

## THE OLD LIFE MUST GO, PT. 2; EPH. 4:20-24 (Ed O'Leary)

### INTRODUCTION.

BECAUSE OF THE LONG GAP DUE TO PREACHING A CHRISTMAS SERMON AND ALSO the weather, ~ ↴↴

▶▶I need to be a little more extensive than I otherwise would be in bringing everyone up to speed, ~ so that no one loses sight of the forest for the trees.

AS EVERYONE IS AWARE, ~ WE ARE CURRENTLY MAKING OUR WAY THROUGH THE second overarching theme of Ephesians, ~ 4:2 — 6:9.

▶▶Recall, ~ In Eph. 4:1, ~ Paul told us, ~ "As a result of all that God has done for and given you, i.e., our great salvation and its accompanying blessings spelled out in the first three chapters of this letter, I, a prisoner of the Lord, urge you to apply or display this truth by living in a way that brings honor and glory to Him."

▶▶And then from 4:2 — 6:9, ~ Paul spells out in detail the type of life that brings honor and glory to God, ~ the type of life that should result from the truth of chapters 1-3.

AND THIS MORNING, ~ WE CONTINUE OUR LOOK AT EPH. 4:17-24, ~ ↴↴

▶▶in which we learn more about the type of life that brings honor and glory to God, ~ the type of life that should result from being saved by Jesus and given "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places."

▶▶If you recall, ~ last time we looked at verses 17-19

▶▶In verse 17a, ~ Paul transitions into this next paragraph.

▶▶As we know, ~ Paul expressed the main idea of this paragraph in verse 17b. ~ It is an exhortation to believers to "no longer live as unbelievers do."

▷▷As a result of what God has done for and given us, ~ spelled out in the first three chapters, ~ believers are to no longer be governed by our sinful nature.

↳↳I.e., ~ we are to no longer practice a sinful lifestyle.

→→Simply, ~ the old life, ~ our life before Jesus saved us, ~ must go.

▶▶Then in verses 17c-24, ~ Paul builds on his exhortation or main idea. ↴↴ 1/9

▷▷ In [verses 17c-19](#), ~ Paul gives a description of unbelievers.

↳↳ As we noted, ~ the description emphatically serves the purpose of providing a rationale or reason why believers should no longer live as unbelievers do.

↳↳ At one time, ~ believers were unbelievers. ~~ We belonged to that unsaved life. ~~

→→ But we no longer belong to that category. ~~ We no longer fit the description that Paul gave.

↳↳ The description highlights the fact that our old life has no place in the new life we have in and from Jesus.

↳↳ We are new creations. ~~ And our lifestyle must match our new status.

↳↳ Therefore, ~ the old life must go.

▶▶ Today, ~ we'll finish up this paragraph by looking at [verses 20-24](#), ~ which continue to build on Paul's main idea that believers are to "no longer live as unbelievers do."

**IN VERSE 20, ~ PAUL GIVES US ANOTHER REASON WHY BELIEVERS ARE TO NO longer live like unbelievers do.**

**ANOTHER REASON WHY THE OLD LIFE MUST GO. ~~ "But that is not the way you learned Christ!"**

▶▶ To boil it down and put it briefly, ~ Paul's point here that is believers are not taught to continue living as unbelievers do. ~~ We aren't taught to hang on to our old life.

**ON THE CONTRARY, ~ IT IS THE EXACT OPPOSITE.**

▶▶ In point of fact, ~ when a person accepts Jesus as Savior and Lord, ~ they are told that the old life must go.

▶▶ Unbelievers' way of life and the description of them that Paul gave us in [verses 17-19](#) are nothing like what we are taught when we came to know Christ as Savior and Lord, ~ as we'll see in [verses 22-24](#).

▶▶ Our old life before Christ, ~ and our new life in and from Christ are not in agreement.

▷▷ As Paul wrote in a different context in [2 Cor. 6:14b](#), ~ and applies here, ~ NIV ~ "what fellowship can light have with darkness?" ↴ 2/9

▶▶ We are told to not hang on to the old way of life.

