

Sermon Title: You, New!
Scripture Text: Eph. 4:20-24 (Ephesians #28)

Speaker: Jim Harris
Date: 2-6-22

Come with me, please, to Ephesians Chapter 4, as we continue our adventure through this great book of the New Testament.

On our previous visit to Ephesians, we entered the paragraph where the Apostle Paul summarizes the spectacular transformation that happens when a person comes to Christ by faith and is saved. I titled that message: "You, B.C."—because it describes what all people are like, unless they turn to Christ. And so the first main point of this paragraph was: "God's 'DON'T WALK' Sign"; He says: "Don't walk this way."

Now, just to get us into the flow of where we're going this morning, here's what we've already seen, starting at Verse 17—"So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, 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; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness" (vss. 17-19; NASB-1995, and throughout, unless otherwise noted).

I said, as we looked at that, you have to realize: That's "You, B.C."—Before Christ. So, think about what that means; now, you can flip that on its head! God has *delivered you* from "futility of mind," "being darkened in understanding," being "excluded from the life of God"; He has delivered you from "ignorance" and "hardness of heart" and being "callous" and being "given over to sensuality" and "practicing every kind of impurity" and "greediness"! So obviously, our title for today is: "You, New".

Someone suggested I really should do "You, A.D." if I did "B.C.", but "B.C." is "Before Christ"; "A.D." is "Anno Domini"—"in the year of our Lord"—it just doesn't quite work that well. However, you *have* been "crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2:20), and now you are risen again with Him (Rom. 6:4), so let's look at the "new you," if you will.

This passage for this morning gives you all the encouragement you could ever need, with a very clear instruction for how to enjoy the transformation provided for you by Jesus Christ. Right after those ugly three verses we just read comes the transition; it was both the end of last time and the beginning of our study for this time. Verse 20—"But you did not learn Christ in this way..."

The contrast is as extreme as can be. That's what you used to be, and now you're in Christ! It's completely different. You've been delivered from those things that controlled you before you came to Christ (cf. Rom. 6:6). There's a mechanism in place that you can use every day that can keep you always on the path toward greater maturity in Christ. You're about to learn how to "put off the old man" and "put on the new man."

Before we dive into that, I want to take a couple of minutes to develop the concept of what a saved person really is. Think of yourself as a *whole person*—you come as a unit. You are your physical body, and you are the *real* you—your soul, your spirit, your mind, your heart, your will, your emotions, all of that. You are *one unit*.

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When I was a young believer, I was taught that a Christian has two natures; a Non-Christian only has one nature—the old "sin nature," they called it—and then you become a Christian, and you now have a new nature added on, and you just need to learn to battle against your old sin nature.

Now, I understand the seriousness of needing to battle against sin. I certainly understand the Doctrine of Depravity, which says that we are born "dead in [our] trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1; cf. Ps. 51:5; 58:3), and we need to be "made alive" in "Christ" (Eph. 2:5). But as I studied the Scripture, I came to understand: You *do not* have two natures! "Old sin nature"—it'll preach, but it's not Biblical terminology. It's something that people have used to try to describe what our passage in Ephesians is actually saying in terms of "the old man." So, we'll get to that; I want to help you see how this all fits together.

But here is a crucial verse to remember: Second Corinthians 5:17—"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is" an improved model...No! "If anyone is in Christ, he is *a new creature*; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." In Christ, you are *all new!* You are not "old" *plus* "new"—you're *transformed!* You're something *brand new* in Christ (see Ezek. 36:26). You are not just the "old man" that you used to be. And ladies, I'm sorry: even if you're a girl, you're part of "mankind," alright? "Old man"—you can live with that; you've been putting up with it your whole life.

It's not that you are what you used to be, *plus* something added on. What you have now—what you *are* now—is a more complex being than you were before you were saved. Before you were saved, you were totally predictable! You were a "slave" to "sin" (Jn. 8:34; cf. Rom. 6:17). You are all new now, but you *still know how to sin* because there is a still-yet-to-be-redeemed part of you: your body. Read Romans 7 and 8 and you can see how we "groan" while we "wait" for "the redemption of our body" (8:23). And while we're still there, we still have this thing called "the flesh"—that's another way of describing the "old man." We still have this battle. You have this whole set of habits and attitudes that you brought along with you from your old life into the new, and you're going to have that problem as long as you live in "the body of this death" (Rom. 7:24; cf. Gal. 5:17).

