

# A New Walk

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, as you know, we've been in the book of Ephesians for some time now.

! And those of you who were here last week will recall that we considered Paul's writing to the Church regarding gifts. Today we come to a new section where Paul returns to the general theme of how believers should walk, how believers should live.

Some might correctly characterize these verses that we are about to consider as the place where the rubber meets the road, so to speak.

Some others might say that this is the real deal. And still others might describe this section we come to as Paul's candid but brief explanation of man's depravity.

One thing is clear. Paul sets a mirror before every believer, each of us, and says, Look into it.

[ 1 : 40 ] He shouts his starkest warning to believers, Be on your guard. The preacher hears him loudest.

Let us pray. Father, Lord, we have come to a very sober portion of Scripture that we are called to preach from this morning.

Lord, we need your help. Lord, we need your help. We need your help to speak. And we need your help to hear and to understand and mostly, Lord, to obey.

Father, would you help us now? In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. The topic this morning is a new walk.

A new walk. And our Scripture reference is Ephesians. Ephesians chapter 4, verses 17 through 24.

[ 3 : 01 ] Ephesians chapter 4, verses 17 through 24. Paul writes to the church at Ephesus, Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do.

Let's read that again. Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do in the futility of their mind.

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, they have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.

But that is not the way you learned Christ, assuming you have heard about Him and were taught in Him, as the truth is in Jesus.

To put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires. And to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

[ 4 : 49 ] You know, sometimes we hear sermons preached and we wonder, you know, is this message for me? You know, perhaps sometimes there might be a special occasion, a Mother's Day service, a Father's Day, or maybe a Youth Sunday, and some people might say, you know, well, you know, that's not quite for me.

This is for someone else. This is for someone else. Well, the message today is not like that.

Today's message is for all of us. It doesn't matter whether you have been a believer for a day, a year, or a century.

Today's message is for all of us. And today's message is a sobering message that Pastor Adley preached today.

We all need to hear this. Paul contrasts how believers live with how believers ought to live with how pagans live.

[ 6 : 14 ] In the verses that we have just read, I believe Paul is saying to us quite simply, believers must not walk as they did before their conversion.

Instead, they should walk in a manner that reflects their conversion. Believers should not walk as they did before their conversion.

Instead, they should walk in a manner that reflects their conversion. Just to make this message as clear as possible, I divide my thoughts into two headings.

Number one, walking with a futile mind. Number two, walking with a renewed mind. On the surface, as we consider these words of Paul's, Paul seems to make the point that a person's walk depends on their mind.

[ 7 : 35 ] Change your mind, and your walk follows. It is interesting because that same concept, if you will, that same view is shared by humanists.

But lest I lose you early, let me make clear that the prescription that Paul offers for the changed mind of a believer is different from what the world presents.

And needless to say, the results are also different. Walking with a futile mind.

Point number one. Paul writes, Now, this I say and testify in the Lord.

That's how he starts this section. But before all of this, before all of this, we go back to the very first verse in this book.

[ 8 : 45 ] This is what it says. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus.

I want you to bear that in mind.

As you consider these words. As you consider these sobering words. Paul could have said to the church that meets the kingdom of life on Chesapeake Road.

It is important to establish that point up front. Paul's audience does not suddenly change. Paul is still in this chapter writing to the saints who are in Ephesus and are faithful in Christ Jesus.

His audience remains. Paul makes clear in verse 17 of chapter 4 that he is writing under special authority to instruct the Ephesians.

[ 10 : 08 ] Paul, now this I say and testify of the Lord. What comes next is Paul's instruction to you and to me.

You must no longer walk as the Gentiles do in the futility of their minds.

What Paul says, and I want to, because I want you to track with me, I want to tell you what Paul is really getting at right here right now.

Many preachers will say this, no, you shouldn't do this, but I don't want to lose you. I want you to hang with me. Paul says, there is a consequence for doing what I'm about to tell you.

You're going to have a futile mind. And then he says, this futile mind is going to produce some things. Remember, he's talking to believers now.

[ 11 : 17 ] He says, it could result in sensuality. It could result in greediness.

