

Walk of the New Man 04

by Rick Bovey

Rick Bovey's sermon emphasizes the importance of living as a new creation in Christ, rejecting the mindset of the world and embracing true holiness.

Duration: 30:29

Scripture: Ephesians 4:17-24

Topics: "New Man"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on Ephesians chapter four, starting from verse 17. He emphasizes the importance of not walking in the ways of the Gentiles, who are ignorant and blinded by their own desires. The preacher contrasts this with the believers who have learned Christ and have been taught the truth in Jesus. He encourages the listeners to put off their old sinful ways and be renewed in their minds and put on the new man, created in righteousness and holiness. The sermon also touches on the difficulty of communicating the truth to those who are spiritually blind and highlights the importance of having the Spirit of God to understand and apply the Word of God.

Transcript

And we trust that not all of you slept in your cars last night. And I will say this, the nice air-conditioned room over at the end, without any kids running around at 5 o'clock in the morning saying, get up, or whatever they were doing, was very, very nice. And all I can say is I really appreciate it.

Now, there are two people I have been very thankful to see here this week, besides many, many others. One was this morning when I saw Brother Ernest Woodhouse get here. I was very thankful for that, for some very obvious reasons.

And we did talk him out of his coat, though. Not us, but somebody else up there. I saw he had his blue coat on.

I said, oh, no, don't do that to me. But anyway, so very glad to see our Brother Woodhouse here this morning. And also, last night, it was a thrill for me to see our Brother Hal Green.

And I know that you've all been praying for him and the brain surgery that he did have. And I'm just thrilled to see the rapid recovery we've already seen in Hal's life. I've not seen him since he had the surgery up at Mayo.

And we're just thrilled to even have him here this morning to be with us. I don't know if he's here this morning or not. He kind of overdid it last night, I think.

He was a little tired. But keep praying for Hal. And we just praise the Lord for him being here and being able to be with us during this conference.

Well, I'm not going to ask how many of you read Ephesians 4, 17 to 24 since last night. So let's read it together this morning. Ephesians 4, beginning at verse 17.

Now let me... Eddie, Johnny, what time am I supposed to be down before I get shot? How about 20, 22 after? 11? No. Oh, okay. Thank you.

Verse 17. This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk in the vanity of their minds, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts, who, being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ.

If so be that ye have heard him and have been taught by him as the truth is in Jesus, that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lesson, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that ye put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Last week we were with my parents in kind of a family reunion for a couple of days and we were looking at the pictures that Prince Charles and Princess Diana celebrated their first anniversary. And they had their little baby boy who is now second in line to the throne of England.

Now Prince Charles is first. I don't know if he can't wait until his mother gets off the throne, I don't know. But anyway, behind Prince Charles now is his son with that nice long British name.

I wouldn't try to repeat all the names that their young son has. But he is now second in line to the throne. But just imagine this young son who is the one who is going to inherit the throne of England maybe in the days to come.

And all of a sudden he gets up to be around a teenager and he decides, you know, I really don't like this king thing. I don't like this royalty fit that I have to go through. So I'm going to go out and I'm going to live like a pauper.

I'm going to go out and live like one of the typical bums, you know, out wherever the Skid Row is in London. And I'm going to do my thing. I'm going to do all the grubby and I'm going to do the whole thing.

And so he acts loose and smells like a very, very grubby person. But the reality of the matter of this whole situation is that this young boy, whether he likes it or not at this point, of course that goes beyond the illustration, but whether he likes it or not, he will always be the son of Prince Charles. And he will be second in line to the throne of England.

Now, of course, we know he can abdicate. He can do other things like that. But we know that he is royalty.

And that is part of what the Apostle Paul is trying to appeal here to is that we are king's kids. We are children of God. We are in Christ and Christ is in us.

And the lifestyle that he's appealing to us to live is to be a life that is consistent with those who are in Christ, those who are children of God, those who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. Now, last night we talked about the beginning of this section with this appeal, this urging, this beseeching that he talked about in verse 1. And he picks up the same idea again in verse 17 when he says the word, therefore. He's going back to this urging.

He's going back to this appeal, to this beseeching and begging. But he goes on with a little bit stronger term, terms that have a little bit of an ominous overtone. This word for testify here is a word that goes beyond just a courtroom testimony.

It can be that. But it goes to a place where it is almost a warning. And he talks about... And this message, by the way, I'm really excited about.

