

Christians Must Not Behave Like the Unbelievers

By Pastor Nick Bibile

17 Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. 18 They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. 19 They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.

Today there are many people who call themselves Christians. Some say they are Christians because they are Protestants, Roman Catholics, some say they are Christians because they are Mormons, Jehovah's Witness. Some say they are born into a Christian family, some say they have a Bible at home, a cross on their neck and so on. But it counts not what people say but what Jesus said. Jesus said, John 3:7 'You must be born again.'

Born again means a second birth. All of us were born of this earth from our physical parents, and we die and buried here on earth. For a person to go to heaven you need to have a spiritual birth. This spiritual birth is from above not from this earth it is from the Spirit of God. The result is he does not belong to himself anymore but to Christ Jesus and become a changed person.

John 3:3 Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again [2] he cannot see the kingdom of God."

John 1:13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. [2] The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Now let us see Ephesians chapter four.

Ephesians 4:17-19 closely resembles Romans 1:24-31 as in Romans we see God's perspective and in Ephesians we see the same progression from a human perspective

17 Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds.

What is the word testify means? To make a declaration of truth or fact under oath; to make a solemn declaration, or proving some facts of evidence.

Matthew 27:13 Then Pilate said to him, “Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?”

Acts 20:24 But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

Paul on Ephesians is saying now this I say and testify in the Lord. He is declaring this truth not in him but in the Lord, this is a heavenly truth, a solemn declaration from heaven. What will be the outcome if you will not obey this solemn heavenly declaration? One day you will have to give an account to God.

What is the heavenly declaration? That you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. See the word; ‘you must not’ is a command. He did not say you may not, you might not but you MUST not walk means, it is imperative, a command which should not be broken under the law. You must not walk as the Gentiles do means to behave or conduct your life as the unbelievers do. How do the unbelievers behave? It says futility of their minds. What is the meaning of futility? It means worthless, unprofitable way of behavior.

Futility of their mind. According to man, the mind holds the highest rank in humans, according to man it is the seat of reason, presides over the will, and restrains sinful desires; some philosophers have the habit of calling mind the Queen. But, Paul makes the mind to consist of nothing else than vanity. (If you are not in Christ.) Their mind is focused on worthless things of this world, which does not profit the soul.

Proverbs 28:26 Whoever trusts in his own mind is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom will be delivered.

The apostle is saying do not behave as the unbelievers do. Their mind is set on this world and they do the things of the flesh. Their desire is to get everything what they can from this world, fulfill the lust of the desires. For them God is not

all in all, God is not priority. May be it is sports, the house, the television set, car, food for stomach than the spiritual food.

Romans 8:5-8 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. 6 To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Christians should have a godly lifestyle in Christ Jesus not a fleshly and a worldly lifestyle. Why is it that the unbelievers have a different lifestyle?

18 They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.

Here Apostle Paul sheds more light and gives more evidence. They are darkened in their understanding. When you are in darkness you cannot see, you are blind, in the same way the unbelievers are blind not physically but to the things of God. They do not see spiritual truths as they cannot understand. They may be illuminated by the truth in the mind but will not settle in their hearts.

Jesus called the unbelievers blind as he called them; you blind fools! (Mat 23:17) You blind men! (Mat 23:19) You blind guides. (Mat 23:24) You blind Pharisee! (Mat 23:26) Here we are talking of a spiritual blindness.

1 Cor 2:14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

Yes, the natural man or the unbeliever understands and can be very intelligent when it comes to physical things of this world, there are doctors, scientists, engineers who are not Christians and they do understand their field and be pretty bright but when it comes to the things of God they are blind and look so foolish.

Now the question is why they are in darkness and why are they spiritually blind? The answer is they are alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.

This was due to the result of the sin. Adam was our fountainhead and when he sinned he was banished from the very presence of God. To be in the presence of God to be in the light and to be away from God to be in darkness.

Psalm 27:1 The Lord Is My Light and My Salvation

Numbers 6:25 25 the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you.

Mat 25:30 And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

When Adam the fountainhead of humanity sinned we all sinned in him. Sin brought spiritual death and alienation from God. The natural man is alive and strong physically but by nature he is corrupt, the defect is in the mind and in the heart. It is spiritual. As he is spiritually dead.

Take the example of a lion and the sheep. The lion has legs so does sheep, the lion has a mouth so does a sheep, the lion have ears so does a sheep. Physically both can walk and eat. But the lion will not eat grass like a sheep neither the sheep will eat meat like a lion. The distinction is in the nature. By nature, the Lion is different than a sheep. In the same way the fallen man is spiritually dead, blind and the heart is corrupted.

The heart is naturally hard and stony due to the fallen nature of man. The unbelievers live in sin/darkness and they love their darkness of sin more than God.

John 3:19 And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil.

Eph 4:19 They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.

You say I have a callus on my thumb, meaning that your skin has become rough and developed hardened tissues when you touch that part of the skin there is no feeling. Here on Ephesians 4:19 Paul is speaking spiritually the unbelievers have become callous to spiritual things

Psalm 119: 70 their heart is unfeeling like fat, but I delight in your law.

People have more affection for sensuality meaning great appetites for the flesh, pleasures of the flesh. And greediness which means to have desire for anything covetous for a food. They don't have any affections and feelings toward God but for themselves.

The heart of man is not hungering after the love of God, because it is dead, cold towards God, his heart is like a dead mans heart towards God.

You may say, there are so many religious people in the world and we see they have a great love for God, as they are very religious. My answer is who would be more religious than the Jews. They worshiped one God, they kept all the traditions and the rituals and they even knew the word of God. But inside in their hearts, there was no true love toward God. They were dead to God inside. Jesus said to these religious people, but I know that you do not have the love of God within you. (John 5:42)

Application

John 8:12 Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

The unbelievers are in darkness and they are blind, they have no purpose in life. But to the Christians we have God who gives light to our path, just like the children of Israel in the wilderness not knowing where to go; the Lord led them as a pillar of cloud during the day and a pillar of fire during the night.

But there is the grace of God, once you hear the word of God there is power in the word of God to bring any sinner from darkness to the light of God, as God can remove the heart of stone and give a heart of flesh to follow him.

Ezek 36:26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

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