And the practice of every kind of impurity. I told you, all of us need to hear this. Because every one of us is at risk here.

Paul says, you got to be careful. Got to be careful. You are a saint, a kingdom life. You got to be careful.

Sounds grim for a believer, right? Well, so if you are currently in a place where one of those words, perhaps, one of those words or perhaps the phrase describes where you are.

Or if you want to avoid getting there, you need to pay careful attention to what Paul is saying. Paul has in view that his listeners were once pagans and still live among pagans.

[ 12 : 41 ] Paul has in view that we were once unbelievers. And we still live in this world among unbelievers. Paul writes, Paul writes, Now I say and testify in the Lord that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do.

You must no longer live. You must no longer live as the Gentiles do. What do you think the pagans do?

What do you think the pagans do? In the futility of their minds? But what is meant by the futility of their minds? Just broadly speaking.

Paul is talking here about these pagans who worshipped false gods. Paul warns us against idolatry. Paul is talking here about pursuing things that will not last, that have no eternal value, have no eternal significance.

[ 13 : 59 ] But this is not the first time in Scripture we see Paul using this term futile. Paul says, listen, we stand the risk of having futile walks, useless walks, meaningless walks in life.

That's the risk you and I face. That's why I tell you, this is a message you need to hear. Because of its import for every one of us.

In Romans chapter 1 verse 21, Paul wrote, For although they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him.

But they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Futile, useless.

And again in 1 Corinthians chapter 3 verse 20, the Lord knows the thoughts of the wise. They are futile.

[15:11] The wise. Futile. So Paul doesn't say that just because somebody has some special knowledge, just because somebody has been to university, has a PhD, Paul says that doesn't make you someone who's not futile.

Not at all. Paul warns believers, you can be in the church and have a lifestyle that is not dissimilar from a pagan's.

He characterizes the pagan's mind and explains why it is as it is. He does this so that you and I can avoid the trap.

Paul begins his argument by setting out that a pagan's mind is futile. Is there anyone here who wants to have a futile mind?

A useless life. Paul says we run the risk of having a futile mind. Having made the point that a man's, a pagan's mind is futile, useless.

[16:33] Paul then sets out its pathology, how it happens. So that's a good thing. Paul says, listen, you run the risk of having a futile mind.

Now, Paul doesn't leave us there because I think if you are a reasonable person, you're going to ask yourself, well, how does this happen? How could I possibly end up there?

Because when you answer that question, if you are wise enough, hopefully you will do what you can to avoid it.

So Paul sets out the pathology, how it happens. He said in the verses that follow, how it happens.

Listen to what Paul says. He says, beginning in verse 18. They are darkened in their understanding.

[17:42] Alienated from the life of God. Because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.

They have become callous. And have given themselves up to sensuality. Greedy to practice every kind of impurity.

These words, Paul tells us how the futile mind comes about. Paul says, take a look at it.

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.

Hardness of heart. Paul says that the pagan's heart is hardened.

[18:39] Nothing, it's impenetrable. Nothing gets through to it. You can talk to such a person until you are blue in the face. Like they say.

Nothing gets through. Their affections are turned to the things of this world.

And you can't persuade them. And Paul says that's the way they are. And believers run the risk of having hardened hearts.

Then he also says, They are darkened in their understanding.

Hardened hearts. I know that that is at the end of this sentence. But Paul says that a hardened heart actually results in darkened understanding.

[19:45] Incapable of seeing consequences. Incapable of understanding. Now I can ask you, you know people like this.

And I'm pretty sure you interact with people like this all the time. People that you have discussed scripture with. And you have said to them something that is so obvious.

You hear some people on television say the craziest thing in the world. And you know they debate for example about whether men should be competing against women.

And you know they are serious about this. And you are saying to yourself scratching your head.

How in the world did they get there? How did they get there?

Are they serious? Yes they are. Yes they are. Because they are in a place that Paul is describing.

[20:47] Darkened in their understanding. Then he says, alienated from the life of God. No evidence of having a relationship with God whatsoever.

Ignorant. Ignorant. Ignorant. Paul writes. Hardness and darkness lead to ignorance about life.