▷▷ 1 Pet. 4:3, ~ "For the time that is past ~ [referring to our lives before we came to Christ] ~ suffices for doing what the Gentiles ~ [unbelievers] ~ want to do."

↳↳ As we noted last time, ~ basically Peter is saying, ~ "Enough already. ~ Put sin in your rearview mirror." ~ You have had enough in your past life of the evil things that unbelievers desire."

↳↳ Peter is driving the point home that the past is the past. ~ It is over and done with.

↳↳ There must be a complete rejection of, ~ break with, ~ and no going back to ~ the sinful things we were involved in before we came to Christ.

▶▶ Also as we said last time, ~ In Col. 3:5, ~ Paul writes, ~ NIV ~ "Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: ~ [examples] ~ sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

▶▶ And in Eph. 1:4, ~ Paul told us that a purpose of God's choosing us for salvation my fellow believers is "that we should be holy and blameless before him."

▷▷ Now, ~ these two adjectives, ~ "holy" and "blameless," ~ most likely form a doublet, ~ which means that they are joined to express ~ and emphasize ~ a single idea.

↳↳ Paul is most likely using the two adjectives to express and emphasize the single idea of moral purity.

→→ IOW, ~ my brothers and sisters in Christ, ~ a purpose of God's choosing us for salvation is that we would lead morally pure lives ~ **emphasis** on morally pure.

▶▶ Instead of being taught to hang on to the old way of life, ~ we are told to reject our unsaved, ~ immoral lifestyle, ~ to "Put to death" the sinful life of the past, ~ and to leave sin in our rearview mirror.

▷▷ Therefore, ~ the old life must go.

### IN VERSES 21-24, ~ PAUL SPELLS OUT WHAT BELIEVERS ARE TAUGHT.

HE BEGINS IN VERSE 21 WITH AN ASSERTION THAT HE KNOWS HIS ORIGINAL readers are saved and have been taught what he is about to say in verses 22-24.

▶▶ "assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus."

▶▶I.e., ~ "assuming that you have heard about him and were taught the truth that comes from Jesus."

▷▷And everything that comes from Jesus is the truth.

↳↳Titus 1:2 tells us that God "never lies." ~~ Heb. 6:18 tells us that "it is impossible for God to lie."

↳↳Num. 23:19a declares, ~ NET ~ "God is not a man, ~ that he should lie, ~ nor a human being, ~ that he should change his mind."

↳↳And Heb. 13:8 says, ~ "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."

▶▶Back in Eph. 4:21, ~ simply put, ~ based on the meaning of the verb for "heard about," ~ this most likely points to the Ephesian believers conversion experience.

▷▷I.e., ~ when they heard and believed, ~ or obeyed, ~ the gospel.

▶▶Although verse 21 is constructed as conditional, ~ and translated that way in many EV, ~ it is one of those expressions in Greek ~ where it is clear that Paul has no doubt about its truth.

▶▶Perhaps we could paraphrase this as: ~~ "You have certainly heard and believed the gospel ~ and were taught the truth that comes from Jesus."

▶▶And "truth" in the immediate context points to what believers have been taught, ~ which is spelled out for us in verses 22-24.

IN VERSES 22-24, ~ PAUL GETS INTO THE SPECIFICS OF WHAT BELIEVERS ARE taught.

▶▶Here Paul zeroes in on three things believers are taught. ~~ And it's definitely not to hang on to our old life.

▶▶Paul presents a stark contrast to our unsaved life, ~ and therefore reinforces the fact that believers are to no longer live as unbelievers do, ~ ¶¶

▷▷that our old life has no place in the new life we have in and from Jesus. ~~ And therefore the old life must go.

FIRST, ~ IN VERSE 22a, ~ PAUL SAYS BELIEVERS ARE TAUGHT "TO PUT OFF [OUR] OLD self, which belongs to [our] former manner of life."

