

The Book of Ephesians

Ephesians 4:17-32

Session 36: Notetaker

Doctrine: 1-3 Godly Thinking

Exhortation: 4:1-16

Godly Living

The Doctrine:

Where it is found:

What it does: _____

The Book of Ephesians

Ephesians 4:17-32

Session 36: Putting On the New Man

Today we begin a new form of doctrine, but this form is different from those which have come before. It is on the basis of the previous doctrines and exhortations that Paul writes what he does beginning in Ephesians 4:17. In other words, Paul is going to describe the effectual outworking of that which he has already written, so we will know what that looks like.

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,

The “therefore” tells us he is reaching back to what he has already written in this epistle. And that means that in order for this doctrine to work in us, it must be based on the effectual working of his previous doctrine. In other words, our “godly living” as described in vs. 17ff will be out of the previous doctrine which pertained to our godly thinking.

You realize that everything we do is a byproduct of what we think. That is why Paul has spent three chapters getting us to think about some things. Let’s refresh ourselves in the first three chapters where Paul has given godly-thinking-doctrine about who we are and what we have in Christ.

In chapter 1, we find that we are blessed with all **spiritual blessings (SB)** in HP in Christ: (What are they? We are chosen in Him before foundation of world; we are holy and without blame; predestinated unto the adoption; accepted in the beloved; have redemption thru His blood; forgiveness of sins; abounded toward us in all wisdom; made known the mystery that in the dispensation of the fulness of times (DoFoT) we are gather together in one all things in Christ; we have obtained an inheritance, sealed with the Spirit). These spiritual blessings make us spiritually fit to be utilized by God as saints, as sons and daughters, and as members of Christ’s body. In view of all God has done for us and given us in Christ, we ought not to walk like unsaved Gentiles walk.

What else should motivate us to change our walk? Because Paul set forth a prayer for us, a prayer that I myself pray for you.

Paul's **three-fold prayer**: that we may know the hope of his calling; the riches of his inheritance; the greatness of His power. Knowing these things will cause us to see there is something greater than our old life to bring us happiness and fulfillment.

In chapter 2, Paul tells us:

We are **co-quickened, raised and seated** in heavenly places (HP) in Christ. We aren't the same any more as we have been given a positional exaltation.

What we **Gentiles** were like in the **time past** of Israel's program.

We were without Christ; aliens from the commonwealth of Israel; strangers from the covenants; having no hope; without God in the world. We are reminded of what it was like for us Gentiles since the tower of Babel all the way up to Saul of Tarsus getting saved on the Damascus road, before the dispensational change, and we ought to rejoice.

How things changed for us **Gentiles** in the **But Now** of this DoGG.

We are made nigh, and He has broken down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile. Has this been a part of your prayer life when you realize that by living today you are the recipient of something special?

Now, Jew and Gentile are reconciled in one body and we are the **One New Man** in Christ. Now we begin to understand that this new life we have in Christ makes us part of a fellowship which we know as the body of Christ.

The body of Christ is an **habitation of God** through the Spirit. In other words, He lives in us now and when we get to the HP, He will accomplish His will and His work through us.

We can't walk as other Gentiles walk because we have been given so many things, made to be something different, because so much has been done for us, to continue to live as we did before we trusted Christ would be to dishonor all that God has done for us, and despise the exalted future He has planned for us. To whom much is given, much is required and we have been given much.

In chapter 3, Paul writes:

That we might understand his knowledge in the **DoGG & the mystery** of Christ. That we might make known to principalities and powers in heavenly places the **manifold wisdom** of God.

Paul's **five-fold prayer** rounds out the chapter where he prays for the body of Christ (BoC) to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ might dwell in our hearts by faith; that being rooted and grounded in love we would be able to comprehend all the dimensions (breadth and length, and depth, and height): the fulness of what is being revealed to us; to know (experience) the love of Christ; that we might be filled with all the fulness of God.

This knowledge is supposed to have an effect on us; a cumulative effect. The more we discover about what has been done for us and to us, the greater the effect should be, with no leveling off effect.

