

Putting on the New Self

King Jesus, Pt. 12

Ephesians 4:17-24

Allan McCullough

Grace Hill Church

July 21, 2019



I. INTRODUCTION

a. Several weeks ago, we began a sermon series that we are dividing into four chapters.

i. The first chapter was entitled “The King Rejected.”

- It began like this...

b. In love, God created me to not be the center of my story.

i. God creates the world and then he creates humans to rule over that world as his representatives...we call this being made in the image of God.

- Bearing the image of God means that we reflect who God is to the world. We live for His glory and according to His ways.

ii. **But, there was a question that the enemy planted into our head.**

- What if we didn't live our lives representing God, what if we lived our lives with just our own interests in mind?
 1. What if we didn't bear the image of God but the image of ourselves?
 2. Why live for someone else when I can live for myself?

iii. **And when humanity acted on that question, something we call sin, everything broke.**

- We rejected our King and were kicked out of His Kingdom.
- And the world has been racked with anxiety, trauma, and pain ever since.



c. And we eventually got to “Chapter 2 – The King Redeems.”

- i. And we learned that God, by nature, is merciful.
 - He is eager to restore us to His Kingdom.
- ii. And so, what God does is He sends His Son, Jesus, to do the work of restoring us to His Kingdom.
 - And so, Jesus becomes a human, lives a life without sin, and then gives of Himself to forgive us.
 1. He voluntarily goes to the cross, not because of His own sin, but because God transferred our sin to Jesus and allowed Jesus to suffer the judgement that we deserve in our place.
 - And Jesus took all of that condemnation that you and I deserve, he took it down into the grave for three days, he conquered it, he exhausted it, he eliminated it, and then he rose again from the dead.
 - So, the good news of the gospel is this:
 1. That when it is our time to go before God the Father, we don't have a sinful record that needs judgment, we have the righteous record of Jesus that deserves eternal life and reward.
 2. We are now worthy of God's Kingdom.
 3. Welcome in His Kingdom.
 4. Reconciled to God.
 - This is our new identity. Righteous. Child of God. Welcome. Worthy.



II. IDENTITY AND NATURE

a. **But I want you to understand something...there is a difference between our identity and our nature. (repeat)**

- i. Your identity is who you are. Your nature is how you live out who you are.
- ii. So, look here, before you were a follower of Christ, your identity **(walk to your right)** was that you were a sinner, an enemy of God, an image bearer of self, not welcome into the Kingdom of God.
 - And your nature was in lock-step with your identity.
 - We had what we call a sinful nature meaning we lived our lives in active, unrepentant sin against God.
- iii. **But, when you trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, your identity changed **(walk to your left)**.**
 - Instantaneously. Completely. 100%.
 - You are now united to Jesus.
 1. You have His righteousness.
 2. You have been given the Holy Spirit.
 3. You are a child of God
 4. You are an image bearer of God.
 5. A citizen of God's Kingdom.
 6. All of your sin has been dealt with and there is no more judgement for you.
 - This is your identity. Forever. It will never change.



iv. But you know what did not completely change when you trusted in Christ? Your nature (*walk back to right*).

- Now don't get me wrong, your nature has changed...just not completely.
 1. If you remember several weeks ago, I preached a sermon on how when we come to Christ, God gives us a new heart with new desires.
- And what that means is that God has given us His Spirit and initiated a process of change within us so that we will start living our lives according to our new identity.
 1. He has put a desire in us to live according to our new self and no longer according to our old self.
- But, this process of change and growth for our nature to become completely in step with our new identity, our new self, is a lifelong process.
 1. And just because our identity and our nature are not 100% aligned all the time, does not mean we are any less saved, loved by God, or any less His child.

v. When you come to Christ...your identity is perfectly redeemed, and your nature begins the process of being redeemed.

- See the difference?
- And the Bible tells us that as followers of Christ, there is a war going on inside of us.
 1. It is the war between the old self and the new self...the flesh and the spirit.