▶▶My brothers and sisters in Christ, ~ Paul is talking about the person we used to be before Jesus saved us, ~ which was governed by our sinful nature. ¶¶ 4/9

▶▶ Recall back in Eph. 2:2-3, ~ Paul gave us a picture of the person we were when we were unsaved.

▷▷ We were 100% sinful, ~ sinning was a way of life for us, ~ we were following the standards of this world, ~ we were following Satan, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ and we were enslaved to our sinful nature and its sinful desires ~ and we carried those sinful desires out.

→→ Each believer is no longer the person he or she was before Jesus saved us and gave us "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places." ~ Each a new creation . . .

↪↪ The person we were belonged to the unsaved life. ~ Now we belong to Jesus.

▶▶ And here in Eph. 4:22a, ~ Paul says that believers are taught that the person we were must be rejected.

▷▷ Like an old, ~ worn out piece of clothing, ~ it is to be taken off and thrown away.

↳↳ To express it a little differently, ~ believers are taught to stop being the person we were ~ ¶¶

→→ and to stop doing the things we did ~ before we came to Jesus for salvation.

▶▶ In Rom. 6:12-13, ~ Paul writes, ~ <sup>12</sup> Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions ~ [i.e., ~ Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires]. ~ ¶¶

▷▷<sup>13</sup> Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ and your members to God as instruments for righteousness ~ [i.e., ~ use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God]."

▶▶ This passage strengthens Paul's assertion in Eph. 4:22a that believers are taught to "to put off [our] old self, which belongs to [our] former manner of life."

▶▶ The fact that we are taught to stop being the person we were and to stop doing the things we did before we came to Christ, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ reinforces Paul's exhortation or main idea that believers are to no longer live as unbelievers do. ~ It vividly points out that the old life must go. ¶¶ 5/9

IN VERSE 22b, ~ PAUL ADDS A NOTE REGARDING THE PERSON WE WERE BEFORE JESUS made us into new creations.

▶▶ Paul says that we were "corrupt through deceitful desires." ~~ Based on the context, ~ "desires" here refers to sinful desires.

▷▷ The person we used to be, ~ our old self before Jesus saved us, ~ was continually being corrupted by deceitful sinful desires, ~ Paul says.

▷▷ The unsaved person never gets better spiritually or morally.

↪↪ Instead, ~ deceitful sinful desires causes the person to get worse and worse.

→→ Deceitful sinful desires only destroy, ~ they never build up.

▶▶ Notice that Paul calls sinful desires "deceitful."

▷▷ Paul says that the person we were before Jesus saved us was fooled by the sinful things that we wanted to do.

▷▷ Sinful desires are "deceitful" ~ or fool us ~ because they promise us whatever our sinful hearts desire ~ but fail to ultimately provide it.

↪↪ Our sinful desires deceive us, ~ because the result of sin is never quite what we expect.

▷▷ Adam and Eve found this out the hard way.

↪↪ Satan had promised that their eyes would be opened ~ and they would be like God ~ knowing good and evil ~ promising them divinity. ~~ So Adam and Eve ate the fruit.

↪↪ And part of what Satan promised was true ~~ Their eyes were opened ~~ They did know good and evil ~ but not as gods.

→→ Instead ~ their eyes were opened to see that they were now sinners ~ alienated from God and from each other.

▷▷ The result of sin is ultimately never as promised. ~~ Someone has said ~ It's as if a deaf person was promised to be able to hear again ~ but all they could hear was screaming.

↪↪ Prov. 20:17 illustrates this. ~~ "Bread gained by deceit is sweet to a man, but afterward his mouth will be full of gravel." ↯↯ 6/9

→→The taste of food gained dishonestly may at first seem sweet, ~ but eventually it is as unpleasant as eating gravel.

→→This proverb contrasts the short-term pleasure of sin with its long-term consequences.

↪↪Sin, usually attractive in its immediate payoff, ~ ultimately turns on the person.

