

Sermon - 26 October 2025

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Date: 26 October 2025

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[0:00] Let us pray. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of all our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

! Please be seated. Amen.

Today's Gospel, in which our Lord gives strength to the paralyzed man, this Gospel offers a vivid picture of the change that must take place in us when we are made new by faith through His mighty work.

Let us know, before we go to the Gospel, let us first consider how St. Paul, in his epistle to Ephesians, describes this transformation. He writes, This I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as Gentiles do in the futility of their minds.

That is, do not live as those who do not know the Gospel. But the phrase, the futility of their mind, suggests a state of hopelessness, of having no true aim or end, because they are without God.

[1:31] And such is life without God. It's an aimless life. It's a futile life. So Paul continues, and he describes people in that state. He says, They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to the oddness, hardness of their hearts.

The worst consequence of sin is that very thing. It's that it blinds the mind to the truth.

The truth about God. The truth about true life. Sin forms a hard crust over the heart. So that it can neither see God, nor love Him.

Nor even recognize its own blindness. This was our state before Christ. The light of the world came into our own lives, into our own darkness.

We were, as Paul says in another passage, sitting in darkness, actually in the Gospels. We were sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death. That's who we were before Christ came.

[2:43] And such people, St. Paul says in verse 19, have become callous. And have given themselves up to sensuality.

Greedy to practice every kind of impurity. In fact, what Paul is saying is that they've lost all sensitivity to God. To be callous, in this sense, means to have ceased to feel grief for sin.

They no longer feel remorse. Their conscience does not prick them. Their conscience is silenced. Each vice is not merely condemned.

According to what St. Paul is doing here. He doesn't merely condemn each vice. But he traces each of them to its spiritual consequence. Sin, according to Paul, enlarges in its desire.

Sin enlarges in its desire. It is unsatiable as the grave. It brings a callous crust over your heart. Sin is not static.

[4:02] But it metastasizes. As cancer does. That's exactly what it is in the human soul. It invades. It poisons. But it doesn't stay in one location.

It metastasizes. And just like cancer, it is insatiable. It seeks to take over every aspect of who you are.

It's a bottomless pit that can never be satisfied. That's what sin is. Endlessly hungering for more and more evil. And in doing so, constantly blinding you to the truth about God and the truth about your own desperate need for a Savior.

But Paul continues in this passage. He says, but you. He's writing to the Ephesians. You. And he's writing to us. You here.

But you, St. Paul says, that is not the way you learned Christ. Assuming that you've heard him and were taught in him as the truth is in Jesus. The Ephesians, like us, had not heard Christ's voice in person.

[5:13] But they heard him. How did they hear Christ? How did you hear Christ? They heard him in the gospel message. In the good news of salvation. They heard Christ. And they were taught by his spirit, the Holy Spirit.

The same way you have been. And as we look to him in prayer and obedience, he transforms us. This is the great work of salvation. This is the mystery of the gospel.

He transforms us into his likeness. Into the new man. And so you must then. If that is indeed you. If you indeed learn Christ.

If you've heard the good news of salvation. You've come to faith. And believe in him. And trusted your old self to him. You're a new man. And then Paul tells us.

You must then put off your old self. Your former way of life. Corrupted by deceitful desires. And you must be renewed in the spirit of your mind.

[6:15] Though Paul says in verse 30. Believers are already sealed by the spirit for the day of redemption. He urges you and me.

Still to keep renewing ourselves. Always. What are we always to do? Always putting off the old self. Always clothing ourselves anew in the righteousness of Christ.

This new self. Paul says. Is created after the likeness of God. In true righteousness. And holiness. Just as the old self was deformed by sin.

After the likeness of Satan. This new self. That you are now in. Is after the likeness of your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. There's that twofold nature of humanity.

The old man and the new man. At least. For those who are in Christ. This is true for them. This is the constant refrain of the Bible. Particularly in the New Testament.

[7:17] Of spiritual transformation through Christ. If you are in a Wednesday night Bible study. You know what I'm speaking of now. Because Paul in Colossians.

