

The Old Man & The New Man

Ephesians 4:20-24

August 2, 2020, Pastor Jeremy Cagle

Good morning and welcome. If you don't know me or if you're joining us for the first time online, my name my name is Jeremy Cagle. I'm the teaching pastor at Grace Fellowship Church. We're a Bible teaching church located in Chilliwack, British Columbia and like a lot of churches are doing right now, we're putting our messages online due to the Coronavirus. We've started putting them on our YouTube channel so you can follow along. If you're streaming with us, you'll know that this is part of a larger service. This sermon is part of a larger event where we have music and scripture reading and prayer, which is a good reminder. It's a good lesson because the church is more than just a sermon. The church is more than just a message. It's a family, amen? It's a community where we worship God together. We don't do this alone. We do this together. We don't do this by ourselves. We do it with those we love.

And if you've been watching the news lately, you'll know that's a hot topic right now in the States. It's a big deal because the California State Government has recently asked churches to postpone their services indefinitely. It's asked them to stop meeting for an unlimited amount of time. And some of the churches have said, "We won't comply with that. With all due respect to the governing authorities, we can stop meeting for a season, we can stop meeting for a while to flatten the curve." And I think all those churches did that. "But we won't do it indefinitely. We won't do that forever because the church is supposed to meet. That's what it does." And I think we would say the same thing here. We would take the same position; the church can't close down indefinitely. That's not an option.

And not only that, but we need to serve people during this time. People need hope right now. I mean, if you talk to people on the street, they're anxious. They're afraid. There's a sense of gloom in the community, and that's why the church is here. We're here to step in in times like that and tell them there's hope. We're here to step in in times like that and tell them there's good news amidst all the bad news. Listen, if you take away the church, you take away the good news, amen? If you take away the church, you take away the hope; and we can't do that right now because people need hope. They need it now more than ever.

With that said this morning, speaking of the church and its hope and its message, I want to invite you to open your Bibles to a book that talks about that this morning. It talks about the church and what it does and what it's there for, and that's the book of Ephesians. That's the book we're in this morning. If you would, please open your Bibles with me to the book of Ephesians, and we're in chapter four. So if you would, turn there. I want to read this to you. We're in Ephesians 4:17. Paul writes this, he says,

So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that You walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, 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. But you did not learn Christ in this way, if indeed you have heard him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which is in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH, EACH ONE OF YOU WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another. BE ANGRY, AND YET DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity. He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labour, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need. Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Just a little background on this, they say that one principle of hermeneutics or Bible interpretation is authorial intent. Authorial intent, which means that in order to understand the Bible, you have to understand the author. In order to understand what the Scripture is saying, you have to understand what he is saying and what he means, which is easy to do in the book of Ephesians. If you look back in chapter one, verse three, it's easy to see what Paul is writing about in this book. Because there he says this in the first and the third verse of the book, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." In other words, this is a book about blessing. This is a book about how much God has given you in Christ. You see the word "blessing" repeated three times there for emphasis because this is just a book about blessings, blessings and blessings. Some of you came in here this morning and you don't feel blessed. You came in here this morning and you feel like you've been beat up by the world, right? I'm not the only one. You had a bad week, or you had a bad day. There's trouble at work, trouble at home, trouble in the neighborhood, trouble everywhere; and Paul tells you to step back for a minute and get your mind off of these troubles. Put your mind in heaven. Put your mind on Christ and remember that you are blessed.

He gives you several blessings in the book. Just a quick review, chapter one says if you're a Christian, you've been adopted, redeemed and sealed with the Spirit. Those are some of the blessings that you have. Chapter two, you've been raised from the dead, made alive with Christ, and seated in the heavenlies. This is why you don't have to worry about this stuff going on in this world because you are seated in the heavenly places with Christ. Your life is not just here. Your life is in a better place, even now. Chapter four says we were placed into a church, given spiritual gifts, and given leaders like the apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastors and teachers to lead us and equip us for the ministry. And in response to that, Paul says this in chapter four, verse 17. In response to all these blessings, here's what you need to do. He says, "So this I say and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk in the futility of their mind." In other words, this is how you respond to the blessings. This is how you respond to all these things Christ has given you, you walk no longer as the Gentiles do.

