

Renewal of the Interior Life

JVI, Long Lake Community Church, 07.14.19, 1

Texts, ESV: Ephesians 4.17-22; Romans 6.1-7; Ephesians 4.23

Last week we started to look at Ephesians, let's read **Ephesians 4.17-19**

i. Paul draws 2 lines in the sand

a The 1st line in the sand is between Christians and Gentiles, **verse 20**

1 Christian salvation stands in contrast to all the wicked ways of Gentiles

2 Paul is also speaking to us, the readers, with the word "you"

3 Drawing a line in the sand is not easy, we have unsaved loved ones

b Paul draws a 2nd line in the sand - **verse 21** - good Christians are growing

1 Paul *assumes* that good Christians are always active and learning

2 If everyone is growing in the faith, then why does he have to say this?¹

3 He's not praising good Christians, he's challenging *INACTIVE* Christians

*What does that look like? Our parents are all in their late 60's and early 70's. Am I saying that they need to be leading *work days* at the church or *starting up a Sunday School program*? I hope none of our parents are asked to do things like this. They're in a different stage of life. But they all know how to pray. They all know how to disciple. They all have Gifts that can still be used in the church. They're NOT benchwarmers.

4 We need saints like them . . . and we also need workers in the fields

ii. Spiritual *mortification*, Ephesians 4.22

a Paul touches on a theme that he develops in his other writings as well

1 He tells us "to put off your old self"

2 Let me remind you that Paul has made it clear he is writing to Christians

b These verses reveal a process of spiritual *mortification*

1 To call it a *metamorphosis* is not quite strong enough for Paul

2 Paul writes other Scriptures like this, but let's look at, **Romans 6.1-7**

3 We have no choice but to crucify our old self with Christ on the Cross

c In this part of Ephesians 4, the verb tense has no beginning, ending, or future

1 Verbs like "learned . . . heard . . . taught . . . put off" (verses 17-22)

2 That means it's ongoing, we must commit to a lifelong process

d We must be on guard, our "deceitful desires" or lusts, "corrupt" us (verse 22)

1 So . . . I can't always blame the devil, I'm my own worst enemy

2 I sabotage my own faith walk, Paul says my desires are deceitful

*We chase the pleasures of this life. We don't admit that we're only fooling ourselves, because our desires are deceitful. Sinful desires are like a theatrical mask that hides

¹ Jerome, *Epistle to the Ephesians ii.iv.20*.

Renewal of the Interior Life

JVI, Long Lake Community Church, 07.14.19, 2

the true person. When we take off the mask, we usually find someone wrestling with hypocrisy and bitterness.²

e How does the Spirit free us from our own deceitful selves?

1 He says: Go through the process of spiritual *mortification*

2 Put off the old self. Crucify it!

iii. Renewal of the interior life, Ephesians 4.23

a Paul makes it clear that there is an interior life

1 He says "be renewed in the spirit of your minds" (verse 23)

2 This phrase is interesting for a couple reasons.

b First of all, the verbal construction is *passive* and *infinitive*.

1 We receive a renewal, and we continue to receive renewal indefinitely

2 We can continually allow ourselves to be renewed

3 The action is being done by someone to us. Who is renewing us? HS

c Secondly, Church leaders have talked about this verse throughout history

*One comes along and says that we can NOT simply let our minds be renewed. We have to go through the process of purification that Paul is talking about first - *mental and spiritual detox*. Then we are renewed in the Spirit.³

*Another one comes along and adds that the phrase "the spirit of your minds" literally means that the Holy Spirit fuses Himself to our renewed mind.⁴

1 We can get to the point where we're thinking . . . *God thoughts*

2 We start to look at our world through His eyes more than ours

iv. What Paul is saying should be nothing new to us all

a First of all, every *FAITH TRIBE* believes in some type of *PROCESS* like this

1 My faith tribe talks about *sanctification*

2 I believe the Friends still use terms like *regeneration* and *sanctification*

3 You may have heard other terms like *renewal* or *transformation*

b Second, every faith tribe has a view about *HOW* this process happens

c Third, everyone has a view about *WHAT* this process does to us as a people

Invitation: No matter what view you hold, every Faith Tribe can agree on 1 thing

1 Something happens, some kind of transformation, a *renewal of the interior life*

2 My prayer today is that we will listen to the words of Paul. Through Paul the Spirit calls us to a lifetime commitment to His processes of renewal

² Chrysostom, *Homily on Ephesians xiii.iv.22*.

³ Origen, *Epistle to the Ephesians iv.23*.

⁴ Jerome, *Epistle to the Ephesians ii.iv.23–24*.

Renewal of the Interior Life

JVI, *Long Lake Community Church*, 07.14.19, 3

COMMUNION

As we take time to remember what Jesus did for us today, let's remember that we are called to a process of *mortification*. Paul makes it clear that we share in the crucifixion, so that we can experience new life. In a real way, we live the sacraments.