2. The Old Self wants to cut God out of every part of your life...it is concerned about bearing the image of self...it wants to shed off any external authority.
 3. The New Self knows that there is joy when God is the center of every part of your life...it is concerned with bearing the image of God...it is happy to serve under the Lordship of Christ.
- And so what it means to grow in godliness and for our nature to be more in step with our identity means there are more and more parts of our lives that we submit to the Lordship of Christ and there are less and less parts of our lives that we keep for ourselves.
 1. **Demonstrate with stage.**

b. And today's theological statement for you to write in your notes:

- i. **I will surrender all to King Jesus and make Him the center of my story.**
- ii. But, the question for the morning is how.
 - How do we surrender all to King Jesus and make Him the center of our story?
 - What does it practically look like to pursue lasting change in my life and see my nature grow closer to my new self and away from my old self/

III. EPHESIANS 4:17-24 & ROMANS 12:1-2

- i. And to do that, I want us to study two Scriptures together.
 - **Read Ephesians 4:17-24.**
 - **Read Romans 12:1-2.**



b. Paul is exhorting the Ephesian and Roman churches to actively do the work of putting off the Old Self and to put on the New Self.

- i. You could say it this way: live according to who you are, not who you used to be.

- But how? How do we do that?

c. Well, in these two texts that we just read, Paul spoke of our bodies, our hearts, and our minds.

- i. Bodies = Behavior. Hearts = Desires. Minds = Knowledge.

- And in order for us to put on the new self and see our nature grow towards who we really are, we must engage all three.
 1. So, let me break down all three for you.

d. Let's start with the body...the simplest of the three.

- i. In Romans 12:1, we are told to present our bodies as a living sacrifice.

- In Ephesians 4:19, we are told that the old self practices every kind of impurity.
- So, when we think of our bodies, I want us to think of our behavior and our practices.

- ii. Putting on the New Self means living our lives in a new way.

- So, when there is something in our life that needs to change, what are we doing to posture our bodies to help effect that change?



- Jesus puts it like this in Matthew 5:29-30 -
“If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.”
 1. In other words, what is something practical I can do to deprive my body of temptation to sin?
 2. Maybe this is getting rid of your smart phone or internet connection for a while because you are tempted to look at things that you shouldn't.
 3. Maybe this is getting off social media, cutting out alcohol, not putting yourself in situation where you're tempted to gossip...how can you posture your body where you are not tempted to live according to the old self?
- Or on the flip side, what is something practical I can do to posture my body towards holiness?
 1. For example, I meet with a group of men on Monday Mornings and we've been holding each other accountable to midday prayer every day at 12:50pm.
 2. So, my phone goes off with an alarm and usually a text message around that time every day and I am trying to build the habit of stopping whatever I am doing to pray.



3. Many times, that alarm goes off during a busy time and I am tempted to turn it off and just keep working instead of stopping.
4. So, I have been trying to build the habit of dropping down to my knees when that alarm goes off.
5. This is my body taking the lead and posturing myself in a place of prayer.
6. And when I get on my knees, I am in a posture of submission and humility. And I remember that the most productive thing I could do in that moment is pray to my Father in Heaven.

iii. **Most of the time, when there is an area of our life that we want to change or grow, this is the strategy we use.**

- We start with our behavior. We deprive our bodies of access to temptation. We try and build a new habit.
 1. And this is good! Because growing in Christ takes effort on our part and we should see it as a sacrifice to God that is a form of worship as Paul says in Romans.
- But just trying to change our behavior is not enough to create lasting change in our lives.
 1. That would be like trying to cure cancer with pain medication.
 2. It might help some of the symptoms, but it is not addressing the root cause of the sin in the first place.
 3. And this is why we struggle so many times when we try to change, break a sinful habit, and grow in Christ.



- What we need to do is simultaneously engage our hearts and minds along with our behavior.

e. So, now that we have postured our bodies for holiness let's talk about the heart.

