

**THE CHRISTIAN DIFFERENCE**  
**Ephesians 4: 17-24 (An Introduction)**

**INTRODUCTION :**

(Show the old shoes tied at the back of the wedding car. I had this favourite but yucky, smelly old shoes that were really worn out that I love to wear everyday. Chicay requested that once we get married, I will throw those shoes away and buy a new pair. Now that we are the bride of Christ, there are old behaviours that we need to throw away.)

**When we were born again, it means we have been given a new life.**

*\*2 Corinthians 5 : <sup>17</sup>Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*

**Note :** We may not see it, we may not feel it but we are definitely new.

**How?**

*\*Romans 6: <sup>3</sup>Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup>We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*

*\*Galatians 2: <sup>20</sup>I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

**In short :** We are already dead in Christ and we live the life of Christ in us.

**\*Illustration :** This wonderful acronym has become popular already – WWJD (What Would Jesus Do)...now allow me to add a new acronym, like a sister of WWJD. The acronym is WJDT – (Would Jesus Do That). Will He be swearing? Will He be having a sexual relationship with someone He is not married to? Will He be stealing?

**Question :** If a Christian has a new life with the life of Christ in him, then why are we struggling with sin?

*\*Romans 7: <sup>1</sup>So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. <sup>22</sup>For in my **inner being** I delight in God's law; <sup>23</sup>but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. <sup>24</sup>What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?*

**Quote :** The Christian life is not hard. It is impossible.

**That's why?**

*\*Romans 7: <sup>24</sup>What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? <sup>25</sup>Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!*

**Illustration :** I love this illustration by this Godly pastor. When we were born again, inside of us now, imagine, that there are two dogs – a black dog and a white dog. It will now depend on which dog you will feed that will manifest in your life.

**REVIEW**

**Ephesians chapters 1 to 3 :** shows who we really are and what we have in Christ - our position in Christ

**Ephesians chapters 4 to 6 :** shows how we live according to who we are – the practice of our Christian life

**\*That's why :**

*Ephesians 4 :1 <sup>1</sup>As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.*

That's why Paul gives the goal of our new life which is CHRISTLIKENESS

**Illustration :** There was this hen who found an unusually large egg together with the regular eggs. So when the eggs hatched, it showed that egg is the egg of an eagle. But since the eaglet was born with the chicks, the eaglet tried to chirp like a chick and eat like a chick. But as he grew up, he knew he was different from the others. His wings were bigger and his claws were longer and sharper. Until one day, he saw an eagle in the sky and saw that it looked him. That's the time, he abandoned chirping like a chick and tried to find food like a chick. He stretched out his wings and he began to soar above all else. Christians are like that. We are different from the world. This is what we're going to talk about today. How are we different from the world?

*Ephesians 4: <sup>17</sup>So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. <sup>18</sup>They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. <sup>19</sup>Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.*

*<sup>20</sup>You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. <sup>21</sup>Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. <sup>22</sup>You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; <sup>23</sup>to be made new in the attitude of your*

*minds; <sup>24</sup>and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

### **Pray**

*Ephesians 4: <sup>17</sup>**So** I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking.*

*Ephesians 4: <sup>17-19</sup>And **so** I insist—and God backs me up on this—that there be no going along with the crowd, the empty-headed, mindless crowd. (The Message paraphrase)*

*Ephesians 4: <sup>17</sup>**This I say therefore**, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, (KJV)*

**Observe :** That word “so” or “therefore”, points out to the previous passage. And we talked about the purpose of God for us is Christlikeness

*Ephesians 4: <sup>13</sup>until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

*<sup>15</sup>Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.*

*Romans 8: <sup>28</sup>And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. <sup>29</sup>For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son,*

**We will know the difference if we are living the new life or the old life depending on**

### **I. WHO ARE WE FOLLOWING**

*Ephesians 4: <sup>17</sup>**So** I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking.*

**Etymology :** Lord “kyrios” master, one who owns

**Then observe again :**

*Ephesians 4: <sup>17</sup>**So** I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking.*

*<sup>17</sup>This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,*

**Etymology :** martyromai (marturomai) - “martyr” where we get the word “martyr”... do you know the meaning of the word martyr...means witness.

