

## NEW LIFE FOR OLD

### Ephesians 4:17-24

Remember the story of Aladdin—

*But when the folk heard him cry on this wise, they derided him and said, "Doubtless this man is Jinnmad, for that he goeth about offering new for old." And a world followed him, and the children of the quarter caught him up from place to place, laughing at him the while, nor did he forbid them or care for their maltreatment. And he ceased not strolling about the streets till he came under Aladdin's pavilion, where he shouted with his loudest voice, and the boys screamed at him: "A madman! A madman!" Just as the Moor offered new lamps for old God offers us new life for old*

- People thought the Moor was crazy
- God's actions also seem foolish to the world (1 Corinthians 1:18)
- But the result is new life for us in Christ!

### The state of the world

- Futility of mind = aimless, vain, purposeless
- Darkened in understanding (and feeling)
- Alienated from the life of God = continual
- Ignorant (*agnostic*) = not knowing, unable to comprehend or see the light, inexcusable blindness)
- Hard of heart cf Mark 3:5
- Callous = beyond feeling (as insensitive to pain). Compare 1 Timothy 4:2. A seared conscious is one which is no longer sensitive, like a seared wound.
- Sensual = wanton, outrageous, shameless
- Greedy = covetous, lustful
- Impure = unclean
- Practise = make a business of, work

'Every trait of the old man's behaviour is putrid, crumbling, or inflated like rotting waste or cadavers, stinking, ripe for being disposed of and forgotten' (Barth)

Things that seem pleasant to us are repulsive to God. The derelict in the street may be less offensive to God than the suited executive who walks past him to his executive penthouse suite.

### The truth in Jesus

- In Christ everything is different
- We have learned the truth as it is in Jesus

- ‘Verily, verily’ = ‘truly, truly’
- Jesus said, ‘I am the truth’ (John 14:6)
- Word—John 8:31,32
- Spirit—John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13

### **Put off the old**

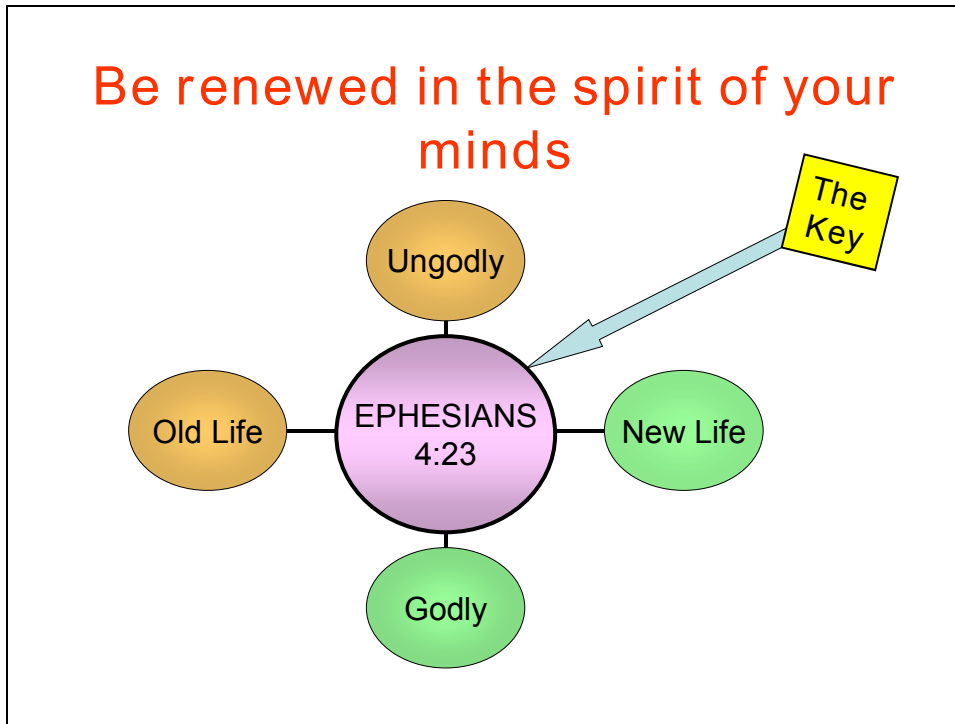
- Aorist tense = once-only and once-for-all
- Corrupt through deceitful desires—pleasure is not the correct goal for our actions
- Clothing analogy—like taking off old, worn clothes cf Zechariah 3:3, 4.

### **Put on the new**

- Aorist tense = once-only and once-for-all
- Created ‘according to God’
- True righteousness—integrity is crucial for the people of God
- Too often, Christians have failed in this area
- True righteousness comes only through the cross of Christ
- True holiness
- Sacredness, piety, devotion
- Sanctioned by God’s law
- 1 Tim 1:8; Luke 1:74, 75; Act 2:27; 13:35; Heb 7:26; Rev 15:4; Eph 5:24;

### **Living God’s way.**

- Be renewed in the spirit of your minds
- Present tense = continual action
- The mind is the key
- God changes us but we must change our thinking
- Rom 12:1,2; 2 Cor 10:5
- Values presented by Scripture versus TV, movies etc. When was the last time you saw James Bond, faced with a crisis, turn to his partner and say, ‘Why don’t we kneel and pray about this?’



### **Baptism**

- Baptism displays this great truth of new life for old
- It is up to us to bring our thinking into line with what God has done
- Re-read the Scripture passage but this time personalise it—

#### Eph 4:20-24 personalised

[20] But that is not the way I learned Christ!—[21] I have heard about him and was taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, [22] to put off my old self, which belongs to my former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, [23] and to be renewed in the spirit of my mind, [24] and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

### **SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT**

*If you don't have time to answer all the questions, don't worry. It is better to do some well than to try to rush through all of them.*

Read Ephesians 4:17-24

1. We are told not to walk (live) as the Gentiles (heathen) walk (17). Compare verse one. To what extent are these verses saying the same thing?
2. Consider the list of attributes of heathen life (18-19). Which of these once applied to your life? If you can, tell the group what it meant or felt like to be in this condition.
3. What was it like when the Lord delivered you? See Colossians 1:13, 14.
4. How do we learn the truth as it is in Jesus? (21) John 8:32-36; 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; Ephesians 6:14; Colossians 1:5..

5. What aspects of the truth as it is in Jesus have been liberating for you? (21) How?
6. One commentator says the two great sins of covetousness and selfishness summarise all the rest. What do you think? To what extent are these two sins major problems in the world today?
7. In the grammar of Greek text, putting off the old self and putting on the new self are both described as one-off actions which do not need repeating. What do we learn from this? What does this say to people who seem to be up and down in their Christian lives?
8. Why do you think the apostle talks of ‘the spirit of our minds’ rather than just our minds? (23)
9. Discuss practical ways in which we can renew the spirit of our minds. (23) What has worked for you?
10. What is ‘true’ righteousness? (24)
11. What is ‘true’ holiness? (24)

*Want to read more by Barry Chant? Easy. Just go to [www.barrychant.com](http://www.barrychant.com) and browse around. There is something for everyone – Bible studies, children’s stories, articles, devotional materials, poems, short stories, Christian resources, pioneer Pentecostal research and more. And lots of it is free. Dr Barry Chant is a regular speaker at church services, seminars, conferences and conventions. Hundreds of thousands of his books have been sold around the world. He has degrees in arts, theology and ministry, a diploma in education and a PhD in history. He is Senior Pastor of the Wesley International Congregation in Sydney, Australia. He is an ordained minister in the CRC Churches International and was the founding president of Tabor College, Australia. He is married (to Vanessa) and they have three adult children and twelve grand-children.*