

**Bible Text:** Ephesians 1-4  
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Well, grab your Bibles and let's go to Ephesians but I want you to go to Ephesians 1 before we get to the particular text that I want us to look at tonight and do a quick run through of the foundation which is absolutely essential that you and I grasp if you're going to understand the exhortations of this practical end of the book, and I think that's one of the great errors in our preaching is when we lose the context and the flow of the context of truth.

And as we look at Ephesians 1, just running through it quickly, we come down to verse 4 of chapter 1, and you're going to have to keep up with me, all right? Chapter 1, verse 4, "just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world," chose us to what end? The last part of verse 4, "that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love." What a powerful statement Paul starts out here.

The song we just sang speaks of God having always loved us. Now don't misunderstand the songwriter. He's not saying God has always had this universal love for mankind. That is true but that's not what that song is saying. That song is saying God had a special unique favor and love marked out for the ones he chose from the foundation of the world. Some struggle with that. They wrestle with that. They don't like that. I'm sorry, you've got to bow your knee before the truth of God's word and let God be God. He's not subjecting himself to your narrow shallow dictates or understanding. He explodes your understanding. He bursts out of every box you put him in. I've said this many times to you, 37 years of expositional preaching, you've let me study a lot over these years and I still marvel over him. I'm still learning marvelous new things. I'm still having to repent of old caricatures and viewpoints. Isn't it a fun journey, though, to do that?

He goes on in verse 5, chapter 1, "He predestined us," marked out beforehand, "to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself." Why did he do this? "According to the kind intention of His will." What he's saying is because in his will he chose to be kind to us.

He's doing all this, verse 6, "to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace." So in time and space history, to those he chose, by the word, to those he predestined in order that he might get

special glory through them, there was a time, a point in time and space history when he had to come and actually achieve that substitutionary atonement, pay that judicial price necessary to free us from the sin and guilt we owe to the law of God.

Verse 8, "He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight." This salvation we have is a salvation that has been lavished upon us. We are saved according to the riches of his grace, listen, not out of the riches of his grace. He didn't just go into the riches of his grace and pluck out a little out of it and say, "I'm going to give you a little of it." No, it means according to the God-sized power and wisdom and beauty he's capable of, he dumped the whole thing on you to make sure he secured you in your salvation for eternity. You have a God-sized salvation. You have a God-sized security because you didn't save yourself, he saved you. What a marvelous thing. Don't you feel deeply deeply sad for people and pastors who skim over these things, afraid of them? How they rob the children of the treasures. How they rob the children of the treasures that are ours.

Verse 9, "He made known to us the mystery of His will," that is, he made known to us how he would bring about our justification, how he would bring about freeing us from sin and guilt. That's through the death of his Son. That was a mystery to the saints of the Old Testament. They didn't see it clearly like we can see it on this side of the cross.

He continues on there, I'm in verse 9, "He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention." Why did he make known through us this Christ that we could believe on him? It was according to his kind intention. He intended to do it for us for his own glory.

Then verse 10, "with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined," marked out beforehand, he uses that word again, "according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will." Verse 12, "to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory." He's talking mainly about Jews who are converted there. They were the first to get the message.

Then verse 13, "In Him, you also," you Gentiles, that is, "after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation," now here is the outward evidence that you are one of those he chose, you are one of those he predestined according to the kind intention of his will. How do I know I'm one? Because after listening to the message of the Gospel of your salvation, "having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise." Now, you can amplify that. I think for a better understanding, you're actually repenting and believing on Christ is the proof of his sealing you of the Holy Spirit. Listen to me, because without the Holy Spirit, you would never know your sin to repent of it. Even the strongest Arminian who believes that salvation is God does his part and we do our part and then we get saved, even the strongest Arminian will say to you unless the Spirit of God convicts and draws a man will not be saved. So even they, they kind of teach against their own system, if you will, but even they would say that. No one is saved unless the Spirit convicts them. Well, here's my question: is the Spirit up to you? Is he

your slave? Do you dictate to him or is he sovereign? Is he God the Holy Spirit? If he is, he's sovereign, he does what he wills. By the way, listen to me, he can't do any otherwise. If God the Holy Spirit yielded to anyone other than to himself, he is no longer God because his will is always perfect and right and good and righteous and holy. So this is this great foundation.

