

Mystery & Clarity // 6-“The Mystery of New Life” // Ephesians 4:17-5:2

We had an incredible week last week... BELIEVE project offering... I know some of you are dying to know how much we had come in... I'm not going to tell you... not yet... it's good... But here's what I know... there's a whole stratosphere of our church that is about 2 weeks behind on everything. So, we'll keep it open for another week or so for you stragglers... and then we'll make the announcement. For those of you impatient, I apologize. I apologize for your impatience, which is a character flaw of yours.

Today, we get back to Ephesians... some of you were like, “Yeah, what happened to Ephesians? Did J.D. run out of material? Run into some stuff in there he didn't agree with?” No. We just took a break for BELIEVE and Easter.

But today, we're going to pick up right where we left off in chapter 4. I want to present you with a question that many of you have had at some point...

*In **Ephesians 4:25-32**, Paul gives a list of behaviors that he tells the Ephesians they should be practicing. Now, here's the thing: on the surface, there is nothing particularly remarkable about the list... **In fact**, take a look at it: (**Ephesians 4:25-32**) he says things like, vs. 25, “Tell the truth;” vs. 26 “don't lose your temper”; vs. 28, don't steal, get a job; vs. 32, be kind,” etc.*

Now, just about every religion in the world tells you those things!

- **Ghandi. Mohammad. DPS** have a list of charter behaviors, which are basically these same things. I even saw a poster at Caribou with the “**Caribou Code of Ethics**” (their's had

something else on there about “sticking it to the man” by not going to Starbucks but still... virtually the same.)

So, a lot of people say, “See? All religions are basically the same... the point of all them is ‘Be good.’ Doesn't matter what brand name you use, it's the same product.”

- And some of you have thought this: You're like, “If the point of religion is to turn bad people into good people... this Hindu guy I know is like the nicest guy—and he already does all these things, so why do I need to tell him to become a Christian? Or I know a Muslim and he believes and practices these things... or even an atheist... and you're like, “They're already good. So, what's the point?”

So here is the question: *Is there anything distinctive about Christian moral teaching?* Or is it all the same? I want to try and show you that there is something distinctive. Something fundamentally different.

To do that... let's rewind 8 verses and go back to vs. 17. Paul is going to give you an 8 verse theology lesson before he gives you this list of ways to behave.

- *I'm going to teach you that lesson* (which is a summary of Ephesians up to this point) and then show you how the moral commands that grow out of it in vv. 25-32 are of a different sort than what other religions teach.
- (Let me note this: today is a **review day** at the Summit... if you've been around here, you have heard me teach on these things before. I'll even give you some word pictures I've used before. But these are foundational to how we understand the Christian life. So, if you hear me say something you've already heard... realize that I'm saying it for the sake of your neighbor.)

¹⁷ Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, (When Paul says “Gentiles” here he is not referring

to people of a certain race, but anyone who doesn't know God... Through the OT God had revealed Himself to the Jews, and anyone outside that covenant Jewish people referred to as Gentiles. So, by "Gentiles," here, Paul mean every person who hasn't met Jesus.

He's about to give you a description.... I want us to work through it backwards, so let's start at the end of vs. 19:

Vs. 19, "They have... given themselves up to sensuality... greedy to practice every kind of impurity." That's the language of craving.

Greedy: I have to have these sensual pleasures... I am hungry for them; I need them; so I've given myself entirely to them.

- These are people who feel enslaved to their desires. The guy who can't say no to porn... the desires are too strong. It's more than just lust, it's an escape, a way to find comfort, relieve stress, add excitement to life and give you something to enjoy and look forward to
- Person who turns to drugs and alcohol for refuge. It's more than just a bodily desire for drink or alcohol, ... you crave the feelings and the security and safety or even control that alcohol or some drug gives to you.

Greedy lust. In other one of Paul's letters, he uses a word that means much of the same thing. He says the heart of sin is **epithumia**:

- The word often gets translated, "lust." (I say "lust," people think, "sex." But epithumia is not just about sex. *Epithumia* means "soul lust... a craving, a yearning, a greedy desire"... Something about which you say, "I have to have that because without that, I can't imagine life being OK. Without that, I might as well be dead."¹ Even the thought of not having it produces despair in your heart!)
- Don't just think "lust" for bad things... it's anything you feel like you just have to have for life to be good. You are greedy for it!