Ignorance about the things that are valuable in life.

Paul writes to the saints at Ephesus. And Paul warns. You do not want to be like this.

You don't want to have a hard heart. A darkened. Be darkened in your understanding. Alienated from God. Ignorant. Then he says further.

That these things. They manifest themselves. In a certain way. They manifest themselves in this futile walk.

[ 21 : 59 ] Characterized by sensuality. Greed and impurity. And Paul says. Paul says. Paul says. These pagans. They have developed like this. And you possibly can run the risk of this happening too. And we are going to get there in a minute.

Paul says. This is going to happen to you. Sensuality. Sexual appetite. But cannot be satisfied. But cannot be satisfied. Paul says.

If you can come to a point in your life. Where this is true of you. Greedy. Having an excessive appetite for things.

Whatever those things are. Money. Position. Clothes. Whatever. Then Paul reads.

[ 22 : 59 ] Practice. Every kind of impurity. Nothing is excluded. For those.

Whose hearts are darkened. Hearts are hardened. Whose understanding is darkened.

Who are alienated from God. Who are ignorant. Ignorant. Paul warns that. You and I. Can find ourselves.

In this. Same. Place. If. We. Are. Not. Careful. That's the point. Of the message. Paul describes a person.

Who is hard to reach. Who cannot comprehend spiritual things. Who gives no thought to the consequences of his actions.

[ 23 : 58 ] Who has no relationship with God. Who accepts ungodly behavior. And demonstrates no evidence. Anything with eternal value.

That is a stark warning to believers. If ever there was one. John Stark writes. In his commentary. On Ephesians. Hardness of heart. Leads first to darkness of mind. Then to deadness of soul. Under the judgment of God.

The judgment of God. And finally. Recklessness of life. Having lost all sensitivity. People lose all self control.

We see the progression. We see. What can happen to you. And I. As believers. How we can.

[ 24 : 58 ] Progress. In this way. We don't necessarily start this way. But we can take one little step here. Do one little thing here. And say okay. We get away with that. And then the next time.

And then the next time. It progresses. It gets deeper. And more significant. Here are some questions. You and I. Might ponder. As we consider. Paul's. Pathology.

Of a futile mind. To see where. We are. Can I come to service. Hear God's word.

Preached. And not be affected. In some way. I'm saying to you. Paul says. That you can. Hear God's word.

And not be moved. By God's word. You can. Hear it. And not understand it. So my question.

[ 25 : 58 ] My question. My suggestion. To you. Is that you ask yourself. This question. Can I come to service. Hear God's word. And not be affected. In some way.

Are there sinful things. I do now. That once moved me. To a sense. Of shame. I can. Do them. Without feeling.

Any. Remorse. Paul says. You better. I'm suggesting. Based on what Paul says. That you answer that question. Because. It could very well be.

That you are. Going down. A life. Of futility. Do I have. A consciousness. Of God. Am I. Mindful.

That he is everywhere. Am I open. To correction. A few questions. That you might. Ask yourself.

But Paul doesn't stop there.

[ 26 : 57 ] Paul says. Yes. That's one way. One way. The heathens walk. One way. The pagans. Walk. But Paul says.

We ought to. Walk. We ought to. Walk. With a renewed mind. So Paul writes. In verses 20.

And 21. Of. Chapter 4. But that is not the way.

You learned Christ. Assuming. You have heard about him. And what taught in him. As the truth is. In him.

Here Paul explains. That his readers know better. You and I. Know better. Because. Like us. Have learned.

[ 27 : 59 ] Christ. They have. Heard. About. Him. And they were. Taught. In him. In other words.

Paul is saying that. Christ was. Preached. To them. Obedience was. Taught. In other words. Paul is saying that. Christ was. Preached. To them.

Obedience was. Taught. Taught. Taught. To them. His lordship. Was taught to them.

Holiness. And righteousness. Were taught to them. Were taught to them. Believers. Have. A relationship. With Christ. Is what Paul. Is saying.

Believers have. A relationship. With Christ. Has. These things. That ought to. Inform. New. Walk. Learning.

