SMS 04172-611 09/19/2004
LAYING ASIDE THE OLD SELF Decatur, IL

INTRODUCTION.

A. Scripture text: **Ephesians 4:17-32**.

B. I am convinced that the most difficult part of becoming a Xian and remaining faithful as a Xian is our repentance from sin. Those who can do that will be very successful in living as God directs.

C. One of the keys to repentance is the concept of Eph. 4:17-32--the laying aside of the old self. And not just this laying aside, but the putting on of a new self in its place.

I. **THE ADMONITION (4:17-19,31).**

A. The text:

This I say therefore, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, **18** being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; **19** and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality, for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness… **31** Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

B. Many of the people in Ephesus had come out of a pagan background. They were living amid the religious activity and actions they no longer practiced. The integrity of the church is seen in the lives of its members. Xians no longer do the things they did before.

C. Paul lists how God views the actions and thoughts of those not in X. Spiritually speaking, a person's spiritual life outside of X is one that is:

1. Futile.
2. Lacking true understanding.
3. Ignorant of the things of God.
4. Lacking feeling (hardness of heart and callous).
5. Sensuality.
6. Impurity with greed.

D. The list of Eph. 4:31 is indicative of the life that is to be no more! Xians are to rid themselves of these things. The apostle lists six sins of the tongue:

1. Bitterness.
2. Wrath.
3. Anger.
4. Clamor.
5. Slander.
6. Malice.

II. **THE ARGUMENT (4:20-24).**

A. The text:

But you did not learn Christ in this way, **21** if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, **22** that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, **23** and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, **24** and put on the new self, which in *the likeness of* God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

B. "But you did not learn Christ in this way…" The Ephesian brethren did not become Xians in the same way that others became members of their religious groups. Xians are different from the world.

C. We have heard of X and been taught in X, because the truth is in X. Galatians 1:4 says by X we have been delivered from this world. X is truth (Jn. 1:17; 14:6).

(Jn 1:17) For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.
(Jn 14:6) Jesus said^ to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.
(Gal 1:4) who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,

D. In 4:22-24; a 3-point solution to being a Xian and not going back to the pre-conversion lifestyle:

1. Lay aside that which was corrupted.
   Forget the old life, lay it aside, get rid of it, and bury it.
2. Be renewed in the spirit of your mind.
   When the old self is done away, there will be a void that needs to be filled. The mind is now empty of all the old thoughts, and it needs to be filled with good things (Rom. 12:1-2).

I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. **2** And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

3. Put on the new self.

We are to use our bodies, not as instruments of sin but as vessels of righteousness (Gal. 3:27; Rom 12:1-2) which is now righteous and holy in God's sight (2:10).

(Gal. 3:27) For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

(Rom 12:1-2) I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. **2** And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

III. **THE APPLICATION (4:25-32).**

A. The text:

Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH, EACH ONE *of you,* WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another. **26** BE ANGRY, AND *yet* DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger, **27** and do not give the devil an opportunity. **28** Let him who steals steal no longer; but rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have *something* to share with him who has need. **29** Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such *a word* as is good for edification according to the need *of the moment,* that it may give grace to those who hear. **30** And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. **31** Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. **32** And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

B. Let us be honest in all things. We glorify God and show the integrity of the church when we do and say only the things that are true:

1. **Lay aside all falsehood** (4:25).
   Put away anything which is pseudo.
2. **Control your anger** (4:26).
   We may vent our anger against what is wrong, but we are not to let it degenerate into sin. Anger is a proper response to some actions, but we must use it for good, not for bad. When we control our anger by using it properly, we do not sin.
3. **Stop stealing and start working** (4:28).
   Even as Xians, there were some in the church who were still stealing. Pagan philosophy says you can do anything, so long as you get by with it. This thinking was in Ephesus and is in the world today. If we work with our hands, and do good, then we will have something to offer. We work so that we can give to others who have need.
4. **Choose your words carefully** (4:29).
   The things we say should always be sweet for the moment so that others may be built up. We are not to exalt self by putting others down. A little moral corruption will quickly spread, and this is especially true if what we say is not proper.
5. **Honor the presence of the HS in your life** (4:30).
   We can affect the mood of the HS, by our saying things we should not. We hurt ourselves and God when we commit sin. There are several ways to sin against the HS:
   a. Lust against Him (see Gal. 5:16).
   b. Resist Him (see Ac. 7:51).
   c. Lie to Him (see Ac. 5:3).
   d. Try Him (see Ac. 5:9).
   e. Insult Him--to despite unto; (see Heb. 10:28).
   f. Grieve Him (see Eph. 5:30).
   g. Blaspheme against Him (see Mk. 3:29).
   h. Quench Him (see 1Th. 5:19).
6. **Have an attitude of forgiveness** (4:32).
   God has forgiven us in X; we should learn to forgive one another.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

A. Remember Paul's three step plan for living:

1. Lay aside that which was corrupted.
2. Be renewed in the spirit of your mind.
3. Put on the new self.

B. You didn't learn to live any other way in X!

C. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.