Verse 14, speaking of the Spirit, "who is given as a pledge." This Spirit that is in us, that as we read the word of God, even the word of God contradicts our conclusions, he helps us to repent. He helps us to grasp. He helps us to stand on stuff we didn't believe was right or true. That's the Spirit working in us.

Verse 14, he's in us. He is this "pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory." Now again, all of this is to the end that God would be glorified.

Then he says in verse 15, "I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints." As I've told you 100 times, faith in Christ and love for a true church always always always goes together. If you run into somebody who seems that they are brilliant in the faith, they know doctrine wonderfully, they have a passion for God, they can weep over the truth, but they have a very weak or casual conviction and commitment to a local church, there is something faulty in their faith. You cannot love and adore the head and reject the body. I've given you the crude illustration before of a man walking down the street and he's just got this bloody head in his arms. Someone says, "What in the world? What is that?" He said, "That's my wife's head. I love her head but I don't like her body." That's just gross and vile. Well, it's gross and vile for you to tell me you love Jesus but you're not wholly dedicated to his church. He was dedicated to his church enough to die on the cross for her. You ought to be dedicated enough to live for it. My point is, there is at least the germ of love and passion and devotion to the church if you love the Christ who is the head of the church and who saves the church.

He says in verse 16, "I don't stop giving thanks for you," then the rest of this chapter he talks about how he prays. Now listen, here's what he's saying, here's how Paul is praying, he said, "I want you to grasp all the glory that is in your salvation." That's what he's actually praying. "I want you to get it. I want you to increasingly just glory in all Christ did to save you." Church, are you listening to me? If we increasingly grasp and glory in the wonders, the great power wisdom and beauty of this salvation, we will live for him better. Are you hearing me? That's the way you get people to live for Christ, you get them to glory in and be humbled by, marvel over the salvation he has given, then your people live and serve in the gratitude and the overflow of the gratitude of what he's done for us.

Then we get to chapter 2, verse 1, and it's like Paul says, "Let me go back again. Let me go back again and just show you where he has brought you." Verse 1, "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience." First of all in verse 1, he says you were dead, spiritually dead before God in trespasses and sins. In your walk, you were deviant in your

walk. You walked according to the course of this perverted wicked world. That's what you were. He's writing to Gentiles and they lived like Gentiles before they were saved. Then thirdly, he said not only are you dead and deviant, number three, you were demonized. You walked verse 2, middle part, "according to the prince of the power of the air," that's the devil. Not only were you dead, deviant, and demonized, fourthly, you were disobedient, the last part of verse 2, "of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience." Then verse 3, you are also deranged. You were dead, deviant, demonized, disobedient and deranged. That's how bad you were.

Verse 3, "Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest." We were damned also. Dead spiritually. Deviant in that we were depraved and walked a depraved lifestyle. Demonized, spiritually there was a demonic oppression in our lives. We were disobedient to everything that mattered to God. Verse 3, we indulged in the desires of the flesh and the mind. There was a derangement type syndrome that we were walking in. And lastly he says by nature you were children of wrath, even as the rest. That means we were damned. He says naturally speaking – listen to me – either you are right or God is right. If you're capable of pulling off turning to Jesus in your own strength and ability, then you are not by nature a child of wrath, by nature there is something good in you. If you had enough goodness and enough virtue to turn to Christ on your own, but you didn't. Paul said, "You were stinking dead." A dead man can't turn. A dead man can't believe. A dead man can't repent. Go down to the funeral home, all a dead man can do is be dead.

That's your condition, Paul says, but look at the wisdom, the power and the beauty of God, but what a grand glorious conjunctive word, but, verse 4, chapter 2, "But God, being rich in mercy." God has this capacity to take the most miserable in his arms and give them what they could never earn or deserve. He's a God rich in mercy, "because of His great love with which He loved us," past tense verb. Did you get that? While you were dead. While you were deviant. While you were demonized. While you were disobedient. While you were to deranged. And while you were damned and could do nothing about it, God loved you and chose to have mercy toward you and make you his own. He's not writing to the world. He's not writing to mankind. He's writing to a redeemed church. The context is everything.