As in that book we are going through. Constantly. Talks about Christ being the ground. And the soil. Of our lives. And so he encourages the believer to be rooted. There's no greater truth that you need to come to.

You've already come to the truth. Who is the person. The person of Jesus Christ. But now. What are you to do as a believer. In this new man. Continue to take root.

Go deeper. Go closer. And go more intimate. And that's what. That's what he's saying. Even here in Ephesians. Put off the old man.

Put on. Constantly. Always. Being the habit of putting on. The new man. After the likeness of Jesus Christ. The old man is described as corrupt. According to the deceitful loss.

[8:18] This is associated with Satan's corruption. And the blindness of heart. That is early described. And the new man is created after God. In righteousness and true holiness. Formed.

Through faith. Grace. With the life of God. And continual renewal. By the Holy Spirit. That is the new man.

When there's dualism. There's two natures. Which we are in now. As Christians. Before you were in Christ. You were just the old man.

Dead. Blind. Now that you're in Christ. You have a new man. But you still have the.

This. Old flesh. That tempts you to sin. That is susceptible to sin. That you must always. Constantly. Now.

[9:15] Now because you're in Christ. Now you are at war. War. A few Sundays ago. We talked about what. The Christian life is. A life of warfare. What are you warring against?

It's not your neighbor. It's not your. It's not your enemy. In fact. You're called to love your enemies. As Christians. You're warring. Particularly against sin. The devil. And your flesh.

That's what you're warring against. And so you must constantly. Put that off. And put on the new man. And in this battle. You're constantly.

Having to. To. To. To deny. The fallen nature. And live. According to the redeemed nature. That you are now. That is now yours. In Christ Jesus. And this now.

Serves as the moral lens. Through which. You view your life. Daily. Not. Not. Momentarily. Not. Just. Occasionally. But daily. You view your life.

[10:11] Through that moral. Moral lens. Of daily. Putting off. The old self. And putting on. The new man. And then. Then St. Paul. Applies this. This reality. Of who we are. He applies it.

To our daily life. And look what he says. He continues. He says. Therefore. He writes. Put away falsehood. Speak truthfully. To your neighbor. For we are members. Of one another.

Particularly. He's talking about. The local body. Of believers now. Put away falsehood. Speak truthfully. To your neighbor. Look around you.
No. Really. Do. Look around you. Those are your neighbors. That's what Paul says. To speak truthfully about. For we are members. Of one another. Just as early in the epistle.
He urged us. To speak the truth. In love. That we might grow up. Into Christ. When we do that. We grow up into Christ. In the same way. We must live in truth.
[11:08] And love. As members join together. In one body. And so. He continues. And gives a series. Of communal. As we live together.

And relational ethics. He says. Be angry. And do not sin. That is. If anger comes. As it is one to do. Sometimes. There is righteous anger. Sometimes.
It may be in response. To evil. But. Because we are. Falling creatures. Even our righteous anger. Can lead us to sin. We must be. On guard. So.
Be angry. And do not sin. Be watchful. That your anger. Does not lead you to sin. Even righteous anger. Must never become bitterness. Or revenge. Do not let the sun.
Go down on your wrath. Paul says. Don't hold. Resentment. In your heart. Because doing so. Is as the poet.

[12:02] Robert Burns says. It's like. Nursing wrath. To keep it warm. What does that do?

Ultimately. To your soul. It's not good. It's damaging. Do not give the devil. A foothold. Paul says. For Satan knows well.

That God forgives. Only those who. Forgive. And seek forgiveness. After all. We say it. Twice every Sunday. Hopefully. Once or twice every day. You do. Keep the daily office.

You say. Forgive us. Our trespasses. As we forgive those. Who trespass against us. If you are forgiven. Then you must be. People will forgive.

Freely. Because you've been forgiven. Such a great debt. Yourself. And Paul continues. He says. Let the thief. No longer steal. He's referring now.

[12:57] To those who once lived in sin. But instead. He says. Let the thief. No longer steal. But let him labor. Doing honest work. With his own hands.

So that. He may have something. To share with those in need. What does the Christian life look like? It means. Honest labor. Working. Hard work. The Christian life.