I told you last week that the phrase, "So this I say," it's an unusual one. It's odd because it's the only time you see it in the letter, the only time it appears in the book of Ephesians. It's to get your attention and to get your antennas up that Paul is saying something significant here. You don't need to live like you used to live. Your life needs to change, and it says in the verse if you notice, "in the futility of their mind" because this is where you do this; this is where you change your life. You do it in the mind.

The Gentiles have a twisted mind right? The lost world, they're twisted inside in their soul. Verse 18 says that they have a darkened understanding. They're excluded from the life of God. Their hearts are hard and callous, and that idea of hard and callous, it's like a brick; you could throw a ball and it just bounces off. And Paul says here, you need to stay away from that way of thinking. You need to change in your mind. You know, some people get saved they don't get this because they want to look like the world, right? They want to continue to act like the world does so they can fit in so they continue to cuss and lust and drink like the heathen. They continue to swear and smoke and party as if nothing ever happened. Nothing ever changed. And Paul says you don't want to go down that road. Something needs to change in you when you're saved, something needs to happen.

Other people take this in another way; they take it in the opposite direction because they want to change. They want to be different, but they do it the wrong way because they want to change on the outside. So, when they get saved, they want to change their clothes and their hair and their jewelry. They want to change their makeup and their tattoos or something like that. And Paul says here, God's not interested in that. God is not primarily interested in your tattoos. He's interested in your mind. That's what has to change first.

I told you last week, the priorities *in here* it's not *out there*. The difference occurs inside of you, not outside of you. That's why when someone is saved, you can't always see it right away

because it happens inside. It takes some time to flesh it out. That's also why you can always tell who the true Christians are when they come to church. I mean, the true Christians, they don't come into church with a big 'C' on their forehead. It's not the way it works. And here's how you change your mind, Paul says, as he's writing this letter to you. Verse 20, this is how this happens, he says,

But you did not learn Christ in this way, if indeed you have heard him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which is in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

We'll explain all this in a moment, I'll walk you through that passage. But if you notice, there you see the word "mind" again. Paul mentions it again to say this is what you should do with it. This is how you should change your mind. He says you need to renew it. That word "renew" it's the Greek word *anakainoó*, which comes from *ana* which means again, and *kainos* which means to think. You need to think again, Paul says. You need to think new thoughts. When someone is saved, I think we all get this, this is what you need to do. You need to think new thoughts. You need to think through life again. Salvation is one big reconsideration of life. Because yes, you're saved. Yes, you're born again. But there's so much you don't know. There's so much you don't get and there's so much that you have wrong. And the way Paul says this is interesting. This is important because he says this to everyone. The way he writes this in chapter four, he's not just writing this to new Christians. He's not just writing those to those who just got saved. This is for everyone to do. This is for every Christian to do. You need to continually think through life again.

Listen, you guys know what this is like. You wake up every day and what happens? You are bombarded with evil thoughts from the world, aren't you? You don't even have to get out of bed. You don't even have to turn the TV on and they come flooding in. Your mind is under siege. You have a cup of coffee, start talking with your spouse, and what happens? Sin. Boom. Paul says there's a solution to that. He says there's a way you can deal with that, and he says you need to renew your mind.

You have to think new thoughts and I might add this is especially important right now. This is especially important for where we're at as a society, because like we talked about last week, this world is getting worse, right? It's not getting better. Which means that the things that it throws at you are not getting better. The things you're dealing with in society are not getting godlier; it's the opposite. You know, people sometimes will say to you, or say to me, or maybe to you, "You

know, YouTube is so bad. Facebook is so bad. The news is so bad.” I don't get my truth from YouTube. I don't get my new thoughts from Facebook. I get them from the Bible.

