



Spiritual Warfare: Pulling Down Strongholds

EPHESIANS 4:20-24
LESSON 11 – RENEWING YOUR MIND – PART 2
PUTTING OFF THE OLD MAN

PASTOR PHILLIP M WAY

UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED, ALL SCRIPTURE TAKEN FROM THE NEW KING JAMES VERSION. COPYRIGHT © 1982 BY THOMAS NELSON, INC. USED BY PERMISSION. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Can You Handle the Truth?

- ▶ Ephesians 4:20 But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus:
- ▶ We have been told in these verses that we have “not so learned Christ”, meaning that we have not continued learning how to live as sinners and walk like the gentiles if we have heard Him and been taught by Him. As His disciples we are being taught to walk in the truth. And Paul tells us that what we have heard and learned is that the truth is in Jesus!
- ▶ We know that Jesus tells us that He is the truth (John 14:6). He in His very nature as God is purely true. He is the embodiment of the Word of God and every Word of God is true. But this is an interesting phrase isn't it? The truth is in Jesus.

Can You Handle the Truth?

- ▶ There are counterfeits and lies and deception all around us. There are those who are deceived and those who are deceiving. There are false doctrines, false Christs, false teachers, false churches, and false gospels. We are surrounded by people who are citizens in the kingdom of Satan – the father of lies. How appropriate then that while Satan is the father of lies we find that our Heavenly Father has sent us His Son, who is the truth!
- ▶ This also says much about those who are all around us and are seeking for the truth. How many people have you heard say, “I’m just looking for the truth”? Are they really looking for the truth? Really?? For to seek truth is not to seek self fulfillment. It is not to seek the answers for every problem, trial, or mystery. It is not to seek to solve those things that puzzle us. It is not to find some secret to happiness. To seek the truth, to really seek the truth, is to seek for Jesus.

Can You Handle the Truth?

- ▶ Many people who claim to be seeking the truth reject Jesus. They hate Him. They want nothing to do with Him. So are they then truly seeking truth? They are seeking for a truth that is truth to them. In other words, their worldview is such that the truth they seek is true to them – but that does not mean that the truth they are pursuing is actually and really true.
- ▶ How can we say this? Because any search for truth that does not lead us to Christ was never a search for truth in the first place. It was a search for assuring lies, a substitute truth. Satan, you see, is the greatest propagandist of all times. Veiling the truth and leading people by deception, convincing them that the lie is true and that truth is a lie. He after all appears as an angel of light! Yet who is the true light of the world? JESUS.

Can You Handle the Truth?

- ▶ If one is really and truly seeking for truth then they are seeking Christ. And who better to point the way? We know the truth. Or as John wrote, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life— that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.”

Put Off the Old Man

- ▶ Ephesians 4:22 that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,
- ▶ As we hear and are taught the truth as it is in Jesus, we learn that there are things about us that cannot remain the same if we are to have fellowship with God. He is absolute in His holiness and we are absolute in our fallen sinfulness. How can the two meet? Where does the reconciliation come from?
- ▶ We are reconciled in Christ! He has come to be the Mediator between God and men and He has given to us the task of working as His ambassadors, preaching the gospel of reconciliation.

Put Off the Old Man

- ▶ As we are called to new life and convicted of our sin, and as the Holy Spirit convinces us of our need for a Savior, we are by God's grace given freely repentance and faith. Lest someone challenge this assertion let us examine the Scriptures, for the Bible is clear – everything about our salvation is a gift of God's grace. By His grace He gives us eternal life, forgiveness, reconciliation, and fellowship with Him and His Body. And everything required for our salvation He freely provides.
- ▶ Jesus lived a perfect and sinless life, fulfilling the requirements of the Law on our behalf. He was submissive to the Father and obedient even to the point of death on the cross, giving His life for us as a substitute. He bore God's wrath toward our sin upon Himself. And in His resurrection we have been given power and freedom over sin and death.

