

## CHRISTIANS ON CAMPUS

### Session 3 - Learning Christ as the Truth is in Jesus

#### Scripture Reading: Eph. 4:15-21

**Ep 4:15** But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,

**Ep 4:16** Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and *through* the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

**Ep 4:17** This therefore I say and testify in the Lord, that you no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk in the vanity of their mind,

**Ep 4:18** Being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance which is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;

**Ep 4:19** Who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lasciviousness to work all uncleanness in greediness.

**Ep 4:20** But you did not so learn Christ,

**Ep 4:21** If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him as the reality is in Jesus,

#### Today's Reading

Holding to truth in love means to handle, embrace, and speak Christ with the church. Others may teach differently, emphasizing doctrines or opinions that distract people from Christ and the church. However, we should not speak in such a way. Rather, we should speak those things that bring us into contact with Christ and that build us up as the Body of Christ. To speak in this way is to handle the truth.

Verse 16 indicates that growth is not for individuals, but for the Body. Any growth that is not for the Body is not genuine. The words “each one part” refer to every member of the Body. Every member of the Body of Christ has its own measure, and this measure works for the growth of the Body. The Body causes the growth of itself through the supplying joints and working parts. Both the joints of the supply and every single part with its measure are needed for the church to build itself up. The growth of the Body is the increase of Christ in the church. This results in the Body building itself up.

Paul's exhortation is to “no longer walk as the nations...walk in the vanity of their mind.” The nations, the Gentiles, are the fallen people, who have become vain in their reasonings (Rom. 1:21). They walk without God in the vanity of their mind and are controlled and directed by their vain thoughts. Whatever they do according to their fallen mind is vanity; it is all without reality. The life of fallen mankind is a walk in the vanity of the mind. All the worldly people today walk in such vanity. In the eyes of God and in the eyes of the Apostle Paul, whatever the people in the world think, say, and do is nothing but vanity. None of those things is real or solid—everything is empty.

As believers, we should no longer walk in the vanity of the mind. Instead, we must walk in the reality of our spirit.

Verses 17 through 19 are a dark background for what Paul says in verse 20: “But you did not so learn Christ.” According to the New Testament, to be saved is to be put by God into Christ. First Corinthians 1:30 says, “But of him are you in Christ Jesus.” When God put us into Christ, He put us into the mold. Just as a sister shapes dough into the form of a mold, so God intends to form us into the mold of Christ. Hence, Romans 8:29 indicates that we are to be conformed to the image of Christ, the Firstborn among many brothers. To be conformed is to be molded. The Firstborn is the pattern, and the many brothers of the Firstborn are those who are to be conformed to this pattern. To learn Christ is simply to be molded into the pattern of Christ, that is, to be conformed to the image of Christ.

After a person is saved, deep within him he desires to live a life in the pattern established by the Lord Jesus. However, many either ignore this desire or cultivate it in a mistaken way, thinking that by self-effort they can succeed in imitating Him. It is a mistake to think that we can imitate Christ by the exercise of our natural life. The believers in Christ should imitate Him, but they should not do so according to their natural life.

The truth in Jesus is the real situation of the life of Jesus as recorded in the four Gospels. In the godless walk of the nations, the fallen people, there is vanity. But in the godly life of Jesus there is truth, reality. Jesus lived a life always doing things in God, with God, and for God. God was in His life, and He was one with God. This is the truth in Jesus. We, the believers, regenerated with Christ as our life and taught in Him, learn from Him as the truth is in Jesus.