Even though there's some really dark things in this message, there is an exciting message that I'd like to communicate to you as we get on up to verse 20. Now, the first thing he starts off and talks about, he talks about the negative side of what we are no longer. He says that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk.

Now, he's not saying there, by the way, that you don't walk as those who are non-Schwarzes. Okay? That's not what he's saying. He's not using this in racial terms between Jew and Gentile.

All the portions in the Word of God where you see this word Gentile, it refers to a religious system. A system that is without God, that denies the presence of God in their lives. So, he's not talking about non-Jews racially.

He's talking about people who are separated from the commonwealth of Israel in the terms of the kingdom of God. That we no longer are part, that these people are not part of the family of God at all. They're Gentiles.

And he says we're not to walk, not to have our lifestyle like that anymore. And he gives a six-fold description in verses 17 down through 19 of the way that Gentiles walk. Now, please note as you're taking a look at this that the cruciality of the words that have to do with mind.

Notice verse 17, in the vanity of their mind. Verse 18, having their understanding darken. The life of God through them.

The ignorance. And then you go on and see more as we see later on. The cruciality of the mind.

Now, I was just reading about a report of this. The criminal mind. A report that was done by two penologists or criminologists.

And it used to be that people said that criminals were a product of their society. Those of you who have ever seen the West Side Story by Leonard Bernstein, that they have a song in there on Officer Krupke. And in that song they say, we're depraved on account of we're deprived.

And so the idea behind that song is that depravity, reprobation, or the psychopathic, sociopathic mind is a result of bad environment, bad circumstances. Growing up in a slum, growing up in poverty, growing up in adverse situations. And they say that that's what's causing the criminals.

That's why all the prisons are so full of them, because of circumstances. But this study that came out, they said no, that's not true. That we're finding that crime is not a result of circumstances, or environment, or situations that people are born into.

But that crime is a result of a mindset, the way people think. And this of course reminds us of the words of Solomon when he says, as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. Now the Gentiles, these religious system that leaves God out, has a certain mindset.

And this mindset is described here in verses 17 through 19. Now the first thing it says, it says in a vanity of their mind. Now that word, vanity, is the word I'm sure that you're acquainted with, is the word, it means empty.

It's full of nothing. It's useless. It's pointless.

It's purposeless. It has no goal, no motivation, no orientation. Now I find that very interesting, because I graduated from the University of Illinois in Chicago.

And I'll never forget, after I first became a Christian, that I was subjected, now we use that word, subjected to a humanities course. And in this humanities course, this man had us reading all different kinds of books. And he just, every class period, he expounded on the wonder of evolution and how man, through the product of eons, of ages, and we're the epitome of creation.

He said, oh man, he was really persuasive. Of course, I had the unique opportunity of talking to R.J. Little at the time when he was still alive. And R.J. Little gave me some really neat ammunition.

So one day in class, I stood up, I raised my hand and said, Professor, could I ask you a question? Yes. At this point he didn't know I was Christian. I said, if you were walking through a desert and you saw three bricks on top of one another, and with mortar in between, what would you conclude? Well, I'd conclude, man's been here.

I said, well, I'd take a look at all of this creation and all of the handiwork that I see around here and I conclude, God's been here. Hubba, hubba, hubba. It was really kind of funny watching that.

And he said, well, I don't see it that way at all. But you know, he could see the three bricks and you take a look at this, I'd much rather see this than three bricks. But anyway, then I used another one on him.

And he says, well, I've read the Bible through and through and I heard another one that you used on people like that. And I said, that's what you get for reading other people's mail. But anyway, but the idea, this guy, he's a doctor.

He's a Ph.D. He has all that the world has to offer. He's gone to the world's well and he's drunk deep and he came out empty. And that's the Gentile mind.

They say, we're so full. They got Ph.D., L.L.D., D.L. and all these different things that they got behind their names. And they say, we've got it all.

And the reality of it is, they've got nothing. But the Gentiles are walking with an empty mind. A mind that is full of vanity.

And then it says, having the understanding darkened. That this mind, that you, you know, things to us, having the Spirit of God coming in and having illumined our lives and lightened up our lives on the inside and we read the Word of God and it's plain to us. It's obvious.

And you sit there and you try to show it to them and, huh? And they just don't seem to understand what you're talking about. They don't seem to be able to relate what you're talking about at all. They're, I don't understand this.