Put Off the Old Man

- ▶ The question is asked a number of times in Scripture, “What must I do to be saved?” And the answer is that because of the completed work of Christ in His righteous life and substitutionary death is that in order to partake of this life and the forgiveness of sins we must only repent and believe.
- ▶ But as we have studied the fallen and futile mind of the lost man in the previous verses from Ephesians 4, we must ask how it is possible that we can repent and believe. For left to ourselves and on our own we will never by nature desire much less pursue a relationship with God. So where does this repentance and faith necessary for salvation come from?
- ▶ Repentance is identified as a gift from the Father in Acts 5:31; 11:18; Romans 2:4; and 2 Timothy 2:25. And we know faith is a gift of grace as well as a fruit of the Spirit according to Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 10:17; Acts 16:14; Philippians 1:29; and John 3:27.

Put Off the Old Man

- ▶ So then what happens to us when we hear the call of Christ to salvation and answer in repentance and faith? What does Jesus teach us as we learn the truth in Him? That is what we begin to learn from verses 22-24. And today we see that the first thing that happens when we repent of our sin and trust in Christ is that we put off the old man. We no longer walk like the rest of the Gentiles walk. Our conduct, our outlook, our way of life is new and different.
- ▶ Our “former conduct” speaks of the way we lived before Christ. This life is best summed up in Galatians 5:19-21. “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Put Off the Old Man

- ▶ I want us to notice today that these are habitual sins. This is not just a one time act of disobedience to the Word of God. These works of the flesh are a way of life, our life before Christ. That is why we must put off these things.
- ▶ Some might say that they came to Christ at a young age, or from a moral lifestyle, and so were not engaged in this list of heinous activity. And yet the simplest reading of Scripture proves that before Christ this is how we all walked. Jesus makes it clear – while the Bible tells us not to commit adultery, He warns about the motives of lust. While we know we should not commit murder He makes it plain that an attitude of anger without a cause is worthy of the same judgment as murder. So while we may not have a list this long and detailed to point to in our life before Christ the truth is that the motives, desires, and thoughts that lead to these sins were present. And we must, in coming to Christ, put these things off.

Put Off the Old Man

- ▶ The term “put off” is a term used to denote changing out of dirty clothes. It is as if we have come home from work and must take off our dirty, soiled, stained, and ripped work clothes. This is repentance. In Christ we have indeed come home and we know that we cannot work for salvation so we change out of that old way of life.
- ▶ Paul stated it the same way in Colossians 3 where he wrote: “But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds.”
- ▶ The old man has been put off if we are in Christ. But we are told to keep putting him off.

Put Off the Old Man

- ▶ Now let me ask then – how many of us would come home, take off our dirty clothes, take a shower and get all cleaned up and ready for dinner, and then go back and pick up those same dirty old clothes and put them back on? And yet how often is that what we try to do? We try to walk in the works of the flesh. We try to put these things back on and walk in them. We try, for whatever reason, to go back to our sin and embrace it as if we can have Christ and our sin both at the same time.
- ▶ Yet to have trusted Christ is to have put off these things. So we must fight the temptation to fall back – to backslide – into this old way of thinking and living. To engage in this type of living is to deny Christ. It is to walk as if we did not know Him. It is to take for granted the grace of God and the power He gives us through the Spirit to walk in the light as He is in the light.

Put Off the Old Man

- ▶ In fact, the term here for “old man” means literally that useless man. Before Christ this old man, this old way of life, is useless. Remember? The Gentiles walk in the **futility** of their minds. There is no salvation, no rescue, no goodness, and no hope without Christ. The old man is perishing. Growing only more and more corrupt in deceitful lusts – consumed with the unfilled desires of the flesh. The old man chases after things which promise satisfaction but never do actually satisfy.
- ▶ That is why we are truly only satisfied when we hunger and thirst after righteousness. When we crave being right with God. Thankfully, He has given us everything we need by His grace to be right with Him. He has made it possible for us to put off this old man, this our former conduct before we heard and learned the truth as it is in Jesus.

A Living Sacrifice

- ▶ To be continually putting off the old man requires that we begin each day with a conscious decision to die to ourselves. How do we do this?
- ▶ Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.
- ▶ The only problem with a living sacrifice is that it can get off the altar! So this requires daily determination to walk in obedience, yielded to the Holy Spirit.
- ▶ NEXT WEEK: We learn what it means to “be renewed in the spirit of your mind.”