

Saint Pauls Cathedral, Melbourne
Bible Study, Sunday 6th December 2020

THE EPISTLE OF EPHESIANS

A Quick Recap of Ephesians 4

Ephesians Chapter 4 is about the unity and living in the body of Christ. It describes how life worthy of being of the Lord's is. We are called to unity as a body of believers through one Lord, one Spirit, and one hope. God has given us apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers to prepare God's people for works of service so the body of Christ may be built up and obtain the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. We are reminded to put on the new self that is created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Being One with Christ

Paul began Ephesians Chapter 4 by saying those who were called in Christ should always be humble and gentle with everyone, especially to one another. They should also be patient and cover everyone with love, just as how Christ did.

Paul explained that there is just one body of Christ and one spirit. Therefore, the unity within the body must be seen in the people who make up the body. This is everyone who is living in Christ and to whom grace has been freely given.

Jesus Ascended on High

Paul quoted the book of Psalms, saying that "He ascended on high," meaning that Jesus had already descended to the lowly regions to win back those who were lost. Jesus equipped all of His apostles with what they needed in order to preach the Gospel. He was the one who first became mature in faith. This is what the apostles were building up to. They were meant to help everyone understand the faith and become fully mature in Christ.

New Creation in Christ

Paul said that believers should no longer be infants in the world. Instead, they should grow in the knowledge and love of Christ. He then urged the Ephesians to change their way of thinking and to no longer live as Gentiles.

He told them to put away their old self and die to Jesus so that in Him, they would be able to have a better life. He instructed them in Ephesians Chapter 4 about how they should treat each other. They were not to sin when they got angry, not to engage in foul talk, and to forgive everyone who has sinned against them.

THE MESSAGE (4:17-32)

The Old Way Has to Go

And so I insist—and God backs me up on this—that there be no going along with the crowd, the empty-headed, mindless crowd. They've refused for so long to deal with God that they've lost touch not only with God but with reality itself. They can't think straight anymore. Feeling no pain, they let themselves go in sexual obsession, addicted to every sort of perversion.

²⁰⁻²⁴ But that's no life for you. You learned Christ! My assumption is that you have paid careful attention to him, been well instructed in the truth precisely as we have it in Jesus. Since, then, we do not have the excuse of ignorance, everything—and I do mean everything—connected with that old way of life has to go. It's rotten through and through. Get rid of it! And then take on an entirely new way of life—a God-fashioned life, a life renewed from the inside and working itself into your conduct as God accurately reproduces his character in you.

²⁵ What this adds up to, then, is this: no more lies, no more pretense. Tell your neighbour the truth. In Christ's body we're all connected to each other, after all. When you lie to others, you end up lying to yourself.

²⁶⁻²⁷ Go ahead and be angry. You do well to be angry—but don't use your anger as fuel for revenge. And don't stay angry. Don't go to bed angry. Don't give the Devil that kind of foothold in your life.

²⁸ Did you use to make ends meet by stealing? Well, no more! Get an honest job so that you can help others who can't work.

²⁹ Watch the way you talk. Let nothing foul or dirty come out of your mouth. Say only what helps, each word a gift.

³⁰ Don't grieve God. Don't break his heart. His Holy Spirit, moving and breathing in you, is the most intimate part of your life, making you fit for himself. Don't take such a gift for granted.

³¹⁻³² Make a clean break with all cutting, backbiting, profane talk. Be gentle with one another, sensitive. Forgive one another as quickly and thoroughly as God in Christ forgave you.

NRSV (4:17-32)

The Old Life and the New

¹⁷ Now this I affirm and insist on in the Lord: you must no longer live as the Gentiles live, in the futility of their minds. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of their ignorance and hardness of heart. ¹⁹ They have lost all sensitivity and have abandoned themselves to licentiousness, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. ²⁰ That is not the way you learned Christ! ²¹ For surely you have heard about him and were taught in him, as truth is in Jesus. ²² You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, ²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Rules for the New Life

²⁵ So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbours, for we are members of one another. ²⁶ Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and do not make room for the devil. ²⁸ Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labour and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. ²⁹ Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, ^[b] as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. ³¹ Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, ³² and be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The old way of life (17-19)

¹⁷ Now this I affirm and insist on in the Lord: you must no longer live as the Gentiles live, in the futility of their minds. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of their ignorance and hardness of heart. ¹⁹ They have lost all sensitivity and have abandoned themselves to licentiousness, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.

- How does Paul describe the “Gentiles”? What did Paul meant?

1. _____ (17)

2. _____ (18)

3. _____ (19)

The new way of life (20-24)

²⁰ That is not the way you learned Christ! ²¹ For surely you have heard about him and were taught in him, as truth is in Jesus. ²² You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, ²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

- What have the Ephesians been taught to do? What did Paul meant?

1. _____ (22)

2. _____ (23)

3. _____ (24)

Rules for the New Life

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1. _____ (25)
2. _____ (26-27)
3. _____ (28)
4. _____ (29)
5. _____ (30)
6. _____ (31)
7. _____ (32)