And we're last night, you know, one of the advantages of being in a motel. I did a nasty, I turned on the TV and crisis to crisis program last night with Barbara Jordan. And of course, you know, Barbara Jordan is the Congresswoman, the black Congresswoman is an attorney who has gained a great deal of fame during the Watergate trials.

She was one of the ones who interrogated all the people with Sam Ervin and company during the Watergate trials. And she was doing a report on the portrait of a religious zealot. And it was Ed McAteer who was the president of Roundtable.

And of course, you see Barbara Jordan who is a very, you know, precise individual. She says her word very plainly, very distinctly, you know, exactly what she's saying. And you could see, you know, the sarcasm.

And yes, the films were really kind of good. You know, it gets you some good Baptist revivals. It had Jerry Falwell and James Robertson and all these different things.

And the gospel, how to be saved and all these different things. And of course, they were putting this on. See what we're being subjected to? What this religious right is like? I said, amen.

So she's going. It really sounds pretty good. But see, the problem that they have is their understanding is darkened.

And the things that lightened up in us because God is living on the inside, they don't understand. They don't understand what you're going to a Bible conference? What do you do there? Well, we sit down and we have Bible studies. What else do you do? Oh, then we talk and fellowship and drink a lot of coffee.

What else do you do? Well, we have more Bible studies. Oh, there's a little bit of softball in there, right? None of you guys, I can tell. But they don't understand this.

And we have a seminar that we're involved with. It's called Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts. And we've talked to people at the seminar building and when we first went to the Keough Auditorium in St. Louis.

And they asked, well, what is this like? Because they're all geared up for a rock concert and things like that. And all these people and the very first time that we watched them cleaning out from a rock concert. And the first night they're out there and the concession stands, they couldn't get... You sure you don't want to sell any beer? Yeah, we're sure.

Your people, all 4,000 of these people aren't going to want any of that. No, they're not going to want it. You're sure? We're sure.

So, the first night they watched it and they couldn't believe people were walking around with a trash can in their hand looking for trash cans. They're not used to that. And these guys would come up to us afterwards

and say, what is this group now? They don't understand what's going on.

See, that's what the Gentiles are like. Outside of God, this religious system. Their mind is vanity.

Secondly, that their understanding is darkened. Thirdly, they're alienated from the light of God through the ignorance that is in them. Now, isn't that kind of... God sits there and takes a look at man's might, man's intelligence, man's power and what does he call him? He calls him ignorant.

You know, I probably should have used this verse in my humanities professor along with one of my... a few of my philosophy professors and all of my psychology professors. And, you know, they think they're so wise and God takes a look at it and says, it's just ignorant. There's nothing of value there that is going to change people's lives.

You know, I was... Jack Wurzen was down speaking at school one time and he had debated with this beautiful woman from Texas. Madeleine Murray O'Hare. And I said, beautiful... you know.

Well, anyway, he was debating with her up in Wisconsin and there was a call-in program and this young girl called in and said, Miss O'Hare. By the way, isn't it kind of exciting her son's gotten saved? Isn't that exciting? But she said, Miss O'Hare, she... I didn't used to believe in God. I was in drugs, immoral and suicidal.

I had attempted suicide a number of times. My life was miserable. I was unhappy.

My parents were broken up. I was kicked out of the house. I had nowhere to live.

I had no money. And I was getting ready to attempt suicide again and all of a sudden I turned on the Word of Life program with Jack Worston. And he told me how to become a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And I accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior and it came in and I'm happy now. I'm back in school and I'm finishing up high school. I'm back living with my parents.

That my life has meaning and purpose and joy and all the rest. And he said, Miss O'Hare, what do you have to offer me? You know what? What does she have to offer them? Absolutely nothing. She's alienated from the life of God.

She is walking in darkness and in death. And she has nothing to offer other than darkness and death. And that's the Gentile's walk.

The Gentile's walk is a life that is alienated. It is at odds with. It is enemies with God Himself.

And then fourthly, because of the blindness of their heart. Now, you might take a look in your margin there and you see that's the word that they have, the word hardness. Well, they can make there's a big long discussion if you get into the commentaries on this and what the meaning of this word is.

I think it might be the idea is something like this. That as long as this little eyeball that we have right here is kind of soft and flexible, pliable, and like that, it works fine. But if that eye starts becoming rigid, just like if our veins become rigid and things like that and it starts getting hard, that that would cause blindness.

And I don't know if that can even happen. But this is the illustration behind it. The eye getting hard and the hardness produces a blindness so that people can't see.

