

Our world has become full of knowledge, but instead of becoming better, our world is growing darker. Drugs are rampant. Relationships are disposable. Many of our big cities are out of control. People are angry and divided.

We have gender craziness, human trafficking, criminals being rewarded, and Honesty being persecuted. How do these things happen in a world so advanced? Every day we see things happening that have never happened before. We hear things being said that have never been said before, and we look around our world and the darkness continues to grow outside of these walls. Why is our world sinking into sin.

Why is it growing darker? Because God tells us the hearts of people have grown hard and their minds have grown dark. People care too much about their looks and too little about their hearts. Our world is a lot like the condition in Ephesus, as Paul was writing to the believers there, they'd come out of a very dark culture, and they were still immersed as this little band of believers in a world that was very much set against God. God had told them in the first three chapters of Ephesians, all the ways he blessed them and of their new position in Christ, and then, he is telling them how to live in those blessings.

We're gonna be in Ephesians chapter 4. We're gonna begin in verse 17. Would you please stand with me for the reading of the word? Ephesians chapter 4 verse 17. With the Lord's authority, I say this.

Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopeless and confused. Their minds are full of darkness. They wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him. They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity.

But that isn't what you learned about Christ. Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him. Throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God, truly righteous and holy.

So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth for we are all parts of the same body, and don't let sin don't sin by letting anger control you. Don't let the sun go down while you're still angry for anger gives a foothold to the devil. If you're a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work. Then give generously to those in need.

Don't use a bow or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them, and do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tender hearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

Let's pray together. Father, this morning, as we confront your word, I ask you to Answer the prayer that we have on our hearts, much like the one King David had on his heart as he wrote the words of Psalm 119. He said, I will study your commandments and reflect on your ways. I will delight in your decrees and not forget your word. Be good to your servant that I may live and obey your word.

Open my eyes to see the wonderful truths in your instructions. Father, that is also our prayer this morning. Open our eyes to see the wonderful truth in your word and change us forever because we have been with you in Jesus name. Amen. Thank you.

Please be seated. In a nutshell, God said this. He said, you are children of the light and you need to stay away from the darkness. It's Time to walk away from that. Let's walk through this for a few minutes.

Look back at verses 17 through 19 for a moment. With the Lord's authority, I say this. Paul is saying, this is this is from the Lord. Live no longer as the Gentiles do. They're hopelessly confused.

Now that explains A little bit about what we see in our world. Doesn't it? When you start looking around and you see people and you're like, that makes no sense what so ever. Why does it make no sense? Why do politicians spout these things?

Why do social pundits Spout these things. Why is our society heading in the wrong direction? Because they are hopelessly confused. Their minds are full of darkness. And so when your mind is full of darkness, you are no longer able to think clearly.

Your Thoughts don't make sense to those who can see. They wander far from the life God gives because they've closed their minds and hardened their hearts. God didn't beat around the bush, did he? He said, here is why the world looks the way it does. Here's why your society looks the way it does.

Their minds are dark. They're they're living with no Shame. They're they're pursuing every kind of evil and impurity because they're far away from the Lord. When we see the news, when we look at what's going around in our world today, is it any wonder that we can look at it and see the Things we do when we see how far away people have gotten from God. And in verse 20, he said, but That isn't what you learned about Christ.

And this is this section right here, these few verses This is 20 through 24 are kind of a summary, if you will, of Romans 5 through 8, where Paul Explains this whole identification with Christ and his death, burial and resurrection. You've been buried with Christ, and now You have been raised to newness of life and he is explaining this. And he says what you've learned about Christ, He is not talking about head knowledge. He's talking about the relationship that we've

begun with Christ because I will tell you something. It's entirely possible to know all the biblical facts about Jesus Christ.

It's entirely possible to attend church. It's entirely possible to know the Bible and still be just as lost as Satan is, if we are not putting our faith and trust in Jesus Christ. He's speaking of the new relationship they have. He said because of this new relationship, run from the darkness. Stay away from these things.

Throw off the old sinful nature. Now I've heard a lot of people say that this just is who I am. And Paul says, no, that is who you were. Who you are now is different. Do you know that your attitude comes from your mind?

What is in your heart comes out of your mouth. And if you've ever been struggling with what comes out of your mouth, that's a good indication that you need to go see a heart doctor, but not a cardiologist need to come to Jesus and let him begin to change what's inside your heart. He said, put on your new nature. Identify with Jesus and then your actions will result in actions appropriate for a child of the king. He starts to list these in verse 25.

He says, so stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth. We're all we're all part of the same body. Satan is the father of lies. He said, speak the truth in love, Not lie.