¹ David Powlison, "Idols of the heart and 'Vanity Fair.'" *Journal of Biblical Counseling* (13:2), 36..

- For some people, it's the security of money... The thought of not being financially secure produces all kinds of anxiety in your heart. So you save, and you stress, and you are stingy... because an abundance of money is what you feel like has to be there for you to feel secure and satisfied.
- For others, it is a greedy, insatiable desire to be successful.
 - I've told you before, this was mine... I felt like I always had to be seen by others as successful or life was worthless... (I even told someone this week who struggled with alcoholism—that for me, this success addiction worked similarly to how they treated alcohol. They turned to alcohol when they were depressed or for an escape from pressure. For me, I escaped those things by doing well in school. As long as I was best in my class I felt like it was all going to be OK. So, I had to be on top. I had to win every argument and be the best at everything and was not a fun person to be around.
- For others they *crave* always being in a relationship. This is the girl who is a serial dater who craves the attention and affirmation of a man. You might be sitting next to that girl. If you have had a boyfriend non-stop since 2nd grade, I'm talking to you...
- Everybody's heart is unique, but I guarantee you... *your* heart has certain of these cravings. **Just ask yourself:** what is the one thing you feel like you have to have for life to be good?
 - (Again, it may not be a bad thing... for some middle aged ladies it is the desire to have their family around and everyone get along... this thing goes beyond a normal desire for family: it's a craving. Life cannot be good, and has no point, if the family is not close and all in perfect harmony. Any disruption of the family is *devastating* to them.)

This is the condition of people apart from God: craving, greedy hearts.

Now, where does Paul say these cravings come from? Look at this: **Vs. 18, "They (come because we) are alienated from the life of God."**

- These cravings arise from the absence of God from our lives.
 - The Bible teaches that we were created for God, and when we were one with God, our hearts were satisfied and filled.
 - When we rejected God, we lost that essential, life-giving, soul satisfying relationship. We found that our souls were starving; we felt naked. What do you do when you feel naked? (Taking a shower... hey, look at this shampoo) that's us. Something is not right, we feel naked, empty, ashamed.
 - We know we're missing something. We may not even realize what it is, or how we got to this place, but we know we're searching for something.
 - What we're searching for is Him! His affirmation. His presence. In His absence, our hearts are restless, and we fill our lives with cheap substitutes.
- St. Augustine, who had been a sex addict before he came to Christ, said it like this: *"Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee."*

Here's the next question: *Where does this alienation from God come from, and why do we stay that way?* ¹⁸ They are... alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them...

- We stay alienated from God because we are ignorant of Him. We can't see God's beauty; we don't sense His glory or His majesty or His lovingness or all-satisfying-ness.
- We are ignorant of Him, we don't even know that He is what we are created for and what we're missing.

But there's more: That ignorance itself is caused by something... what is that? (¹⁸ They are... alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, *due to their hardness of heart.*)

- **Vs. 18: that ignorance is due to their hardness of heart.** It's not that God is not there or can't be seen, it's that their hearts were too hard even to see Him.
- For many of us, even though His glory is all around us, we can't sense it or feel it, because our hearts are hard and dead and our spiritual eyes are blind.
 - BTW, that is why (college students—say this especially to you) 2 smart people look at the same set of evidence for whether or not there is a God and come up with 2 completely different conclusions.
 - *Always bothered me... my professor is smart, and he says that the evidence points toward there being no God. But other people I know and respect look at the same evidence and see God in it. Which one's smarter? Has nothing to do with it.*
 - Whether or not we see God has nothing to do with the quality of the evidence, but the state of our hearts.
 - **I've heard it like this: The same sun that hardens the clay softens the wax.** The difference is not in the sun that shines on the material, but the makeup of the material it shines upon.
 - Even my favorite atheist, **Friedrich Nietzsche** recognized this. He said in ***Beyond Good and Evil***, *"The idea of objective human beings who are just disinterested seekers in truth is crazy... the human heart is too insecure to ever be able to handle the truth.* Cue Jack Nicholson: *"You can't handle the truth."* *There is a natural hatred and fear of the truth. (summary, for example) We revise our memories to fit the story of ourselves that we want to believe... 'There's no way I could ever have done that,' says our*

pride. And it's not long before the past we remember is the past we want to be true."

