

The Pearl of the Epistles – Ephesians

Put Off to Put On

Ephesians 4:21-32

***Ephesians 4:20-32** 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.*

Introduction

For a quick review, the Apostle Paul has been instructing the Ephesian church concerning unity in the faith and the congregation, abandoning anything that have nothing to do with Jesus Christ and exhorting them to remember the old life only for knowing those things that they should and should not do.

Paul used the idea of the Christian life as a walk through life. In the last sermon, the Apostle Paul beseeched the church to not walk as the Gentiles walk. Most were Gentiles, and I am sure his words hit a chord in their lives. There was a B.C. (before Christ) for these believers and the Apostle was reminding them of what they should put away.

If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, there was a B. C. (before Christ) for you as well. There may be things in your past life that were not God honoring and should be thrust out of your life right now.

Last week I introduced the idea of clothing and how it could represent our innermost feelings. If you will remember from your studies in the New Testament, Jesus had much to say to those Pharisee's who wore the finest robes of office and yet Jesus condemned them for being dead on the inside when it came to knowing the will of God. Jesus concluded that they were hypocrites and living a lie. Jesus said they were full of extortion, excess, unclean, dead inside, deny mercy and faith (Matthew 23).

In this section of the passage, Paul will use the terms of "put off" and "put on" in the sense of a coat that you would put on and take off. But this garment is the way we live and not a piece of cloth. There are some things in our walk that we should take off or out of our life.

Taught By Christ (vv. 20-21)

Ephesians 4:20-21 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:

But ye have not so learned Christ – This not only refers to their conversion to Christ, but also the teachings of Christ. The world, Gentiles, does not turn to God and learn about Christ. For the believer, they should not be children, their minds vain and no longer darkened; no longer alienated from God; their hearts are no longer hardened, unclean, greedy and impure (vv. 14-19). Christ taught and they have heard His words through the Holy Spirit through Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers (v. 11).

Put Off (v. 22)

Ephesians 4:22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

That ye put off – to remove or take out of your life has the metaphor of a garment. This means that a Christian must acknowledge their lifestyle and make a decision to remove or repent of that way of life.

...concerning the former conversation – each believer is to remember their former behavior, practices and habits. Before Christ reined in their hearts, the old man reigned supreme.

...the old man – the old man's nature is corrupt and sinful with deceitful lusts (Colossians 3:9). This is the former evil character of the world and the believer.

...which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts - the old man is controlled by his passions and desires. Lust is the base drive of mankind: ambition, self-gratification, greed, and love of pleasure above all else.

Be Renewed (v. 23)

Ephesians 4:23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

It is not a suggestion that the believer should be renewed. This is emphatic “*be renewed*”. It is essential that the man described in this chapter become a new man by being renewed. To better understand renewed, let us look at two other passages of the Apostle Paul’s writing in the New Testament.

2 Corinthians 4:16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

Colossians 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

Renewal then means to “make new”. When a person comes to salvation, a work of regeneration takes place and that is the framework of renewal. Renewal carries several ideas. A man must be renewed “from something”, old life and those sinful desires and “to something”, to a life where our knowledge of God is increased. A man must be renewed (made new) in order to be saved. Once saved, a believer is to continue the work of renewal (make new) daily. The old man is changed at the point of salvation, but salvation is a continuous act needing renewal in order to draw closer to God.

...*in the spirit of your mind* – The renewal that Paul is talking about concerns having a new mind or focus centered on God.

Put On (v. 24)

Ephesians 4:24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Notice the order of putting on the new man: 1) first being taught by Christ. 2) Put off the old lifestyle. 3) Renew in the spirit of your mind. It is after all this that you will be able to “put on the new renovated man.” Putting on the new man can only take place after the heart is changed.

How would you describe a “new man?” Well he would have a new vision for his life.

1. His ideals and principles would be different than before.
2. His feelings and desires would be different.
3. He would walk with a new purpose in life.
4. He would see with a different set of eyes.
5. He would speak about something new.
6. He would hear the Spirit of God.
7. His moral compass would be recalibrated.
8. He would have a new purpose in life.
9. Where his life was filled with; darkness, listening to Satan, the Liar, alienated from a life with God, given over to uncleanness and greedy, the new life would be filled with light, answering only to God, becoming one in the family of God, with a desire to live a life of love and faith.

Put Away (vv. 25-31)

Ephesians 4:25-31 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:

Now in order to put on the “new man” some changes need to take place. In this section of scripture, Paul lists out those things that were common among the brethren:

Lying (v. 25)

Anger (v.26)

Don't give place for the Devil (v. 27)

Stealing (v. 28)

Watch your mouth (vv. 29-31)

Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God (v. 30)

Put away (v. 31)

Bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, evil speaking

Be Kind (v. 32)

Ephesians 4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

True Christianity produces courteous, loving, and polite people. A goal of the brethren would be to make others happy. There really is no room for sour, rude, unforgiving Christians.

Look at what Christ has done for you! How can we not follow in His example?

Conclusion

Change should be consistent in the believer. The believer is to be renewed daily. The Apostle Paul wrote an epistle to the churches in Galatia. He defined this renewal like this:

Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Robert C. Crowder