

Disciple-making leadership

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Why this conference?

- “ways of being Christian without being Christ-like...”?
- Role of leaders in nurturing maturity in the body of Christ
- So that ...
- What’s at stake?

Literary Structure

- “Walking” 8 times (2:2, 2:10, 4:1, 4:17 (twice), 5:2, 5:8, 5:15)
- Therefore Key theme of the letter is “walking” = how we live
- Two prayers (1:15-22 & 3:14-21), both followed by reference to “Walking”

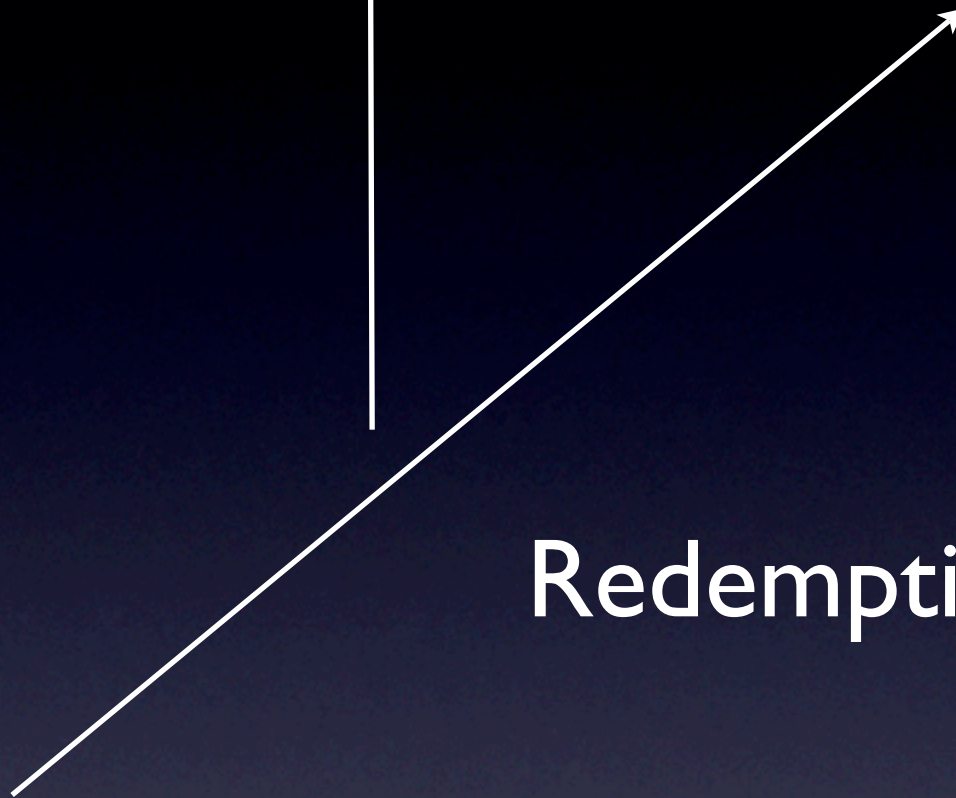
Themes

- “in Christ”, “in Him”, “in Christ Jesus”, “in Jesus” = Union with Christ
- Love
- Power
- Unity
- The Church
- New Creation

Creation

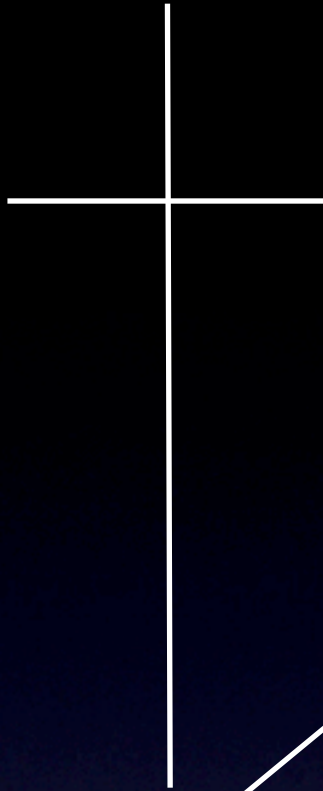


Fall



Redemption

New Creation



“Learning Christ” - Discipleship and Transformation in Ephesians

- how does transformation happen?
- “learning Christ” = discipleship

Ephesians 4:17-24

- unique phrase
- “Learn Christ”
- what does it mean?

