

**Sunday Morning Sermon, 10.20.19 ~ Ephesians 4:20-24,  
"Off with the Old, On with the New."**

Some of the Christians in Ephesus had fallen back into the lifestyles they had led before coming to Christ. As we have seen the past two Sundays, Paul instructs them (**Ephesians 17-19**) to not live that way any longer. The very idea that a person could be a believer and follower of Jesus Christ, a recipient of God's forgiveness for sin and gift of eternal life, and yet, not live any differently than a person who rejects Christ (remaining separated from God), is ridiculous!

Read **Ephesians 4:20-24**. Paul declares that when someone comes to Christ, he/she becomes a new person (**2Corinthians 5:17**) with a desire and propensity to know and to obey God's Word, to live in a manner that pleases God.

**Matthew 7:7-8**, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened." **13-14**, "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it."

The narrow/small gate [*lit. stenos*= restrictive, constrictive], is a one way turn style or truncated gate that doesn't allow a person to bring anything, except Christ in them, onto the narrow path that leads to eternal life (heaven); whereas the wide gate allows a person to bring all of their worldly beliefs and behaviors, godless accessories and entrapments, onto the broad road that leads to eternal death (hell).

These roads don't lead to the same destination, and that is why Jesus commands, "Enter through the narrow gate," and then He says, "the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it."

There is a wide road (a way of life) that gives the appearance of leading to heaven or having a belief about God, it may be filled with good deeds, philanthropic works, religious rituals and practices, even miracles, but it does not lead to forgiveness and eternal life through Jesus Christ, God's Son!

When you realize your sinfulness and ask God to save you, you change your mind concerning sin, self, and God; this change is called repentance, it leads you off the broad road of unbelief, to the small gate (Christ), and onto a narrow path (Christianity), which leads to an eternity in heaven with God and all those who belong to Him.

If you have never trusted Jesus Christ to forgive your sins and save your soul, you remain dead in your sins, separated from life with God.

**Romans 3:23-24**, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus."

**Romans 6:23**, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

**Romans 5:8**, "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

**Romans 10:13**, "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Many people are fooled into thinking that they are saved merely because they do good deeds, attend church, or believe that there is a God; but it isn't enough to just believe God exists, go to church, or to do good deeds (helping the poor and needy).

**Mark 1:15**, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." **17**, "And Jesus said to them, 'Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.'"

Only Christians can apply the wisdom of God's Word to their life, but it would seem that some of the believers and followers of Christ in Ephesus were already falling back into unbelieving lifestyles, as if they were ignorant of what God's Word says, and were still on the broad road, dead in their sins, separated from life with God.

Paul reminds us (see **Ephesians 2:1-3**) that every Christian was an unbeliever at one time, cruising down the broad road, acting like those who do not know or belong to God.

In **Ephesians 4:20-24**, Paul exhorts us, as true followers of God, to lay aside the old self, and put on Christ, i.e., we are to live to please God.

**Romans 12:2**, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

**Romans 13:14**, "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts."

Paul is speaking of the change that occurs in a person's life when he is born into the family of God; there must be a noticeable difference in the life of those who profess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior; because God's Spirit lives in them.

See **John 3:3-8; 14:15-17, 25-26; 1Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 1:13-14, 1Corinthians 12:12-14, 18-20, 27.**

Imagine that you had to work in a sewer all day. When you get home, you remove your soiled clothing, take a long hot cleansing shower, and put on clean clothes! You wouldn't dare put back on the filthy garments you had taken off.

In the same way, Paul says, we are to lay aside [put off] those sinful attitudes and actions of our old life; for they are like sewage soaked clothing. Christians are a new creation in Christ; we are to "dress and look differently," i.e., our walk and our talk should exemplify Christ, not the godless life we had before coming to God.

The broad road (**Matthew 7:13**) ultimately leads to Hell (eternal separation from God). Everyone is on this road until they get off (**Matthew 7:14**) by exiting through the small gate (Christ) onto the narrow road (which leads to heaven). Only a few find It [Christ], because only a few (**Matthew 7:7-8**) are asking and seeking the way off.

Jesus says, (**John 10:9**), "I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved," (**John 11:25-26**), "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die."

Salvation is eternal! You cannot become unsaved, however, you can live in disobedience to the teaching of God's Word, turning a deaf ear to the Spirit's voice, just like an unbeliever. But honestly, for a person to return to way they lived before coming to Christ, would be like putting back on putrid sewage soaked clothing, after having taken it off, thoroughly washed your body, and then put on clean clothes!

When you repent of your sin asking God to forgive you, He cleanses you from all unrighteousness, i.e., from all your sins, all of the sewage of your life, and He clothes you with His own righteousness.

**2Corinthians 5:21**, "He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

**John 5:24**, "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life."

**1John 1:8-9**, " If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

**Psalm 103:12**, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us."

**Isaiah 43:25**, "'I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, and I will not remember your sins."

**Hebrews 10:17**, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."

**Ephesians 2:8-10**, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."

**Galatians 2:20**, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."

Everyone is born dead in sin and separated from life with God, i.e., traveling on the broad road to hell, where our words, actions, beliefs, and even our thoughts, display our godlessness, like clothing soaked with sewage; but when we enter the small gate that leads to heaven, we are cleansed and clothed by God's Son.

Let those of us who belong to God seek to display Christ in and through our lives, so that those who are on the broad road that leads to death, might be made aware of the only way that leads to life: Jesus Christ, both Lord and Savior, He is (**John 14:6**), the only Way to God, the only Truth of God, and the only Life from God; and no one goes to heaven except through Him.

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