After all, let me just be honest, if you can't, if we can't tell the truth about temporary things, why in the world would anybody believe us when we start thinking about and speaking about eternal things. They have to be able to believe us. So if you catch yourself. And you are beginning to say something that is not true. Just stop.

Refocus. Say, hey, you know what? Let me just start that over again and speak it correctly, And then speak the truth. Verse 26 says, don't sin by letting anger control you. Don't let the sun go down while you're still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil.

Now this is a hard one for most of us and And for married couples, if you've been given the instruction, don't go to bed angry. I don't know anybody who's been married longer than a week who hasn't probably violated that one, But we try to get the principle. Right? The principle is that anger is not a sin. God became angry.

Jesus became angry. And they were rightfully angry at the sin and unrighteousness that was in the world. You and I are not God. We don't see clearly enough to trust our anger to be proper. And so what God says is, we typically become angry for selfish reasons.

We typically become angry because our feelings have and hurt or or we are insulted or we're overlooked or we're not appreciated. And he said, so when you allow that anger to remain, it grows into bitterness, which poisons our hearts and our relationships. When my kidneys decided to rebel against Me and, and shut down. It almost killed me, but it got my attention. I pay a whole lot more attention to my kidneys.

I didn't even know really where my kidneys were. They remind me every day where they're at now. It caused poisonous toxins that were wreaking havoc. And I will tell you something, Bitterness and anger in a body causes poisonous toxins, even in the body of Christ. Anger can burn down unity.

It can burn down relationships and it can burn down ministries. Some people say, it's just who I am. I explode and then I'm over it pastor. That's just who I am. I'm like, well, a bomb explodes too, and then it's finished.

But what it leaves behind is destruction. And So you and I are responsible for our anger. That may be who we used to be, But he goes on to say this, anger gives a place for Satan to stand in our heart in our life. When you allow anger to remain, it is like allowing a serial psychopathic killer To come sleep on your couch. Only Satan is far worse than that.

Do not allow anger to remain or bitterness to start growing. He said in verse 28, if you're a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work. And he didn't just say, and provide for all your needs. He said, use your hands for good hard work, so you can give generously to others who are in need.

He said, I want you to go beyond just earning an honest living. I want you to go into the realm of generosity. Just like lying, Satan is also A thief. A thief comes to steal, kill and destroy. Most people aren't professional thieves, but most of us have stolen.

Most of us have stolen small things, some big things, but all of us have stolen time. All of us have stolen affection. All of us has stolen what belonged to God in our worship and we've kept it for ourselves. I was a thief at one point in my life. Carefully plotting, I scoped out the place I was gonna hit.

I watched for security. 1st, I had to Shake the lady who was tailing me around and watching me, calculated my every move and then I stealthily palmed the merchandise, Placed it in my pockets. It was Brax candy from the open bins at the grocery store. The multicolored coconut ones. I was a hardened criminal at 5 years old.

I got caught by the butcher, who was watching me from the back window. And I will tell you something, Having a man walk up to you wearing a bloody apron, holding a holding a butcher knife in his hand, and telling you not to steal anymore makes impression. 11 years later, I got a job at that same store and they made me take a lie detector test to get the job. And one of the questions they asked was, have you ever stolen? I said, yes, from this store.

And he said, tell me about it. I told him about it and the dude was just Losing it, laughing. He said, Have you stolen anything since? I said, No. He said, You're telling me the truth.

I said, You try having a dude walk up to you in a bloody apron with a butcher knife, it it I said, it leaves an impression, but Instead of worrying about somebody catching us, we need to worry about what God thinks and the impact that we have on the lives of other people. Paul said this in verse 29. He said, don't use foul or abusive language. And then he carries it one step further. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.

Don't use foul or abusive language. We all know that's probably not okay. But yet we all find ourselves Struggling with this. Every person at some point has something come out of their mouth that they don't like. And Paul says this, he said, don't just try not to curse.

Don't just try not to be abusive. He said, I want you to Go to the point where every word you say is helpful and beneficial to the people around you. What comes out of your mouth is what's hiding in our hearts. What comes out of our mouth when we're angry is what's hiding in our heart. If we can't control our mouth, we need to control our hearts, because that's where it begins.

Get in the word And get in prayer, because if what's coming out of your mouth is not what you want to hear, not what's blessing others, then that means what's in our heart is not correct. And so this is where we start, not in trying to stop our mouth or keep our mouth shut. It's in filling our heart with the right things. We tend to talk like the people we hang around. We tend to talk like what we listen to, and so we need to spend a lot more time listening to Jesus and hanging around him.

