Message Two

Putting Off the Old Man

Scripture Reading: Eph. 4:22-24

I. Our putting off of the old man and our putting on of the new man is a manifestation of our having learned Christ—Eph. 4:20-24:

A. To put off the old man is to put off the old way of life, the former way of living, our old community life—v. 22.

B. To put on the new man means to have the church life, which is the new life of the new mankind created by Christ in Himself; corporately we need to put on the church life as a new humanity—2:15; 4:24.

C. If we would be the one new man, we must put off the community life of the old man and put on the community life of the new man—cf. Acts 2:42-47.

II. In every country of the world and among every people there is a characteristic manner of life; many saints in the Lord's recovery still hold on to their former manner of life:

A. If we truly desire to be renewed, we need to put off the former manner of life, which involves ordinances and our way of living—Eph. 2:15; 4:24.

B. We should not be swept along by the current of this age; instead, we should bury our former manner of life and even hold a funeral for it—2:2; Col. 2:12; Rom. 6:4.

C. In the new man there is no possibility for any natural person of any nationality or culture to exist, because the former manner of life found among these peoples has been put away—Col. 3:10-11:

1. In order to have the church life, people from different cultures and countries have to put off the old man embodied in their former manner of life; in the church life there is room only for Christ—v. 11.
2. All the various manners of life and the differences among the peoples are the heritage of Babel, but on the cross Christ slew all these differences in order to produce the one new man—Eph. 2:14-15.
3. We should not justify our manner of life or glory in it; every way of life involves ordinances and must be put off.
4. How deplorable it is to see so-called churches formed according to nationality! Instead of treasuring our heritage, we should disown it and treasure Christ supremely—cf. Phil. 3:4-8.

III. The former manner of life includes everything related to us: what we are, what we have, our family life, and our social life:

A. We must put off what we are, what we have, and what we do; we must put off our very way of living:

1. The old man with all it includes is a damage to the church life; wherever the old man is, there can be no church.
2. This means that what we are, what we have, and what we do make the church life an impossibility; if we continue to live according to the old man, the church life will be seriously damaged, even terminated.

3. Those who are released from the old man are very flexible; Paul could be all things to all men because he had put aside his old man—1 Cor. 9:22.

B. If we put off the old man with its former manner of life, we shall have a marvelous church life, a church life that will be a miniature of the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth; in such a church life it is impossible to have division—cf. Col. 3:12-15.

IV. Whenever we return to the old manner of life, we shall spontaneously sense that we are darkened within and estranged from God's life:

A. Whenever we live according to our old community life, there is vanity, darkness, estrangement, ignorance, and hardness within us.

B. If we persist in living according to the former manner of life, we shall eventually become calloused and insensitive; we may even cease from feeling because we do not care for our conscience—Eph. 4:17-19.

C. We grieve the Holy Spirit when we do not live according to the new manner of life; instead, we walk according to the vanity of the mind—vv. 17, 30.

V. Our way of life must become absolutely new in nature, manner, and practice—cf. 2 Cor. 5:17; Ezek. 36:26:

A. The church life is the daily walk of a corporate man, a walk that is absolutely new in nature and in manner—Rom. 6:4; 7:6.

B. If we walk according to the spirit of our mind, we shall be those who live such a corporate life; we shall have the proper community life in which everything is new—Eph. 4:23; Rom. 8:4, 6.

VI. In order to put off the old man and put on the new man, our mingled spirit must become the spirit of our mind—Eph. 4:23:

A. If our spirit is the spirit of our mind, then all our living will be by the spirit; as we are renewed by this spirit, we put on the new man.

B. The way to live the life of the new man is to put off the former manner of life and to allow our entire being and daily living to be dominated and directed by the spirit; then we shall be renewed and experience the new man as our church life.

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