- Everybody knows that different cultures do this; he's saying that individuals do it, too. We mold the truth to fit our preferences.
- And we do it with the truth about God. We see God not as He is, but as we want Him to be, including, sometimes, wanting Him not to be there.
- You see, the strangest thing happens when God softens you up and opens you up to Him... you suddenly start to see Him everywhere. The skeptic says, "I can't see God!" Some of us look around and say, "How can you *not* see God!" You don't always understand Him, but you see the evidences of Him everywhere and you sense His presence.

So, there we are: Paul has described the problem: Because the human heart is alienated from God, it craves sin. And we don't know it's God we're looking for, and we can't see God or sense Him or know Him because it is too hardened and blackened and deadened by sin.

Now, that's not to say, btw, *the Gentiles* are not religious people... Mankind has always been very religious... but the **religious tendencies of the human heart are not born out of a love for, or a delight in God.** More often than not, our religion is an attempt to use God.

- **Here's a story I've told you before to illustrate this: Horse illustration. Story of a very poor farmer in medieval England... "this carrot is fit for a king." Court officer: Dang (or whatever the old English equivalent is...)**
- That's the way a lot of religion is. It's done entirely for self-interest. You give to God because God will reward you... bless your life; take you to heaven.

Paul says, in vs. 24, **(vs. 24 "created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.")** that what God is after is *true righteousness and holiness.* People who do righteousness for the reasons God does it (see where it says "created after His likeness"?). God does righteousness not because someone is making Him, or because it is a means to an end... but because it is his nature, because he loves it! **Theatre**

OK, so... **our problem = we have an ignorant, dead heart that doesn't really want God.** Well, then what would **the solution** be? (this is so obvious): We need 2 things:

Solution =

- **(vs. 21) a new knowledge of God** (so we're not ignorant of him); and
- **(vs. 23) a renewed heart to delight in that knowledge** (so we can be able to receive that knowledge!) We need a new vision of God and new eyes to see it with.

So, where does this knowledge of God and renewed heart to see it with come from? **2 places.** (vs. 21—this is so good!) ²¹ **assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus...**

- Commentators point out that when Paul refers to Jesus Christ, he almost always uses the term, "Christ." When Paul uses the term, "Jesus," he is referring specifically to Jesus as he lived on earth... the Nazarene baby born in Bethlehem who lived as a carpenter, worked miracles, and died on the cross.

In other words, **(1) the new knowledge of God comes to us through the STORY of Jesus.**

- In the story of Jesus we see the beauty of God, in seeing the beauty of God revealed in the story of Jesus, we are changed.
- In case you've never noticed this, your Bible is not arranged thematically: like a reference book, where you look up, **"How to Raise Kids, p 100. How to get along with your spouse: 18. How to vote: P. 42.** No, the Bible is a story!

- It is by being swept up into the story that everything changes.
 - If you ever watch one of these epic movies the plot is basically the same. Like Avatar... You got some loser guy with no purpose in life... but then he's swept up into some great drama, wherein he experiences real danger and encounters real beauty. **(In the case of Avatar, more like creepy beauty with a blue tail. Like a tall version of the smurfs.)**
 - And that experience changes the person, fundamentally. After they become a part of this drama, they are different.
 - They no longer walk around with a sense of purposelessness. Why? They've been a part of a big drama. They no longer are afraid of normal dangers. Why? They've faced real dangers. They no longer succumb to normal, everyday temptations. Why? Because they've encountered a greater beauty.
- That's what happens when you meet God in the story of Jesus. **It's a story with such beauty and drama in it that when you get swept up into that changes your life!** Not by just correcting this or that but by changing you fundamentally. Temptations lose their power because you've seen greater beauty. Now you know what purpose is and you know how much power in the universe is available to you! The love of God shown to you in that story transforms you into the kind of person who loves and forgives.