**In short,** since Paul is talking to the church and he just mentioned in the previous verse that Jesus is the Head of this church

*Ephesians 4: <sup>15</sup>Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.*

He knows the basic difference of a Christian is who they follow, that is Christ. That’s the basis of his command.

**Important Question :** Who are we following if we are not following Christ?

**Illustration :** You always hear the term when facing a hard decision or just even plain decisions. “Just follow your heart”. There will be trouble if you follow your heart because how will the heart lead you?

**Important Read :**

*Jeremiah 17: <sup>9</sup>The heart is deceitful above all things  
and beyond cure.  
*Who can understand it?**

**Another illustration :** One of my favorite poems as a kid was “Invictus” by Henley, there’s a line there that says, “I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul.”

But what does the Bible say?

*Proverbs 16: <sup>25</sup> There is a way that seems right to a man,  
but in the end it leads to death.*

*Matthew 16 : <sup>24</sup>Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.*

**Example :** One of our prayers when we pray nightly is this : “Lord continue to be at the center of our lives”

**Question :** Who is the center of our life?

**Illustration :** What do you call a follower of Nora Aunor? Noranian. The follower of Vilma Santos? Vilmanian. We can only call ourselves a Christian if we are following Christ.

**Question :** How do we know we are following the Lord? We will talk about that in detail in next week's sermon

**We will know the difference if we are living the new life or the old life depending on**

## **II. HOW ARE WE LIVING**

*Ephesians 4: <sup>17</sup>So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking.*

**Note :** We know we are living the new life in Christ, if we are living differently from the world.

**Etymology :** Gentile (Latin) "gentilis" - but the greek word is "ethnos", where we get the word "ethnic" it means a people group, multitude of individuals of the same nature.

**Etymology :** church "ekklessia" – meaning called out;

**Earlier we studied :** "saints" or God's people

*Ephesians 4: <sup>12</sup>to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up*

**Etymology :** saints "hageos" – means "separated",

**In short,** Paul is saying we will know if we are living the new life if we are not living like the rest of the world.

Let's read again :

*Romans 6: <sup>3</sup>Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup>We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*

**Story :** There was this old man who went to the city the first time. He went to a building with his son and wife. He was standing in front of the elevator together with his son (first time he saw it and he didn't know what it is for). He saw an old woman hobbling went into the elevator and the doors closed. After a few seconds, when the elevator door opened, out came a beautiful young woman. So another old woman came again and went inside the elevator. When the doors closed, he waited for a few seconds and the elevator door opened again to reveal a young beautiful woman. He thought that this "contraption" could transform old women to younger women, so he said to his son, "Son, call your mother. Quick!"

**As Christians,** people should be astonished or astounded by the change in our lives.

**We will know the difference if we are living the new life or the old life depending on**

### **III. WHAT ARE WE THINKING**

*Ephesians 4: <sup>17</sup>So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking.*

**Etymology :** futility – vanity (KJV) “mataiotes” - devoid of truth and appropriateness; perversity – coming from “mataios” useless; of no purpose

**Illustration :** When I was young, I saw a bumper sticker at the back of the car which says, “If it feels good, do it” That’s how the world thinks. BUT, not all that feels good is good for us.

*\*Isaiah 5: <sup>20</sup> Woe to those who call evil good  
and good evil,  
who put darkness for light  
and light for darkness,  
who put bitter for sweet  
and sweet for bitter.*

*<sup>21</sup> Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes  
and clever in their own sight*

**Illustration :** Chicay and I were watching Dr. Oz one night and they now have a new term for homosexual, which is “transgender” and trying to justify this behaviour saying they were born that way. But scientifically, here is what science says about it.

