

**THE BIG IDEA:** New affection leads to new direction.

The Take-Off

Remember how I told you that the end of Ephesians is more practical than the beginning?

That Paul gets a little braver and bolder about telling the Christ followers in Ephesus the truth?

Well, after telling them that they are one in Christ and that they are gifts to each other to help the church grow up before it grows out, he drops a bomb.

He tells them, in essence, that the people who see them should see a difference in them. That because they are a part of a growing body of faith, others who watch their lives should see something in them that is changing.

But before he really sinks his teeth into behavioral changes, he takes the time once more to really explain the nature of man's heart and why we can't change apart from the saving grace offered to us by Jesus.

He starts with showing us how bad the old way was:

**1. The OLD way is bad**

- a. In verses 17-19, Paul reminds the believers in Ephesus about the human condition apart from God
- b. And yes, it's bad. Real bad.
- c. Apart from God, Paul says that we have:
  - No choice (on how to live)
  - No aim ("futility" means "aimless, having no goal")
  - No light (darkened in their understanding)
  - No life (separated from the life of God)
  - No remorse (hardened in their hearts and calloused in their sins)
  - No satisfaction (continual lust for more)
- d. Too many times, we don't really think that we were - or anybody is - that bad apart from God
- e. But let's just dive into that last verse - verse 19 - to really get a picture of how the Bible says men are when they live apart from God
- f. The phrase "having lost all sensitivity" means that we grow "calloused" apart from God
- g. I brought a few pictures of callouses to show you just to make sure we really get the picture here
- h. It's ugly, it's dry, and there's no feeling
- i. Back in the day when I was playing tennis a lot, I could literally cut chunks of my callouses off my feet with a pair of scissors
- j. But it never hurt, because that skin was dead
- k. The human heart apart from God ends up dead, unable to feel the remorse necessary for repentance
- l. And not only can we not feel, but this verse says we can't stop
- m. Apart from God, we become human bobble heads, nodding in agreement but never living in agreement
- n. Maybe when Paul was writing these words he was remembering some words from a previous message he had preached in Rome (Acts 28:26-27)
- o. Bottom line? Apart from God the end result is hearts that are hard, feel no remorse and no conviction and therefore show no change.
- p. If we were describing anything other than a spiritual condition, we'd be describing a sociopath
- q. There is NO DOUBT that the OLD way - life apart from God - is bad

**2. The NEW way is good**

- a. Thank God for words like "however!"
- b. The good news is that we aren't left in the bad, and for those of us who are in Christ, here's what we know:
  - We can choose ("you must no longer live as the Gentiles do")
  - We can hear and learn (we're no longer in the dark)
  - We can dress differently (take off the old, put on the new)
- c. Paul wrote that we did not come to know Christ in that way
- d. Our minds are no longer dark, our lives are no longer separated, our hearts are no longer hard
- e. We are - in every way imaginable - made new

- 2 Corinthians 5:17 - we were re-created
  - Galatians 2:20 - we died and were raised to life new
  - Isaiah 43:18-19 - we have a new path, a new way to walk
  - Jeremiah 29:11 - a new hope, a new future
- f. Just as there was no doubt that the OLD way was bad and led us to death, there is no doubt that the NEW way is good and leads to life
- g. So smart people just choose the new way, right? Wrong.

### 3. The way from old to new is Jesus

- a. Lots of people want the good, and not many want the bad.
- b. It doesn't take a brain surgeon to see the difference between the old and the new, the hard and the soft, but just in case you missed it, here's one more picture to help you
- c. (Before and after of calloused heel)
- d. If that was a picture of our hearts, how many want the nasty one? Right.
- e. But we are guilty of going after the new in the wrong way. We go on the Dr. Phil show, or a new behavior modification plan, or we slap on the Nicotine patch
- f. The way from the old to the new isn't a new to-do list. It's Jesus. (John 14:6)
- g. This is so important, because next week Paul is going to start listing a bunch of stuff that we should DO, and if we aren't careful, it'll sound like hoops to jump through so we can "live right"
- h. But living right is the natural result of loving the right person
- i. The Big Idea says it like this: **new affection leads to new direction.**
- j. I stopped acting single the day I stopped being single. I don't have to try to act married, because I am married. My affections are toward Wendy.
- k. What I do flows out of who I love and who I am loved by.
- l. Jesus said in John 14:15 and John 14:23 that our lives of obedience are linked to loving him
- m. Not works leading to love, but love leading to works
- n. What Jesus is saying is that when we love him, we'll want to learn from him and about him
- o. Look at the biggest difference between the old way and the new way: the old way is marked by aimless drifting; the new way is marked by active learning
  - we didn't come to know Christ this way (by aimless drifting)
  - "Surely" - there was an expectation on Paul's part that they had been taught the truth
  - The truth about Jesus and how the truth about him should lead to a new direction
- p. I get that not everyone is a book nerd, but Paul expected that Christ followers would be Christ learners, too
- q. These are words of discipleship, of dead souls now alive by grace and with a hunger for truth
- r. The old is insatiable in lust; the new is insatiable in learning truth
  - 2 John 1:9 - Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.
  - Proverbs 10:17 - Whoever heeds instruction is on the path to life, but he who rejects reproof leads others astray.
  - 2 Timothy 2:15 - Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.
  - Psalm 119:14 - I rejoice in the word
  - Psalm 119:16 - I delight in the word
  - Psalm 119:20 - I crave the word
- s. These aren't the words of a man who blows the dust off his bible on the way to community group
- t. This is a man who gets that the key to a life turning toward Jesus is a life that is learning from Jesus

#### The Landing

Let's see if we can wrap this morning up with some simple truths.

One, the Big Idea: new affection leads to new direction.

- basically, loving Jesus changes us
- our motivation for obedience isn't the fear of punishment, but an unwillingness to hurt him

Two, works flow out from a changed heart

- behavioral psychology says the opposite: changed actions can lead to changed beliefs
- but it never really works that way
- Jesus changes our insides before our outsides

Three, if we don't hunger the word, we need to examine our diet

- I get that after this message, it would be easy to feel condemned for not loving the Bible or reading
- but this is about a culture of learning, and more specifically, learning the truth in God's word
- obviously, the old nature doesn't desire God's truth
- if we're in Christ but don't want to read the Bible, what do we do?
- We repent, and then we check our intake
- Psalm 119:36 is your prayer this morning: turn my heart toward the word

Fourth, learning about Jesus is the best remedy for a broken heart

- when we are really hurting, our first tendency is to go into autopilot
- stop feeling, stop thinking, turn on the tv, start a sad song playlist
- but that kind of aimless drifting is the mark of the old nature
- how does a Christ follower respond in difficult situations? Look to the word.
- Psalm 119:20 - the best medicine for sorrow is the strength found in the Bible

If you love me, you'll obey my commands.

The changed heart isn't content to simply drift through the motions, but is motivated to learn about the One who changed it.

And the more we learn about Jesus, the more we walk with Jesus, because new affection leads to new direction.

[Sinners do NOTHING to earn Jesus, but the saved will do EVERYTHING to learn Jesus!]