Now, stay with me and you're going to get a great payoff from the words of our passage. You are now "a new creature." The New Testament says you are "spiritual" compared to being "natural" before you were saved (1 Cor. 2:14-15). In other words: You have the Holy Spirit—Romans 8, Verses 9 and 10. In this sense, *every* Christian is "spiritual" as opposed to "natural."

Romans 8:5-10 deals with those two kinds of people: those who have the Holy Spirit, and those who don't (cf. 1 Jn. 3:10a)—which is, those who are saved and those who are not. In First Corinthians Chapter 2, Verses 9 and 10, Paul contrasts the "natural" man and the "spiritual" man. These are the two kinds of people: the saved and the lost. In First Corinthians Chapter 3, Verse 1, after he has made that comparison in Chapter 2, he chides the Corinthians because they were acting *as if* they were made of flesh; and there's some very particular and carefully chosen wording in the Greek there. In Chapter 3, Verse 3 of First Corinthians, Paul says they are acting like the flesh acts. In other words,

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he's saying, "You're the 'new creature' who's acting like the old guy! That's an incongruity!" His choice of words makes it clear: You are no longer *made* of flesh, but you are still capable of *acting like* the flesh.

Now, erroneous interpretations of that passage have given rise to the wrong teaching that there are actually three categories of peoples: natural and spiritual, and then "carnal"; "carnal" is the Latinized version of the word "fleshly." And supposedly—and I was taught this in college—you can be saved, but under the control of the flesh; and your goal, then, is that you have to "make Jesus your Lord." That's *adding* something that the Bible doesn't say! You're saved or you're lost. You're new or you're old. You can't have your feet in both worlds. You *are* one or the other. You're not a hybrid.

So, what is this "old man" versus "new man" stuff? Well, you are "new" in Christ. You have—what do we see at the beginning of Ephesians?—"every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (1:3). What do we see in Second Peter? You have "everything" you need for "life and godliness" (1:3). So, spiritual growth is a matter of living more and more in accordance with the "new creature" that you actually are in Christ. There are not two of you doing battle within you! It's one "you"! You are "you," and you come as a unit. You have this memory, if you will, of what you once were; but it's one "you," having been conditioned by a certain number of years of "old man" kind of living, struggling to live your life according to a *new* set of priorities that are opposed to your "natural" tendencies.

You think that you want to take up golf—maybe you should, maybe you shouldn't. How hard can it be? It's not like baseball; they don't throw the ball at you, it's sitting still—surely, you can just swing that thing at hit it. And you start to be able to do it a little bit, and *then* you go and take lessons. And the person looks at you, and tries not to giggle, and says, "Well, first of all, hold the club differently. Okay, well, *stand* differently. Alright, *think* differently. Okay, *do this* differently." You've got these ways that you have to *unlearn*, and then learn the right way, the better way, the good way to do it.

But a lot of people get this idea that it's two different "me's" at war, but it's not. A lot of Christians don't realize it, but they believe the error known as "Dualism"—the same misconception about the Universe that the Gnostics of the First and Second Century believed; like, the spirit is good but the flesh—the physical body—is evil.

You can't make it into that kind of dichotomy. That leads to the attitude that lets *you* off the hook, because you can say, "Aw! The 'flesh' made me do it! The Devil made me do it!" And they have this idea like, there's this little devil on one shoulder and this little angel on the other shoulder, whispering contradictory instructions into your ears; and your life and your success depends on which one you choose to listen to. That's not accurate!

It's *the one* "you" in *your own mind*, choosing to exercise *your will* either to follow the old habits, or to obey the Spirit of God (cf. Gal. 5:16).

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Now, I'm not denying that it's a battle. I'm not denying that it's hard. But it's a very important matter, and it's crucial for us to understand: *You* are responsible for the choices that *you* make! *It's on you!* Christ has *saved* you, adopted you, cleansed you, washed you, justified you, sanctified you (1 Cor. 6:11); He's on the way to glorifying you (Rom. 8:30); and long the way, *you have choices* (Rom. 6:16).

