

# Walk Worthy

of the calling with which you were called.  
Ephesians 4:1-5:21

PART TWO – WALK IN TRUTH – EPH. 4:17-32  
LESSON 14 – THE TRUTH ABOUT ETHNICITY – EPH. 4:17  
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# Ephesians 4:17

- ▶ 17 This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, 18 having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; 19 who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

# Therefore

- ▶ “This I say, therefore,” – what is the therefore there for?
- ▶ In the context of Eph. 4:1-16 we are to walk worthy of our calling in Christ Jesus and walk in unity. Therefore, as a result of walking as we are expected and empowered to walk, we will not be walking like the rest of the Gentiles, but will walk in a distinct manner. We will walk in (live in accordance with) truth.
- ▶ These next few verses tell us how not to walk, how not to live, think, act, and speak. We find here insight into how those who hate God live and think.
- ▶ Let us start then with identifying who it is we are NOT to walk like.

# Gentiles - *ethnos*

- ▶ The verse says that we are to “no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles”. The Greek word here is *ethnos*, which is translated quite obviously as “ethnic.”
- ▶ Usually when the word is used it compares ethnicities - the Jewish people to the Gentile peoples. At times the word is translated “nations”, referring to those kingdoms and nations that are not part of the nation of Israel.
- ▶ There is also a usage, determined by context, that reveals the use of this word to differentiate between the saved and the lost. Those who are in Christ are heirs to the promises made to Abraham and as such are the true Israel of God. (see Galatians 3 and especially Romans 9:6-7). In Abraham, all the nations of the world have been blessed as God’s people are called and redeemed from out of every tongue, tribe, and nation of the earth.

# Race?

- ▶ In other words, salvation does not belong to one “race” of people.
- ▶ “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.” (Romans 1:16).
- ▶ The Scripture is full of evidence that God, from before the beginning, had determined to save people from many ethnic backgrounds and cultures. The gospel was meant for both Jew and Gentiles.

# One New Man

- ▶ Here it makes it clear that there is an “ethnic” difference between the saved and the lost, the righteous and the unregenerate. Our citizenship is no longer in a Jewish state or a Gentile nation, but in heaven (Phil. 3:20).
- ▶ Our nationality has changed in Christ, and as such, there should be no distinction to us between Jew and Gentile. In Christ we are one Body, one people, one church.
- ▶ Many church planters are taught first to work up a demographic profile for those that they wish to reach with the gospel message in planting a new church. Well I have news for them – there are only 2 demographics that matter. The saved and the lost. And the saved are to preach the gospel to the lost. What demographic is the church supposed to focus on and reach out to? Those who need the gospel. Sinners. And “all have sinned” (Rom. 3:23).

# Ephesians 2:11-13

- ▶ It is past time that we in the Church of Jesus Christ learned that Jesus has indeed “broken down the middle wall of separation” that existed between Jew and Gentile. Listen to what Paul wrote earlier in Ephesians 2 about this very thing:
- ▶ Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

# Once Gentiles in the Flesh

- ▶ We, who were “once Gentiles in the flesh”, not Jewish, but Gentile by birth, we were without Christ, aliens to the Kingdom of God, strangers to God’s working in the Covenants of Scripture, being without hope and without God. We were the world, in the sense that we were not His people.
- ▶ “But now” it says, now in Christ we were we afar off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. There is the distinction. There are those who have been forgiven through the blood of Christ and those who have not. This is the only classification of ethnicity that we are to ever be concerned with now.



# Ephesians 2:14-18

- ▶ Paul continues: For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

# He is Our Peace

- ▶ He is our peace. Where once was racial enmity and wars and fighting, now we are one people. Within His church, He has broken down any walls that separate us. He has made peace between men, reconciling sinners to God, giving us peace with Him and with each other.
- ▶ We now, as one people, as one body, have access to God together through one Spirit – the Holy Spirit who indwells us. Above all nationalistic patriotism, above all commitments to our governments and lands, above all that this world has to offer us we are to understand that we who are members of the Body of Christ are part of a Kingdom, a nation, a people whose citizenship is in heaven. We belong above all else to God first, and then to each other. Our first concern, far above nationality or nationalism, should be concern and love for the church around the world wherever we find it.

# Ephesians 2:19-22

- ▶ Paul also tells us: Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

# Fitted Together

- ▶ We are fellow citizens in the household of God. He is our Father, and His house is being built upon the foundation of the gospel and the Word of God given by the apostles and prophets, of which Christ is the living cornerstone.
- ▶ And look at the wording here – “being fitted together” and “in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.” Sound familiar?
- ▶ It is no wonder then when in chapter 4 Paul instructs us concerning church growth, as we have studied, that he uses the same terminology. We are being fitted together, growing in grace, being built up in Christ.

# One People

- ▶ The church, the people of God, the redeemed – we are being fitted together from out of various and different nationalities and ethnicities.
- ▶ Though different and at times even enemies to each other before salvation, Christ in His Body has abolished the enmity, He has removed that which separated us, and we are all ONE people.
- ▶ It is indeed time that the church came to see that we are one family, one body, one church. Not at the expense of doctrine or truth, for it is the truth of sound doctrine that gives us our only true foundation for real unity. But we must look beyond our nation, our earthly citizenship, and we must stand up for the church around the world.
- ▶ Of course the best and most effective way to stand up for them is to kneel in prayer for them as we plead with God to protect, embolden, and to grow His people wherever they are.

# Every Tribe, Tongue, and Nation

- ▶ The bottom line for us today is that there is no place in the church for racism, prejudice, bigotry, national pride, or hatred for those of another ethnic group. For the only ethnicity we are to be concerned with is the difference between the saved and the lost. And in love for the lost we are to live and preach before them the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- ▶ Evangelism gives us the opportunity to watch Christ break down those walls that so often separate people. To bring from every tribe, tongue, and nation His people, our fellow members of the Body of Christ.

# A People Who Were Not a People

- ▶ 1 Peter 2:4 Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, 5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame." 7 Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone," 8 and "A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. 9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

# A Holy Nation

- ▶ “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”
- ▶ A holy nation (ethnos).
- ▶ Colossians 3:10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, 11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.



# Abraham's Seed

- ▶ Galatians 3:27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.
- ▶ One race – the human race.
- ▶ Two nations/kingdoms – the saved and the lost.
- ▶ One mission – to seek and save that which is lost so that they might be transformed from darkness to light.

# Next Lesson

- ▶ Lesson 15 – The Futility of Their Mind – Eph. 4:17