Not only turns from evil. But abounds in good. Stealing can be done. In multiple ways. You know. Right? It's not just. Burglary. It's not just. Knicking something from a store.

And not paying for it. Stealing can be. Practicing dishonesty. At work. That can be a form of stealing. Stealing. But. What is the antidote? In fact.

Stealing. Can be. Withholding the truth. From your neighbor. But what is the antidote. To this. Former lifestyle. How do we abound in good?

[13:58] The antidote. I think. Against greed. And slavery. As St. Paul says. Is generosity. Generosity of heart. Generosity of action.

When we learn Christ. We come to know that all is ours. All that is ours rather. When we learn Christ. We come to know that all that is ours. Is given by God.

He has been so generous to us. Beyond what we deserve. Or can hope for. As recipients of God's generosity then. We are to be in turn generous to others. Radical generosity.

Is a faithful family trait. Of those who are in God's family. After all. Our Lord. Is an example of such generosity. Of someone who gives.

Even sacrificially. To help those who are needy. And we. After all. Are recipients of that generosity. Of our Lord. So in turn. We must be generous. And Paul continues.

[14:58] He says. Let no corrupt. Word. Proceed from your mouth. But only what is good. For what? For building up. That is.

That it may. Give grace. To those who hear. The Greek word. For corrupting talk. Describes. A kind of. Deceased. Tree. That bears.

Bad fruit. That's what corrupting talk. Talk is like. It's a word used. To describe something. That's rancid. Or rotten. Or diseased. That's what corrupting talk is.

It's gossip. And slander. Those are. This kind of. Rotten words. That. That must not be found. In the believer. Such things. Are part of the old self. And we are to put it off.

Instead. Notice. The antidote. That Paul gives. Our words. Are to be words. That bless. We are to speak. Graciously. Out of the abundance.

[15 : 54] Of the heart. After all. The mouth speaks. So let your speech. Never suggest impurity. But instead. Be seasoned. With goodness. And truth.

So that it strengthens others. Be an encourager. Be Barnabas. The son of encouragement. Let us read that. To one another.

Every word that defiles. Drives away the Holy Spirit. Therefore. Some Paul wants. Do not grieve. The Holy Spirit of God. By whom you were sealed. For the day of redemption.

A sealing that began at your baptism. And continues through faith. Finally. Paul gathers all of these things. That he is saying.

Into one appeal. He says. Let all bitterness. And wrath. And anger. And clamor. And slander. Be put away. From you. Along with all malice.

[16 : 50] Be kind. To one another. Tender hearted. Forgiving one another. As God in Christ forgave you. Be kind to one another.

Tender hearted. Isn't that the disposition of God towards you? In the same way then. Have the same disposition. Towards one another.

Here we see how utterly different. The life of grace is. From the life of nature. From the world around us. The life of nature is the world around you.

See. Look around. This description. What Paul is calling us to. And how he's inviting us to live. Is counter-cultural to the world around us.

And counter-cultural. Even from the impulses. Of the falling human heart. But true Christian holiness.

[17 : 46] Will always appear strange to the world. It would appear like light shining in darkness. Which the darkness cannot understand. How different we would be in the world.

If we were to live in such a way. We would be a shining contrast. In the darkness of our world. When we exhibit that we are members of God's family. By readily seeking forgiveness.

And extending forgiveness to one another. We who were so undeserving of mercy and grace. Yet God in Christ. Through his perfect obedience. And sacrificial death.

Forgave us. Oh how different we would be in the world. If we would live. According to who we are in Christ. And all this beauty of holiness.

That Paul describes. All this heavenly way of living. He calls us to. Is made visible. Full of life and power. All of this is made visible.

[18 : 47] When we look into our gospel reading this morning. We look at the gospel account. Of the healing. Of the paralytic man. So in today's gospel. We saw Jesus. Healing this man.

Paralyzed. Couldn't move. And what we're meant to see though. Is that the outward miracle. Jesus giving strength to the powerless limbs of this man.