So, our ignorance is overcome by encountering the beauty of God the story of Jesus. But there is something else we need. ²³ **and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds..."**

- We need a spiritual renewal. This is why Paul prays for them twice in Ephesians. God has to give you eyes to see! **A blind man can stare in direction of the rainbow all day long but he won't ever see it until he's been given eyes to see. So, (2) our hearts perceive the new knowledge by renewal of the Spirit**

Summary: **Biblical change:** (This is the whole thesis of Ephesians) **The Spirit of God using the story of God to make the beauty of God come alive in our hearts.** That's why these prescriptions come in chapter 4, not chapter 1. Only after saturating yourself in the Gospel Paul has driven you into the Gospel in chapters 1–3 and only after the Spirit of God has renewed your heart according to his prayers will your heart see and know God and *change!*

So, let's answer our question: how is Christian morality fundamentally different than the morality that other religions teach?

6 Axioms of Biblical Change

(and, throughout, I'll show you how this shows up in the moral prescriptions of vv 25–32—it's always been there, you just didn't know to look for it)

I. Gospel change is fundamentally a change of desire

- You do truth because you love truth.
- **One of the biggest substitutes for true Gospel-change is what we call "moralism" (substitute for biblical change): moralism = teaching people that external behavior matters more than internal disposition**
 - For example... how do you motivate a kid to quit lying?
 - "Don't lie... if you lie you're going to get caught and then you'll be in trouble." Or, "Other people will think badly of you." You create in him a *fear*... of punishment, or of rejection, and he becomes honest because he doesn't want to be punished and he wants to be accepted by others.
 - Or you, can say, "Don't lie. You're better than that. You're a Greear. If you're dishonest you're going to lower your standards so that you're just like everyone else." In that case, you're motivating him to change by creating a feeling of superiority.

- (You can give Christian versions of both of those things: “If you lie, God will cast you into hell. I don’t want to go to hell... I better be honest. Or, you can say, “You want to be like Jesus, don’t you? Don’t be like all those lying non-Christians.”)
 - That’s why most of us don’t lie. Fear of being punished or losing face... or a out of a sense of pride that says we are better than everyone else.
- Problem is, both of those may make us tell the truth, but neither of those motivations make us love truth. That’s not **“v. 24, (“...created after the likeness of God in) true righteousness and holiness.”**
 - The Gospel motivates differently. It creates in our hearts a love of truth.
 - Like God, whom we have been made like, we love truth. Right? God doesn’t tell the truth because someone is going to punish Him, but because He loves the truth in his core.
 - You might get people to change through moralism, but you can’t really change them in their hearts.
 - Here is Jesus’ analogy. Mark 7: You can’t make a tree come alive by hanging fruit on it. **We have weeds in our flowerbed. I hate them. Two ways to do it... you can pull them up carefully, or you can nuke them with Roundup... napalm for weeds.** That’s what I do. Problem is I end up nuking all the bushes. We have some dead ones. My wife complains... so I get a dozen roses and staple them on...
 - Most of the techniques for change that you read about are rose-stapling techniques. Moralism.
 - Moralism is what is preached by every religion in the world...
 - ...and unfortunately in most churches.

- You know exactly what I’m talking about. Some of you grew up in churches where you heard, “Real Christians don’t watch R-rated movies. Real Christians don’t say this. RC don’t drink beer. Real Christians vote Republican.” Real Christians don’t listen to music that has a beat in it. **External behavior mattered more than internal disposition.**

II. Gospel change begins with sight

- Theatre... Where do you learn to love and delight in God? The Gospel. It’s why we always preach it here and keep coming back to it. Why we keep telling the story of Christianity.
 - Many of us grew up in churches where we were taught that the Gospel was simply the entry rite into Christianity. The prayer you pray to begin your relationship with God. It is the way you grow up in Jesus.
 - It is only vs. 21, when you are taught (²¹ assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, ²² to put off your old self) in him, that you put off your old self!
- The Gospel is not just the diving board, it’s the pool.
- It’s how you start off with God; it’s also how you grow deep with God. It doesn’t just save us from the penalty of our sins in the past and take us to heaven in the future, it empowers us to say no to temptation in our present.
- So, I want you to study the story of Jesus, deeply:
 - not like the seminarian, but like you study a sunset, that leaves you speechless, or like a man who is passionately in love with his wife would study her, until he’s captivated by her so that his enthrallment with her drives out all the enticements of other women.
 - I want you to study the God revealed in Jesus, because real change begins with sight...

- It's also why we bathe our efforts in prayer here. Until the Spirit of God gives you eyes to see the beauty of God, you'll never see Him. You're like a blind man before a rainbow. A sermon won't do it; we need the Spirit of God to do in us what a sermon can never do... give us eyes to see.