You know, one example of this, if you look in verse 19, Paul mentions the sin of sensuality or the sin of lust. And I read somewhere this week that on top of all our other problems today, the pornography rate has gone up in North America. On top of all the other things that are going on in our society, the consumption of illicit videos is on the rise because of the Coronavirus. Because people are home all day with nothing to do and so as a result, this is what they're doing. They're buying pornographic videos. One pornographic website recently boasted of getting 100 million visitors a day. A day. 64,000 per second.

One source I read on Josh McDowell's website said that there are estimates that 30% of the internet right now is nothing but pornography. And I just I'm bringing that up to say this is having a devastating impact on our society. It's destroying our culture because it's making it so normal now. It's making it so commonplace. It's so common now you see rainbow crosswalks going all up around Chilliwack to support the LGBT community. You know, Chilliwack was once known as being the Bible Belt of Canada. It was once known as taking a stance against things like that, but now it's the opposite. We're known for accepting it. According to the newspaper, we might be the rainbow capital of the world. Rainbow crosswalk capital the world. And it's not just in Chilliwack because there's gay pride parades in Vancouver every year. Every summer the streets of the city are lined with people showing support for this. In some provinces, they say it's illegal to speak out against homosexuality. It's against the law. It's considered a hate crime; you might go to jail. But the point is, this is becoming so normal for us. It's just becoming part of everyday life. We're not even shocked by it anymore.

Paul says as a result of going in this direction as a society, you're going to have to renew your mind more than ever. You're going to have to think new thoughts now more than ever before. You can't coast through life as a Christian. You can't go through life like a zombie. You have to think. You can't put your head in the sand and hope this will go away. This is not going away. It's going to be here for a while.

Charles Spurgeon said “Our thoughts, if left to themselves, are like a cage of unclean birds or a den of wild beasts. You can't leave them alone. You have to do something with them. You need to invite Jesus into your thoughts to clean them out. You need to bring the Bible in to wash the filth away.”

This is something you see a lot in Scripture. This is something that's talked about over and over again. For example, Romans 13:14, says, “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh.” That means when you're saved, the flesh is still around. When you're saved, the sin is still there. You just need to make no provision for it. You need to starve it out.

Romans 12:2 says, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is.” Now you see this phrase, “renew your mind” in there. Paul says you should renew your mind because it shows you the will of God. As your mind changes, as your mind is renewed, as it's sanctified, you can truly see what God wants for you. We could read other passages.

2 Corinthians 4:16 says, “Therefore we do not lose heart because though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.” There you see the confidence you can have in this, the surety you can have. Your inner man is being renewed as a believer, which is what we're going to talk about this morning.

So if you're taking notes this morning in Ephesians 4, we're gonna look at two ways to renew your mind in this passage. That's our outline for today. That's what it's about. We want to be real practical here, want to be real hands on. But if you're wondering what this looks like in Ephesians 4, we're going to look at two ways to renew your mind.

And the first one is this. The first way to renew your mind is to lay aside the old self. So if you're taking notes, the first way to renew your mind is to lay aside the old self, which means to lay aside the old way of life. To lay aside what you were before you were saved. We just mentioned that when you're saved, there's a change that occurs in you. There's a difference that's made, but it's a change that has to keep changing. And if you look in verse 20, Paul writes, and he says,

But you did not learn Christ in this way, if indeed you have heard him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit.

Just to say a few words about this, as Paul is going through the book of Ephesians, as he's writing this chapter, he's telling you how to respond to your blessings. He's telling you how to respond to the good things Christ has done for you. And he says something simple here. He says, “But you did not learn Christ this way.” In other words, you did not learn how to follow Him like the world does. You did not learn how to follow Him in sin, but instead you learned this. This is what you need to do. Verse 22 says, “In reference to your former way of life, you lay aside the old self.”