And so we see that the heart of the man outside of God, outside of the family of God, without having God living inside of him, that he's described as being blind in his heart or hardened in his heart. Of course, we can think of Pharaoh. Pharaoh hardened his heart and God hardened his heart.

We see that the willful hardening of his own heart, but then the judicial hardening that came from God Himself. So we see the blindness of their heart. And isn't this interesting? You know, that we see all these... they don't understand things and then you come up and they say, don't you see? You come up and you talk to parents and you see what they're doing with their children.

They're programming their children for destruction. And you come up and don't you see that what you're doing is wrong? And they don't see it because of the blindness that's in their heart. Because of the hardness in their heart.

You know, one of the greatest things that's been propagated in our society has been Benjamin Spock's Baby and Child Care. Even Benjamin Spock, you know, later on, of course you can't take all those books back. Benjamin Spock, later on, recanted of what he had said in Permissive Education.

Because he began realizing, even though he didn't understand the Bible, that, you know, the parent who doesn't thank their child, who doesn't discipline their child, is a parent who really did not love their child. That there is hate in their heart for that child. And so this permissive type thing that was going on, and so I never forget this one cartoon that really epitomized permissive child training.

And these parents were hovering over their little girl in the middle of their house, which was burned down. It was just in rubble all around them, and you see the smoke coming up, and they take their little girl. Now we realize that you are expressing some of your frustrations with life.

Right. Don't you see that that kind of thinking, that that kind of attitude of heart, is producing all kinds of wickedness and immorality in our world? And that's what he goes on to say. He says, "...who being past feelings have given themselves over unto lasciviousness." They give themselves over.

They are so callous towards natural things without natural affection, that they don't have love for their parents, they don't have love for their children, they don't have love for other people. They're past feelings. And not only that, they're past feelings that the Spirit of God, Bertrand Russell, used to say that, and Bertrand Russell was of course one of the signers of the Humanist Manifesto back in 1933, and we'll talk a little bit about that on Friday when we're in our seminar on humanism.

But Bertrand Russell being one of the signers of that, he said, "...back when I was a young man, when I began first espousing my principles of atheism, there was something inside of me telling me, you're wrong, you're wrong, you're wrong. Well, I've grown past that now." Well, he really hadn't grown past it, had he? He had become past feelings. He couldn't respond any longer.

He was beyond feelings. And notice that this person goes beyond feelings, gives himself over to lasciviousness. Now, this word for lasciviousness is a very, very strong word.

It's a word that has to do with sensuality, but not just in the gallery of our mind, not just in the quarters of our heart, but it's a person who is involved in lasciviousness, sensuality, wantonness, in an open and public way whose lifestyle is just violate the public standards in mores, that he parades as a public show his sensuality. And don't we have that today? I mean, today, where the American Psychiatric Association calls homosexuality normal, where the city of San Francisco, and I've talked to a number of people from

San Francisco, literally, is run by this quote-unquote, and isn't this terrible that this word has been so misused, the gay community. I mean, that used to be a nice word, the gay nineties.

Now use that word and it's a ruined word. You can't use it anymore, can you? And the whole city is run by that. But you go on and you can talk about the movies, the billboards, the magazines, and all the things that we're subjected to in our society, and things are paraded openly.

That's what it says. To work. And you know what that word there is? To do business.

Make merchandise of, that the Gentiles are making merchandise of uncleanness. I was just reading some reports that the estimates of the people who are involved in the business of pornography, that last year some people have estimated that just pornography did a business of a hundred billion dollars in our country last year. Now that's a lot of money.

Think we could rent the campground for a hundred billion? Think you could retire on a hundred billion? Live off the interest? You could live off the interest and give about four hundred million a year in interest. That's a lot. And they're making merchandise of it with greediness.

And have you ever seen that book? Looking out for number one. And that's what people are. The greediness.

No matter what it takes. I'll take what you've got if necessary. That's the Gentiles' walk.

But then he says, but ye have not so learned Christ. That's where the Gentiles walk. He's not saying this is the way they are.

He says that's the way the Gentiles walk. But ye have not so learned Christ. If so be that ye have heard him and have been taught by him as the truth is in Jesus.

Now can I give you a little bit of a lesson in the language of the New Testament? That if there, there's four kinds of if in the Greek New Testament. One is if and it's true. If and it's not true.

If and it's probably true. And if and it's probably not true. Those are called conditional sentences.

First cause, second cause, third cause, fourth cause, and last condition. Now that if right there is a first class condition. If and it's true.