III. Gospel change is a response to grace and not an attempt to earn God's favor

- All throughout this passage God reminds them that God has forgiven them (vs. 32, just as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you; vs. 30, you are sealed (guaranteed salvation) to the day of redemption; 5:1–2, Paul reminds them, God has already made us His beloved children through the sacrifice of Christ on our behalf)
- **GIFT** righteousness: God gives you His righteousness as a gift, not as something you earn
- Every religion in the world tells you, "If you obey enough, you will be accepted." The Gospel reverses that... accepted b/c of what God has done
- Ephesians 2:8–9
- And that is the only real way to change. You see, as long as your acceptance before God is tied to how good you are, you'll always have a self-interest in being good. When you think that being good and doing good makes you better in the eyes of God and others and that you'll be more accepted by God and others when you are good, you'll always be self-interested.
- ***That's our story of the horse.***
- You can only begin to love God sincerely when you do it freely. Otherwise, you'll always be trying to use Him.
- So the Gospel changes us by telling us of God's love and acceptance of us first, and then invites us to love Him in return.
 - **Some of you, here's what you need to hear: God could not love you more...** You struggle with some temptation. Pornography. Depression. Being a good

husband or father. Consistency in your walk with Christ. God could not love you more... His love and acceptance of you is not conditioned on your performance but is a gift given you in Christ. By embracing that, your full acceptance in Christ, it will give you the power to overcome temptation and become the kind of person God wants you to become.

IV. Gospel change is intimately connected to a person

- **(Vs. 30, And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.)**
- Vs. 30, in the middle of all these moral commands is a command to not grieve a person, the Holy Spirit.
- Jump into the next chapter: **Ephesians 5:1, "Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."**
- Did you see that? He tied our joyful obedience to every member of the Trinity.
 - We do good because we're children of God the Father and we love what our daddy loves (I see this in my kids)
 - we do good in response to God the Son who poured out Himself for us.
 - We do good in response to God the Spirit because He lives in us and we love His presence and friendship in our hearts.
- **Gospel change is intimately connected to a person:**
 - *Reference a recent movie that will bring my manhood into question: **Young Victoria**...* Courtship and marriage of Albert and Queen Victoria. When he first comes into her life and shows her attention, she annoyed as she has no intention of ever being married. She is scared of being controlled ... He courts her and BLAH, BLAH BLAH they get married (*I have to throw that in so that I can win some respect back from the guys*).

- However tensions between Albert and Victoria start to emerge. She wants him to be obedient and do her every whim, and he won't do it. They get in an argument about it and she demands that he leaves... later they are riding through the streets together and a crazy man tries to shoot her. He throws himself in front of her and is badly wounded, almost killed. **Shocked by the danger he put himself in for her, and amazed by the strength and grace of his love... this leads to an entire change of life for her.**
- Some of you say, "Well, if I had something like that happen to me, I'd be nice, too..." **You have. Jesus absorbed a greater danger for us than anything else we're confronted with. God has loved you with a love more intense than has ever entered the heart of man.**
- As you come to know that love, your life produces spiritual fruit.
 - That's a helpful analogy: Physical fruit is not the result of thinking about fruit...

V. Gospel change is more powerful than religious change

- Gospel change produces deeper, more genuine, sacrificial love, than simply resolving to do better. 2 examples from vv 25–32:

Test case #1:

- **Vs. 32, "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."**
 - Not just "forgive." You could never really do that. But when are saturated by the love of Christ you can actually start to forgive others and love others like you have been forgiven.

Test case #2:

- **Vs. 26, Be angry and do not sin...**

- Notice, it doesn't just say "Don't be angry." That's moralism! It's more than that. He commands you to "be angry."
- He commands you to be angry in a loving way.
- Anger is a part of love. When you love something, you are angry at the thing that destroys it.
 - Lying in my daughters... I hate the violence and the lying because I love them.
 - Cancer. If I love the person, I hate the cancer that is destroying their body; if I love the person, I'll hate and be angry at the moral cancer that is destroying their soul.
- The problem with our anger is that it is selfish anger. We want to get them back for what they did to us. They hit you; so we angrily hit them back. Or maybe you punish them through yelling. Or maybe through the silent treatment. They cut you off in traffic and you are going to punish them with noise. Your anger is a desire for vindication.
- Paul says, "Don't be selfishly angry, which is sinful anger. Have loving anger. Like Jesus."
 - Jesus got angry and confronted sin, rebuked it, even drove it out with whips. But when it came time for punishment, Jesus took it.
 - Paul says, "That's how you should be angry." When your spouse offends you, your boss... don't be angry about what they've done to you... in fact, you should absorb that yourself and forgive them like Jesus did for you. Any anger you direct at them should be loving, broken-hearted anger... anger at what they're sin is doing to them.
- He's not talking about simply ceasing to lose your temper, but let the whole structure of your heart be transformed so that even your anger is not selfish, but loving!
 - **Real quick... too good to pass up:** Paul even gives you a test to know whether or not your anger is sinful or

loving: (Vs. 26... do not let the sun go down on your anger). When you are selfishly angry, it stays with you! It simmers. You mull it over. When you love someone... anger quickly dissipates.

- E.g. my daughters. When they do something that makes me mad, I deal with it. and then I'm overcome with love again. It's when you are personally wounded you mull over it.
 - I say this b/c marriage counselors told us not to go to bed angry...so my wife and I would talk about it... and afterward I'd still be angry b/c she didn't see it may or wasn't sorry *enough*, *weeping at my feet*. I couldn't sleep at night b/c I was personally wounded... my anger was selfish, not loving. If you can't let your anger go, it's because it is selfish.
- ***Do you see what Paul is getting at here? A total transformation of heart so that even emotions like anger originate in love!***

VI. Gospel change is total

- ***In these chapters, Paul just names off these areas:*** Paul talks about communication, emotions, relationships, sexuality, materialism, time-management, humor, care for the poor, theft, families, employer-employee relationships, marriage, the occult world... not one square inch of you is unaffected. He covers them all.
 - The result of encountering Jesus is all of you changes. When Paul talks about "fruit of the Spirit..." he uses the singular. Not many, as if they are flowers you staple to the bush, but singular.
- Listen, if you're Christian life is compartmentalized... and it is for many people... I'm doing the church attendance, I give... but yeah, I cheated on my taxes... and yeah, I've got this relationship over here that's not right... and yeah, my boyfriend and I are sleeping together... but that's ok... **Or,**

yeah, I'm going to church and starting to be a little more moral, got my temper under control, but I'm not really what you'd call a generous person...

- If that's what's happening to you, whatever is happening in you is not Gospel change. You're stapling on roses. You are religious, but Jesus has never changed you.
- The result of being filled with Jesus is total change. You could no more compartmentalize your life than you could flood this room with water and command it only to stay on ½.

So, what do you do? Embrace the Gospel! (Bow your heads)

- "I have parts of my life that are not right. I want to experience this change." Look at Jesus. Ask Him to help you apply the Gospel to various areas.
- I am not a Christian... "I see Christians who are not like this." We're all works in process. Our invitation is not for you to come and be like us... but for you to experience the Jesus we've experienced and let Him change your life. Here's the Gospel: God has a purpose for your life, but we have messed it up because we have chosen to do our own thing and live apart from Him. But God, in His love, has offered us a chance to be reconciled to Him. He sent Jesus to suffer the wrath and penalty for our sin so if we would receive Him, let Him be the Lord of our lives and trust His work as our salvation, He would save us. It starts with right now surrendering your soul to Jesus, and receiving Him as your Savior. Say that to Him... to the one who died for you and came to save you: *"I surrender to you, Lord Jesus, and I receive."* He's real. He's here. Receive Him.

Bullpen:

Examples:

²⁰ But that is not the way you learned Christ!— ²¹ assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, ²² to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

²⁵ Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the **truth** with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

²⁶ Be **angry** and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and give no opportunity to the devil.

²⁸ Let the thief no longer **steal**, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

²⁹ Let no **corrupting talk** come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

³¹ Let all **bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander** be put away from you, along with all malice.