Then, Paul follows in chapter 4:1-16 with an exhortation for us to realize that we are members one of another, and corporately we are the body of Christ.

The measure of the gift of Christ is in proportion to how much doctrine we have stored in our inner man, and we have been given grace in accordance with that. We get that doctrine by studying and understanding God's word with our minds, and then believing it in our hearts so that the truth gets into our soul. As we purpose to live out of the doctrine, we are transformed by the power of Christ, making us godly sons and daughters.

You can work through this on your own: lowliness, meekness and longsuffering; we forbear with one another in love.

We keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (USBP) by the seven items listed by Paul. As members together of Christ's body, this should be our first concern (Ephesians 4:4-6; see Session 29.)

What is the basis for the bond that binds us together? That we do not base our unity on personality, interests, hobbies, or things like that. Our unity has been provided for by our Father and it consists of seven issues. These are the things

which bind us together and provide for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

We are all members of the same body; we all have the same Spirit within us; we all have the same calling and hope of that calling; we have the same Lord; we all have been given the same faith (of Paul's doctrine); we have all have the same baptism (by the Spirit into Christ); and we all have the same God and Father (which makes us kin to each other.)

To God, these should be the things which bind us together and by which we value and esteem each other.

We have not been saved merely to miss hell, but that God may present a people who will astonish the world of men and the realm of angels with the manifold wisdom of God.

Therefore, we have to think of ourselves more and more, not as individuals, but as parts of the church, as members of Christ's body. And our supreme ambition is to grow up into Him in all things, as He is the Head of us corporately as a body, and by doing so, we attain unto "a perfect man, unto the stature of the fulness of Christ." I believe this can be done individually, but I also believe that the greater emphasis is on the body as a whole.

By what Paul is about to write, he will give us the answer to what he has written in Ephesians 4:1-16. In other words, how do we grow up into Christ in all things? How are we to arrive at being a perfect man? How are we to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace? From vs. 17 onward, Paul is going to answer those questions in a practical and detailed manner.

That being said let me give us a 10,000 foot view of the remainder of the book of Ephesians.

Last week we finished the form of doctrine contained in Ephesians 4:7-16. Now let's read the rest of the chapter. You will see why we need to do this shortly.

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,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: ¹⁹ Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. ²⁰ But ye have not so learned Christ; ²¹ If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: ²² That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; ²³ And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; ²⁴ And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. ²⁵ Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. ²⁶ Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: ²⁷ Neither give place to the devil. ²⁸ Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with *his* hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. ²⁹ Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. ³⁰ And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: ³² And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

(I hope that as we work through the book of Ephesians, you are reading the pertinent verses all week long, leading up to the lessons on Sundays or Tuesdays.)

In vv. 17-24, Paul wants us to realize that we are entirely new creatures in Christ. In accordance with this, he will tell us to put off the old man and put on the new man.

Then, in vv. 25-29, he points out what that looks like in practice by use of his popular expression, wherefore. So, Paul will say, “wherefore, put away lying,” but we are to understand that we are to put away lying because you have put off the old man and put on the new man (because of what has been done for you;

because of who you have been made to be). When you put away lying, you “speak every man truth with his neighbor.”

Paul will repeat this pattern throughout the rest of the chapter; doctrine first, followed by practical implications worked out in detail.

Then in vs. 30, Paul goes back to the doctrine, “Greive not the holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed until the day of redemption.

So, Paul begins with a reminder that we are new creatures in Christ and then he follows with a reminder that His Spirit *dwells* within us, and because of that, we must avoid anything that will grieve His Spirit which is within us. Therefore...

Ephesians 4:31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: ³² And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Why? Because if you do not, you are grieving the Holy Spirit. The way Paul teaches the doctrine, there is no excuse for failure. The Christian life is not just a general philosophy of life, it is a life that is to be lived out in particular details! And if we are not living the doctrine out in the details of our lives, then we are denying the very truths which we claim to believe.

