

# **This is a Great Mystery**

## A Study of Ephesians

### Week 19 – Ephesians 4:20-27

**Prayer** – Dear Jesus, we have learned so much about you and we desire to learn more so that our faith may be fed by your Word. As we take in your truth, renew our minds. Move us by the power of your Spirit to daily take off our old self and put on the new self, so that we may walk according to your commands. Bless us today and always. **Amen.**

**Introduction/Review** – Paul has highlighted the Gentile (unbeliever) way of life. Now, in a way, Paul will continue to go back and forth, comparing and contrasting the way of the Gentile with the way of the believer.

Look back at verses 14-19 of chapter 4, the verses you covered last week. Is there anything that you wanted to discuss from last week?

**Ephesians 4:20-21** – ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐχ οὕτως ἐμάθετε τὸν Χριστόν, **21** εἴ γε αὐτὸν ἠκούσατε καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ ἐδιδάχθητε, καθὼς ἐστὶν ἀλήθεια ἐν τῷ Ἰησοῦ,

**But you did not learn Christ in this way, <sup>21</sup> if indeed you have heard of him and have been taught in him, as truth is in Jesus.**

1. This is a pretty straightforward thought: if you really know Jesus and what he means for your life, then you know that the way the Gentiles live is not the way of truth. However, as we will get to discuss through much of the rest of chapter 4, of what false notions must we be aware in discussing things like “really knowing Jesus”?
2. Notice the connection between Jesus and the truth in the following verses:
  - a. **John 1:17**
  - b. **John 14:6**
  - c. **John 18:37**
  - d. **Colossians 2:3**
  - e. Some of you might be wondering why John highlights this connection—when John wrote, there were already many false teachers claiming that Jesus is not who he says he is. So, John made it abundantly clear that Jesus is truth itself.
3. Throughout Ephesians, Paul consistently uses “Christ” when referring to the Son of God, the second person of the trinity. At the end of verse 21, however, he uses the name “Jesus.” The NIV84 study notes suggest that Paul is pointing to Jesus’ earthly life as the embodiment of truth, whereas the title “Christ” speaks more to his exalted state as God’s chosen Messiah. I had never noticed that switch before or thought about it that way.

**Ephesians 4:22-24** – ἀποθέσθαι ὑμᾶς κατὰ τὴν προτέραν ἀναστροφὴν τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν φθειρόμενον κατὰ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τῆς ἀπάτης, **23** ἀνανεοῦσθαι δὲ τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ νοῦς ὑμῶν **24** καὶ ἐνδύσασθαι τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν κατὰ θεὸν κτισθέντα ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ ὁσιότητι τῆς ἀληθείας.

**[You have been taught], with regard to your former way of life, to take off the old person—the one corrupted by its desires of deceit—<sup>23</sup> and to be [continually] renewed in the spirit of your mind <sup>24</sup> and to put on the new person—the one created according to God in righteousness and true holiness.**

4. Now we get into what the non-Gentile way of life looks like. This section lays out the main point; the rest of chapter 4 will give specific ways in which believers can carry out what God is calling us to do.
5. The reason “you have been taught” is in brackets is because it carries over from verse 21. Greek does that sometimes where a verb from a few verses back will still be “in play” later. In English, we would call that a run-on sentence.
6. Notice the “continually” that has been added; this is another present verb with ongoing action. For what reasons does the spirit of our mind need to be constantly renewed?
  - a. Also notice that we have to be renewed. Paul does not say that we can renew ourselves.
7. We are familiar with the “former way of life/old self” and the “current way of life/new self” terminology. In fact, it is found in both the Old and New testaments. Let’s look at two other sections that speak about this “old/new” concept.
  - a. **Isaiah 65:17-25**
    - i. What “new” place is God talking about here?
    - ii. What is the “old” place?
    - iii. What is different between the old and the new in Isaiah 65?
    - iv. In what ways do those words and concepts apply to our renewed way of life?
  - b. **2 Corinthians 5:17-21**
    - i. Name some ways we might be led to doubt the words of verse 17.
    - ii. When such thoughts arise, in what ways do the other verses dispel our doubts?
    - iii. In other words, we are not “new” because of what \_\_\_\_\_ do, but because of what \_\_\_\_\_ has done.

What comments and questions do you have?

**Ephesians 4:25-27** – Διὸ ἀποθέμενοι τὸ ψεῦδος λαλεῖτε ἀλήθειαν ἕκαστος μετὰ τοῦ πλησίον αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ἐσμὲν ἀλλήλων μέλη. **26** ὀργίζεσθε καὶ μὴ ἁμαρτάνετε· ὁ ἥλιος μὴ ἐπιδύετω ἐπὶ [τῷ] παροργισμῷ ὑμῶν, **27** μηδὲ δίδοτε τόπον τῷ διαβόλῳ.

**Therefore, once you have put aside lying, each of you must speak the truth with his neighbor, since we are all members of one another.** <sup>26</sup> **“Be angry, but do not sin.” Do not let the sun go down on your anger.** <sup>27</sup> **Do not give a place for the devil.**

8. What is the “therefore” there for? Paul has laid out the principle of taking off the old self and putting on the new self. Now he follows, “Here are some practical ways you do that as renewed Christian people.”
9. Paul also brings back the “one body” concept with the phrase “we are all members of one another.” Most translations say, “members of one body.” While that’s true, that’s not what the Greek says. To me, “members of one another” seems to make the connection believers have with one another even more closely knit. You’re not just an ear that’s far away from the foot or a fingernail that has nothing to do with the voice—you’re all uniquely knit together to benefit and strengthen each other. So, that’s a long tangent to bring us to the fact that, while we would want to act in this way with all people, it seems as though Paul is speaking more specifically here about our conduct with other Christians.
10. Before we get to the specific commands, what do we need to remember when it comes to sanctification?
11. Lying is one of those sins that might get swept under the rug in a lot of ways. That’s why phrases such as “little white lie” exist, along with “cute” stories like Pinocchio. What are some ways in which Christians might, intentionally or unintentionally, lie to each other?
  - a. What is the ultimate truth that not only removes lies from our present and future lives but also addresses those we have heard, said, or suffered from in the past?
12. “Be angry, but do not sin.” – This was another one of the questions that was brought up in our first class on Ephesians. What is God saying here? How is this possible?
  - a. Throughout Deuteronomy, the anger of the LORD is spoken about more than 20 times. The Psalms also speak of God as being angry, at times.
  - b. Jesus showed anger when he drove out the money changers from the temple.

- c. What is the difference between these types of anger and what we read in **James 1:19-20**?
  
  - d. What lines can we draw as we apply what God says about anger in the life of a Christian?
13. Verse 27 says, “Do not give a place for (or to) the devil.” You might be more familiar with either giving the devil a “foothold” or an “opportunity.” The Greek word is “place,” but these other options fit. Regardless of the translation, in what ways does this phrase fit with what Paul is saying about anger?
- a. In what other ways could we apply this encouragement to other specific sins?
  
  - b. Paul assumes that his audience knows how to not give the devil a place. How do we fend off the devil and his schemes to try to find a place in our hearts?

What comments and questions do you have?

**Closing Prayer** Lord Jesus Christ, with Us Abide CW 541 v. 5 and 6

**Oh, keep us in your Word, we pray;**

**The guile and rage of Satan stay!**

**Oh, may your mercy never cease!**

**Give concord, patience, courage, peace.**

**The cause is yours, the glory, too,**

**So hear us, Lord, and keep us true.**

**Your Word alone is our defense,**

**The Church's glorious confidence. Amen.**