Verse 5, "even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ." God acted on you and in your behalf and within you and made you alive, and one of the first feeble signs of new spiritual life, you know, when a baby is born, you know I've been told when the doctors spank them and all this stuff and it makes them cry and it clears their lungs, and it's kind of a sad thing the first thing that happens to a baby is it screams in pain or something. But I don't know if they still do that anymore but that's what they did, you know, that's what you always saw in movies back in old days when I was growing up. I liked it better when the men didn't go back there. We did those Lamaze classes. Y'all still do those Lamaze classes? Some freak feminist thought those things up, I guarantee it. And I was glad to be there with Pam and it was special from that perspective, but she'll be the first to tell you I was no help in the delivery room. "Pam,

watch that graph right there." "I'm dying!" "Watch that graph. It's going way up high right now." I had no idea what I was doing and then, bless their hearts, some sweet nurses, I think Shirley was there actually. She's a sweet nurse. Are you still a nurse? Kind of, okay. I didn't know if you had quit or not or retired or not. But these sweet nurses come in and do you know what? These ladies have helped birth thousands of babies. They knew exactly how to help her. Do you know what I found out? I could do best, I could do this really well, is ice chips. I could administer the ice chips and that's all I could do. I don't know what got me exactly off on that, but where am I in my text?

He made us alive, but when that first baby comes into the world, there is just something, noises, cries, that lets you know, hey, it's alive. Do you know what the first aspects that God has birthed you? By the way, you can't birth yourself. You see, here's what bothers Baptists, we are so used to manipulating and pragmatically scheming everything we do, we can't accept God doing anything in the Spirit that is outside of our control. Mom, you listen to your preacher tonight: if God is going to save your children, he'll do it in a way you can't understand. If you get him saved, you'll get him to hell, but if God saves him, he'll be saved forever.

Do you know what the first signs of new spiritual life are? Repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ. You might not even understand it. I remember so clearly when I was converted in my car driving back home, or driving to college rather, to Middle Tennessee State University. I remember so well in my car just beginning to grasp, "Oh, I love Jesus but I'm not sure all it means. I know he loves me." Then just beginning the tiniest ways to realize, "Oh, but how unworthy I am. What a sinner I am. How wrong I am." And both of those just kept growing and growing and growing over the next several weeks. That was my birth cries. The Bible says, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Do you know what that is? It's a continuous action. It means you become one that looks to him and nothing else to keep you saved, to save you and keep you saved. It means you have a constant communion with him as the only one who can keep you.

Now, Paul is laying all of this out. He goes on. We are about through with the warm-up, all right? Now, verse 5, he "made us alive." Verse 6, "and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Now think about that. You are right now seated in heaven. In chapter 1, Paul told the Ephesians, "God chose you and predestined you before you were saved." In chapter 2, he says, "and God has put you in heaven before you die." Did you get that? God chose you before you were born and he has already put you in heaven before you die. You're just waiting to catch up with the eternal decrees of God. When you die, you're just catching up with what has already been settled and set. You are in heaven in Christ.

Now, you can never get in heaven in you. You can't go to heaven in the priest, by going to the Catholic Church and taking the priestcraft thinking that somehow grace is administered through this human priest and somehow going through those motions, you get into heaven. That's not going to work. By the way, you're not going to go to heaven in the Baptist evangelist either. You don't go to heaven because you jump through the hoops some evangelist told you to jump through, which changes every 10 or 15 years when they

find a new twist on getting people to do stuff. You only get there if from your heart you have believed on Jesus Christ.

Well, he said we are already seated with Christ in heavenly places. Look at verse 7. Why? Why Paul? These things are just unfathomable. They are glorious beyond compare. Incomparable. It's just too awesome to take in. The love here, the grace here, the mercy here, the power to bring us, the wisdom to have thought it up, the beauty of how it all works is just overwhelming. Why Paul? Why? I'm glad you asked. Verse 7, chapter 2, "so that in the ages to come He might show," I think you could amplify that in the context of what he's talking about and say, might show you off. Have you ever seen anybody that wanted to show off their children? Have you ever seen anybody that wanted to show off their grandchildren? God likes to show off his children. He saved you so that he could get you in heaven one day and "He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." In other words, you are going to be a trophy of grace in heaven that God can just show and shine to all the universe, "Look what my wisdom, my power and my beautiful capacity to conform. That one should be rotting and burning in a just hell and they are here as a joint heir with me, the Son of God. Isn't my grace wonderful?" He's going to show you off. We are his showpiece of what he can accomplish.

