



## **Alive On the Inside Ephesians 4v17-32**

God has made us alive with Christ (2v5), and so he urges us to live out that new life: to “walk” worthy of our calling (4v1); not to walk like those who don’t know God (4v17); and to walk in love, as Christ loved us (5v2).

### **1) Separated & Strangers to Life (4v17-19)**

Human beings were created by God to bear his image (4v24), to be like him and to know him—wonderfully, to share the life of God. This passage shows us what that life looks like and what death looks like. The Apostle Paul begins with death—why would we want to walk even one mile in the way described in v17-19? He is describing those who don’t know Christ. There is a futility and emptiness (v17) which comes from being “separated from the life of God” (v18). Their understanding is darkened and their heart is hard towards God (v18). And this leads to giving themselves over to sensuality and to being driven in their behaviour to satisfy immediate desires and cravings (v19). This isn’t life! These things are “grave clothes”—they’re associated with a spiritual death which God has already raised us out of with Christ.

### **2) Created in Christ & Clothed with Him (4v20-24)**

That kind of walking and living (v17-19) is not what we learned when we came to learn, see and know Christ personally (v20-21). The Lord wants us to “put off” or take off the old clothes, the grave clothes—that old self which is corrupt and spoiled. And, in their place, the Lord wants us to “put on the new self” (v24), to put on the clothes that fit someone who God has been made alive with Christ. That new self has already been “created to be like God in...holiness” (v24). God hasn’t only declared you right with him forever, he has also changed you and raised you to new life, transforming your heart. The Holy Spirit of God lives in you (v30) and so you are able to put on the new clothes. *Recall the car cover illustration. What clothing might you still be wearing which is doing you harm and belongs to your old self rather than the new self who knows Christ?*

### **3) Take Off the Grave Clothes! (4v25-32)**

As we’ve been learning, the Lord gives life in his body, the church. These verses (v25-32) are all about how to enjoy and experience the life Christ has given us together. Speak truthfully to each other (v25). If you’re angry with someone in the fellowship (wrongly or perhaps, sometimes, rightly), don’t act in hatred, but sort it out quickly (v26-27). Work hard and honestly so that we can give to one another (v28), and live in love towards one another. In what you say (v29), aim to recognise each other’s needs and build each other up.

When the Spirit sees a local church and there is bitterness between people in that church, resentment, or anger/ slander against one another, the Holy Spirit of God is grieved and outraged (v30). But God is kind, he’s tenderhearted, and his word to us this morning urges us to let go of any such bitterness and to ask for forgiveness. Let’s “be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave” us (v32). Let’s be treating each other with the beautiful grace that Christ gives to us.