

Dear Church (Part 10)
"Off with the Old" [Eph. 4:17-24]
July 02, 2017
Pastor Bill Bowers

Ephesians 4:17-24

**clothing may polish the image, but it does not polish the character.

"Beware of all enterprises that require new cloths and not rather a new wearer of clothes." Henry David Thoreau

Two things have to happen

1. "Throw off the old sinful nature..." v.22
2. "Put on your new nature..." v. 24

Four "Bad" Words. V 17-19

1. HARDNESS
2. DARKNESS
3. DEADNESS
4. RECKLESSNESS

*Christ be with me; Christ be in me; Christ behind me; Christ before me;
Christ beside me; Christ to win me; Christ to comfort and restore me;
Christ beneath me; Christ above me; Christ in quiet; Christ in danger;
Christ in hearts of all that love me;
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger. (St Patrick 5th Century)*

Off with the Old—a "Good" Word v. 20-24

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HomeGroup and Personal Study Questions

- Our text this week opens with a strong exhortation, the Apostle Paul writes; *"With the Lord's authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him."* (NLT)
This is very strong language. How does it make you feel? Who are the Gentiles that we might refer today? How does this admonishment affect you? Do you associate or are you influenced by contemporary Gentiles?
- Pastor Bill shared the "strongly-worded" description of the Gentiles with us in our teaching this week; "hardness" of hearts, "darkness" of heart, "deadness," and "recklessness"—unrestrained abandonment to sin. Do you think this description is really true of the world apart from Christ or do you think it is an exaggeration? Please explain your position.
- In verses 22-24, our instructions are to "put off the old self...and put on the new self." How do you think this transformation works? What part of this transformation is God's work? What part of this transformation is the work of the individual (your work)?
- Verse 24 ends with the following words: "Put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness" (NIV). Can you describe this lifestyle in practical terms? Be as specific and descriptive as you are able.
- How do you think "created to be like God" is meant to be understood? Is this a literal instruction or metaphorical? In either event, how do you receive this instruction? How are you compelled to respond to it?
- The past several weeks of our journey through the Ephesians letter has been challenging. How are feeling about the instructions and invitation to follow Jesus at this juncture? Are you sensing any desire to respond? Have you spoken with anyone about the process and your possible responses and actions?