

## OFF WITH THE OLD, ON WITH THE NEW

(Ephesians 4:17-24)

...Our world is consumed with fashion. Somebody somewhere creates the latest trends, and in time, most of us follow by wearing “what’s new.” Styles come and go...who can forget bell-bottoms and polyester suits? ...Paul in writing to the believers in Ephesus described the wonder of the church in a most heavenly language, (chapters 1-3), now begins to tell us as Christians how the Gospel changes our lives through New Birth. ...In using words for clothing, Paul calls us to daily wear a style of clothing that will never go out of date, and wears even better as the days go by. In this he reminds us that the Gospel makes us different from our world.

### TWO WARDROBES OF CLOTHING (LIFESTYLES) FROM WHICH YOU MUST DAILY CHOOSE THE NEW.

“For a changed nature demands a changed behavior!”

#### I. The Old Wardrobe Describes Our Godless Lifestyle Before Salvation.(vv17-19)

- A. Paul begins with a negative: “You must no longer walk as the Gentiles (godless) do.”
  - 1. Before regeneration (salvation), all believers were living “in the futility of mind.”  
...This means we lived lives without meaningful purpose, useless, and aimless.
  - 2. Salvation has produced in us a radical change of life...once dead, but now alive.
  - 3. Yet, we still possess a sin nature, though the power of sin is broken. This answers the question: “Why do we continue to sin after we become Christians?”
- B. Paul describes our once unsaved lives...and the present world in which we live.
  - 1. Hardness: Unsaved men and women possess a hardness of heart toward God.  
...”porosis”...harder than marble. “Heart of stone.” (Mark 3:5,6)  
...Such hardness describes the inability and unwillingness to respond to God’s truth.  
...God has revealed Himself in nature, His Word, and in true believers...but the godless man rejects and suppresses the truth. (Romans 1) This is willful rejection.
  - 2. Darkness. From hardness comes darkness. The godless man has no spiritual understanding. He may be brilliant in worldly matters, but totally ignorant of the knowledge that in the end is the only thing really worth knowing. Stumbles in the dark...the lights are out. He does not know God so he cannot think properly. Everything is out of place and his disordered and sinful conduct reflects his mind.
  - 3. Deadness. From hardness and darkness comes deadness, as such ones are alienated from “the life of God.” This death-state makes it possible to call “evil good and...”
  - 4. Reckless. Lost men and women live callused lives throwing off all restraints.  
...This often involves gross sensual (sexual) practices and perversions.  
...Living out any and every kind of impurity and yet never being satisfied.

#### II. The New Wardrobe Describes Our Spirit Controlled Lifestyle That Is Possible

**Only With New Birth.(20-24)**...We are called by Jesus to daily wear this attire. “Put this on!!!”

- A. Paul reminds us that salvation changed everything. Now we are radically different from...(20)
  - 1. A change in nature, demands a change in behavior. Is your new nature showing?
  - 2. As Christians, we are distinct from the world from which we came. (John 17)
  - 3. We too have heard the voice of Christ...
- B. Jesus’ instruction in this matter is given to us. (vv.22-24) (3 things)
  - 1. We are to continuously “put off” the old clothing...the old sinful ways. The problem is the old clothing is so comfortable and natural. In Christ, the power of sin is broken, like an old garment its presence is still in our lives.  
...put off lust, greed, pride, anger, hatred...every single day. Shed it!

2. The way we are able to do this is by the renewing of our minds in the Bible. (v.23)  
...Daily saturate your mind with God's wonderful Word. It will cleanse your thinking and provide power to resist the baser urges of the flesh. God's thoughts are infused into us. "Ideas have consequences." "You are what you think." (Romans 12:2)
3. We are to daily "put on the new self." (v.24) This new nature is God's gift to us. Once you are saved, you must begin to work at growing up in Christ. (Phil 3:12-13)  
...This is the wardrobe that pleases the Lord Jesus. It is always in fashion!!!!

### **SO WHAT? WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES THIS MAKE IN MY LIFE?**

1. If you are not saved by the grace of God, then your condition is hopeless. You are by nature and choice stumbling in sin with no way out. Your only hope is Jesus. You must call out to Him in prayer...confessing your sin and believing upon Him alone...and He will save you...and change you...and make your life whole.
2. If you know Jesus as your Savior, you must daily walk with Him by listening to His voice in the Bible, praying to Him, and serving Him with your life. If you don't discipline yourself to do these things, you will stray far from the path of God's blessing.
3. Realize that as a Christian you still have the residue of the old nature...and this is the reason why you still battle sin in your life. Don't be surprised. Don't think you are not a believer because of this. Daily put on the wardrobe...and walk in obedience with Him.