

Introduction

- Imagine being at some sporting occasion - tennis, football...
 - taking part is the rising star of that sport - the next Wayne Rooney or David Beckham - someone like Lewis Hamilton is now
 - and as you watch the crowd becomes strangely silent as the talent of this newcomer is revealed - beautiful striker of the ball, incredible precision in their driving, phenomenal pace, whatever it is...
 - its magic...!
- When we come to Scripture, its not magic we seek, but inspiration, even glory
 - don't always see it to start off with! (even when we know we are looking at the very Word of God)
 - here in this passage? We are meant to be reading about the glorious church of God... but what we have is ethics, behaviour, right standards!
 - bit dull and boring?
- Need sometimes to prayerfully persist!
- So where is central theme?
 - suggest v.21 - "Surely you heard him"
 - not of him - direct
 - Jesus speaking to them - as we will have had the experience of saying "God was speaking to me..."
 - for the Ephesians, it would have been in the lecture hall of Tyrannus (Acts 19:9-10)
- This direct encounter with God is the centre of Paul's appeal - not just here, but in all his letters - to a new ethical standard
 - you heard him speak, so now you live the way he tells you...
- Earlier in this chapter, what we looked at last week, call was to grow particularly in keeping bond of unity in the Spirit (v.3)
 - no he switches to theme of purity

1. Pool of Ignorance (vs. 17-19)

- First he looks at the basic lifestyle of men and women who have no restraint
 - wrong thinking, wrong understanding, ignorance - due to the hardening of hearts
 - moral ignorance, and it leads ultimately to a moral cesspool
 - non-believers have a worldview, but sooner or later it is shown to be inadequate
 - was true in 1st Century Roman Empire - and just as true in 21st Century Western World
 - may have been in the city of the Temple of Diana, one of 7 wonders of world, but their thinking was futile

2. School of Christ (vs.20-24)

- Contrasting with that "pool of ignorance" is the school of Christ that we are to enter into
 - you, however - contrast (v.20)
 - not a purely intellectual exercise - despite the words used
 - to do with our moral compass, the over-arching understanding we have of what is happening in the world around us
 - if it is Christ centred, the everything else will fall into place
- The "holy grail" of Physics is GUT
 - spiritually, if we enter the school of Christ, with him as our guide and centre, all else falls into place
 - in particular, the central lesson taught here is that, spiritually and morally, we have put our old life behind us in Christ, we are made new, and are to adopt this new attitude in our minds
 - an attitude like God's, an attitude that will lead us to live lives of true

Ephesians 4:17-5:2 Living as the body of Christ Fintry, 10/6/2007, pm

righteousness and holiness

- Even if we feel the vestiges of the old life clinging on, we have, in Christ, said goodbye to that old life
 - rather we are born now into a new life, a new attitude, a new mindset, one whose overall aim is to become, in character, like God himself (v.24)
 - that's what we were born for - holiness! - which is Christ's life within us

3. Rule of Truth (vs.25-32)

- Why did you become a Christian?
 - may be many parts to that story
 - ultimately, hopefully, because it is true!
- So now, in our living, truth is to rule
 - for Jesus himself is the truth
 - the truth is to rule our choices, our life, our speech, our behaviour...
 - as we have learned lesson one - old life off, new life on
 - so subsequent lessons follow - put off falsehood, put on truthfulness; control is to be exercised in our relationships - our temper; we are not to grieve the Holy Spirit; stealing is out... etc
- Story of conman and Trinity Norwich vicar Gordon
 - stealing is out when converted
 - and he was willing to face prison for the sake of letting truth rule in his life!
 - (I am deeply challenged by this!)
- Its not just stopping negative actions:
 - also putting on positive replacements
 - too easy to say "I don't steal" - but do we give?
 - conman didn't just stop conning, he owned up, faced consequences of his past sin, made restoration.... and Paul encourages positive, constructive work that enables positive giving in its place (end v.28)
 - do we do that with our temper? our past lies? our unwholesome talk? our bitterness?
- This is what we are to practise in the community of the church!
 - we are to be careful, not just with what we say, but with one another, with how we behave, and showing mutual forgiveness
- Surely you heard him (v.21)

Conclusion

- Are we putting off that old life?
- Are we learning in the school of Christ?
- Are we letting truth rule in our living?