



LIVING GRACE
COMMUNITY CHURCH

“Walking in Newness of Life-Part 1”

Sermon Date: February 13th, 2022

Reflections on Sunday’s Sermon

Below is a reference to the section of the New City Catechism that we went over on Sunday:

The New City Catechism—Lord’s Day 7

What Does the Law of God Require?

Personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience; that we love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength; and love our neighbor as ourselves. What God forbids should never be done and what God commands should always be done.

Prayer

Praise God for giving us new life in Christ—a life that is created after the ‘likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness’ (v. 24). Praise Jesus for redeeming us from our sins and the ‘futility’ of our minds (v. 17). Praise the Holy Spirit who has caused us to be born again—saving us from our hard hearts that we might know the ‘truth in Jesus’ (v. 21). As you pray, consider making this prayer your own (this prayer was taken from At the Throne of Grace by John MacArthur).

Our Father, how thankful we are for Christ’s work and Your Spirit enabling us to put our trust in Jesus as Lord! In the moment we first believed, You granted us a new life, a new heart, and new, holy affections. Thus regenerated, we now have by Your gracious hand a new capacity to do what is good, honorable, and righteous. We praise You that in Christ we have been made capable of pleasing you.

Yet we face the reality of our daily lives, we know that sin still exists within us and will seek to subdue us until we reach heavenly glory. We mourn over our sin; we hunger and thirst after righteousness; we joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man. Help us to put off the old things and put on the new—and be renewed in the spirit of our minds. Amen.

Scripture

Ephesians 4:17-24 (ESV)

¹⁷ Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. ¹⁹ They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. ²⁰ But that is not the way you learned Christ!— ²¹ assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, ²² to put off your old self,^{1a} which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Handling the Word

Let's break down the passage:

1. How do Gentiles (unbelievers) walk due to their hardness of heart? (vv. 17-19)
2. Why are believers no longer to walk like the Gentiles do? (vv. 20-21)
3. What type of life have believers obtained in Christ? (vv. 22-24)
4. What is the image of our new life in Christ created after? (v. 24)

Understanding and Applying

1. In part, Paul is having to remind the Ephesians of their new life, and its implications, on account of their surrounding culture—its lifestyle and allurements (vv.17-20). Given your surroundings, what are some things that try to revive your ‘old self’ (1 John 2:16)? Though your old self has been crucified or put off, what are some lingering temptations/struggles in your life that negatively affect other believers (James 1:14-15)?
2. Notice that the Gentile’s way of life, which is alienated from God, is on account of their minds, understanding, and hardness of heart (vv. 17-18). In essence, unbelievers *consciously* run from God and against His ways. Do you know of anyone who: 1) says that they don’t believe in God and 2) won’t take responsibility for their sins? How does Scripture contradict their claims and shape our response to them (Romans 1:18-32)?
3. Though odd sounding, Paul intentionally appeals to the Ephesians having ‘learned Christ’ (v.20) rather than having learned *about* Christ, as he urges them to live out their new identity. What is the difference between someone who knows things about Christ and someone who has learned Christ—or identifies with Him? Similarly, how does knowing Christ as our Lord and Savior affect the way we learn things about Christ?
4. Though God’s Word is true in all its parts, more specifically ‘the truth is in Jesus Christ,’ thus we are to hear of Him and be taught of Him (vv. 20-21). In the Bible, whether we are reading history, wisdom, doctrine, or commands all is to be taught with Christ at the center. For the believer, why do we need to look to Christ when considering the historical accounts, such as Genesis or Leviticus (Luke 24:44-45)? Additionally, what might happen when we don’t approach commands with the person and work of Christ in mind?

5. Urging the Ephesians to godly living, Paul reminds them that they had ‘put off’ their old self (v. 22). Whether you came to faith at an early age, or later in life, how would you describe your old self (Romans 3:9-12, 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3, 12)? Prior to your conversion, how would you have described your life?
6. In receiving Christ, we put off our old self and put on the new self (vv. 21-24). When urging us to no longer walk as unbelievers, why does God call us to remember what is already true of us in Christ—the death of our old self and the life of the new self (Romans 6:5-11)? How does the sacrament of baptism visualize this glorious reality—death of the old self and life of the new self—for God’s people (Rom. 6:3-4)?
7. The new self is not merely a better way of life rather it is the total restoration of man, that he might bear the image of God in ‘true righteousness and holiness’ (v. 24). Jesus accomplished where Adam failed (Rom. 5:12-19). Given the passages below, what constitutes our new life in Christ (what was life prior to the Fall or what has Jesus restored that was destroyed in the Fall)?
 - Genesis 1:26-27
 - Genesis 2:15-17
 - Genesis 3:8
8. Our new life in Christ is a glorious thing to consider, it is the cause and the motivation to no longer live like unbelievers. What does our new life in Christ mean for you and what are you asking the Holy Spirit to help you comprehend regarding the new self in Christ?

“The hope for the nations of our world does not lie in political renewal, societal regeneration, the overthrow of ISIS, or the imposition of tougher laws for crimes. The world needs to see and to hear from a renewed Christian church, a church freshly invaded by the power, grace, glory, and truth of the gospel. The world is the way it is not because of a lack of education or a failure in social manners but because people harden their hearts against God. The fundamental problem in every society is theological and spiritual. The Bible has a radical diagnosis of the ills that afflict our world. Humanity lives in active, willful rebellion against God. This is why the world’s greatest need is the heart- and life-renewing power of the gospel of Christ.”

-Ian Hamilton