Verse 8, "For by grace you have been saved through faith," here he tells us again, "that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast." What a statement. If in one tiny tiny tiny way you did something that merits you earning heaven, then you have a little to boast about, but this text says no boasting, none whatsoever. It's all the work of Christ.

Verse 10, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works." Now that word "created" is the Greek equivalent to the Hebrew *ex nihilo* which is used in Genesis for the creation story. In other words – now listen now – when God makes you one of his own, it is a miraculous divine work equal to, if not greater, than anything he did when he spoke the worlds into existence out of nothing. As a matter of fact, is it not a greater work because when he spoke the worlds into existence out of nothing, that's half the job of taking you out of rotten, justly deserved wickedness and making you fit for heaven. That's a bigger longer work than just bringing something out of nothing. You see, the new creation, all of us in the church age, is greater than the first creation. The first creation is glorious. Look at a sunset. Look at a sunrise. Look at the stars in the heavens. Look at the mountains. Look at the grass. Look at the rivers. Look at the animals. There is glory in that. The glory of God is sure, but not even to be compared with the glory of God saving, building, preserving, sanctifying, and one day glorifying, his church. That's the greatest glory of God. That shows off more of what God can do than anything he has chosen to do. We are his workmanship. We show what he can do.

Verse 10 again, chapter 2, "created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand." God has ordained before he saved you that he would save you and so change you that you would begin to do kinds of works that now are rightfully defined as good from the holy and good mind of God. You did a lot of stuff before you thought was

good, but it wasn't really for God and God's glory and God's purposes, really it was just about you doing good stuff so people would think good things about you. But once you're saved, that begins to be reversed. Now you do good things in God's church, the good place, so that God will get the glory and honor and praise, and you didn't have the capacity to even begin to think that way before you were saved. He ordained beforehand that this change would occur in you. Now we still struggle with that, do we not? We can get into the church and we can fall into wanting to use the church for our own advancement and glory. That's where we have to be repenters and get that repented back down and say, "No, it's about your honor. It's about your glory. I do good works now in your church, through your church, for your glory." He prepared beforehand that I should be that way.

The rest of chapter 2, he talks about how now whether you are a Jew or a Gentile, he has broken down that separation. That doesn't mean a lot to us but in this culture, that was huge. Jews were not the special elitists, and then Gentiles get saved, but they are kind of under Jewish converts. No, no, no, all equal in Christ Jesus.

Chapter 3, he talks about his own calling and how God called him specifically to go and tell the Gentiles that they are joint heirs. Of course, the Ephesians are Gentiles and they are joint heirs with Jesus Christ. Then he prays again at the end of chapter 3, again, that they would grasp and glory in and comprehend or apprehend all the wonders of their great salvation.

Then when we get to chapter 4, he gets really down to brass tacks where he begins to tell them about all the ways you ought to live now since all of this is true. Do you know what? I gave up in the pastorate years ago. Here's what I gave up on: I gave up on beating Baptists who don't know Jesus into living like they do know him. I just gave up on it. I thought, "I can't do this anymore." And basically said, "God, I give up," and God pretty much looked at me and said, "Well, good. I've been trying to get you here for a long time. Why don't you just preach the truth and let me save my church and let me keep my church and let me sanctify my church. You're a human instrument but I'll be doing it through you." It doesn't mean we shouldn't have structures and strategies. Those are biblical, those are helpful, but we have to resolve in our heart this is God's work. Quit propping it up. That's why here at Grace Life we don't reinvent ourselves every 5 to 7 years with a new emphasis and a new approach and new ideas. This book is 2,000 years old. There is nothing new in it, but everything in it is true. Pastors don't last who do that. They are usually looking for a place to go in 7 or 8, 10 or 12 years, because they run out of soap. Jesus doesn't run out of soap because he's not soap.