Don't ever say, "I couldn't help myself!" Yes, you could. If you refuse to take *all* the responsibility for your sins by trying to pass them off on the old nature, or the Devil—"That was just the way I was raised!" "I've always been that way!" "I just speak my mind!" (They always say that after they've said something really rude, right?)—instead of admitting: *you* chose to disobey God; until *you* take responsibility, you can't grow spiritually the way you should (cf. Prov. 28:13). The responsibility is yours, whether you walk according to the "old man" or the "new man."

If somebody says, "I couldn't help myself when I did whatever it was that I did, said whatever I said," I want to ask: "Would you have done that same thing up here in front of church on a Sunday morning?" "Well, *no!*" So you *could* help yourself! Understand: *You* made that choice!

Now, if it's something *really awful*, and it's something you *really hate*, and you *hate* the fact that you *love* it, it's still crucial that you realize: *I* am making that choice! You have to call it what it is, because Christ died for *sin*; He didn't die for the way you were raised, He died for *you*—for *your sins* (Gal. 2:20).

Alright, let's go to the text—enough ranting from me. Very simple plan: Number 1—Lay Aside The Old Man. Number 2—Be Renewed In The Spirit Of Your Mind. And Number 3—Put On The New Man. Last time, in the outline for the previous sermon, I called this: Get Rid Of Your Old Man. I still love saying that; it sounds so cute. But technically, you don't "get rid of" the "old man" until you die, but we're going to "lay him aside"; we'll see what that means. More accurately, what we're after here is "putting on the new man."

The main emphasis so far is on the walk of the "old man," the lifestyle of the "old man," the manner of living of the "old man." We saw that in Verses 17, 18, and 19. Then comes the exhortation: Put Off The Old Man, Put On The New Man—and our passage is going to show us how to connect those dots. Starting in Verse 25, we'll then have The Walk Of The New Man. So, The Walk Of The Old Man, how to Put Off The Old Man and Put On The New Man, and then The Walk Of The New Man—that's where we're headed next time.

Okay, Number 1—Lay Aside The Old Man. Pick it up at that transition verse, Verse 20—"But you did not learn Christ in this way, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus..." So, this is saying, "If you're *really saved*, if you really are now embedded in the 'truth' that 'is in Jesus,' this is who it ought to be." Verse 22—"that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self"—that's literally "the old man"—"lay aside the old man, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit."

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Now, I *strongly* prefer to stay with the literal translation in this passage—"old man" and "new man"—rather than the highly psychologized word "self." The word "self" comes with a boatload of baggage of the worldly cult of "Self-ism"—looking out for yourself, self-esteem; that's *exactly* the opposite of what the Bible teaches. You don't need to learn better self-esteem, you need to learn more accurately who you are in Christ. And if you look at your own self, you'd better be discouraged, because anything good in you is from Christ (cf. Jn. 15:5; Rom. 7:18a). So, let's stay with the word chosen by the Holy Spirit.

When it comes to the "old man," we want to "lay aside the old man." "Lay aside" is a translation of a word that is used for taking off a filthy garment. Maybe you've just run a 10-K; maybe you've been working in the garden for four hours in July, and you're muddy, you're dirty, you're dusty, you're sweaty, you're stinky, you're smelly—you just want to get that gross thing off of you, and you want to get cleaned up! It's the idea that you have toward that filthy thing: you want to get rid of it. And it's always used in the New Testament in the middle voice, which means it's something you do for yourself; this is *your* responsibility, to say: "I want to get rid of this awful thing!" Nobody else can ever do it for you.

And by the way, there are three descriptions of this "old man" embedded in that verse. First, notice: The "old man" is "being corrupted." That's in a verb tense that implies that it's an ongoing thing. The longer a person waits to come to Christ, the more hardened they get, the more corrupted they get, the less pliable they become; they grow worse and worse; they're rotting, they're deteriorating. That's the idea—it's a harder and harder heart. Think of it: How many people do you know who get saved in their fifties, compared to how many get saved as a young adult or as a child? You continue to be corrupted, the longer that you remain apart from Christ.

And secondly: The "old man" acts in accordance with "lusts." "Lust" is the word that means "strong desires," and in this case: "strong desires" for the wrong things.