³² Be **kind** to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Truth

- You love the truth, and God is true
- Don't trust God's sovereignty, so we create a false reality
- We no longer need to lie; we start to love truth more than we love personal advantage

Steal:

- Idolaters
- Don't think God has a plan for them... to make them productive.
- You become better students and better workers
- God has a purpose and a plan for you

Internal change

- Not only do you not steal, you share
- Not only do you not lie, you speak the truth and in a way that builds up
- Your speaking and living comes out of a heart that loves and forgives others
 - Bible not arranged thematically. It is theologically annotated narrative. So if u want to learn about marriage by looking up all the places marriage is used in the Bible, u'll miss the Bible's teaching.
- Everything is a response: (purity, truthfulness, etc)
- You have to not just learn it, you have to experience it. "Taught *in* him," not about Him.
- "We are dealing with the danger of ceasing to come under the power of the truth... If I can every study the Bible without being searched and examined and humbled, without being lifted up and made to praise God, I am under the power of the evil one, even as a pastor. I must feel as much of the desire to sing when I am alone in my study as when I am standing in this pulpit... This applies also to you listening to the truth. If you are able to listen to the Word of God and then go away without having *felt* the power of the truth, then either you or the preacher is failing; if it is all merely a matter of intellectual entertainment, giving and receiving information and knowledge that stops there and doesn't come to you in such a way

as to make you *feel* uncomfortable... if it does not make you realize your deficiency and your failures; if it does not expose your hidden secret things in your heart; if it doesn't make you *feel* as if you've got to pull yourself together to do something; if it does not ever move you or thrill you and make you *feel* like shouting and praise; well then, you are in a dangerous state." D. Martyn Lloyd Jones

- Explanation must be overtaken by sensation. "Taste and see the Lord is good." It wasn't that they didn't already know... Licking the screen
- My prayer when I read the Bible used to be, "God speak to me" as in "learn something new". Now it is help me to see and adore God.
- If your life is not changing this way, you are not saved. You have changed, but it is not internal or total.
- A lot of our changes might be superficial.
- What is the sign of being saved? James 2
- Not try harder, but receive love; stand in awe.

Based on grace

The only external changes that matter are those that spring from an internal change of desires

- Moralism: teaching people that external behavior matters more than internal disposition
- **You are not contained, you are transformed**
 - vs. 25 **"Therefore"** we put off falsehood
 - Honesty... 3 ways to change
 - God matters more to you than your desires
 - You don't steal... get as much as you can, even if you hurt others. Now, you are generous.

The changes are total

- Paul talks about communication, emotions, relationships, sexuality, materialism, time-management, humor, care for the poor, theft,

families, employer-employee relationships, marriage, the occult world... all of you is different.

- The Christian faith is the most comprehensive view of the world around. Not one square inch...
- Everything about you is affected.
- Do you want to know God?
- "You're my baby on Monday, Wednesday, Friday"
- Some of you only want to bring certain areas of your life... maybe they are hurting you. Maybe they are causing you to lose favor in the eyes of others. With Christianity, changes are total because it all becomes about knowing God.
- If we don't change, we haven't been saved
 - What is the sign of being saved? Long hair? Not drinking beer? In a restaurant and people say, "Wow, he's not drinking beer, I really need to be saved." Not going to the movies? "You know who I've never seen at the movies? Pastor J.D. I need to be saved." These things are.

Real change starts with sight

They are not based on merit, they are based on grace

Response to seeing God

- Ignorance came from hardness of our heart!

Response to God's grace

We no longer lie... don't need to.

We don't steal, we share.

Not partial, it is total: you may want a God who own parts of you... but not all. if you earned your way to heaven, you could give him part, but bc of what God has done, it is all.

- **The only external changes that matter are those that flow out of internal changes in the mind and heart**
 - It starts with seeing
 - Your appetites change (vs. 23-24)