This miracle is an image of what he does within our very souls. The body that could not move. Is like the soul. That is bound and lifeless. Under sin.

The same divine voice. That said. Arise. Take up your bed. And walk. Speaks now to us as well. Saying. Awake. You will sleep. And arise from the dead.

And Christ will give you light. The paralytic's helplessness. Represents our own state. By nature. This is who we are. By nature. This is what Paul had earlier described.

[19 : 47] We were paralyzed in our sin. Unable to help ourselves. And we may see what is right. We may even wish to do what is right. But we have no power to act. Sin.

Long indulged. Weakens our will. And chains our heart. We lie as it were. Motionless before God. Until Christ speaks the word of life.

And how graciously our Lord. Begins. With us. Just as he does with this. With this man. This paralytic man. Before healing his body.

He first heals his soul. Jesus says to the man. Take heart my son. He says to him. Your sins are forgiven. This forgiveness is the first great gift of the new life.

It is the first touch. Of that divine power. Which begins to renew us. Yet forgiveness is never given. To leave us as we were.

[20 : 54] It is the beginning. Of our life. With God. And in God. It is the beginning of our restoration. The same voice that pardons you. And that pardons this paralytic man.

Is the same voice that commands. Rise. And walk. So too. With all of us here. With every Christian. First comes the word of mercy. Your sins are forgiven.

Then comes the word of holiness. The call to holiness. We may think of it. In this way. When our Lord says. Your sins are forgiven. He gave life to your heart. And when he had it. Rise up. Take up your bed. And go to your house. He gives strength to your limbs. The inward healing. Precedes the outward change. The soul must be made whole. Before the life can follow. Here is the truth.

[21 : 52] Brothers and sisters. Without that inward change. All our efforts. Is window dressing. It's futile. We may try holiness.

We may play at holiness. Unless God changes our heart. And our mind. Transforms us. Removes the heartening callousness.

Of our hearts. And makes us alive. To God. Which only God can do. Unless he does that work. Whole lot of efforts. Are futile. But God does do that work. Thanks be to God. He does. He brings that word of mercy.

Your sins are forgiven. He says. In this miracle. God reveals himself. As both God and man.

[22 : 49] Only God can forgive sins. After all. Yet it is as man. That he touches this paralytic man. And raises him. From his. From his. From his paralytic bed. And the crowd.

When they saw what Jesus has done. They. And then they saw the man stand up and work. And walk. They glorified God. Why did they glorify God? Because they knew that God is the one. Who was given such power to man. So in the same way. He gives his spirit. To his church. That his grace. Might still work among us. Raising the fallen.

Strengthening the weak. Renewing the heart of man. And as God does that. In the power of his Holy Spirit. We are meant to give glory to God.

And as we live. In that new life. The world is meant to see us. And give glory to God. And perhaps even turn to this same God.

[23 : 45] That we serve. Every healing of the body. In the gospel. Is actually meant to teach us. Of this deeper work. This healing of the soul.

The paralytic was carried. By others after all. This is one of the remarkable stories. Of this miracle. These friends who brought him. To Jesus. Because he could not come. To Christ himself. So too. The sinner. Is often brought to God. By the prayers and faith of others. When Jesus saw. The faith of this. Of this man's friends. The faith of those who carried him.

He said. Your sins are forgiven. Let us never forget. How much we hold. To the prayers of the church. To the prayers of godly parents. Godly friends.

The prayer of saints. Who have gone before. Who have laid the work. Let us not forget. Those who bring us. As it were. To Christ.

[24 : 44] When we cannot come ourselves. And let us not stop. Or grow weary. Of bringing our. Loved ones. Even our enemies. To Christ in prayer.

And in sharing the good news. Of the gospel with them. This gospel shows us. The whole mystery. Of Christian renewal.

Forgiveness. Healing. And restoration. To holy life. What. St. Paul teaches. In this doctrine. Is to put off. The old man. And put on the new.

What St. Paul teaches. Christ shows us. In action. Giving life. To the paralyzed man. And calling him. To walk in newness of life. And if you're wondering. If you have this.