And then thirdly: The "old man" is driven by wrong desires which are deceitful. "Deceit" is that thing which gives a false impression. "Deceit" is used in the New Testament with "lusts" (Eph. 4:22) and "riches" (Mk. 4:19) and "sin" (Heb. 3:13) and unrighteousness (Rom. 1:29). Understand here: Sin *always lies*! Sin always tries to make you think that it's a good thing—or, at least, it's not a *bad* thing. "Everybody does it! It's something that you're *entitled* to! I mean, you get to *indulge* yourself a little bit, and everybody does it! It won't really do any harm! It's just a *little* thing! It's just this *once*! It's the path of least resistance! I could stop anytime I want to!" *Sin always lies* (cf. Jn. 8:44).

Now, here's the first part of the formula for making sure that you stay on the path toward maturity: Be on the lookout! (Matt. 26:41; cf. Prov. 4:26) The police say they have a "BOLO"—Be On The Lookout! Be on the lookout for the activity of the "old man"—that "futility of mind," that "darkened understanding," that wanting to be separate from the life of God and the people of God, that "ignorance," that "hardness of heart," that "callousness," that "sensuality," that "practice of impurity," that "greediness." So, whenever you see that coming, you start this process!

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Now, here's another way to make yourself aware of the kind of thing that you need to lay aside. You may not be as familiar with the terminology of Ephesians 4 as you are with the terminology of Galatians Chapter 5, Verses 19-21: "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident"—the "flesh" is associated with the "old man." What are those deeds?—"immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."

The word "practice" is very important there. It's a present tense verb that means: those who are *constantly* doing these things. That was "You, B.C." (cf. 1 Jn. 3:8-9). So, when you see those things: when you find yourself being angry, when you find yourself having strife with other people, when you find yourself jealous of someone else, when you find yourself desiring that naughty thing, when you find yourself wanting not to be in warm Christian fellowship—*be on the lookout!* You've just spotted the "bad guy"!

Now, those who *continually* practice such things—they're not going to "inherit the kingdom of God." If you're in Christ, you *are* going to "inherit the kingdom of God"! You are a "fellow heir" with God the Son (Rom. 8:17)! And so, those ongoing patterns are not yours. Those things are *broken* now! You're a "new creature"!

Oh, but you know yourself well enough to know: you can also relapse at any moment. So, you need to learn to "put off the old man," *stop* that old practice from rearing its ugly head again (Col. 3:9-10; 1 Pet. 4:2-3). When you realize that you are starting to head in the direction desired by the "old man," *slam on the brakes!* Do what you need to do. Start thinking about what God has done for you in Christ. "That's not me! That's the *old* me! That's not who I am!"

Romans 6:5-6. One of our people sent me this note last time and said, "Yeah, you *can* name the next sermon 'You, A.D.' because you're 'in Christ,' because you *died* with Christ!" Well, here's the passage that that comes from: Romans 6:5-6—"For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin." The "old man" was crucified with Christ. *Stop resurrecting him!* But when the lid of that casket starts to jiggle, *slam it shut!* You don't want him out! You don't want him running around! (Gal. 5:24)

Now, here's how the essence of the process of maturing in Christ works. The first step: recognize the characteristics of the "old man"—"You, B.C." The next step is to realize who you are in Christ—that you *are* no longer the "old man," you are a "new creature." Then, you can "renew your mind" to understand God's will for the "new man." Then you "lay aside the old man," you "put on the new man." It's not hard to understand what needs to be done. Where it *really is hard* is when your "B.C." habits and thought patters are *so deeply ingrained*. You need to be able to *overcome* those things. *How?* Well, this passage is going to *show* you how to do it.

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I grew up in a home with parents that were both about two-pack-a-day smokers, and they smoked for 35 years, and my dad grew to hate it so much that he quit several times. The last one finally worked, and he told me such an interesting thing. He was a fixer, doer, put-things-together, think-things-through kind of a person; and whenever he would start to think about how to solve a problem, his hand immediately went to the pocket where, for 35 years, there was a pack of cigarettes; because always, he would light a cigarette when he would start to think. Apparently he thought a lot! *Years afterward*, even when he *hated* it—and my dad wasn't a believer—even when he hated the thought of it, that reflex was still there.

Well, friends, the "old man" had a lot of time to lay down his habits. You might even have trouble sometimes seeing them for what they are. So, you need to apply this passage.