Then we get to chapter 4 where we are now and Paul talks about him being the prisoner of the Lord, and he begins to implore them about all the ways they are to live and all the ways that they are to walk and all the ways they are to function. I love it when he gets down to verses 9, 10 and 11, specifically verse 11. He talks about how God has structured this great, glorious, wondrous thing called the church. He has a way he wants it to be structured and a way he wants it to function.

Verse 11, "He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists." Primarily those offices have passed away. I wouldn't say the office of evangelist, necessarily has, though I think I'm troubled by some of what is called evangelism today. But certainly apostles and prophets has passed away. They were in the initial stages before the completion of the New Testament. They helped get the thing started. Then as you go chronologically in Paul's writing in the epistles, you start seeing Paul strongly emphasize pastors and elders and barely emphasize the offices of prophet and apostle. As a matter fact, he doesn't really emphasize it at all except for his own apostleship. That's because chronologically there is a thing called progressive revelation. As you start with Genesis and go chronologically through the Old Testament into the New Testament, you come to the Gospels talking about the ministry of Christ on earth, the climactic aspect being centered in Christ dying, buried, rose again for his church, and then you get to the book of Acts where the Spirit of God is poured out so that the Gospel message these men will preach will be effectual and God begins to save his churches, you have prophets, you have apostles, and you have great works going on, and then as things begin to settle down, those offices pass off, the New Testament is established and then you have pastor/teachers that take the established record of the apostles and prophets, the Bible, and use it as the once for all settled faith of the saints of God, and that's where we are today.

So he says that's the structure. God has given you pastor/teachers. Why? Verse 12, "for the equipping of the saints for the work of service," this is verse 12 of chapter 4, "to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ." "Don't be children any longer," he says in verse 14. "All this has been done for you and God has even given you men to preach to you, and the Spirit to enable you to do right and walk right. So grow up. Don't be children any longer tossed here and there by waves and carried about every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men and deceitful scheming."

The men of the church need to grow up. Grow up. Be a man. Sometimes you men have to look at your wives and say, "Sweetheart, I love you and I'd die for you but we are not chasing that guy, we are not chasing this ministry, we are not chasing that one. We're going to be settled and firm right where we are. We are not going to chase this wind of doctrine. We are not going to chase this new thing. We're going to stay. I'll tell you what, we're just going to stay anchored in truth." I like that phrase. That's just where we're going to stay. God has made ladies to be more emotional. Thank God for that. They are better nurturers. They are better caregivers. I don't care what you say, you can argue and you can just be a raging feminist all you want, tell me, "Well, it doesn't matter, they're all the same." Give me a female nurse every time over a male nurse. They just care differently. They just feel differently. The downside of that sometimes ladies, emotions can get over here, and a new guy, a new lady comes in with their Bible study, their emotions go over here. They are just more prone to that so men have to be the heads of their houses spiritually and decide we're going to stay on the truth. Now, let me say something. I'm not saying that ladies can't mature to have discipline and principled decision making. Godly ladies can do that, there are just not a lot of those.



So don't be children any longer. We've got this glorious, wondrous, unbelievable salvation and God has even given you pastor/teachers to help mature you to be solid, so don't be children chasing the next cool exciting thing in church life. That's my modern translation of what he's saying.

Now, are you listening to me? All this stuff is nothing new. You see, in Paul's day Paul would get a church established and then the doggone Gnostic heretics would come in and say, "Here's the new thing! Y'all got to learn this new thing because we're Gnostics." Gnostics basically teach a few elitists have the real understanding of God's will and the rest of you don't have it and you have to listen to them. So these Gnostic heretics would come in and steal Paul's congregation; get them thinking, "Well, Paul didn't give us everything. These guys know special insights nobody else knows." And so they would run over there and chase that. Then, doggone, a little bit later, another group, the Judaizers would come in and say, "Yes, Paul is right but he left you short. There is something else. You've really got to keep the old Jewish law and Jesus to really be right with God." So they would go back and chase the law some. The book of Hebrews is all about that. The book of Galatians is about Paul attacking and undermining that. Then he had the general worldliness of the Gentile culture which all of them came out of, and it was filled with sexual immoralities and promiscuity and the lust of the flesh, and that would creep in and people would start perverting grace, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness. He had to fight that movement.

