

SUNDAY SERVICE NOTES

February 21, 2021

Ephesians 4:17-24

How to walk

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Today we are continuing our study through Ephesians after exploring what it looked like to be a growing and maturing Jesus Follower.

As I was studying today's passage, I thought of a couple of questions:

"Is it enough just to talk the talk?"

"Is it enough just to have the right belief system?"

On the surface, the answer to the first one is an easy "No!" and the second question has enough ambiguity to get us thinking a little more.

Today I want to talk about "How" we walk out our talk and our belief matters.

Sometimes, well meaning Christians have mastered the talk more than the walk and have settled for a life that tries to nail down the "right" beliefs (orthodoxy) without the same passionate conviction of "rightly" walking out the ways of Jesus (orthopraxy). If we understand the ways of Jesus it's not an either/or, it's a both/and. A proper understanding of His Truth and the discernment and courage to walk it out in a practical and powerful way.

Let's see what our section of Scripture in Ephesians says about this:

Ephesians 4:17-24

So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, ¹⁸ being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; ¹⁹ and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. ²⁰ But you did not learn Christ in this way, ²¹ if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, ²² that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, ²³ and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴ and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

There's so much we can explore in these verses, let's focus on the insight given to us concerning our walk. Our walk matters!

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The Greek word for walk is peripateo. It means to make one’s way, to progress, and to make due use of the opportunities.

I encourage you to go to www.blueletterbible.org and type G4043 in the search bar and look at all the amazing ways the Father used this word to instruct us in His ways.

We have to constantly make choices of how we will make our way, progress, and make due use of the opportunities before us. If we aren’t intentional in this process, it’s easy to drift from His ways to convenient ways, comfortable ways, etc. The proverbial, “Path of least resistance”. We have to choose to how we are going to walk – walk as “Gentiles” or walk as Jesus Followers.

The knee jerk thought of a Christian is, “Of course I’m going to walk the Jesus way.” Of course, that is our desire. Is it always our practice?

Let’s look at what these verses say about how Gentiles walk.

_____ of their mind

_____ in their understanding

_____ due to the:

_____ of their hearts

Let’s look at these four things, let’s start with futility.

The Greek word is mataiotes, which means what is devoid of truth and appropriateness, perverseness, depravity, frailty, and want of vigor.

Let’s look at the word darkened. The Greek word is skotoo, which means to cover with darkness, darken, or blind the mind.

Let’s look at the word ignorance. The Greek word is agnoia, which means lack of knowledge and moral blindness.

Finally, the word hardness. The Greek word is porosis, which means

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covering with a callous, lack of mental discernment, dulled perception, and stubbornness.

We know the enemy is prowling around, seeking those to devour (1 Peter 5:8) and that he wants to take us captive through a hollow and deceptive philosophy. (Colossians 2:8)

This is why we need to be very intentional and aware of how we walk.

Let's look back to verse 20: But you did not learn Christ this way

The Father is encouraging us, through Paul, to be aware of difference between how Gentiles walk and how a Jesus Follower should walk.

Let's look at the way of Jesus in which we should walk.

Paul gives us some insight into this in verses 22-24:

lay aside the _____

be _____ in the spirit of your mind

put on the _____, which is:

_____ in righteousness and holiness

of _____

It's important that, when we look at this topic, we don't reduce it to just behavior modification and performance orientation. We need to keep it in context of growing in our relationship with Jesus and allowing Him to form and fashion us according to His Truth.

Let me encourage you with this:

Sometimes the journey can be challenging. Remember, He is with us. He created us in righteousness and holiness.

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LET'S
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Meditate on verses 17,18 concerning how Gentiles walk. Ask the Father to show you if there are any tendencies that you may have to walk in those ways. Write them down so you can be aware and pray. Feel free to share with a trusted Jesus Follower for accountability.

Futility of their mind

Darkened in their understanding

Ignorance that is in them

Hardness of their heart

How are some practical ways you can walk out the ways of Jesus in the ways that are talked about in verses 22-24:

Lay aside the old self

Be renewed in the spirit of your mind

Put on the new self

What is the power of this truth as it applies to your desire and ability to walk in the way of Jesus:

which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

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