[ 28 : 56 ] Christ. Receive. And follow him. Paul is saying. This is just not. Something. We come to church. Every Sunday. And we hear a message. And we go home.

He's saying. We have to live it out. Christ communicates. With us. Through his Holy Spirit. He is. Alive. And well.

Paul says. We have. Learned. Christ. Heard. Heard. Heard. Heard. Heard. Heard. Heard.

And so. We ought not have. A futile. Mind. We ought to have. A. Transformed. Mind. Paul makes. The point.

Further down. That those three. Ingredients. That those three things. That those three things. Are.

[ 29 : 51 ] Necessary. Ingredients. For a new. Walk. Those three things. Being. Having. Learned. Of Christ. Having heard about him. And having been taught in him.

Paul says. That they are necessary ingredients. For a new walk. Why? Why does he say this? Take a look at what Paul says. Here. Paul answers. In 21b.

Because. The truth. Is. In Jesus. Paul says. That the truth. Is. In.

Jesus. And that's why. When we. Hear about him. And we. Learn about him. We hear the truth. And we know how. To walk. We know how.

To live. Yes. Yes. Yes. They've learned, they've heard, and been taught three things, Paul says.

[ 30 : 52 ] Paul, in verses 22 through 24, says, believers have heard, learned three things. One, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires.

In summary, Paul says that believers have learned to put off your old self. Two, to be renewed in the spirit of your minds.

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

Let's consider each of these. Paul says, put off your old self. Why? Because it belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires.

Why? Because of all the things that we said earlier. Because it is futile. What does it mean to put it off? It means to abandon things that you once did that were sinful.

[ 32 : 18 ] It means progressively achieving holiness. It does not mean perfection, nor can it be. And then Paul, let's get the second one.

We'll come back to it in a moment. But the third point Paul makes is that we ought to put on the new self. Put off the old self.

And now he says, number three, put on the new self. What? This is change of garment.

This change of garment, as it were, is reflected in our actions, in our attitudes, in our tendencies, in our appetite, in our affections, and much more.

Paul says, put off the old garment. Abandon the futile way of life. And now put on the new self.

[ 33 : 24 ] Why? Because Paul says it leads to holiness and righteousness. Now how does this happen?

It's the work of the Holy Spirit. Let me say here now that we should not for one second believe that you, that we are beyond being tempted.

Or that we will never be tempted. Anyone who believes that, you haven't really been reading your Bible. Every single one of us can be tempted.

But Paul says to us, still, we ought to put on our new self. None of us is beyond sinning.

But Paul says to us, you've got to put on the new self. Because it leads to holiness and righteousness. Brian Chappell, in his commentary on Ephesians, writes, We are learning to be what we are.

[ 34 : 42 ] And we have to be something that we were not. We're learning to be what we are. We're learning to be what God has called us to be. What he says we are.

Holy and righteous. And we have to be something that we were not. We've not been it. We've been declared it, but we are not yet there.

But Paul tells us, as believers, take a look at what Paul says in the concluding portion of verse 24.

But let's take a look at, beginning at verse 20. He says, beginning at verse 22, he says, You need to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life, and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self.

Look at what he says in that final clause. And to put on your new self. Created, created, he says, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

[ 36 : 08 ] And so we see from what Paul says, that the believer is a new creation. Indeed, Ephesians 2, verse 10 says, Therefore we are like him, for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

This work, this new putting on, putting on the new self, this is a work of God. And second, we see God is the motto for this new creation.

Created after the likeness of God, after the likeness of God, in true righteousness and holiness. We are called to be like him.

To be holy and righteous. So now we have gone from putting off to putting on. But there is a bridge between putting off and putting on that Paul writes about here.

Paul says, you ought to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life, and is corrupt through deceitful desire. And to be renewed in the spirit of your minds.

[ 37 : 37 ] And to put on the new self. You see that? Renewed, be renewed in the spirit of your minds, stands between those two positions.

That bridge, renewing the mind. Yes, a new walk requires a new mind. The humanist might advise, say these ten things, ten times, and everything will be fine.