- i. Paul says in Ephesians that the Old Self is characterized by a heart that is hard, callous, and corrupt through deceitful desires.
 - What does it mean to have a hard heart?
 1. Well it means to be stubborn. Your heart is stuck in a certain place. Unwilling or unable to change.
 - And Paul tells us that what corrupts the heart in this way is deceitful desires.
 1. Oh, we studied this in Genesis 3.
 2. What caused the first sin?
 3. It was the desire of Adam and Eve to be independent from God and the Enemy fed them this lie that independence from God would lead to true life.
 4. It was a deceitful desire.
 5. A deceitful desire is a desire that we think will bring us life when it actually brings us death.
 - And these desires in our heart are the cancer that causes us to sin and live according to our old self.
- ii. **And so, the obvious question is: how do you soften a hard heart? How do you loosen the grip that these deceitful desires have on our heart?**
 - The answer is simple but so incredibly hard and there is no way around it... the answer is exposure.



1. John 3:20 says - *"For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed."*
 2. Deceitful desires and hard hearts gain strength in darkness and isolation.
 3. And they lose their power when they are exposed to the light.
- iii. **Early on in my marriage with Kim, we kept on having the same conflict over and over again.**
- And here is what was happening...
 1. I had this fear that Kim thought I was a fraud of a pastor...that I had false motives in doing ministry.
 2. Kim had this fear that I looked down on her and thought she was insignificant.
 - And what would happen is one of us would make a comment to the other that would poke this fear and the ping-pong game began.
 1. I would say something that belittled her and made her feel stupid and then she would respond with something that made me feel like a fraud.
 2. And we kept having this conflict until one night, by God's grace, we had this conversation that changed everything.
 - I remember sitting on the bed and both of us just confessed these fears and deceitful desires that we had.
 1. We exposed what was inside our hearts...as ridiculous as it was.
 2. It's humiliating to confess these kinds of fears that are in our hearts about other people.



3. To confess these deceitful desires that we had.
 4. We both had this deceitful desire for the other person to think so highly of us that we would lash out when that was threatened.
- But the moment we exposed it to one another, our hearts softened.
 1. We now knew how we had hurt one another.
 2. We now knew how to better love one another.
 3. We now had a pathway to change.
- iv. **See, our hearts stay hard and our deceitful desires control us when we keep them to ourselves...but our hearts soften and our deceitful desires look foolish when they are exposed to trusted Christian community.**
- If your marriage is in a tough spot right now, if you're bitter, if you're angry, if you're hurt, if you just don't care anymore...you need to expose what is in your heart to a trusted Christian friend, pastor, or counselor.
 1. Because your heart is hardened by deceitful desires and the only way to soften that is through exposing it.
 - If you're struggling with an addiction, if you're consumed with materialism and money, if you're tired of being single, if you're in the midst of a conflict with someone, if you just feel indifferent about your walk with Christ, you need to sit with someone and let them dig into the desires, beliefs, and fears of your heart.



1. And you need to verbalize the desires in your heart that your most ashamed to say out loud.
 2. The ones you feel are most childish, or selfish, or immature.
 3. Because these desires are fueling sin and hardening your heart.
- It might be that part of what is hardening your heart and giving you these desires is trauma from your past.
 1. Someone may have sinned against or you may have experienced some tragedy.
 2. And, many times, our hearts respond to trauma with fear, isolation, anger or bitterness...all which can feed us deceitful desires that need to be exposed.
 3. And you need to work through this with someone to find healing from your trauma and begin to dissect how it may have hardened your heart.
- v. **This is why being involved in close, deep, Christian community is not optional.**
- You cannot put off the old self and put on the new self alone.
 1. Because when we are alone, we are no match for our deceitful desires and they lose their power when they are exposed.



f. And this leads to talking about our minds...our knowledge.

- i. We cannot do the work of posturing our bodies and exposing our hearts without also doing the work of renewing our minds.
 - Paul also says both in Ephesians 4 and Romans 12 that our minds need to be renewed.
 - In Ephesians 4, Paul says that the Old Self walks in the futility of its mind, its understanding is darkened, and that it is ignorant.
 1. In other words, the Old Self operates off of what is false and the New Self operates off of what is true.
 - And there are two fallacies that we constantly believe that need to be combated with truth in order for us to be motivated to posture our bodies for holiness and expose the desires of the heart.
- ii. The first fallacy is the belief that if we were fully known and exposed at the heart level, that no one would accept us.
 - In other words, we forget who we are. We forget our true identity. We forget that God has already declared us to be His child.
 1. God doesn't wait for our nature to be perfected before he accepts us and makes us a new creation.
 2. God doesn't wait for all of the junk in our heart to be cleaned out before he makes us His child.



