

Ephesians 4:14-23

8/3/25

Truth: “By grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is a gift from God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast. We are what God has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.”
Ephesians 2:8-10

How do you start your day? On my desk reads a sign, “How do I take my coffee? Seriously. Very Seriously!” Are many watching *The Chosen*? If you haven’t yet, join my Sunday school class beginning 9/7. We are starting the 2nd season. There is plenty that I appreciate about this portrayal of Jesus, but one practice in particular is Jesus’ prayer life. What do you think is the first thing Jesus does as he sits up from sleep? Jesus prays.

“I am thankful before You, living and enduring King, for you have mercifully restored my soul within me. Great is Your faithfulness.” Whether Jesus prayed this prayer or not (it is not mentioned in Scripture), it demonstrates a powerful practice: **action must follow belief**. Another way to say it, **Christian motivation for action is Christ!**

Helpful: Your challenge this week is to evaluate how you begin your day and to read the letter to the Ephesians. Let’s follow God’s Word, “We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people’s trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ...” There are so many fads when it comes to technology, diets, or management styles, but one person endures: Jesus Christ. Follow His habits. Practice His beliefs to live well.

My wife has brought the T.H.I.N.K. acronym to my attention and I believe it is a good interpretation of what God’s Word is teaching us this morning. Not only are we to evaluate our own lives, we desire the best for others as well, and yes, we believe following Christ is the best way for all people. When we have impactful conversations with people, is what we are about to say, True, Helpful, Inspiring, Necessary, Kind? Like beginning each day with prayer and gratitude is a habit that follows belief, so is the T.H.I.N.K way to approach difficult conversations. And I am still very much practicing. I sometimes speak impulsively without THINKING.

Paul continues his difficult conversation that he writes from prison in Ephesians 4:24-32.

Inspiring: Jesus says, “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven.” — Matthew 5:44–45 Jesus’ best friends sit around the Passover meal worshipping the God who rescues slaves, worshipping the God who commands rest, and He knows we will betray Him. Have you ever been betrayed? Betrayal is gut-wrenching. Betrayal makes you question everything! And yet the Creator kneels before the creation lovingly washing us. Hours later hanging on the cross, Jesus prays, “Father forgive

them for they do not know what they are doing.”-Luke 23:24 Jesus doesn’t simply give us moral advice. Jesus empowers us to be like God offering God’s mercy!

Necessary: For Paul, becoming Christian is transformation or as our Bibles say, “Put away your old self and clothe yourself with Christ.”-Ephesians 4:22-24 Or another way he says it is, “I have been crucified with Christ. I no longer live but Christ who lives in me.”-Galatians 2:20 If you have hit rock bottom, this dramatic transformation is what you may need, give your life to Christ and begin the transformation. Invite the Holy Spirit to change you from the inside out.

But what if you have given your life to Christ years ago, like I have. It’s been a good 30 years or so for me. For many of you today, the process will probably not be as dramatic but incremental. As you know, Hope is a registered dietitian. One thing she preaches is small changes. Small decisions that can add up for bigger impact. So, you don’t want to drive 15 minutes to the gym, then work out for an hour, then 15 minutes back home. What about intentional breathing at your desk? Or what about 5 push-ups at different times a day throughout the day. Instead of a complete change in diet. What about no salad dressing and just eat it with salt & pepper? Something is better than nothing when it comes to positive change.

Paul writes not simply to an individual, but a group of individuals trying to be Christ’s body. And seemly there are thieves in this church! He gives the thieves a shout out and advises incremental change, labor and work, to have something to share with the needy. The anti-Christ steals, the Christian generously gives. Those opposite of Christ is hiding truth to make yourself look better, the Christian is transparent. The anti-Christ is nothing, the Christian makes incremental improvements to grow into Christ.

Kind: “By grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is a gift from God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast. We are what God has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.” Ephesians 2:8-10

The most important improvements are those that build each other up. Christian action must follow belief not impulse.

So how do you begin your day? Does it follow your faith in Jesus Christ?

Love,
Pastor Curtis