**January 14, 2018 “Walk No Longer” Ephesians 4:17-24**

**I Peter 2:9-10**

**Romans 6:12-13**

Oftentimes when we read a book in the Bible, it is hard for us to put ourselves in the place of those hearers to whom the book was written. Quite honestly, it would be very hard for them to imagine the circumstances surrounding our lives today as well. For example, how would we be able to explain to the church in Ephesus what it is like to have a cell phone? Or a computer? Or a television?

On the other hand, if we were to reverse the order and try to understand what it was like to be a Christian in Ephesus, we would have an eye-opening experience. Ephesus was considered to be a major city in the ancient world. It was reputed to have about 300,000 people who lived in this city. However, it was not the size of the city that was its most outstanding feature. This city housed one of the seven wonders of the ancient world which was the temple of Diana or Artemis.

Artemis was worshipped as the sex goddess and the temple which was the size of many of our major football stadiums was filled with singers and dancers, shrine prostitutes and pagan priests. Self-mutilation was part of the worship and the vileness was beyond our imagination. Heraclitus said the temple was, quote, “The darkness of vileness. The morals were lower than animals, and the inhabitants of Ephesus were fit only to be drowned”.

The making of idols to Artemis was a major source of industry in this city. People would wear images of Artemis around their necks, ankles and wrists. Silversmiths literally supported themselves very well with the idol-making profession.

Surrounding this temple was a penalty free zone where criminals would be free from arrest from the authorities. Consequently, this city attracted some of the worst of society who flocked to this city in hopes of attaining sanctuary. Interestingly, this temple was also the center of banking for no one dared to rob this bank because doing so would incur the wrath of the so-called gods and their followers.

Into this mess, in Acts 19 we read of the arrival of Paul and he finds 12 men who are followers of Jesus Christ. From that group, a church begins to flourish as you can read in Acts 19. So his message to them and to the rest of the Church in Ephesus is this… “do not walk (live) like the pagans”.

You see the problem with the church in Ephesus was the same problem the Church in the world has today. That problem is that the Church is trying to get the world to act like the Church… loving and kind and helpful to those less fortunate.

That is not the main problem of the Church, however. The problem of the Church is to get Christians to stop living like the world!!!! If the Church is ever going impact the world around it, it must be different.

1. Ephesians 4:1
   1. Walk worthy
      1. Ephesians 4:17
         1. Walk no longer as the Gentiles also walk
2. I Peter 2:9-12
   1. Right living starts with right thinking
      1. How do you see yourself as a Christian?
         1. A chosen race?
         2. A royal priest?
         3. A holy nation made of holy people?
         4. Existing as God’s possession?
         5. Proclaiming His excellencies?
         6. Loving mercy?
         7. Abstaining from fleshly lusts?
      2. Romans 6:11-13
3. Romans 12:1-2
   1. Transformed mind
      1. When we think differently… we act differently
   2. Ephesians 4:17-23
      1. Paul does not address any particular sin of the flesh
      2. But he addresses the root problem of sin in our lives
   3. Our thinking
      1. When you and I got saved
         1. We think about sin differently
         2. We think about life differently
         3. Ephesians 4:17… futility of their mind
         4. Ephesians 4:18… darkened in their understanding
         5. Ephesians 4:18… ignorance
         6. Ephesians 4:20… did not learn this way
         7. Ephesians 4:21… are taught differently
         8. Ephesians 4:23… renewed in your mind
4. Note the progression
   1. Ephesians 4: 17……self-centered thinking
      1. Futility or (KJV) vanity of their minds
         1. I think… it is my opinion… I feel
         2. This is chasing bubbles
         3. Constantly floating from this to that
            1. The result is that nothing means anything
            2. A futile life
   2. Ephesians 4:18… not that they cannot understand… they just don’t care
      1. 3 steps
         1. Understanding darkened
         2. Ignorance
         3. Hardened heart
      2. Perhaps the most dangerous place in the world for your soul
         1. Is in church
            1. The Word is preached and you hear it

But do not listen

I’ve heard all this before and I know all of it

* + - * 1. Conviction is evident

Oh… they’re just picking on me because

* + - * 1. Self-justification

If so and so had never done that to me

Nobody understands how I feel

Nobody knows what it is like to be me

My relationship with God is between Him and me

* + - * 1. Shamelessness

Look at our society

No shame

Television

Movies

Music

Lifestyles are all to be accepted

Is the church any different?

Do you want your children, grandchildren or great-grandchildren to live like you do?

Do you want them to be the same Christian as you are?

* 1. Given themselves over to
     1. Reprobate mind
        1. Mind that cannot think clearly
        2. Cannot reason
           1. Look at what is going on in Hollywood
           2. Political leaders

Many are not running for re-election

Why? They do not want their lifestyles exposed

Paul looks around him and all he sees is self-centered, useless, purposeless lifestyles leading to hard hearts and he asks… “Did you learn Christ that way?”

Why are we as Christians so afraid to be different? What are we so afraid of?

II Corinthians 6:16-18

Don’t you think that today would be a good day for a change? A change in your life with Christ?