**New Life in Christ**

***17****Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds.****18****They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.****19****They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.****20****But that is not the way you learned Christ!—****21****assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus,****22****to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,****23****and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds,****24****and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*

***25****Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.****26****Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,****27****and give no opportunity to the devil.****28****Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.****29****Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.****30****And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.****31****Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.****32****Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. (Ephesians 4:17-32)*

 The new life that we have in Christ is called to have practical expression. Greetings on this fourth Sunday of Lent as we talk today about the nature of the new life that Christians have. How is a believer supposed to live? What does it mean to have a new life? Why is it that non-Christians cannot function in the same way as us? We will touch upon these and other issues in this message. In a word, a Christian is supposed to have a new life which begins from within and is expressed in their external life. Again, the new life that we have in Christ is called to have practical expression. Let’s go into detail…

 A follower of Christ is supposed to take off the old man and put on the new man. The Apostle Paul presents an image of wearing clothing as he is talking about church members’ everyday behavior. For him (and thus for the Church), being a Christian is not just the act of believing, but also expressing that belief in practical ways. If a change has truly occurred within someone, then that person’s everyday life needs to show a clear difference from before they had accepted Christ. Non-Christians cannot have that new life because they have become callous or insensitive to God’s promptings. This is so because of their constant living in darkness and giving in to meaningless practices, thus rejecting the new life that Christ offers, both in their godless words and unclean deeds.

 A Christian, however, is to be different since Jesus Christ is different. The old man, the old personality-based weaknesses, the old bad habits need to disappear, because our minds are being renewed by Jesus’ example. We have become new human beings through Jesus – this specific new life is what we should be putting on every day.

 The examples that the Apostle gives are very up to date: Lying is an issue with people up ‘til today – but it should not be for the believer. We are to tell the truth to each other instead of lying; we are one Body in Christ, and Christ has no falsehood within Him. If we get angry, we must be careful not to lengthen the time that we are that way, so that we do not commit sin – because if we do allow anger to fester, the Evil One, the devil, will enter into the picture and could cause even worse disturbances and problems. Neither should stealing be an occurrence for a Christian – since he or she is already working, doing what is good, to be able to help those in need. There should not be foul language coming out of a Christian’s mouth. They should be good words, constructive ones, not destructive in nature. The words should be appropriate for the occasion; our entire relational behavior ought to be pleasing to the Holy Spirit. There should be absolutely no bitterness, rage, chaotic screaming, cursing coming from our mouths. For us, the old nature is dead, and we are new people in Christ. We are kind toward each other, always tenderhearted, always forgiving since God has forgiven us through Christ.

 Therefore, our life is called to be lived according to the new life Jesus has given us. If someone considers themselves a Christian but their behavior is the same as the non-Christian, then what testimony do they have to those who are unbelievers but who are seeking relief from their lost godless lives?

 A follower of Christ is supposed to take off the old man and put on the new man. The new life that we have in Christ is called to have practical expression. The Lord bless you all. Amen.