

Ephesians 4:17-19

One might say that Paul's instructions in v. 1-16 are rather... otherworldly! After all, we don't often see any semblance of unity in our world and the sight of mature and anchored people is quite foreign to most of us. With this in mind, Paul begins this next section of Scripture by contrasting the difference that salvation should make. My Bible's heading (not inspired!) says that this portion of Ephesians 4 is about "new life". I would agree with this sentiment and would add that we see the beauty of our new life by contrasting the blessing of salvation with the condition of those who are still lost.

1. The condition of lost men

- a. The term "Gentile" is not meant to be understood here in the physical sense
- b. Instead, the word is meant to denote the spiritual condition of those who are outside of the covenant, and therefore outside of relationship, with God
- c. In other words, Paul is speaking here about lost people
- d. In so doing, he provides us with some very important information about what characterizes those who are not believers... here are a few:
- e. They do not comprehend the truth
 - i. The term "darkened" here is important
 - ii. It refers to those who are not able to see the light of the truth of God's Word
 - iii. Lost people think they understand but, in reality, they are simply wondering around in their own sinful, dimly lit, stupor
 1. We see evidence of this all around us
 2. Think about how much of the world's problems are a product of the world's thinking!
 3. People think freedom is rooted in untethered sexual exploits, materialism, corruption, legalism and the like
 4. In all these pursuits, we are reminded that lost men don't see clearly!
- f. They are hard of heart
 - i. Here's the real rub... even when confronted with obvious proof of the existence and wisdom of God, lost men are callous to the truth
 - ii. The problem is not lack of revelation, the problem is a lack of humble embrace of what is true!
 - iii. Lost men beat their heads on the constant wall of consequence all the while neglecting the open door of salvation in Christ alone and all the wisdom He provides

- iv. This is part of why we are doomed, as a society, to repeat the sinful mistakes of our fathers... because lost men are callous!
- v. The word means unaffected
 - 1. To be calloused means that a person has built up resistance to any feeling or perception of the truth
 - 2. Callous men are not prone to respond to outside forces which would compel them to believe, repent and follow
 - 3. Consequently, they are prone to continue in the same path regardless of the pain it may cause
- g. They are known by their sin
 - i. Notice here that Paul characterizes the sins of ignorant, calloused men using three adjectives
 - 1. Sensuality
 - a. The term denotes lewdness or sexual sin
 - b. It speaks to the fact that lost people are known by their debauched practice
 - c. So much of our society today is enveloped in sensuality
 - i. Think about the sexual revolution, the explosion of homosexual and transgenderism, the anger that permeates the abortion discussion (because abortion is necessary if sensuality is going to persist!)
 - ii. In all these things, we see evidence of Paul's claim
 - 2. Greed
 - a. Men and women who are lost are greedy
 - b. They are greedy for:
 - i. Financial gain
 - ii. Fame and recognition
 - iii. Personal pleasure
 - c. Our world is awash in greed!
 - d. We have an entire industry that is dedicated to security because of the explosion of fraud, identity theft and the like
 - e. News stories constantly arise about executives who steal money
 - f. "influencers" live for the clicks their videos receives in an attempt to hoard recognition and fame

- 3. Impurity
 - a. This is a more general term that just speaks to sinfulness
 - b. All of sin is impure and that impurity is common amongst lost men
- 2. In all these things, Paul shows us what lost men look like by virtue of describing their mentality and behavior
 - a. In contrast to this kind of living, next week we will see the beauty and power of God's salvation!