That phrase “lay aside” here is the Greek word *apothesthai* which means to lay aside or cast off something like an old pair of clothes. When you came to church today, that's what you did, isn't it? You changed your clothes, cast off your old clothes, put on new clothes for church. In a similar way, Paul says you need to do that with your old self or your former way of life.

That phrase, “former manner of life,” it's the same way of saying the old self. These are the same things. It's what you were before God saved you. And if you notice the phrase “old self,” or “old man,” it's in the singular here because this is the old self that we all have, this is the old self we all share. It's a reference to our sin nature because when you were born, this is what you were given. You were given a nature of sin. It's called the old self because it's old. It's very old. It goes all the way back to the beginning. It goes back to Adam because when Adam was created the first man, he was sinless, he never disobeyed; but in one fatal moment, that changed. He sinned, and as a result, all of us share in his nature now. That's why when you have children, you don't have to sit them down and teach them to do bad. They know how to do that. You don't have to teach them to lie and steal and fight. They get that. Why? Because it's in their nature.

Paul says now that you're a Christian, you need to lay that aside. Now that you're a believer, you have to toss it off like an old pair of clothes. In fact, to understand this, in the Greek this is in a tense which says this has already happened. This has already occurred. In other words, you've already laid it aside, you've already cast it off, because the old self is dead, you just need to leave it alone. You need to leave it on the ground.

It says that you do this because the old self has been corrupted in accordance with the lust of deceit. In other words, the old self is getting worse. It's not getting better. If you notice, it's not just corrupted, it's being corrupted. This is an ongoing thing. That word “corrupt” means rotten or polluted. The old self stinks more and more every day. A lot of Christians will say, “I sin less now than I did when I first got saved, but it hurts more.” Do you guys know what I'm talking about? I'm being sanctified, I'm growing, but when I sin right now, it crushes me. Why is that? It's because the old self stinks in your eyes now.

I don't know if you guys have read the book, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* before, but it tells a story of a scientist who became an evil monster. And he would go back and forth between the two. One day he would be the scientist, and the next day he would be the monster, and the next day scientist again and back and forth until it got to the point where the monster kept getting worse. The monster was taking over, so the scientist had to kill it. He had to put it to death. Paul says you have to do this as a Christian. This is how you grow in the Christian life. You have to put the old self to death, which leads to some applications here.

It leads to some basic ways to apply this to our lives. For one thing, this means you need to take sin seriously. I think this is obvious as you read the passage. It's pretty straightforward, but you need to take your sin seriously. You can't mess around with it anymore. You can't play around with sin like it's a toy or a game because it's not a toy. It's a monster. It doesn't want part of your life; it wants all of your life. Your sin will consume you if you let it.

I can't tell you how many people I've met who don't understand this. How many Christians don't understand because they want to play around with their sin. They want to dabble in it like it's a toy. So, for instance, what we talked about earlier, they want to watch a little pornography as if it's no big deal. They want to see a little trash on the computer or on their iPhone and they say, "Well it's okay; I'm strong enough, I can handle it. That's not what this says here. Paul says you're not going to handle your sin, your sin is going to handle you. Paul says you're not strong enough to mess around with a monster. The monster will take over your life and you need to kill it. When you talk to people who struggle with sins like this, pornography or sexual sin, they'll tell you it all started with one little mistake. It all started with one little glance at a computer screen and before long and their whole life was over because they said, "It's okay. I'm strong enough." Paul says you can't think that way this morning. You have to take your sin very seriously.

S. D. Gordon was a famous pastor from the 1900s who said there are four things every Christian should know about sin, four lessons to learn. One is that sin demands wages. Sin charges a fee for all that it does. And second, sin will be paid. You can guarantee it. In this life, or the next day, it will collect a fee. Third lesson, sin insists on being paid in full, it won't accept partial payment. And fourth, sin never forgets. Your sin will find you. You have to remember that. It leads to another application here.