So that's why he is saying here, this is the same stuff today. Different names but the same kind of stuff floating through our churches today. This church runs over here, then they run over there. Paul says, "Grow up! Grow up. Don't be children chasing everything that comes along." Take a child to an amusement park, "I want to do this and I want to do this and I want to do this!" That's okay, they are children but you men need to be men of God. Stable. Solid. Mature. Philemon like. Remember this morning? Philemon like. Paul knew he could count on Philemon and you guys really are those kind of men and I am humbled and I am grateful to God for you.

"So we affirm together," I'm in verse 17, "with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind." Remember, that means they our empty minds. The world is full of people who have empty heads, he says. You're not to live, child of God, like you've got an empty head.

Verse 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; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness." You want to look at today's culture and can I just say this at the risk of upsetting some of you? There is a wing of the Democratic Party that's aptly described by that right there. Listen to it, "given themselves over to sensuality." That means whatever impulses my lower base animal nature wants to chase after, I'm going to go for it. I'm going to live in that sin and that impurity. "With greediness." Have you seen their spirits? Have you seen their countenance? Have you heard their words? Greed is, "I

want it! I want to do it! I want to live this way and you had better help me and you'd better pay for it and you'd better celebrate it or you are bigots and you're intolerant!" That's the spirit of our age. Do you know what Paul is saying? He's saying that's what you used to be. You are no longer that, though. That's the way the Gentiles walk but a child of God doesn't walk like that anymore. Now you're not perfect immediately and that's why he's writing this to this Gentile church because they are still learning and growing and repenting and trying to get on track with what a child of God looks like.

Verse 20 of chapter 4, "you did not learn Christ in this way." When Christ saved you, Christ didn't teach you to be darkened in your understanding, have a hardened heart, be callused in your conscience. Christ didn't teach you to give over to sensuality and practice impurities with greed. That didn't come from Jesus, that's your old life.

Verse 21, "if indeed you have heard Him," remember I spent a lot of time there. I know you've heard a lot about him but have you heard him? "My sheep," Jesus said, "hear my voice." That means he has saved you. If you have heard him, he has really converted you. You are really his. You really belong to him. He didn't say if you jump through some religious hoops at the end of the service. He said if you've heard him. There is a difference in those two things. Now, you may have done something at the end of the service and I'm not saying all that's wrong but it needs to be more than just that.

Verse 22, "that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self," notice this taking off and putting on. You have laid aside the old self, that old Gentile life, that old lower based animal nature lifestyle, "being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit." Verse 23, "and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind." Verse 24, "and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth." It's a beautiful picture here. He says the new self. I love this picture. It's like don't quote me on this because I'm just saying this for the sake of illustration, it's like there is a new you, a true new you outside of you, and that true new you is righteous and holy. It's just like God. And that's the true new you and when you get to heaven, God is going to put that on you and take the old you out. But now you are to be striving in the process of putting more of that on and taking more of the old off.

And that's a jet tour of where we are so far. So all you get tonight is the introduction to my next message but it's so important. I'm ready. The notes are there but right before I got up, I thought, "I want to run through this again and just throw it out there." That's the awesome foundation stone of all these practical instructions. Are you listening to me, church? Because if you haven't experienced the glories of the conversion he's talking about, you cannot live out the exhortation's he's about to give you. It's always in that order. We need to stop trying to make goats act like sheep. You've got to become a sheep, then it's your nature to act like sheep. My question to you is: are you one of his sheep? Is there evidence in your heart and in your life he has, indeed, convicted you of your sin? He has, indeed, made clear to you you are wanting before the bar of holy justice and that only Jesus can cure that want, only Jesus can satisfy the just demands against you by a holy God. Do you know what you've got to do, sir? Every morning when you wake up, every night when you go to bed, and every moment in between, you've got to cast your

heart of faith toward God and his Son Jesus Christ and say, "O Father, my trust is him, because if it was up to me, I'm sunk. I'll never make it."

Are you his?