

Notes for the Ekklēsia Meeting

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Putting On The New Life

by Dan Trygg

“Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”

Romans 6:4

“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come to be.”

II Corinthians 5:17

“...to put on the new man, the one according to God being created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.”

Ephesians 4:23

“Do not be false with one another, laying-aside the old self with its practices, ¹⁰ and putting-on the radically-new self...”

And so, as those who have been chosen of God, set-apart and having-been-loved ones, put on (for yourselves) a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; ¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. ¹⁴ And beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. ¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts...”

Colossians 3:9,10,12-15

“But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.”

Romans 13:14

We have been studying Ephesians 4:17-24, where **Paul admonishes the believers to stop living as the unbelievers live, in the futility of their minds.** Attempting to live by their own resources, not knowing about God’s love and provision for them, they push their inner discontent away from their conscious minds, and pursue distracting pleasures. It is possible for Christians, who *do* know about God’s love, to continue to live by the same methodology. Paul admonishes them to no longer live that way, as practical atheists. This is not what Jesus came for. This is not how they were taught to follow Him. **They were taught to “put away from themselves” the old self and its customary manner of living, and to be renewing the attitude of their worldview.** They are to think of spiritual things, and reeducate their understanding of who they are, what they are here for, and how to live differently. **They are to learn to incorporate God’s presence and power into their lives.**

A key part of that is to recognize that God has *truly* made us *new*. There *is* a new life available to us in Christ. There *is* actually a new identity, a new self that has been created for us in the risen Christ. According to Romans 6:4 and Colossians 2:11-13, it is because we were united with Jesus in His death and resurrection that our old self was put to death with Him, and we were made new. **There is a new identity, a new self, and a new power for living that is available to us in Christ.** This new self is radically and fundamentally different than our old self. It is not just a cleaned-up version of our previous self. The word for “new” in Ephesians 4:24 is the Greek word, *kainos*, which means something that was “unknown, unheard-of, unusual, strange, of a superior quality”. **God is not into “rehabilitating” our old self; He chose to “re-create” an *entirely different creature*.** This is such a crucial, essential aspect of God’s plan that we need to wrap our heads around. God does not *at all* want us to operate out of our old lives, our old selves, our old abilities. No. **He came to make us *new*, so that we could walk in *newness of life*.** We are to operate out of this new life, out of our new selves, out of the new abilities and power He has put within us by His indwelling Holy Spirit. **Most Christians don’t really even understand or believe this is a possibility. They are still trying to prop up, clean up or control the old, fleshly self.** *God wants nothing to do with that old self.* It has been *judged, condemned* to death, and even *put to death* with Jesus. It is *finished*, as far as God is concerned. It is spoiled, ruined, corrupted, broken, and warped by sin, ...and it continues to *get worse* (Eph. 4:22). **The Lord does not desire to “renovate” this old man. Instead, He chose to create a *new, unsullied self, ...one made in righteousness and holiness of the truth.*** This new nature is in the image of God, born of His seed, and therefore incapable of sin (I Jn. 3:9). From the beginning of creation, God designed animals and plants to “bear fruit according to their kind”. The essence of God’s plan is consistent with what Jesus said in Matthew 12:33, “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit.” **God has made us *new* so we could produce the fruit of righteousness that comes from a *new heart, energized and led by a new Spirit within us, ...the Holy Spirit*** (Ezk. 11:19; 18:31; 36:26; cf. Gal. 5:22,23).

Of course, **it is not enough to *know* that God has made us *new*.** It is clear, from Ephesians 4:22-24, that both the old self and the new self exist at the same time, at least as potential options. We can live out one, or the other. The former life, our previous identity and orientation toward God and the world around us, did not just get extinguished. It did not cease to be. **We need to intentionally *put off the old person*,** corrupted by misleading strong desires. We put it off by putting aside the former manner of living, the old way we used to operate, in favor of living in a new, better, God-centered fashion. **Then, we must consciously *put on the new self*,** that new identity and orientation toward God and the world around us. We *own* and *embrace* that new identity, and *choose* to live out the reality of God in us. Instead of “shooting from the hip”, and living as we have customarily lived for year after year,