3. No, God saves us, gives us a new identity, and then begins this process of change in our lives.
- And our minds need to be renewed with the truth of the gospel constantly so that we don't allow lies to deceive us into isolation.
 1. When we forget the gospel and find our identity in the Old Self, we will always fight against exposing the heart.
 2. But, one who has had their mind renewed in the Gospel has no ego to protect and no image to project...but their security is in Christ and there is no threat in exposing the deep desires of the heart.
- iii. **The second fallacy is the belief that what the world has to offer us is better than what God has to offer us.**
- Following Jesus and putting on the New Self will mean sacrifice in this life.
 1. Posturing your body for holiness means discipline.
 2. Dealing with the desires in our heart means humble exposure.
 3. Renewing the mind means daily feeding of God's Word.
 - And there are times where it will seem that living according to the Old Self will be easier, will bring you more joy, and is ultimately better for you.
 1. And that's a lie. It's a deceitful desire.
 2. And our minds need to be fed constantly with the truth that God's way is better.



- iv. **Every minute of every single day, your mind is being influenced.**
- Most of the time, it is being influenced by a world that is constantly reinforcing your old self.
 1. Constantly telling you that you are better off on your own.
 2. Constantly telling you to shed off any authority that would challenge your desires.
 3. Constantly pushing you to project a false image of yourself to the world.
 - And every single day where we do not intentionally fill our minds with God's Word, every time we neglect to gather with the church, every day that we choose to ignore the presence of God...is a day where our minds and our understanding is being darkened.

g. How do we change?

- We posture the body for holiness.
 - We expose the desires of our heart.
 - We renew our mind in God's Word.
- i. **And these three work together simultaneously.**
- And at times it is a quick process and at other times it is a slow process.
 - But God's Word to us this morning does not tell us to prove who we are...it tells us to live out who we are.

IV. CONCLUSION

- a. **As many of you know my wife and I have been involved with Foster Care and Adoption.**



- i. And one thing many adoptive children have to work through is this new way of life in a new home and a new family.
- ii. There was this one family who lived here in the United States and were very well-off.
 - They had adopted a little girl from a third world country and were in final preparations to bring her home.
 1. They had put together a room in their house just for her with a brand-new bed, pink linens, toys, and all kinds of new clothes for her.
 2. And they stocked their pantry and fridge with all kinds of snacks and food they thought this little girl would like.
 - When they picked her up, the only thing that she had that belonged to her were the old, ratty clothes on her back that looked as if they had never been washed.
 1. This little girl had never slept in a bed before, she never used a toilet, and she never had a day where she was well fed.
 - And after a few days in her new house, with her new family, and her new identity...things started to get tough.
 1. The family would find her sleeping on the floor of her room in her old clothes and not in her new PJs in her brand-new bed.
 2. She would often relieve herself in the corner of her room instead of using the restroom.
 3. And they caught her hiding food in her room.



- See, even though she had lived her whole life in utter poverty and without all of this luxury, this was what was most comfortable to her...it's all she knew.
 1. And it took time for her to begin to accept her new identity and begin living this new life and leaving behind the old life.
- iii. **There are many of us here who are redeemed children of God where God has prepared a place for us in His Kingdom.**
 - And yet, we are most comfortable still wearing our old, dirty clothes.
 1. We're most comfortable living the life of the old self.
 2. The old self might not bring us joy. But it's familiar. And I don't have to face the deep places of my heart.
 - Christian, you belong to God. You will be with Him for eternity.
 1. And as we wait for that day, take off the old clothes, put on the new ones, and begin to live according to who you really are.
 2. Stop wallowing in your Old Self. That is no longer who you are.
 3. Surrender all to King Jesus and make Him the center of every part of your life.
 4. What part of your life are you withholding from Him?
 5. Where in your life do you need to posture your body for holiness, expose the desires of your heart, and renew your mind with the truth of God's Word?

V. PRAY