So that what comes out of our mouth is blessing. Verse 30, he says, do not bring Sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. It is a sobering Thought that we can bring sorrow to the Lord. If you have a child, you understand what happens when one of your children disobeys, when when one of your children acts up in public. As parents, we tend to get pretty pretty, protective.

We want our Children to reflect well. Why? Why do we want our children to behave in public? Well because it's a reflection of us as parents. Not only do we not want them to cause havoc and and hurt things and break things or hurt people, we want Other people to see that we've done our job as parents, that they're well behaved, that they're polite.

And we rejoice when they do the right things and our heart hurts when they don't. And our father is no different. When we do not do what we're supposed to do, we bring grief, sorrow to the holy spirit, to our father. He said, remember, he's identified you as his own. This one is mine.

You know, when your kids acting up in public, you can just kind of turn around go, I don't know whose kid that is, but, somebody needs to get control of their child. But God's identified you. They know who's you are. Jesus went to the cross, suffered, bled and died to pay the price we owed. And he's already made that very clear in Ephesians, so now he's Because of what he's done, live a life that honors him.

The holy spirit's with us all the time. It's with us when we look at our phone. It's with us He's with us when we watch our shows. The Holy Spirit is with us when we're with our friends and the Holy Spirit is with us when we think we're alone because we're never alone. Don't bring sorrow to him by the way you live.

And then We're given some action steps to take and we're gonna put those in this next part. And number 1 is walk away from darkness. Walk away from darkness. We are not just lights that are supposed to remain in the dark and and try to shine. We are to To walk away in our personal lives from the darkness that we have been in.

Not that we walk away from a dark world, that's Impossible. But he said, personally, get away from these things. He said, get away, get rid of All bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, slander and evil behavior. If we got rid of all those, how would our world look than.

Wouldn't that be amazing? Just that one thing would would change so many things in our world. It also changes Things in our relationships. I was a sarcastic, angry, bitter young man. And it showed.

Inside, I thought I was still morally following some code, But on the outside, I was ready to fight at the drop of a hat. My poor wife, I was still dealing with some of this when I when I met her. I will tell you something. Bitterness and anger will change you. Every hurt, Every failure fed into my life until I was you know those little pop goes the weasel things where you're turning Crank and it's like, ding ding ding ding ding ding ding ding ding ding ding ding ding ding ding ding ding ding ding ding ding ding ding ding ding ding ding.

You're just waiting because it's gonna go pop. That was me. Everywhere I walked, it was just like somebody was Turn that crank until finally, I popped. If we do not get rid of these things, That's what happens. Jesus changed that.

Jesus changed me. He replaced My heart, he gave me a new life and it took a lot of work and it took a lot of patience on God's part, I am sure, But he helped me clean the areas out that were ugly and filthy, and he replaced them, until my actions started to match my identity. God can do that for us. We have to look at who we were and remember who we are. As Christians, we not simply changed our minds about God.

We're not just like in favor of Jesus now. We're not just religious. God said, here's who you were. That person is now dead. Their sins been nailed to the cross.

You have died with Christ and and you've been raised to a new life and here's your new nature. Live this. 2nd Corinthians 5 17 says, we are a new creation in Jesus. The command is not just to suppress our old behavior. David be less of you.

That's not what God's saying. He's saying, David, the old you is gone. Be the new you, the one that I've created. Warren Wiersbe said this. He said, an unforgiving Spirit is the devil's playground and before long it becomes the Christian's battleground.

You and I have to stop allowing bitterness to control us. We have to stop allowing rage and Anger to control us. We have to stop speaking in ways that hurt other people. Stop every type of evil behavior, and we can list a few of those pretty quickly that impact the lives of so many people with pornography and cursing and and sex act sexual activity outside of marriage, occult activity, lust, greed, lying, get rid of it. He said, you have no place with these things.

And that's just the way I am if not in the Bible. That's the way you were before you met Jesus. And if it's still the way you are, then you need to make sure you've met Jesus. And if you have, it's time to throw off the old nature and put on the new. Get rid of it.

It has no place in our lives. My favorite example of this type of scenario, this type of Change is Jesus' friend Lazarus. If you've you've heard any of the Bible at all, you understand that Jesus and Lazarus and Mary and Martha were friends and Lazarus had gotten sick and they told Jesus, the one you love is sick. He's he's really sick and Jesus didn't come. Lazarus died from his illness.

Been in the grave 4 days when Jesus showed up. Jesus came in and and he said, open the grave. And Mary said, Oh, by now he's gonna smell terrible. You know, the body is decaying. Jesus told them to open the grave and then Jesus said, Lazarus come forth.