we must disengage from that old script and former outlook. **We must choose to pause and readjust ourselves to listen for or tune in to this new, inner working of God's Spirit inside of us.** At first, this will feel strange and awkward. We will not know what we are waiting *for*, or trying to tune in *to*. By “stopping the bus”, so to speak, ...by disengaging from the old script..., we are withdrawing from the old, self-directed life, and we are beginning to reach out for God to show us how to live differently. **We might need to get our bearings, but as we focus on God, we will sense another attitude inside of us.** Psalm 46:10 begins with, “Be still, and know that I am God”, or, “Cease striving, let go, relax and experientially recognize that I am God.” “I will be exalted among the nations,” or “I will be lifted up, honored, esteemed among the peoples.” **As we are momentarily still within ourselves, and focus on acknowledging His presence in us, we will break through to actually recognizing His presence.** As we lift Him up, and value Him, our entire inner self will begin to become collected into the quietness of His greatness. **The sense of awe or reverence which we feel when we are before Him will silence the agitation of the old emotions, expose the fleshly orientation, and bring clarity within us.** As we are humbled and quieted, He is lifted up. As we are stilled, we begin to sense the stirring of His quiet, sure leading rising up inside of us. We are learning to “wait for the hope of righteousness” (Gal. 5:5).

It is important to see how quietness and inner peace clears the mental, emotional and physical static, so we can sense God's leading more effectively. Note that Paul had said the old man is corrupted or ruined by strong desires that lead us astray (Eph. 4:22). Peter agreed with this analysis, exhorting his readers to “abstain from fleshly desires which war against the soul” (1 Pet. 2:11). The word for “abstain” here literally means “hold away from” or “distance yourself from”. This is a practical insight. We are easily pulled here and there by strong desires or lusts, emotional disruptions or irritations, or physical discomforts and appetites. If we accept and acknowledge this reality, **we can learn to wisely manage our lives to avoid strong, misleading desires. We can also learn to quiet or calm ourselves by drawing into the presence of God.** This is a practical way to be renewed in the spirit of our perception.

What are we listening for? We are trying to tune in to the heart, attitude and leading of the Holy Spirit inside of us. To help us with this, Paul breaks it down for us in Colossians 3, “put on (for yourselves) a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other.” **This helps us to identify the heart of God's Spirit.** Other passages to meditate on, that help us to understand and recognize the new heart of the Spirit working within us are Galatians 5:22,23, “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” and I Corinthians 13:4-7, “Agapē-love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act disgracefully; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not keep a record of wrongs suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails...” **These examples give us practical “handles” to help us recognize, embrace and live out the leadings of the Spirit.**

In Romans 13, Paul summarizes everything up by saying, **“But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.” Note again, the “either-or” reality of what Paul said there.** It is Jesus, *or* the flesh. It is the Spirit, *or* fleshly desires. It is the new man, *or* the old, fleshly way of living. **It is one or the other. You cannot have both.** God is not interested in compromise. **Compromise grieves and insults the Spirit of God.** This is not new. Paul wrote, “For the flesh strongly-desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are opposed to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please” (Gal. 5:17). Did you catch that last part? **There will be no peace between the flesh and the Spirit, as long as we live on this earth.** They are set against one another over *your* life. **What does God ask and expect of us? Does He want some measured balance between the Spirit and the flesh? Absolutely not!** The independent, selfish, pleasure-focused orientation is *dead set against* God's purposes in your life, ...and you know it! **It is stealing your time, energy, health, money, growth, potentiality and promise right out from under your nose, ...and you know it!** You are watching your life dribbling away, day by day, and yet you remain complicit with the selfish, comfort-seeking desires that hold you captive. Just for clarification, **the Bible is not against pleasure, nor does it teach that our physical bodies are evil.** They are *not*. They are the temporary “earth suits” we live in until Jesus returns. We need to take care of them responsibly, as good stewards. **God created a world full of pleasurable tastes, smells, and experiences for us to gratefully enjoy within the wise boundaries of His will.** Pleasure was meant to draw us *back* to God, not distract us *from* Him. **Sin has turned our focus inward.** We need to subdue our bodies, so they *serve us*, not *rule us* (I Cor. 9:27). Jesus came to set us free from self-absorption, but we have to *choose* to make God the center of our existence, once again. We are not *really* under the dominion of those self-centered strong desires. *We can* choose to live differently, but we keep putting on the old, wasteful habits over and over again. **How much provision for the flesh did Paul say we ought to allow, or plan for? None!! Absolutely none!** *Put off the old way of living*, along with its habitual practices. *Renew yourself* in the attitude of your world view. Then, *put on the newly-created, spiritual person, and walk in the Spirit!*