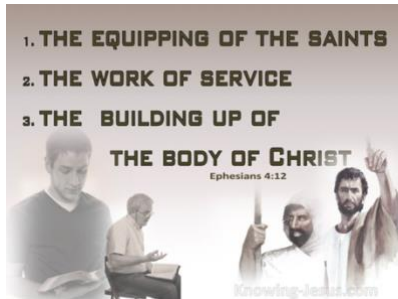


13 Ephesians 4:17-24 PUT ON THE NEW MAN



*<sup>11</sup> And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,*

*<sup>12</sup> to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, <sup>14</sup> so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every*

*wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. <sup>15</sup> Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, <sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, **when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.***

On Wednesday night we had a great time in the Lord and in His Word. We talked about certain leadership gifts that have been given to the church in the present age. I also talked about gifts in general which are given to all believers in the church, and I mentioned several ways that we can discover our gifts. But in this scripture, Paul is listing leadership gifts that God has given to the church: evangelists, pastors/shepherds, and teachers. The purpose that these gifts have been given is so that you the Body of Christ would be equipped to do the ministry of the church. This is a big deal because Paul places the equipping on a few that are gifted with those specific gifts, but the responsibility of the ministry itself is on each one of you reading this sermon or those of you sitting at the Grove listening to this teaching. In verse 11, Paul lists these three gifts that are still with us, and I want to give a bit of an explanation about them.

**Evangelists** are those who preach the good news of salvation. The gospel is easy for them to share. For them it is like breathing. They are divinely equipped to win the lost to Christ. They have a special ability to diagnose a sinner's condition, probe the conscience, answer objections, encourage decisions for Christ, and help the convert find assurance through the word. Evangelists include people like Billy Graham or Chad McMillan. They go out and preach the word to the lost and then lead the converts back to the local church where they will be fed and encouraged.

**Pastors** are men who serve the sheep of Christ. They guide and feed the flock. Theirs is a ministry of wise counsel, correction, encouragement, and consolation. Some churches have an office they call elder and they choose a pastor from the group of elders, but being a pastor is more than that. It is a specific spiritual gift. The NT pictures a number of pastors in a local church (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Pet. 5:1, 2) rather than one pastor or presiding elder. As Union Grove has grown, we are close to the Lord giving us another person to serve in that capacity with such gifting. Scripture supports that the office of pastor encompasses three functions described in the Bible: a shepherd, a bishop, and an elder. I heard it once described as being an "elder" is what the man is, being "pastor" is how he feels, and being an "overseer/bishop" is what he does. (1 Peter 5:1-5)

**Teachers** are men or women who are divinely empowered to explain what the Bible says, interpret what it means, and apply it to the hearts and consciences of the saints.

The purpose of these three is TO EQUIP THE SAINTS (THAT MEANS YOU) TO DO MINISTRY. This is one reason you don't hear me refer to myself as "the minister" here at Union Grove. When we have one person that we think of as "the minister" people think he is the person who must say all of the prayers, do all of the visits, and do the other things that are really the responsibility of the whole church body. Paul is clear that pastors and teachers equip the saints to do the actual ministry of the church. In addition, through sound teaching, the church body will not be led astray by all kinds of errant doctrine and teachings.

Paul is very specific on why pastors and teachers are a gift to the church. When we are all doing what we're supposed to be doing, we are building one another up and we're stabilizing ourselves against crazy winds of doctrine that come along and lead people astray. This is why I stay in the Bible and don't get up here and do book studies. That way you'll each know what the Bible says. Paul then continues.



Putting On  
The New Man:  
Ephesians 4-5

*<sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. <sup>20</sup> But that is not the way you learned Christ!*

*<sup>21</sup> assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, <sup>22</sup> to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, <sup>23</sup> and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, <sup>24</sup> and*

*to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*

So, in this scripture today, we see Paul referring to unbelievers as “gentiles”. This would be equated today to those who know nothing of the wisdom of God. Today, we might just call these “worldly” people. He says that these gentiles walked in “futility” (Greek meaning empty or vain). This can be thought of as living a totally self-centered life and being absolutely useless. You know when you’re living for yourself and what you can accumulate for yourself it is a very empty life. It has no purpose beyond yourself.

As I’ve said many many times, all of us have three basic needs: 1) to be loved and accepted, 2) To have value and worth, and 3) To “fit in” (have an identity). When we try to fill these with anything apart from God, it leads to conflict and frustration. The pursuing of these things apart from God is what Paul is calling a gentile lifestyle. A person without God will desperately do whatever they can to feel loved and accepted. They will desperately do whatever they can to feel like they have value and worth, and they’ll desperately do whatever they can to fit in. The result is awful. It is empty. It is ugly. It is living in the flesh. It never ends well.