If so be and you have that ye have heard him and have been taught by him as the truth is in Jesus. This is true of you. So that Paul realized that when he was writing to these people in Ephesus, this little church in the middle of this moral cesspool in Ephesus, he says I know you really have been born again.

You really have met the Lord Jesus Christ, this historical person. And by the way, it's very rare for Paul to use that word Jesus just by itself. It's either Lord Jesus or Jesus Christ or the Lord Jesus Christ.

Rarely does he use the word Jesus all by itself. And when he does, it's usually referring to the historical person, the Lord Jesus, the man Jesus Christ. And so that the truth in this man Jesus, we know that that's true and if you've met this man who literally lived, who literally died and shed his blood, who literally was buried and rose from the dead on the third day, that's this man who lived in history.

He is the embodiment of truth. And he says, I know you've learned him. And you did not learn Jesus the way the Gentiles are walking.

Now that kind of lifestyle we can see prayed on the front page of the newspapers in Nashville, St. Louis, Des Moines, or wherever you're from. We know that that kind of lifestyle is being lived. But the sad thing that Paul is warning them about, he says, now some of you Christians who are in Christ and Christ is in you are living though just like the Gentiles walk.

You're walking like they walk. And he says, hey, no, that's not the way it ought to be. Verse 22, that ye put off concerning the former conversation of the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lust.

Now that word put off with a companion word in verse 24, put on, I'm sure you've heard this before, it's just the terminology of putting off clothes and putting on clothes. How many of you have ever read to your children the little seven series book by C.S. Lewis called The Chronicles of Narnia? Three of you? Four of you? Come on, you've got to do that. Oh, the children are too old to grow on.

My child is 35 years old. He wouldn't stand for me reading to him right now. Well, they've got a beautiful little description on the Boy to the Dawn Treader.

This one guy is selfish. He's greedy. He goes out and he puts some dragon gold on his arm and he turns into a dragon.

And he's got all of his problems. And finally, Aslan the Lion, which is a picture of Jesus Christ, takes him up onto Aslan's mountain and he says to Yusuf, this dragon, take off your dragon skin. So he sits there and he takes off his dragon skin.

He looks. Do you know what he's got? He's still got a dragon skin. So he grabs his dragon skin and he puts it off.

Another dragon skin. He grabs the dragon skin and puts it off. Oh, I can't get it off.

That's right. We can't get off that old dragon skin. That is something that can only be accomplished by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is Jesus, when we have met Him, that we learn Christ and heard Him and have been taught by Him as the truth is in Jesus. When we have this experience of being in Christ and Christ in us, then we find out that this putting off is not on something that we can do by some moral rearmament. Benjamin Franklin, 13 point program of improving himself.

He does this, he does this, he does this, and after he finishes 13 points and what he's still got, he's still got dragon skin. But then Aslan takes his claw and it comes up and it cuts right to the heart of the dragon. He thought it was going to hurt.

It didn't. And Aslan the lion peels off that old dragon skin and there's the new Yusuf, the new man. Now, can I tell you another thing about the Greek language that that word put off and that word put on is in the aorist tense.

Aorist tense, not present tense. If it's present tense, keep on putting off. Uh uh, that's not what it says.

You put it off. That's being interpreted. It is once for all and forever put off at the cross of Christ.

Romans chapter 6, he tells about that, you know that in Galatians chapter 2 verse 20 that this old man is crucified with Christ. The old man, this Gentile walk, hey, get excited about this. Go ahead and smile.

The old man is crucified. He has no more claim on believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. So our position is it is put off.

So, in our practice, no problem. Our practice can be a result of putting it off. But the problem is that our practice of putting it off is not following our position in Christ that we're living as a Gentile's walk.

And then he says that he put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Now this new man, this new man that we put on and that we're clothed and produces righteousness and holiness, that's what we're going to talk about as we go on through the rest of Ephesians chapter 4 and 5 and on up into chapter 6. This new man, what does this new man like when it comes to using your tongue? How does that like? When it's out in the business world? When it's in your family and your husband and wife relationship? What is that new man like? Now he's not just saying put on the new man and then running and saying figure it out for yourself. That's not it at all.

But he's saying here that this old man which is described here in verses 17-19 because of being in Christ has been put off. Has been put off forever. We are crucified with Christ.

The old man is dead in Christ. It has no more claim to him. And we can put on in practice the man that we are in Christ.

We can live consistently with him. Let's pray.

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