Meditate every day. Breathe slowly. That's what they might say. But the renewal of the mind is the walk of the Holy Spirit.

The progressive walk of the Holy Spirit. Who walks along with us. We are called, in this passage, and in Scripture, to be constantly renewing our minds.

But how does this happen? We must saturate our hearts with God's word. 2 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 16 through 18 tells us, so we do not lose heart, though our outer self is wasting away.

[ 38 : 54 ] Our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.

As we look not to the things that are seen, but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

You and I, as believers, Paul is saying to us that we have to, we have to transform our minds.

And yes, this is a walk of the Holy Spirit, but we got a part to play as well. And Paul is saying that as our minds are changed, our appetites, our desires, our desires, the things that you and I struggle with, the things that ordinarily we would do without thinking about, Paul says, that the taste for those things, the taste for the world, will dissipate.

He doesn't say that the temptations will not come, but he's saying that the desire for it will not be the same.

[ 40 : 16 ] And Paul warns us that this is our weapon, that this is what you and I are called to do. This is how we put off the old self and put on the new self.

And so, if today you are struggling with sin, or if in future, like all of us, you anticipate that it's going to happen, the word to you today is renew your mind.

The word is to renew your mind. You know, it's easy to listen to a message like this and to be driven to thinking that it is about legalism and gritting one's teeth.

No, it is not. It is about grace, ultimately. It is about God's grace. You know, there's a song that we sing sometimes in this church.

And verse 2 of that song gives us a sense of what Paul is writing about here. The song goes something like this.

[ 41 : 39 ] Your word is living light upon our darkened eyes. that guards us through temptations makes the simple words.

The word is food for famished ones. Freedom for the slave. Riches for the needy soul. Come speak to us today. God's word has this effect on us.

It transforms our hearts, and it transforms our minds, and we ought to take advantage of it. As I conclude today, it is only because of Jesus that we can follow these instructions of the Apostle Paul, which leads us from a life of futility to a life of righteousness and holiness.

It's only because of Jesus. And only those whom the Lord has saved can claim this privilege. If you're not a believer, I pray that the Lord would open your eyes to the truth of his word. If you are a believer, and perhaps you're struggling with a particular sin, I trust you will reflect on this message.

[ 43 : 06 ] I also trust that you will take to heart all of the words of the Apostle Paul in Ephesians chapter 4, verse 17 through 24.

Let us pray. O Lord, Father, as we consider the weightiness of these words, and as we consider what we would be if we are disobedient to these words, our hearts tremble within us.

We truly are moved. Lord, we thank you that you don't give us this word to scare us.

You don't give us this word even to heal ourselves. Lord, thank you that you've done all of that for us.

Lord, cause us, teach us indeed how to cast ourselves on you, to look to you. But Lord, also give us a sense of what we ought to do.

[ 44 : 42 ] Yes, Lord, convict our hearts. Show us Christ. Show us Christ, Lord.

Lord, for those things that we have taken for granted, that we have repeated, and they're so easy for us now, because our hearts have become impenetrable.

Our eyes are darkened to the truth. Lord, would you once again open our eyes so that we might see sin.

Would you once again, oh Lord, soften our hearts. Would you change our affection.

Would you do a work that only you can do. Lord, we acknowledge that we struggle with so much.

We need your help.

[ 45 : 48 ] Lord, we need your help, Lord. Whether it's a young child, Lord, who struggles with bullying.

Whether it's a man who struggles with pornography. Whether, whatever it might be, Lord.

Whether it's someone who struggles with jealousy or seeking to be like others. Lord, help us. Help all of us, Lord.

To take your word seriously. Lord, because we know that we have been created by you.

That we have been called to be righteous and holy. Lord, by your Holy Spirit, help us, we pray. In Jesus' name.

[ 46 : 50 ] And all God's people say, Amen. Amen. Amen. I invite you to please stand as we sing off those excellent songs. Oh, great God, the highest heaven, Occupy my lowly heart.

Own it all and reign supreme. Uncow everywhere, oh Father. Let no rise for sin remain.

That resist your holy woe. You have loved and purchased me. Make me yours forever.