Solomon talked about this. He talked about building projects, planting vineyards, etc. He tells us that it is all vanity. There’s nothing permanently satisfying about any of it. As humans we can fall into the trap of feeling that being busy is being purposeful. It is not. Paul goes on to tell us why we were so fixed on what didn’t matter.

*<sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.*

This means that a gentile/worldly lifestyle is pursued because this person does not know about God and the things of God, and the priorities of God. Hence, that kind of lifestyle just pursues what the five senses can sense. That is the ultimate “sensuality”. But the problem is that you can’t get enough to satisfy. I’ve heard the story about the guy that wanted a million dollars. He got it, and then he just wanted another million. That sensuality as Paul calls it is so real. In the sexual context, we men have spoken about the fact that pornography is such that when a person engages in being excited by it, he just wants more and more. There’s no amount of flesh that will satisfy. The same thing can be said for drugs, alcohol, and other things of the flesh that promise to give real lasting

pleasure but THEY NEVER DO. WHAT DRUGS, ALCOHOL, SEX, SUCCESS, FAME, ETC PROMISE IS NEVER ENOUGH. It can't meet the those three basic needs.

Paul then goes on and makes great contrast of this with the flesh.

*<sup>20</sup> But that is not the way you learned Christ! - <sup>21</sup> assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, <sup>22</sup> to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, <sup>23</sup> and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, <sup>24</sup> and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*

This kind of living is the exact opposite of a flesh centered life. When we come to the Lord, we are to PUT OFF THE OLD SELF AND PUT ON THE NEW SELF. This is so interesting because these are actions that we can do. Paul is telling us to do this because now we have the freedom to do this. Before we came to the Lord, we did not have power over our flesh. It had power over us.

When we received the Holy Spirit, we received the power to not be controlled by the flesh. We are no longer slaves to sin, but we can in fact choose to live a different way. We have the power to do that. We can also choose to go back to the pig trough of sin and live in slavery again if we make the decision to do so. I know Christians that have given their lives to Christ and with one little trigger they go back to deeds of the flesh that put them back into chains. It's the alcoholic that picks up the booze again after becoming clean. It's the liar that asks God to forgive their lying, but they lie again to meet a need. Having the Holy Spirit doesn't mean you by default want to obey the Holy Spirit.

My own editor told me that she was a Christian when she allowed her flesh to be tempted by the curiosity of drugs and alcohol. She made some foolish choices and soon found herself bound in the slavery of addiction to crystal meth. This is exactly what can go on when we no longer put on the new man. We must make a decision to PUT ON THE NEW MAN. We all need to be on our guard continually. This doesn't just happen to the weak. If Satan can't have your soul, he is bound and determined to steal your joy. Paul has already told us the key to this in the verses we studied on Wednesday night. It is receiving the word from pastors and teachers and being thoroughly equipped to do ministry.

It is in the receiving of and digesting of sound teaching that we are empowered and reinforced. The Word of God gives us roots and strong branches to stand against the assaults of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Paul tells us why we should receive sound teaching; *"so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and*

*carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.”(v.14)*

Note that Paul talks about this putting on of the NEW MAN and taking off the OLD MAN in the context of being “renewed in the spirit of our minds”. (see Romans 12:1-2)

I want to caution everyone reading this sermon that we are not to beat ourselves up because of our lapses in the flesh. There will always be a default in our flesh to run back to the old man. The only way out is to get our minds and our eyes off of our sins and our past, and instead to focus on our Savior. If we focus on our sins, we end up hating ourselves and tearing ourselves apart. He gives us everything we need for a godly life so focus.

*Remember that “His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.”(2 Peter 1:3 NIV)*

*<sup>13</sup> No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. (1 Corinthians 10:13 ESV)*

Jesus told us, “So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.” (John 8:36 ESV)

In these past couple of teachings, Paul has told us that our identity in Christ is strengthened through the study of the Word. He tells us that God has gifted the church evangelists, pastors, and teachers to pour God’s Word into us to equip us for ministry. And, as an added bonus, when you are thoroughly equipped you will not be tossed to and fro by every wind of teaching that comes your way. You will be a steadfast Christian warrior transformed by the continual “putting on of the New Man”. That is your identity. That is who you are. Now go out and be who you are and MINISTER !

Let us pray.

SERMON TODAY HAS NOT BEEN EDITED AS AMANDA IS TAKING THE WEEK OFF.

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