

**CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER**

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<b>Series:</b>	<b>Ephesians</b>		<b>Pastor/Teacher</b>
<b>Number:</b>	<b>8</b>		<b>Josh Walker</b>
<b>Text:</b>	<b>Ephesians 4:17-32</b>		
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**LIVING OUT THE NEW LIFE**

**INTRODUCTION:** In our culture today, we prize the emotions. Our emotions are placed front and center. Here are two small illustrations of this: first, we have a family friend who is getting a divorce, which is tragic. When they told their young adult children that they were getting a divorce, their response was, “We just want you both to be happy.” Who here has heard something similar? Forget about honor, duty, commitment, etc. What these kids demonstrated is that happiness, an emotion, is prized above all these other virtues. So long as you are happy, our culture tells us, you can do what you want (as long as you don’t hurt anyone). In fact, I think a good case can be made that happiness is the supreme value of our culture.

A second illustration of the fact that our society and culture prize the emotions is seen in the way we speak. How many of you have heard someone say, “I *feel* we should not vote for such and such a policy.” Or, “I *feel* the best option is this or that.” Notice how these statements begin with “I feel” and then do *not* provide a feeling but provide a thought. In other words, these statements, should say, “I *think* we should not vote for such and such a policy.” Or, “I *think* the best option is this or that.” But, we so value feelings in our culture, and we want to be heard, so we say we *feel* our thoughts instead of *thinking* them in order to emphasize them and place value on them. (As a somewhat amusing aside, you can ask my students, if someone in one of my classes says, “I feel...” and then follows it with a thought, I correct them to say, “I think...”.)

More examples could be provided, but I think it is abundantly clear that our culture places the highest of value on the emotions. It is so clear that no more examples, I think, need to be given to demonstrate this.

What does the Bible say about this? Well, so I am not misunderstood, let me first say that the Bible does place a high value on our emotions. Think of the greatest commandment, which is to *love* God and *love* neighbor. Love is, among other things, an emotion. But, unlike our culture, the Bible does not place ultimate value on the emotions. In our passage this morning, I hope to demonstrate that the new life we have in Christ places a higher value on truth and on our minds than emotions. By placing a higher value on truth, it leads to proper emotions and conduct. In other words, for the Bible generally, and our passage this morning specifically, proper emotions and proper conduct flow from a proper way of thinking; they flow from the truth. As the old adage goes, we need to get our minds right!

To this end, we will see two things in our passage this morning: first, Living Out the New Life *in Christ*, and second, Living Out the New Life *in Community*. That is, we will see the way our minds fit in the New Life in Christ and the New Life in Community. Let look at each of these points in turn.

### **Living Out the New Life in Christ (4:17–24)**

4:17: “The apostle now turned his attention from relationships within the body of Christ (4:1–6) to his direct expectation (‘therefore’), begun in vv.1–3. He urges his readers not to fall back into the patterns of thinking and behavior of their former Gentile way of life, a lifestyle that is subsequently painted in dark colors (vv.18–19). The language shows that Paul’s admonition is both important and urgent, and that it comes with divine authority: *I tell you this, and insist on it from the Lord.*”<sup>1</sup>

4:18: “Paul paints a distressing picture of the lives of Gentiles who are not part of the Christian community. They have chosen a lifestyle that is contrary to what God wants for them. Such was the experience of the Gentile readers of this letter before they were touched by the mercy and grace of God.”<sup>2</sup>

4:24: “Paul concludes here his summary sketch of what the Ephesians – and presently all in the apostolic-era church – had been taught regarding their regeneration and the foundation of their sanctification.”<sup>3</sup>

### **Living Out the New Life in Community (4:25-32)**

4:25: “[The word ‘therefore’] indicates that the exhortation that follows in v. 25 and beyond flow from the truth in which the audience had just been instructed (see 4:21–24), just as [‘therefore’] in 2:11 introduces an inferential imperative from the truth of 2:1–10 (cf. Rom 15:7; 1 Cor 14:13; 2 Cor 6:17; 1 Thess 5:11).”<sup>4</sup>

4:26-27: “In God’s new society believers are not to sin by indulging in anger, for this is a serious obstacle to harmonious relationships within the body. Unlike the other exhortations in this paraenetic material of 4:25-5:2, this second topic sentence begins with a positive admonition, follows with a negative exhortation (‘Do not sin’), and then gives the reason for dealing with anger properly (v. 27).”<sup>5</sup>

4:30: “Evil speech—indeed, all forms of unholy behavior—deeply hurts the Spirit, whom God has given to his people to indwell them and empower them to live a holy life. The fact that God has marked believers as belonging to him through his Spirit, and that he will be with them until the end of the age should motivate them to live in ways that are consistent with God’s call.”<sup>6</sup>

4:32: “The model for Christians forgiving one another is God’s own forgiveness of his people. The conjunction [‘as’] is probably best taken as expressing both cause and manner, and thereby establishes God’s act of forgiveness as both the motivation and the pattern for forgiving others.... There is no greater example of forgiveness that can be adduced.”<sup>7</sup>

## **ENDNOTES**

<sup>1</sup>O’Brien, Peter T., *The Letter to the Ephesians: The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Eerdmans, 1999), 319.

<sup>2</sup>Arnold, Clint E., *Ephesians: Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Zondervan, 2010), 282.

<sup>3</sup>Baugh, S. M., *Ephesians: Evangelical Exegetical Commentary* (Lexham Press, 2016), 373.

<sup>4</sup>Baugh, *Ephesians*, 389.

<sup>5</sup>O’Brien, *Ephesians*, 339.

<sup>6</sup>Arnold, *Ephesians*, 305.

<sup>7</sup>Arnold, *Ephesians*, 309.