Another way to look at this, and that is that as a Christian you don't have to be afraid of your sin. This is the flip side of what we just talked about. As a Christian, you don't have to be afraid of the old man. This is important. You don't want to miss this. But as you read this passage, you can see there's a note of hope in here, isn't there? There's a note of victory as a way Paul writes this. Because Paul's not saying this would be wonderful if it were true. This would be so great if you could have it. He says you already have it. He says this is yours. He doesn't say this would be great if you could just get the second blessing of the Holy Spirit. This would be so great if you could have a Pentecost moment and your whole life would be perfect from then on out. He doesn't say that. He says this is yours. Every Christian, every believer, you just need to act accordingly. You just need to enjoy it now.

When some people struggle with sin, they get so discouraged, don't they? They get so upset because it's like a treadmill for them. It's like a roller coaster. They go up and down, up and down. One week, they come in your office, they've had some victory. They've had some success, and they're happy; they're on cloud nine. Next week, they come in your office, it's the opposite and they're miserable. They have no victory. No hope. Paul says it shouldn't be that way for you as a Christian. You don't have to live like that because you're a new man now, You have a new self. it's a fact; it's a reality.

I heard one pastor describe it this way. He says, "Life goes up and down, but as you grow as a Christian, you grow closer to God, the lows aren't so low anymore. Life begins to stable. You don't earn it, you already have it. You don't pay for it; it's already been paid for. You just enjoy it."

On July 1st, 1863, Abraham Lincoln issued his most famous edict as a president of the United States. It was known as the Emancipation Proclamation which freed the slaves. It gave them their liberty, but the interesting thing about the announcement is that for a time, the slaves didn't know about it. They had no idea because no one told them. It took a while for the messengers to go out, so they kept on acting like slaves. They kept acting like they were chained up and friends, there are a lot of Christians that live that way today. There are a lot of Christians that are still living like slaves. And you don't have to. That's not necessary anymore. You are free, free. The old man is dead. You just need to enjoy it, put it into practice, live it out, believe it.

Which leads to another point to consider this morning. Another way to renew your mind, this is a mental thing, isn't it? This occurs in your head. The battle is in your head, so that's where you have to renew it. It leads to another way to renew your mind. The first one is to lay aside the old self, which means you lay aside the old way of life. You lay aside what you were before you believed. If you're saved, if you're a Christian, you have an old self, you have a sin nature; but that's not all you have. That's not all God has given you, you have a new one as well. You have a free one; you have a victorious self. And that leads to another point to consider, another way to renew your mind, and that is to put on the new self. A second way to renew your mind is to put on the new self, which means you need to put on the new way of life. You need to put on what you are now that God has saved you. And if you look in the passage again, Paul goes on and he writes this in verse 20.

But you did not learn Christ in this way, if indeed you have heard him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which is in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

Just to explain this to you, as you walk through the passage, as you can tell, Paul is saying something simple here. He hasn't changed his style of writing. This is still easy to read, which is kind of unusual. If you've read Paul before, you'll know in a lot of his letters he can be hard to follow, can be a little difficult. But this is simple stuff. It's not confusing. Verse 23 says you need to be renewed in the spirit of your mind, we just talked about that earlier, renewed in your soul. And in order to do that, he says you need to put on the new self. You've put off the old self,

you've cast that aside. Now you need to put the new one on. you've laid aside the old man. So now you need to complete the process and put on what you are now in Christ.

That phrase “put on” it's a Greek word that means to put on something; to try it on like a pair of clothes. It's the opposite of lay aside. Again, you know when you came to church today, you laid aside your old clothes, but you didn't stop there. You put on new clothes, put on your Sunday best. Paul says you do the same thing when you become a Christian. You put off the old self and put on the new self. And that phrase, it's in the same tense, as “laid aside” in verse 22, which means this has already happened as well. This has already occurred in you. You're not trying really hard to make this happen. It's already happened.

You're not saying, “If I come to church enough, if I tithe enough, if I'm a good enough person, I can wear these new clothes.” You already have them. They're yours. It's also singular as well, because this is the new self we all have in Christ. This is the new man that we have all become.