And *here* is where one of the most useful ministries of the Body of Christ comes into play. We call it "Biblical Counseling." It is one believer coming alongside another believer to help them get untangled from ungodly habits and ungodly ways of thinking and ungodly ways of reacting (cf. Gal. 6:1).

For example: If you find yourself being angry, it's almost always because you are thinking that you're not getting what you deserve, or what you want. That's almost always because you have allowed something to become an idol in your life, something that usurps the place that God should occupy; because you should be able to find your satisfaction in the Lord. And so, if you're being angry because you're being disappointed, well, maybe your expectations need to be adjusted, according to the difference between the "old man" and the "new man."

The world *completely biffs it* at this point. The world understands, people have problems. People have bad habits. People do awful things. The world understands that, but they *reject* the idea that sin and alienation from God is the *cause* for human suffering and broken relationships and addictions and all manner of evil behavior; so, they have to call it something besides what it is...so, they call it "syndrome." That sounds *so* sophisticated. "I have a *syndrome*." Or, they call it a "disease"—and then, they can work on doing behavior modification to maybe mitigate the consequences, to maybe bring the behavior a little more under control so that it doesn't cause as much of a problem. Or, they just go ahead and go the way that our world is going now: they just flip the whole moral system upside down, and they say, "Oh, no! That's not sin! That's a *good* thing!" A man can decide he's a woman, a woman can decide that she's a man—"That's *good*!" (cf. Is. 5:20)

The world will always get that wrong (see 1 Jn. 5:19). You have to get that *right*! You have to understand what it is about *you* and your battle with the "old man," or you're not going to come to the right solution; because Christ died for sin, Christ died to receive "sinners" (Lk. 5:32); and until you're willing to realize that at the core of this problem that I have is a *sin* issue, and I have a Savior who can fix that—*then* you can start to rebuild the relationships that have been damaged by the behaviors that are caused by the sinful reactions within the dynamics of the situation, etc.

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"Biblical Counseling" is nothing other than customized tutoring in discipleship. It happens when a believer who has passed through Ephesians 4:11-12 and has become equipped for a good work; so, he or she comes alongside someone else to pursue "the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). That's all it is! It's just customized tutoring in discipleship to help us move along toward maturity in Christ.

And our text here is the outline for the process. Once you've identified one of the sinister acts of the "old man," then you *strip it off* like you would that filthy, disgusting, smelly, ripped piece of clothing; and you move on to the next step. You "lay aside the old man," and then, Verse 23—"be renewed in the spirit of your mind." There it is, smack dab in the middle of this: "...and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind." Do you see what connects "lay aside the old man" and "put on the new man"? It passes right through *you* in *your mind*. It's *your* responsibility to acknowledge the sin and deal with it in a Biblical manner.

"Be renewed" is one of those present tense verbs; it is "*constantly* being renewed"; it is replacing something old with something new. In this case, it has to do with "the spirit of your mind"—*what* do you think about things, and *how* to you think about those things? It's a *continuous* process. It's a *lifelong* process. It's a *daily* process of "putting on the new man."

And by the way: this "being renewed" is in the same tense as "being corrupted" when it comes to the "old man." Like I told you: The longer a person goes without turning to Christ, the more corrupted they become. The longer a person walks with Christ, the more renewed the mind gets to be (Prov. 4:18; 2 Cor. 3:18; Heb. 5:14).

So, the key is the "mind." The basis for spiritual growth—just like, as we saw earlier in this chapter, the basis for unity—is programming your mind according to what God says is true, living according to His design. You're probably more familiar with the way that Paul said it over in Romans Chapter 12, Verse 2. He said: "Do not be conformed to this world..." That word "conformed" has the idea of being pressured from the outside. "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed"—that's the word *metamorphōō*, from which we get "metamorphosis," which is a renewal from the inside out—Don't let the world squeeze you into its mold, but "but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

Once you "renew your mind," *then* God's will begins to be evident, unfolded by the way that you live! You have to choose between giving in to pressure from the outside—being "conformed"—or building a more substantial pressure from the inside, so you're "transformed" to resist that pressure from the outside (cf. 1 Jn. 2:14b; 5:4).

So, when the "old man" shows his face—well, *slap him!* Strip away his influence as definitively as you know how (Rom. 8:13); and then, ponder what it is about your thinking that needs to be refreshed and renewed. You Lay Aside The Old Man—Verses 20 through 22. You Be Renewed In The Spirit Of Your Mind—Verse 23.

