

The New Life in Christ

Ephesians Part 8

Ephesians 4:17-32

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Christ in me

- Read/pray “Christ in Me,” a prayer of Saint Patrick, adapted by David Platt.¹
- One thing I really appreciate about this prayer is it really explains how the Christian’s life is to be: Christ in me.
- As Christians, Jesus should control our decisions, speech, relationships, and life. Nothing in our life should be out of touch with Christ.
 - Paul says, “The love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.” (*2 Corinthians 5:14-15*, ESV)
- Tonight as we continue our series on Ephesians, we will pick up in *4:17-32*. Tonight we are going to see that our lives really should look like we’re following Jesus. Our lives should look different than the people of the world’s lives.
 - As we study this passage, notice how Christ-centered this passage is, especially the beginning.
 - We will look at three points Paul makes: don’t live like you’re not a Christian, live like the Christian you’ve been made to be, and marks of the new life in Christ.
 - Remember, the first three chapters of Ephesians lays out the doctrine of the church and doctrine of Christ. In the second half of the letter, chapters 4-6, Paul gives us the practical applications based on the theology of Christ.
 - John Stott - “Good conduct arises out of good doctrine. It is only when we have grasped clearly who we are in Christ, that the desire will grow within us to live a life worthy of our calling and fitting to our character as God’s new society.”²

Don’t live like you’re not a Christian. (*Ephesians 4:17-19*)

- Paul says to not live like the Gentiles live.
- We know from our study of Ephesians so far that Paul is not anti-Gentile. In fact, he spends much of this letter (*2:11-3:13*) arguing that both Jews and Gentiles should be united because God’s plan is to unite both Jews and Gentiles into one household of God (*2:19*). In other words, both Jews and Gentiles can come to Christ.
- Sometimes in scripture the term Gentiles can refer to both ethnicity or way of living and thought. Paul affirms that Gentiles are included in the kingdom of God and have access to God, but when Gentiles come to Christ, they are living into their new society.

¹ David Platt voiced this prayer at the beginning of Secret Church 14: The Cross and Everyday Life, session 1, April 18, 2014, <http://radical.net/?session=the-cross-and-everyday-life-session-1>.

² Stott, 194.

- When you come to Christ, give up your old life.
- You don't have the same priorities as you once had.
- *Proverbs 26:11* - like a dog returning to its vomit
- The gospel is the most glorious news in the history of the world. Why would we forsake everything God and Christ and the Spirit have done for you? Why return to the sin that Jesus just saved you from.

Your new life in Christ (*Ephesians 4:20-24*)

- You put off the old self (*4:22*)
 - N.T. Wright - "God accepts us as we are, but His acceptance does not leave us as we are."
 - When we come to Christ we get a whole new life.
 - Yes, we have the same personality, look the same, and still struggle with the same struggles, but we have changed.
- Renewed in the spirit of your minds (*4:23*)
 - Rick Warren says that it's hard to make our minds mind.³
 - Greatest Command: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your *mind* and with all your strength." (*Mark 12:30*)
- Put on the new self, which is created in God's image. (*1:24*)
 - This is *Genesis 1:27* language - creation and new creation
 - Holy, righteous

Marks of your new life in Christ (*Ephesians 4:25-32*)

- Put away falsehood (*4:25*)
- Speak the truth to your neighbor (*4:25*)
- Be angry, but not sinful (*4:25*)
 - It is not a sin to be angry. But anger can cause sin.
- Give no opportunity to the devil (*4:25*)
- Don't steal, but work to provide for yourself and others (*4:25*)
 - God isn't interested in you only stopping the bad stuff you do. God is inviting you to something more. Don't just stop stealing. But work so you can give away.
- No corrupting talk, but encourage and build up. (*4:25*)
 - "I've never met anyone who needs less encouragement"
 - Does your speech tear down or build up?
 - Let grace be in your speech.

³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g6iSdRCOw68&t=603s>

- Don't grieve the Holy Spirit (4:30)
 - The language of grieving the Holy Spirit comes from the Old Testament in *Isaiah 63:10*, where it describes Israel's rebellion from God. So we grieve the Holy Spirit when rebel against God. "This verse marks the incongruity of grieving the one who is proof we belong to God and are destined for his future salvation. Why live contrary to him whose ownership seal we wear and in violation of our destiny?"⁴
 - N.T. Wright - "The word Paul uses could refer to the official 'seal' or official stamp on a document or package, marking it out for a particular use or occasion. The mark indicates who it belongs to and what it's for."⁵
 - In *Ephesians 1:13*, we see that the Holy Spirit is the one who seals us.
- Put away... (4:31)
 - Bitterness
 - Wrath
 - Anger
 - Clamor
 - Slander
 - Malice
- Be kind to one another and tenderhearted (4:32)
 - Kindness is central to the Christian ethic.
 - NT Wright - "Kindness is one of the purest forms of imitation of God."⁶
 - Once eighteenth-century literary figure Dr. Samuel Johnson was once asked what good it was to simply spend time with people if the conversations of those meetings did not include anything worth remembering. The point is to "eat and drink together, and to promote kindness."⁷
- Forgive others like Christ forgave you. (4:32)
 - Forgiveness was not a virtue in much of the ancient world of Jesus' day. If you forgave someone it was often viewed as a weakness or as you letting someone off the hook for harming you.
 - The Lord's Prayer states that we ask for forgiveness in the same way that we forgive others. After his prayer Jesus says that we will not receive forgiveness if we do not offer forgiveness. (*Matthew 6:12, 14-15*)
 - We forgive because God forgave us.

⁴ Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 251.

⁵ Wright, 56.

⁶ NT Wright, 54.

⁷ NT Wright, 54.