

### Is CHANGE enough?

What is the biggest change you have ever made in your life?

What event in your life has changed you the most?

What changes have you made that have impacted you the most?

Marriage. Divorce. Death. New baby. New house, job, church, diet.

We're surrounded by changes in our lives, and today I want to ask – "Is change enough"

Last week we talked about the power of God working in us, and through us, and out of us – the power of God to change us. We talked about our own powerlessness to make the changes that are needed to follow Jesus – that we need the power of God in us. That we need to be people where Jesus dwells, where the power of his Holy Spirit is at work in us to grasp the love of Jesus so we can change to be people who glorify God. In verse 17, Paul says:

*You must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking...*

### OLD and NEW

Paul is saying that change is essential for the Christian life. But it's more than just change. It's a complete putting off of the old and putting on the new. In verse 22 he says:

**22***You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to **put off** your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23to **be made new** in the attitude of your minds;*

**III** – Many people these days have heart operations. A new valve. A stent. Bypass surgery. These are operations that keep people alive. And usually, change is needed – change in diet, change in lifestyle, change in medicines. But sometimes, these operations and changes, aren't enough. Sometimes people need a heart transplant. A whole new heart. Sometimes the old cannot be fixed.

What Paul is saying here is that we need a NEW self. We don't just need to make a few changes in our lives. We can't just tweak a few things and patch up the rough bits. We need a new mind. A new self. And this is what Jesus offers for our life. Not just a change, but a heart transplant.

When we make that decision to follow Jesus, this is what it is – a commitment to a new mind and a new self. We put off the old self, and we put on the new self that Jesus gives us. Verse 24:

*to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

But this is not easy. It's not easy to put off our old self and put on a new self. It's not easy to allow God to make that transplant in our life.

**III** – Think about the clothes you wear. At the moment, we're preparing to move house, and part of that means I'm going through my closet. I'm getting rid of old clothes. When you update your clothes, you don't throw the whole lot out and buy a whole new wardrobe! You throw out some, and buy some new ones. Then you throw out some more, and you buy some others. After 20 years, you probably still have a few things that haven't changed, and lots of things that have changed. (e.g.?)

In our lives, this is the journey that Paul wants to take us on. Allow Jesus to transform your mind and then, with that new mind, start working through the closet. Start asking God to help you make those changes in every part of your life. Start sorting through the old attitudes and thinking that was unhelpful and ungodly and unholy, and start replacing those attitudes with the holy and righteous attitudes of Jesus.

So Paul takes us through a few attitudes and behaviours to help us start sorting out our closet. I'm going to focus on just 3 today?

## OFF and ON

### 1. Truth

*25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body.*

No more falsehood. Speak the truth in love, as it says in verse 15. We are all members of one body. Therefore, speak truthfully to each other in a loving way. When someone wrongs us. When someone treats us poorly, to lovingly speak to them about it, rather than harbor a grudge against them. And when we sin against someone, to confess that to them and work to restore our relationship.

**III** – I remember one of our members here coming to me in the middle of all the changes for the building work we've just finished. They were concerned. And they said to me: "I'm not complaining. But I'm concerned about some of these changes. To be honest, I don't like "this" and "this". Can we talk about it?"

And so we talked about it. They came to a better understanding of what was happening, and I came to a better understanding of their concerns. Both of us were changed by that simple conversation. It was a blessing. God was glorified through us speaking the truth in love to one another.

You see, it's that honesty about our lives together that Paul is encouraging. We can't think the way we used to when we lived without Jesus. God now comes first. Our relationship with Him and with each other is important. And everything we do should be done to build up those relationships.

### 2. Anger

*26 "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 and do not give the devil a foothold.*

Anger is a normal human emotion. Even God displays anger, righteous anger, at sin. Starving children, sexual abuse, corrupt governments – these things should make us righteously angry. But when that anger is not righteous, it often leads us into sin.

We're angry at someone, so we don't talk to them - resentment.

We're angry at someone so we speak poorly of them – malice, gossip.

We're angry at someone so we hit them – violence.

Paul wants us to put on a new self that releases that anger. That deals with it. We don't let the sun go down without dealing with those anger issues. When we're angry, we need to act in a godly way. Not like the old self – in a way that just makes us feel good. But in a godly way, that **resolves** our anger. To talk about our issues with each other in a loving way. Otherwise – we give the devil a foothold. This is serious. Anger is like propping the door open to Satan with a brick and letting him sneak in to our lives and feed that anger.

### 3. Speech

Let's jump to verse 29:

***29**Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.*

Unwholesome talk isn't talking just about swearing and bad language. It's talking about the **content** of what we say.

The new self is about being a part of a community – the body of Christ. We are to ONLY speak words that build up others according to their needs. Slander, malice, gossip – all of these sorts of ways of speaking are the OLD way. The OLD self. The new self isn't about making ourselves feel better by putting others down. The new self is about building up others.

Here's a great question to ask before we speak: Is what I am about to say going to build this person up according to **their** needs?

We have to KNOW the needs of other people in order to speak helpfully to them. Where are they at? What challenges are they facing? What do they need to hear now in their life? Do they need encouragement? A challenge? Do they need someone to listen to them?

Instead, we often want to be helpful by telling someone how we think they should be running their life, or telling them what they're doing wrong. And there may be times to lovingly tell people if they're going down a bad path in life. But when we open our mouths, we need to be thinking NOT about what WE want to say, but about what THEY need to hear.

If we want to speak helpful words to people, we need to listen to each other.

So, with a new mind, there are 3 changes of clothes to think about. Truth. Anger. Speech.

### GRIEF and LOVE

And here is Paul's summary to tie it all together – from verse 30:

***30**And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. **31**Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every*

*form of malice. 32Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*

**We can walk in grief, or we can walk in love.** This is just fantastic wisdom for us. Grief or love. When we put aside the bitterness and rage and anger and brawling and slander and malice, and we start to experience the new life of kindness and compassion, of forgiveness and love.

What is causing grief in your life?

What grief have you caused in the lives of others?

What lies have you told?

What anger have you held on to?

What destructive words have you used?

5:1

*1Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children 2and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

The way of love is the way that releases us from the foothold Satan can have. The way of love and the forgiveness that we find at the cross of Jesus, releases us from the need to hold on to the things that destroy our relationships.

It's not an easy journey. And it's not always a short journey. But it is a necessary one. To recognise the things we are holding on to in our lives that are not helpful – like anger – and to know that Jesus has forgiven us for every one of the sins WE have committed. And to then love **others** as Christ has loved us. To forgive. To let go of anger. To to speak helpful words. And to speak the truth.

Let's pray.

**1**As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. **2**Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. **3**Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. **4**There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; **5**one Lord, one faith, one baptism; **6**one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. **7**But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. **8**This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people."

**9**(What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? **10**He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) **11**So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, **12**to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up **13**until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. **14**Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. **15**Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. **16**From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

### **Instructions for Christian Living**

**17**So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. **18**They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. **19**Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed. **20**That, however, is not the way of life you learned **21**when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. **22**You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; **23**to be made new in the attitude of your minds; **24**and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. **25**Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. **26**"In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, **27**and do not give the devil a foothold. **28**Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need. **29**Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. **30**And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. **31**Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. **32**Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

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