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And *now*, Put On The New Man—Verse 24. "And put on the new man, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth." Do you notice that phrase "has been created"? You've been made a "new creature"! You didn't get an add-on, after-market accessory; *you've been changed!* You are a *new creation in Christ!* So, *put that on!* (cf. Gal. 5:16)

"Lay aside the old," "Put on the new"—those are the opposites here. Just as when you *can't wait* to get out of that disgusting, corrupted, filthy thing, you want to "put on" something new. What appearance do you want to present to anybody who sees you? Do you want to be dressed up like that stinky, filthy "old man," or do you want to "put on the new man"?

Now, that's a *crucial point* about the "new man"! This is who you *really are!* So, you need to be continually slapping down the "old man"—turning your back on him, walking away, stripping it away, renewing the patterns of your mind, and building in systematic obedience to God, so that you tear down those patterns of the "old man." That's what "putting on the new man" is all about!

Do you see the "old man" lurking around in your thoughts, in your desires? Stop! Put him away like a filthy garment you can't wait to take off. Then, replace those sinful thoughts with truth from God's Word. You have probably built in a *reflex* to react in certain situations certain ways; we all have. You have to make a *choice* to reject that, and to act like the "new man" that you are in Christ. It's *always* your choice how to act! You *can* obey what it says: "Walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called" (Eph. 4:1).

Now, if you do that, "How long is it going to take for me to change that habit?" Well, how many times have you done it wrong? If you do something a few hundred times, you're going to start to find that you have new habits and new desires that replace old habits and old desires. And let me tell you something: Along the way, the more serious you become about walking with Christ, the more of a *holy hatred* that you have for "You, B.C.", you're going to come to the time when the thing that you hate the most is true. There's going to be the time that you realize: "I'm still in love with that part of the 'old man.'" You need to learn to *hate* what God hates (Ps. 97:10; Prov. 8:13) so that you can love what God loves. And so, you stop and you repent and you confess to God: "God, I not only hate that evil thing; I *really* hate the fact that I *love* that evil thing!" You have to get honest about it! You have to be willing to let God do in you what He wants to do: to put Christ on display to a world, through you (Phil. 2:15).

You see, "You, New"—you can grow, day by day, to be more and more like your beloved Savior (2 Cor. 3:18). Put Off The Old Man, Renew The Way You Think, Put On The New Man. *And*, if you need help to get unstuck from something—well, that's where the Body of Christ comes in! (Gal. 6:2; cf. Ecc. 4:9-10) We *belong* to each other! We *need* each other! We need to connect with each other. We all face the same battles (1 Pet. 5:9). They just come with different labels, maybe different circumstances for different people.

Sermon Title: You, New!
Scripture Text: Eph. 4:20-24 (Ephesians #28)

Speaker: Jim Harris
Date: 2-6-22

But, God has given you everything you need to know to daily "put on the new man." That's what we want! That's all that we're about! When you think about it, you're not a slave to how you were raised. You're not a slave to the worst habit you've ever had. You've been set free from bondage (Jn. 8:36; Rom. 8:2)—slavery to death (Heb. 2:15)! Now, Jesus is your Lord, you are His slave (Eph. 6:6). You have the most *perfect*, loving, benevolent Master, who "gave Himself" (Gal. 1:4; 2:20) to satisfy God's *appropriate* wrath against you and your "old man" (see Eph. 2:3; Titus 3:3) so that you can be His adopted child (Gal. 4:5)—justified, sanctified, on your way to being glorified (Rom. 8:30).

Let's pray:

Father, how we thank You for the victory that is ours in Christ. Father, the "old man" was crucified with Him, yet we seem so willing so often to let him out of his grave. Father, every person here battles with sin. Every person here can be encouraged, helped. May we be that influence on each other. Father, teach us that it is always right thinking that comes before right actions. So, teach us to hate what You hate, to love what You love, and to know what You desire for Your people to be like in the world. You've taught us that we stand in Your grace in Christ. Father, please, if there is someone here today not standing in Your grace, not yet having been set free from slavery to the flesh, to the "old man," please, draw that one to Yourself, that he or she might call out to You today for forgiveness, for restoration; and they could be born again, forgiven, made into a child of God. Have Your way with us to use us for Your glory, we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.