- In 5:3–14, the metaphor is changed. Now it is “light and darkness.”
- We walk in a way that is wise (5:15, meaning, we see God); a way that is light vs. darkness (5:8, meaning, we have seen God); our desires are changed (4:23–24).
- You encounter the truth in Jesus (v. 22). Not just new facts, but new desires: “We are dealing with the danger of ceasing to come under the power of the truth. The moment you cease to be under its power, you have already become a victim of the evil one. I can apply it to myself as a preacher – if I can every study the Bible without being searched and examined and humbled, without being lifted up and made to praise God – I must feel as much of the desire to sing when I am alone in my study as when I am standing in the pulpit. If that’s not true, then I am in a bad state. This applies also to listening to the truth. If you are able to attend churches and go away without having felt the power of the truth, then either you or the preacher is failing; if it is all merely a matter of intellectual entertainment, giving and receiving information and knowledge that stops there and doesn’t come to you in such a way as to make you feel uncomfortable; if it does not make you realize your deficiency and your failures; if it does not expose your hidden secret things in your heart; if it doesn’t make you feel as if you’ve got to pull yourself together to do something; if it does not ever move you or thrill you and make you feel like shouting and praise; well then, you are in a dangerous state.” D. Martyn Lloyd Jones
- Eat the truth, drink it... feed and live on it.
- My prayer when I read the Bible used to be, “God speak to me” as in “learn something new”. Now it is help me to see and adore God.
- Eph 4–5 tell you to live in a way that is a proper response to the Gospel. Responding to the grace and beauty of God: What the experience of grace produces (purity; forgiveness; godly anger). We should live in a way that shows we’ve seen Christ! We love righteousness/mercy because we love Jesus. **Captivated by the beauty of truth:** We become imitators of God, walking in love, just like God is love (5:1)

- **Every epic movie has the same plot... someone gets swept up in some greater drama from another dimension...**
- Examples: falsehood,
 - vs. 25 **“Therefore”** we put off falsehood
 - Honesty... 3 ways to change
- Other possible examples: anger, drunkenness
- **Every part of us then changes: vs. 24, “put on the new self”**
 - Paul talks about communication, emotions, relationships, sexuality, materialism, time-management, humor, care for the poor, theft, families, employer-employee relationships, marriage, the occult world... all of you is different. If not, you are not saved.
 - The Christian faith is the most comprehensive view of the world around. Not one square inch...
 - If we don’t change, we haven’t been saved
 - What is the sign of being saved? Long hair? Not drinking beer? In a restaurant and people say, “Wow, he’s not drinking beer, I really need to be saved.” Not going to the movies? “You know who I’ve never seen at the movies? Pastor J.D. I need to be saved.” These things are.
 - These things become the key to knowing and doing the will of God
 - Knowing the will of God starts by becoming the person God wants you to become. When you become a person shaped by the purposes of God, you will do the will of God. Eph 4 describes the kind of person who does the will of God. (Will of God is spoken of 6 times in Ephesians, 1:1, 5, 9, 11; 5:17, 6:6)
- **Christian morality is based in grace (Eph 4:25 (therefore); 4:32)**
 - This is the primary characteristic! Even as God...
 - All other religions... the winners are rewarded.
 - Christianity: All your morality has not gotten you closer to God, but further, because it is a monument to your own ability

Vs. 30: Right in the middle is a strange command: “grieve not the Holy Spirit.” You grieve over someone you love. God grieves over our sin. Let that sink it to you.

The result is that we are completely different than everyone else and we live in a way that convicts them. (5:11) Does the mere presence of how you live bring conviction to others?

Explanation must be overtaken by sensation. Imagine you were hungry... just watched food network and licked the TV. Not the same as juicy prime rib in your mouth.

Kharis: sometimes I tell myself I am scared. Shame.... I thought teachable moment... yeah, you have to overcome fear. Allie: Kharis, you're not a scaredy-cat.

Epithumia: It's translated, "lust". When I say "lust" we always think "sex." But epithumia is not just about sex. Epithumia means "inordinate desire, a craving, a yearning, a greedy desire, a demand you have: "I have to have that because without that, I can't imagine life being OK. Without that, I might as well be dead."² Even *the thought of satisfaction gives pleasure and that of non-satisfaction pain.*³ Epithumia is when anything takes on an inordinate weight in your life... because it begins to invade on the sphere that God is supposed to occupy

- \\ Some of us get angry because we've been insulted, and we feel like the insults challenge our worth as a person. So our anger is a self-defense. The Gospel assures us of God's love for us, and so the insults of others don't wound us so deeply.

Opening illus: brands; Gospel centered change; coming back to Ephesians

² David Powlison, "Idols of the heart and 'Vanity Fair.'" *Journal of Biblical Counseling* (13:2), 36..

³ *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Vols. 5-9 edited by Gerhard Friedrich. Vol. 10 compiled by Ronald Pitkin. Edited by Kittel, Gerhard, Geoffrey William Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, Vol. 3, Page 171. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-c1976.