**\*Quote :** “As Dr. Collins would agree, environment can influence gene expression, and free will determines the response to whatever predispositions might be present.

Dr. Collins succinctly reviewed the research on homosexuality and offers the following: "An area of particularly strong public interest is the genetic basis of homosexuality. Evidence from twin studies does in fact support the conclusion that heritable factors play a role in male homosexuality. However, the likelihood that the identical twin of a homosexual male will also be gay is about 20% (compared with 2-4 percent of males in the general population), indicating that sexual orientation is genetically influenced but not hardwired by DNA, and that whatever genes are involved represent predispositions, not predeterminations."

Dr. Collins noted that environment, particularly childhood experiences as well as the role of free will choices affect all of us in profound ways.”

- Dr. Richard Collins “Head of the Human Genome Project”

**In short**, the world will do everything to justify behaviour that are against God’s Word.

**Another Illustration :** Pastor Joe Wright said this prayer for the opening of the Kansas House (like the local government) and caused a real controversy, with one person walking out. This prayer was also used by Republican representative Mark Pascahl in Colorado and some members walked out too.

Prayer :

Heavenly Father,

We come before You today to ask Your Forgiveness and seek Your direction and guidance. We know Your Word says, "Woe to those who call evil good," but that's exactly what we have done. We have lost our Spiritual equilibrium and inverted our values. We confess that; we have ridiculed the absolute truth of Your Word and called it pluralism; We have worshipped other gods and called it multiculturalism; We have endorsed perversion and called it an alternative lifestyle; We have exploited the poor and called it the lottery; We have neglected the needy and called it self preservation; We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare; We have killed our unborn and called it choice; We have shot abortionists and called it justifiable; We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building self-esteem; We have abused power and called it political savvy; We have coveted our neighbor's possessions and called it ambition; We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of expression; We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our forefathers and called it enlightenment. Search us, O God, and know our hearts today; try us and see if there be some wicked way in us; cleanse us from every sin and set us free. Guide and bless these men and women who have been sent here by the people of this state and who have been ordained by You, to govern this great state of Kansas. Grant them your wisdom to rule and may their decisions direct us to the center of Your Will.

I ask in in the name of your Son, The Living Savior, Jesus Christ

**Note :** Our way of thinking should be aligned with God’s Word because the world’s thinking is always “mataiotes” perverse

### **CONCLUSION :**

London businessman Lindsay Clegg told the story of a warehouse property he was selling. The building had been empty for months and needed repairs. Vandals had damaged the doors, smashed the windows, and strewn trash around the interior.

As he showed a prospective buyer the property, Clegg took pains to say that he would replace the broken windows, bring in a crew to correct any structural damage, and clean out the garbage.

"Forget about the repairs," the buyer said. "When I buy this place, I'm going to build something completely different. I don't want the building; I want the site."

Compared with the renovation God has in mind, our efforts to improve our own lives are as trivial as sweeping a warehouse slated for the wrecking ball. When we become God's, the old life is over (2 Cor. 5:17). He makes all things new. **All he wants is the site and the permission to build.**

**Next week :** We'll talk about the details on the difference between Gentile living and Christian living

**S.G.D.**

Next we will go into detail regarding the difference between the world and the Christian

- I. IGNORANT OF THE TRUTH
  
- II. ISOLATED FROM GOD
- III. INDULGENT TO SENSUALITY

Untruth and truth

Separated from God...created to be like God

Have given themselves over to corruption....already made new

<sup>17</sup>So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking.

<sup>18</sup>They are darkened in their understanding **and**

separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them **due** to the hardening of their hearts.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>9</sup>Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.

<sup>20</sup>You, however, did not come to know Christ that way.

<sup>21</sup>Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. <sup>22</sup>You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; <sup>23</sup>to be made new in the attitude of your minds; <sup>24</sup>and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.