Put off that sin.

Do like Zacchaeus. Do like Zacchaeus in Luke chapter 19. My goodness, the man was a tax collector. He was hated by both sides, just like Matthew was.

[27 : 09] He was hated by the Jews because he was a tax collector. He was hated by the Romans because he was a Jew. He didn't have any friends. But Jesus came by. And when He came down out the tree, and He went, and Jesus supped with Him, what did He say?

He said, Lord, half of my things, half of everything that I have, I give to the poor. And if I've taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore to him fourfold.

Hey folks, that's repentance. And that's putting off the old man. Right. That's putting off the old man. But folks, when we put off the old man, when we take off the old coat, we can't just stand there naked.

Amen. We've got to put something else on. Mm-hmm. Take off the old coat. Boy, don't that sound like an old gospel song? Yeah. Yeah. There's a lady named Dorothy who used to sing that song to Coach all the time over at Boone's Creek.

Praise God. Mm-hmm. Put off the old... That you put off concerning the former conversation to the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lust and be renewed in the spirit of your mind.

[28 : 21] Again, folks, it doesn't start in our mind. Salvation is begun here in the heart. And salvation, once it's begun in the heart, it flows out to the rest of it.

But folks, when that salvation is worked in the heart, when it is worked inside of you by the Holy Spirit of God, by the regenerating of the Holy Spirit, it goes everywhere including your mind.

What did David pray in Psalm 51? Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

That was David's prayer after he had sinned. After he had sinned viciously. After he had sinned enormously with Bathsheba. And not only had he committed adultery, not only was a baby born out of that adulterous affair, but he had murder, he had deceit, he had lying, he had all of these things on his plate!

And he prayed to God in that psalm. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew, renew the right spirit within me. And here Paul says, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind.

[29 : 46] Again, folks, verses 17, 18, and 19. We're not to look back to those things. We are certainly not to dwell on those things. We're not to look back and say, boy, I wish I was still in that kind of shape.

If that's the case, I'd question whether he ever got saved or not. Amen. But we're not to dwell on it either. Being born again children of God. Folks, if it's been forgiven, if it's been forgiven, quit

bringing it up to yourself.

Quit beating yourself up about it. Now, if you sin now, if you sin this day, or this hour, yes, it should grieve you. Yes, it should bring you to tears. And yes, you should repent.

But don't repent over and over and over for the sins that you were forgiven of when you were first born again. Don't do that.

You just beat yourself up. You beat yourself up. Be renewed in the spirit of your mind. And only God can do that.

[30 : 51] Now, this is commandment to do so. And if we read the verse before this, taking off the old man, the one of the former conversation, the one that was full of deceitful lusts, if we take that off, if we take off that old man, we'll be renewed.

We will have a renewed spirit in our mind. Verse 24, and we'll be done. And that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

We take off the old man, the man of the former conversation, and that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

This new man is created after God. Folks, when Adam and Eve were created in the garden, were they not formed in the image of Almighty God?

Yes, they were. When you and I were created in the womb, and every one of us were created by Almighty God in the womb, I don't care what science tells you.

[32 : 00] Every one of us were created by God in the womb. We were created in that exact same image. But the problem is, verses 17, 18, and 19 came into the picture.

Verses 17-19 marred the image of God. I'm not saying they marred God. They marred the image of God.

Us. It marred Adam and Eve in the garden. It has marred every man, woman, boy, and girl ever since. Sin has marred the image of God.

But, when we take off the old man, and we're renewed in the spirit of our mind, and we put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

After God, God has created this new man, and we put up the old man, and we put on the new man, and we walk in this righteousness. We walk in this righteousness before men, and we walk in holiness before Almighty God.

[33 : 02] And the only way to do that is to have this new man on. So, the big question tonight is have you taken off the old man?

And have you put on the new? Have you learned Christ? Not learned of Christ. There's a whole world out there that's learned of Christ.

But they still stand unconverted. Have you learned Christ? And have you been taught by Christ? Folks, we must put off the old man.

I ain't talking works-based salvation. Remember, Paul is writing to a church. The church at Ephesus. To people that had made their profession in Jesus Christ.

To believers. And he is talking about their old life. And talking about the life of those outside of the church. And I'm talking about the church of Jesus Christ. And how they live.

[34 : 02] But he is giving commandment here to the church. To take off the old life. Take off the old conversation. Folks, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was crucified for you.

Jesus Christ was crucified for this very purpose. He was crucified. He was made dead that you could take the dead man off.

That you could put this old conversation off. And it didn't stop there. Jesus Christ. Resurrected. That you could have new life.

That the spirit of your mind could be renewed. That you could put on the new man. The question is, has that happened in your life? Has that happened to your soul?

Have you put off the old man? And have you put on the new? That's the message for this evening. God bless y'all. I appreciate your attention.