

“Become Who You Are”

Ephesians 4.17-24

Easter 3, 2017 (April 30)

The Church: God’s New Society Sermon Series

### Discussion Questions

Read Ephesians 4.17-19 (possibly alongside Paul’s critique of pagan Gentiles (i.e., non-Jews) in Romans 1.18-25).

- 1) What does Paul think is the pagan Gentile’s most basic problem? (One possibility: the sermon suggests “hardness of heart” is “ingratitude toward the Creator – do you dis/agree? Why?)
- 2) What kinds of consequences are a result of the Gentiles’ problem?
- 3) What analogies, or points of connection, can you draw between our present-day culture and Paul’s description of Gentile culture? In other words: what does Ephesians 4.17-19 have to say to us today?

Read Ephesians 4.20-24.

- 1) Paul is calling the Ephesians to remember how they “learned Christ” and “heard about him” – that is, who Jesus is and what it means to follow him. What’s your first memory of hearing about Jesus? Of being taught about him?
- 2) Paul is writing to first-generation converts to Christianity – pagans who left behind their “former way of life” (v.22). What do these verses say to someone who was raised in the church/as a Christian (especially if you were baptized as an infant)? Do you have an “old self” to put off?
- 3) What does it mean to say that the old self is “corrupt in deceitful desires”?
- 4) Salvation is none of our own doing: “It is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast” (Eph 2.8). But living out our salvation and following Jesus seems to take work, or at least discipline (e.g., the “putting off/putting on” the “old self/new self” (Eph 4.22-24) – *as well as* involving a renewal that’s not up to us (“*be* renewed in the spirit of your minds”). How do you understand the relationship between God’s grace and your will/action? How have you experienced both of these in your own process of sanctification (that is, becoming more of the “new self”)?
- 5) Ephesians is all about the church as a whole: members building each other up for the sake of the entire body. As a group, how could you help each other’s growth as described in vv. 20-24 – in putting off the old self, being renewed, and putting on the new self?