It's called new because it's brand new. It's entirely new. God gave this to you when you're saved. Some of you got saved and your family said, “What happened to you?” Right? “I don't even know who you are anymore.” It's because you have a new self. And Paul mentions it here, so we'll remember it. He mentions it, so we won't forget.

Later on in this book, he's going to talk about practical areas where this fleshes out. He's going to talk about our marriage, and our homes, and our families, and our workplace. But before you get to all that Paul says you got to remember this basic principle of the Christian life. You're different now.

This is so easy to forget, isn't it? I mean, I don't know about you guys, but I don't always feel like a new person. I don't always feel different. You wake up most days and you feel tired, right? You feel worn out from your sin. You feel like you've been in a battle. Paul says that's okay because feelings have nothing to do with it. That's okay because your emotions don't determine this. This is a reality. This is a fact. This is positional newness. It's not situational. It's permanent newness. It doesn't change and ebb and flow with the times. This is something you can go back to over and over and over again in your Christian life.

The passage says “Put on the new self, which in the likeness of God is been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.” That corresponds to what Paul said above in verse 22. In other words, while the old self is being corrupted, the new self is being created. While the old self is getting worse and worse and worse because it's becoming deceitful and polluted, the new self is getting better because it's becoming more righteous, and more holy. You know, when you say, “I sin less than I did when I first got saved, but it hurts me more.” That's because your new

self is growing stronger. The sin should hurt you. The sin should impact you. It's taking over and that's a good thing.

You know, we have several people in our church who are trained in biblical counseling. They're certified with ACBC or the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors and they'll tell you that in their training, they learn what is known as the Put Off, Put On Principle. It's a principle that says, when someone is in sin, when they're wrestling with it, it's not enough to just put off the sin. You have to put on righteousness as well. It's not enough to just avoid the evil, you got to replace it with a good thing. So if you're struggling with pride, you need to replace it with humility. You need to replace it with low thoughts of yourself. If you're battling with anger, you need to replace it with contentment. That's what Paul says here.

Some of you remember the parable Jesus told of the man who got rid of a demon. He threw the demon out, but he didn't replace it with anything. He left the house wide open, so the demon went out and what did he do? He came back with seven of his buddies and he took over. He destroyed the person's life. Paul says what you need to do, you don't need to repeat that mistake. If you get rid of a sin, you need to replace it with something good. If you get rid of a demon, replace it with something holy.

It leads to several applications here, several ways to apply this to our life. For one thing, this means you need to fill your mind with good things. That's simple, right? You don't just take out the bad things, but you need to fill your mind with good things. Don't leave it empty. Don't leave it unoccupied. There are way too many empty minds in the church today, amen? There are far too many unoccupied brains. People come in they sit down, unscrew their head at the neck and put it under the chair, and they don't pick it up until they go out. That is not the way to live the Christian life. Come in alive, sit there like zombies, go back alive. You don't do that; you have to fill your mind with things of the Lord. I just quoted some statistics to you about the pornography rate in North America and how bad it is. But one reason for that is because people aren't filling their minds with anything else. They're not putting anything better in their head, and as a result, they're getting into all that terrible stuff.

Several years ago, to show you some more statistics, Christianity Today published a survey in which they found that half the people they talk to who go to church, don't read their Bible regularly. This is church attenders. Half of them don't read the Bible. One in five, don't read it at all. They never even touch it. And as a result, they don't know what it says. So, 30% of people couldn't find Adam and Eve in the Bible. Churchgoers. I'll give you a hint, they're in the first couple chapters, right? And one in three said they thought Superman was a biblical character, which is funny. It's pretty ridiculous; but it's a reminder that people are not filling their minds with Scripture. So they're making room for other stuff. If your mind is full of the Word of God,

there's no room for evil. If your mind is full of the things of God, there's no room for sin. The reason we sin is it's not full.

