

Refuge City Church — October 1, 2023 “Walk this Way” (Ephesians 4:17-32)

Introduction

- Herein lies the beauty of Paul’s letter to the Ephesian Christians.
 - He started by providing understanding of who God is, and everything He has done for us.
 - He then gives praise to the church for their faithfulness, and prays they dive deeper into a relationship with Jesus.
 - Next he discusses the beauty that faith in Christ provides...the free gift of salvation, and that this salvation is offered to everyone, regardless of who they are.
 - Showing that the church is designed for unity and is of utmost importance!
 - It is imperative that we spiritually fight to maintain that unity.
- **Last week**, Pastor Ray explained the necessity to *walk in that unity* bound together through the Spirit of God, the teaching of His Word, and the application of that truth, showing love to the world around us.
 - **Ephesians 4:1**, “walk in a manner worthy of your calling.”
 - **Ephesians 4:17**, “no longer walk in sin.”
 - **Ephesians 5:2**, “walk in love”
 - **Ephesians 5:8**, “walk as children of light”
 - **Ephesians 5:15**, “walk in wisdom”
- **TODAY**: With what we know, we put one foot in front of the other and continue to walk in *unity and holiness*.

“Walking dead” [Verses 17-19]

“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. 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. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.”

- One of the world’s claims *not* to follow Jesus is because it’s just a bunch of “don’t do this”, “you can’t do that” rules.
 - They’re not wrong! But their claim is coming from a place of self-gratification.
- Paul begins by explaining that we are set apart to walk in holiness, by beseeching us NOT to walk as sinners walk.
 - “Futility of mind” = vanity, emptiness, purposelessness
 - “Darkened in understanding” = lack of wisdom; void of thought
 - **Proverbs 26:11**, “Like a dog that returns to his vomit is a fool who repeats his folly.”
[better to have something in his stomach, than nothing at all]
 - “Alienated from God” = separated by their own choosing to remain in sin
 - “Ignorant” = unaware; sometimes willingly
 - “Hardness of heart” = insensibility; numbness

- “Callous” = past feeling; ceasing to care
- When people hear of the truth of God and what Jesus did for them, why do they still choose this dark path??
 - Because they’d rather serve a god that looks and sounds like them, than one who calls them to a pure life.
 - For some, they’re so used to living life in the mud, that to be clean makes no sense.
 - **QUOTE:** “The bad man usually tries to hide his sin; but the man who has [this callousness] in his soul does not care how much he shocks public opinion so long as he can gratify his desires.” [William Barclay]
- **Romans 1:24-28**, “Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.”
- Christian: we must NO LONGER walk as sinners.
 - There is no room for lingering in the ways of the old life, even to ‘appeal’ to those who you may want to evangelize.
 - We are to show them the purity of Christ in the newness of life.
 - **Example:** My ‘dual-party’ night in high school.

“Walking in holiness” [Verses 20-24]

“But that is not the way you learned Christ!— assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”

- As a ‘bible teacher’, both in church and in school, it’s a concept I’m trying to convey.
 - We must learn, but it can not remain academic.
 - **Romans 12:2**, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”
 - Life in Jesus is not *only* academic. It’s not the attainment of knowledge to say we know *about* Jesus & Christianity.
- This is such an important concept to understand!
 - “Learning Christ” is *not* only book-learning. It is *not* what you do to try and ‘stop sinning’.

- It is 100% the work of the Holy Spirit in you, transforming and regenerating you to be who you were made to be...holy and blameless, made in the image of God!
- **Ephesians 2:8-10**, “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”
- The essence of the gospel message is the incentive to live for Christ!
 - The work of the Spirit in us will produce a desire to stand on His truth, to walk in His ways, adhering to His moral standards of holiness.
- **Proverbs 9:10**, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.”
- **QUESTION:** Does a prisoner still wear his prison clothes when he gets out??
- He’s set free. With a true understanding of freedom, he seeks to do all he can so as not to return to his former imprisonment.
 - He no longer identifies as a prisoner. He is a man with a new life and new purpose!
- **John 11:43-44**, “[Jesus] cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out.” The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, ‘*Unbind him, and let him go.*’”
- **2 Corinthians 5:17**, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

“Here’s what you can do” [Verses 25-31]

“Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil. Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.”

- **Truth:** what place does lying have in the body of Christ?
 - If we are to walk in Unity, lies will only divide.
 - **Exodus 20:16**, “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”
 - Lying was the deception in the garden of Eden, and is one of the original 10 laws of God!
- **Anger:** in and of itself, it is not sin.
 - Yet if it your anger leads to acting on it, it becomes sin.
 - **Psalms 4:4**, “Be angry, and do not sin; ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent.”
 - Let our anger be dismissed quickly [don’t let the sun go down; matter of time, not literally]
 - You want to give the devil an opportunity to use you? Then stew in your anger.
 - **QUOTE:** “If we would be angry and not sin, we must be angry at nothing but sin.” [Matthew Henry]

- **Work:** going back to the original 10... **Exodus 20:15**, “you shall not steal.”
 - Yet notice the intention of our work... for ourselves or others?? [so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.] Not for me, but for thee.
 - Think about what God has given you [Ephesians 1]... **Acts 20:35**, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”
- **Speech:** pure, encouraging, and edifying.
 - **Proverbs 26:18-20**, “Like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows, and death is the man who deceives his neighbor and says, “I am only joking!” For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, quarreling ceases.”
 - **Colossians 4:6**, “Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt...”
- **Grieving the Holy Spirit**
 - When we fall back into the things we ought not to do, it ‘pains’ the Spirit of God in us.
 - Remember that Jesus was fully God, as well as fully man. He suffered pain, heartache, and grief.
 - **John 11:** Prior to raising Lazarus from the dead, “Jesus wept”. He expressed the empathy for others who lost their loved one.
 - **Luke 19:** Jesus wept over Jerusalem. This time, His heart was grieving over the sin of the city who had become blind and deaf to their Savior.
 - **Isaiah 53:3**, “He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief...”
 - We grieve the Spirit when we neglect the holiness we are called to walk in.
 - We grieve the Spirit when the Truth has been revealed to us, and we ignore it.
 - We grieve the Spirit when we have the opportunity and ability to dive deeper into holiness, and we choose otherwise.
 - He bore the weight of our sin on His shoulders, and it grieves Him when we jump back into the mud, preferring temporary sin over the cleanliness of his blood-bought forgiveness.

Conclusion

“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”

- Simply put, walking in holiness is to treat others in the exact same way Jesus treats us.
- **QUOTE:** “If anyone here who is a Christian finds a difficulty in forgiveness, I am going to give him three words which will help him wonderfully. I would put them into the good man’s mouth. I gave them to you just now, and prayed you to get the sweetness of them; here they are again! ‘For Christ’s sake.’ Cannot you forgive an offender on that ground?” [Charles Spurgeon]