Newness of life. This morning. May I ask you. May I invite you. To examine yourself. God. Only you can. Maybe ask God. To help you. To do that. Have you indeed.

[25 : 42] Heard that voice. That voice. Of mercy. Have you risen. At his command. Do you now walk. Strengthened. By his grace.

No longer. In the vanity. Of your mind. But in the light. Of his spirit. If so. Then you must give thanks. For he is. For he who has begun.

A good work in you. Will surely. Will surely. Carry it on. To completion. The gospel then.

Teaches us. How we are to live. After being made new. In Christ. For just as that man. That paralyzed man. Did not remain lying. On his bed. After he was healed. So we too.

Must not remain. Idle. After being forgiven. The voice that forgives. Also commands us to act. Every pardon from God. With it.

[26 : 36] Comes. A call to holiness. Rise. He says to us. Each one of us. Rise. And walk. How solemn.

And beautiful. Is that command. From our Lord. It is the daily word. Of Christ. To every Christian soul. When he first called us. From death to life. He said. Rise. Rise. And walk. When he brings us into. His family. Through baptism. He said. Rise. And walk. When he restores us. After we have fallen into sin. He says again. Rise. And walk. When he gives us grace. After confession. Or strength. In prayer. Or light. Through his word. It is still the same command. Leave the old life behind. And walk. In newness of life. And this walking. Means living out our faith. [27 : 29] It is nothing less than that. Step by step. We are to do it. Moment by moment. In patience. We are to do it. In humility. And in love. We are to do it in the power of the Holy Spirit. You know. It is not enough to feel remorse. Of make resolutions. The year is almost over now. January 1 is coming. People are going to make resolutions. It is not always a bad thing to do. But it is not enough to do that. We must walk. We must put our faith into action. The Christian life is not a single act. But it is a journey. Each day. We must go forward. Leaving behind what is past. Pressing toward what lies ahead. The Christian life is a journey. We know our destination. Don't we? We do. But we must walk towards that destination. [28 : 33] The paralytic's bed. Jesus tells him. This bed which once bore him in his weakness. Jesus. Jesus. After telling him to rise and walk. What does he do? He now carries that same bed himself. He carries it. So it must be with you and me. That which once weighed us down. Becomes light. When we bear it in obedience. To Christ. And walk. In a new life he has given us. Our trials. We have some of it. I am sure. You all have different ones. Our temptations. Our daily labors. These are no longer burdens. That crush us. If we are in Christ. But there are crosses. That we must bear. And we must lift up. And follow Christ with it. What once was a sign of defeat. Your sins. [29 : 31] Your failure. Your brokenness. Those were once signs of defeat. But now. In Christ. They become a testimony of grace. And as that man was told by Jesus. To go to his house. The home. The workplace. The common duties. Of each of our day. Our sphere of influence. As it were. These places become. Where we. In the new man. In our new nature. Are now to walk. And to show ourselves. And to display this new life. Of Christ. To those in our sphere of influence. True holiness. Is not found. In lofty words. Or deeds. True holiness. Is found in the quiet faithfulness. Of ordinary life. Lived in the spirit. True holiness. Is found. [30 : 28] In your interactions. With your children. And your spouse. And your neighbors. And your co-workers. These are the settings. In which we are meant to walk. In this new life. And I think the lesson. Of today's gospel. Is both. Is both profound. And it's practical. Every miracle of Christ's grace. Begins with forgiveness. That's where we begin. All of us here. If you're in Christ. You began there. You were a sinner. That was forgiven. A great debt. That's where you begin. But it continues. With renewal. And ends. With obedience. As you're being transformed. As you obey more and more. As you walk in obedience to God. And his word. The transformation. Comes more and more. And increases. And moment by moment. [31 : 25] Day by day. You're being transformed. Into what? Into who? To the image. Of Jesus Christ. The sinner forgiven. Must rise. And live a new life. The old self. Must be put off. The habits. The passions. The resentments. That once ruled over you. Must be put off. And the new self. Must be put on. Which is formed. After God's own image. In righteousness. And holiness. And if we ever grow weary. Or fall back into weakness. Hear this.