It leads to another application here; another way to apply this to our lives and this is getting pretty blunt here, but we need to stop being so lazy as Christians. We need to stop being so lazy. I don't want to be blunt here, but this needs to be said. Let's be honest, pornography is not the greatest problem in the church today, laziness is. Laziness. Sexual sin is not the greatest problem; that's not going to destroy the church. Idleness is; worldliness is. If we weren't lazy, there wouldn't be any room for that.

I believe there's more Bibles being printed or available today than in any other time in human history. If you don't have one in your home, you have one on your phone. You have thousands of them on your phone or on your computer. The problem is we don't read it like we should. The problem is we don't take time to study it. You know, when you when you counsel someone in sin, one thing you notice right off the bat every time, and I say this with respect but it's true, is that they're lazy. Because they know what they're supposed to do, if they're a believer, and they don't do it. They know the things to do to fight the sin, but they give up. Oftentimes they don't pray. They don't read their Bible. They don't go to church. They don't have anyone involved in their lives on a deep level, they have no accountability. But when you find someone living in victory, it's the opposite. When you find someone defeating the sin on an ongoing basis, it's because they're doing these things and that's not an accident. That's not a mistake. It's the way God intended it to be.

R. A. Torrey once said this, he said, "The reason why many fail in spiritual battle is because they want to wait until the hour of battle to fight. They want to wait until the last possible moment to prepare for it. But the reason others succeed is because they don't do that. They don't procrastinate. They prepare ahead of time for the battle. They get down on their knees and pray long before the battle comes."

In other words, they are diligent about this. They make it a priority which leads me to ask the question this morning, are you? Are you making this a priority? Are you being diligent in the battle with sin? They say you don't build a fortress when you're getting shot at; you build a fortress in times of peace, in times of calm. If you're in a time of calm right now, are you? Are you getting ready? Are you reading your Bible, going to church, praying right now? Or are you waiting until the last possible moment? I ask you this because if you're waiting until the last moment when temptation comes, you're not going to be ready. When the battle comes, you'll fail. You need to prepare now.

To ask this another way, how seriously are you taking sin this morning? How seriously are you fighting it? John Owen said you need to be killing sin or it'll be killing you. So which one are

you doing? Are you taking the time to fight it? Are you taking the time to kill it? Or are you saying, "It's okay? I'm strong enough. I can handle it."

Friends, this is Christianity 101. This is basic stuff. But the good news you have is you have the resources to have victory. You just need to apply them.

In my study this week, I came across a story of a poor farmer living in the hills of Tennessee. He lived in the Appalachian Mountains, kind of near to where I come from and a visitor asked him, "Mister, why do you live this way? Why do you live in poverty when you have all this farmland? Why don't you plant some crops and take them to market and make a little money for yourself? Why don't you do something like that?" And the old man thought about for a minute and he said, "You know, son, there's no use in trying that. I told my wife to do that years ago and she refused."

There's a lesson you can learn from that. There's a principle there. The principle is you don't have to live in poverty today. You don't have to live in squalor as a Christian. Jesus has given you victory. He has given you riches, you have a new man, you have a new mind, you have a new self. Everything is new for you. You just need to take advantage of it. Will you do that this morning? Will you make it a priority to put on the new man? Let me pray that you would. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we thank You for the words we've read this morning. And we thank You for this passage. This is basic stuff, but we forget these kinds of things. And we go through life Lord, living like the same old man. I pray this morning as we've studied this passage, our hearts would be pricked to live a godlier life. And we would be pricked to excel still more in Christ to glorify Him.

Lord, thank You that our salvation is so full. There's nothing lacking in it. There is no emptiness. We don't have to meet You halfway, God; You've done everything.

Lord, may we go out in that sense of victory this morning. Who would You be glorified? And then we also pray, Father, if there's any who were here today who don't have a new man. If there are any here today who don't have a new self, Lord, would You draw them to Christ and let them know they don't have to be slaves anymore? They don't have to live like they're poor. They can live like they're rich and blessed and free in Him. Thank You for Jesus. Thank You for the salvation that He brings. We pray all this in His name. Amen.