As I said, today we begin **a new form of doctrine, which is found in Ephesians 4:17-32.** This is the doctrine of **Putting on the New Man.** (Don't confuse this with the One New Man.)

As we live out of our having put off the old man and put on the new man, we edify one another with truth, sound doctrine, so that it might minister grace unto the hearers.

The form of doctrine in **vv. 17-29 is also perfecting our godly living**, but this doctrine is perfecting us **in view of three things: 1) putting off the old man, 2) renewing our mind, and 3) putting on the new man.**

Therefore, we will refer to this form of doctrine as the Doctrine of Putting On the New Man.

I want to make two important points:

- 1) Every saint, whether they know it or not, has positionally put off the old man and put on the new man. This was done for us when we trusted Christ as our Savior. We cannot produce this by any work that we do. But in these verses, Paul is taking that truth and asking us to make an application of it in the details of our lives so that we bring our daily living up to the level of our position (so that we do not walk as other Gentiles walk). Paul has already given us the doctrine which should be in our thinking, and now we have to take that godly thinking and start living out of it. We have to understand it, believe it and now we have to start consciously living out of it, meditating on the scriptures that pertain to it, integrating it into our prayer life, and evaluating each day how we did.
- 2) Our life here at the church as we learn the doctrine, and our life outside of the church are not two separate lives, they are not detached from each other. Everything we say is part of our Christian life. Everything we do is part of our Christian life. Our spiritual life and our physical life are inter-related, for one affects the other. If we have truly put off the old man and put on the new man, we cannot be one way when we are at church and another way when we are out in the world. Our conduct always comes from our thinking, and our thinking must always be dictated by and controlled by the doctrine. By the doctrine we not only understand **what** we are doing (or not doing), but **why** we are doing (or not doing) it.

If you find yourself failing in some area of your Christian life, then it follows that you have failed to either understand the doctrine, or you have failed to practically apply the doctrine.

So let me end with a principle: it is wrong to make constant, direct appeals to our will apart from the doctrine. We are not supposed to just “will” ourselves to righteousness, as that would be self-righteousness. We do not approach our will directly, but it is approached with the doctrine, through the mind and the heart.

In my job as pastor, I cannot appeal to your will in order to make you holy, but I can help you understand the doctrine and exhort you to apply it; that is what makes us holy. Therefore, every method of teaching sanctification which is not based directly and immediately upon an understanding of the doctrine, followed

by an exhortation to apply that doctrine in the details of our lives is a false teaching of sanctification.

There are ways of teaching sanctification that completely bypass the passage we have before us. They would say that you get sanctification for nothing, you simply receive it as a gift; you do nothing. And positionally that would be true, but what they fail to understand is that practically, as it works out in our lives, that is not true. It is that practical or functional sanctification that Paul has in mind here when he says not walk as other Gentiles. Here in Ephesians 4, Paul is exhorting us to work out in detail what we claim to believe, and to realize why we must do so if we have really understood and grasped the doctrine.

And why? For what purpose should we do this? I'm afraid that if we answer this question honestly, that our answers are too self-centered. Our concern to live the doctrine should not come just from a desire to be good, nor a desire to be better than we have been. It should not just come from a desire to get rid of certain sins, or to be happy, or to have victory in our lives, as these things all focus on us, on ourselves.

Our concern should be to function fully and perfectly as members of the body of Christ. What should worry us is not so much that I failed, or that I have a problem in my life, but that I am failing my Father and His purpose for me, that I am failing my Savior who is my Head, that I am failing the church, my fellow saints who are fellow members of His body.

Christ died to make the members of His body perfect and entire and whole, and if we are failing, we should think of what He did and is doing. This is why in prayer, we must spend the time recalling all that has been done for us so that our focus, our motivation comes not from ourselves, but from our love for God and our love for the saints. We must see it all in terms of our high calling, of our being joined together with the Head in this wonderful body, through the "bands of supply" which every member contributes. The life of the Head is flowing through us, and when we think and live this way, we are truly being "to the praise of the glory of His grace."

And now, with that in mind, we are ready to dig into the doctrine which begins in vs. 17.