GETTING BACK TO THE SPECIFICS OF WHAT BELIEVERS ARE TAUGHT, ~ IN VERSE 23 Paul says the second thing believers are taught is "to be renewed in the spirit of [our] minds."

▶▶Basically, ~ Paul is saying that believers are taught to renew our attitudes, ~ thoughts, ~ and way of thinking.

▶▶The grammar in Eph. 4:23 indicates that is to be an ongoing thing. ~ I.e., ~ we are taught to continually renew our attitudes, ~ thoughts, ~ and way of thinking.

▷▷The implication being that there is a danger of our minds falling back into the attitudes, ~ thoughts, ~ and way of thinking we had when we were unsaved. ~ So we must give this renewal constant attention.

▶▶And how do we do that? ~ How do we continually renew our attitudes, ~ thoughts, ~ and way of thinking? ~ By constantly saturating our minds with the word of God.

▷▷Ps. 19:7-8, ~ "The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul ~ [i.e., ~ it gives renewed energy and strength to one's whole being; ~ the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple ~ [i.e., ~ makes naive people wise]; ~ 77

↪↪the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes ~ [i.e., ~ God's word gives wisdom and understanding, ~ and also insights for living as the people of God]."

▶▶That believers are taught to abandon the attitudes, ~ thoughts, ~ and way of thinking we had when we were unsaved, ~ and to continually renew them by saturating our minds with the word of God, ~ 77

▷▷reinforces Paul's exhortation or main idea that believers are to no longer live as unbelievers do.

▶▶The fact that we are taught this vividly points out that the old life must go. 77 7/9

IN VERSE 24a, ~ PAUL SAYS THE THIRD THING BELIEVERS ARE TAUGHT IS "TO PUT ON the new self."

▶▶ Believers are new persons with brand new natures.

▷▷ As Paul says in 2 Cor. 5:17, ~ "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

▷▷ And in Ezek. 36:26, ~ God declares through Ezekiel, ~ "And I will give you a new heart, ~ and a new spirit I will put within you. ~ And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh."

↪↪ This happens when we accept Jesus as Savior and Lord.

→→ At that moment, ~ God, ~ by His immeasurably great power, ~ removes our sin-hardened hearts, ~ gives us "a new heart," ~ and puts "a new spirit within" us.

↪↪ "a new heart" and "a new spirit," ~ which by instinct wish to please, ~ to live for, ~ and to serve God.

▶▶ And Paul says here in Eph. 4:24a that believers are taught to be that new person, ~ to live as that new person, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ and to be guided by that new nature, ~ which by instinct desires to please, ~ to live for, ~ and to serve Jesus.

▶▶ That believers are taught this reinforces Paul's exhortation or main idea that believers are to no longer live as unbelievers do.

▷▷ It vividly points out that the old life must go.

THEN PAUL ADDS IN VERSE 24b THAT THE NEW PERSON WERE ARE WAS CREATED after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

▶▶ I.e., ~ God has created us, ~ i.e., ~ those who truly have Jesus as Savior and Lord, ~ to be like Himself. ~ And i.e., ~ truly righteous and holy.

▶▶ Once again, ~ we are confronted with the truth that believers are to become more and more like Jesus. ¶¶ 8/9



## CONCLUSION.

AS A RESULT ALL THAT GOD HAS DONE FOR AND GIVEN US, ~ SPELLED OUT IN THE first three chapters of the letter, ~ Paul says, ~ we are to no longer live like unbelievers.

▶▶I.e., ~ As a result of what God has done for and given us, ~ believers are to no longer be governed by our sinful nature.

▷▷We are to no longer practice a sinful lifestyle as unbelievers do, ~ the sinful lifestyle that we believers practiced before Jesus saved us.

▶▶God has not chosen believers for salvation in order for us to remain as we were.

▷▷God has not "rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son" in order for us to continue living as if we were still residing in "the domain of darkness."

▶▶Because Jesus has saved us and given us "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places," ~ the old life must go.

LET'S PRAY . . . . 9/9