And Lazarus came walking out of that grave. Now, I don't know how he was walking because he was bound up in grave clothes. Now when they when somebody died, they would wrap them in cloth. And they would wrap them and they'd put spices in Cloth to keep it from smelling quite so bad, to prepare the body for burial. And so when Lazarus came out, he was probably doing this.

You know, he heard Jesus and this dead guy comes walking out. And Jesus said this, he said, unwrap him and let him Go. Why? Because the old grave clothes that belonged on a dead person did not belong on Lazarus anymore. And Jesus is telling you and I, the old dead clothes, the old dead life Doesn't belong on us anymore.

We have been raised to new life. We have to stop living like Dead people and live like we have been given the new life God has given us. Number 2 is walk in the light, And this is the part that's where he turns to, here's what to do. He spent a lot of time telling us what not to do. And then he said, here's what to do.

In verse 32, instead of all these other things, Be kind to each other, tender hearted, forgiving one another just as God through Christ has forgiven you. Kind, tenderhearted, forgiving. Those are hard things to do. But that's our attitude towards each other. He said, I want you to be kind, tender hearted and forgiving.

Not because you're a better person than other people. I want you to be kind, tender hearted and forgiving, not because the other person deserves it. I want you to be kind, tender hearted and forgiving, just as God through Christ forgave you. We don't do it because we deserve it. We don't do it because they deserve it.

We do it because of what God has done for us. That's our motivation. That type of attitude doesn't become natural. It isn't natural to us. It's not our human nature.

That's not what the world does. It's what we do after we've met Jesus and we allow him to fill our hearts and our minds. It's what happens when the Word of God starts to sink into us and it becomes what starts coming out of our mouths. It's what happens when we realize, oh, what I deserve from God And what I received from God are so different. He's been so What?

He's been so kind. He's been so tender hearted. He's been so for Giving to me, surely I can do that for others. If we have a problem with our attitude, I will tell you where to start. It's usually in your time with God, in prayer, and in the word.

If you're having a problem with your attitude, if you're having a problem with your mouth, you can go Straight to the word, and I will tell you, you've probably been neglecting your quiet time with the Lord. That's usually where it Starts. It's usually because we've fallen out of love with God and we have started acting like the world. There's no better cure for our old actions than forgiveness and love. And when we spend time with God, he reminds us.

You remember? You remember me? You remember what I've done? Yes. Yes, God, I do.

Thank you so much. Now you go do this for them. And the next day I come back to the Lord. I'm spending time with God. You Do you know who how much I love you?

Do you know How much I care for you? Do you realize how precious you are to me? Now go. And I want you to tell others the same things. Walk in purity, treating each other like Jesus treats us.

Is it easy? No. We're walking into a world where Satan has blinded them. We're walking into a Dark world where their minds are confused, where they're they're set on evil. And they've walked away from God and we're walking into them Just like somebody walked up to us and saying, hey, do you know God loves you?

Do you know how much he loves you and we share? We have to throw off our grave clothes, walk away from the darkness and shine, so others can see Jesus. Bow your heads and close your eyes for just a moment. Your first priority, your number one goal, your highest priority choice In your life is what you are going to do with Jesus. What you believe about Jesus will determine forever for you.



God sent his only son. Jesus came and willingly went to the cross to pay the price For our sin, he died on that cross and he rose again. The Bible says when we put our faith Then trust in him. We ask God to save us that, then we are saved. We are forgiven.

We are adopted and we are given New life. If that has not happened for you, if you are not trusted in Jesus, would you do that this morning, right now as we We pray together. Dear God, I know I've done wrong. I believe Jesus paid my price on that cross. Would you please forgive me?

Would you save me? Would you help me live for you all the days of my life until I stand before you face to face. And if that is you this morning, if you put your trust and your faith in Jesus this morning, Then Bible says, your old life is dead and your new life has begun. And I'm rejoicing with you. If you made that prayer yours.

If you've put your trust in Jesus, please come find me and tell me this morning. I've got a Bible I'd love to give you. I wanna help you take those next Steps. If you've taken the first step and you've trusted in Jesus, but your life is stuck and you've just been kinda on cruise, then there is so much more. Please don't stay there.

Maybe it's time for you to rededicate your life and just turn it over to the Lord. Father, give us courage to trust you this morning. I know some people in here are thinking back over the way they've spoken, over the actions they've had, just like I do. And Father, we see the ways that we've we have not acted appropriately, not spoken well. Times when our anger and our bitterness spoke instead.

Father, forgive us. Help us to speak well, Father. Help us to speak words that bless you and And when you look at our actions and our words, Father, may it bring you joy instead of sorrow. And may it bring light to those who so desperately need to see Jesus. In his name, we pray.