A. Command not to walk in old way.

B. Caused by un-renewed minds.

C. Resulting in sin.

D. Learning Christ.

C`. Putting off sin.

B`. Having minds renewed.

A`. Walking in the new creation.

Trajectory

- walking in the old way
- living in the new way
- (Note parallel to 2:1-10)

**Walk
old
way**

Transformation

**Walk
new
way**

Learning Christ transforms...

- **Old way** - futility of mind; darkened understanding; alienation from the life of God; hardness of heart; callous, insatiable impurity - *to become* -
- **New way** - putting off the “old man”, renewed in the spirit of our minds, putting on the “new man” living in reality of new creation “in true righteousness and holiness”.

What causes this transformation?

- learning Christ
- Hearing about Christ
- Being taught in Christ
- Process of renewal - human perspective on our ongoing participation **in union with Christ**

Parallel with 2:1-10 where transformation caused by -

- God's action in graciously saving us
- God raising us, seating us with Christ
- Event of God's saving action - divine perspective on union with Christ

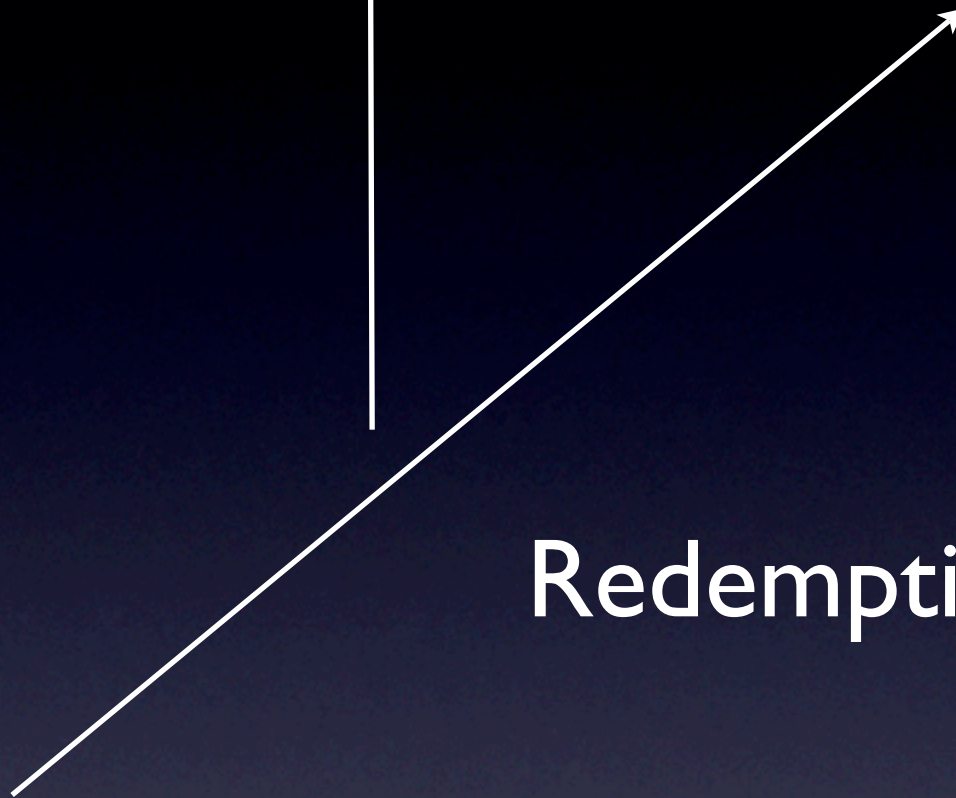
Therefore...

- “Learning Christ” is the human perspective on our growing appropriation of the reality of the new creation, in union with Christ - a reality in which we become participants because of God’s gracious action.

Creation

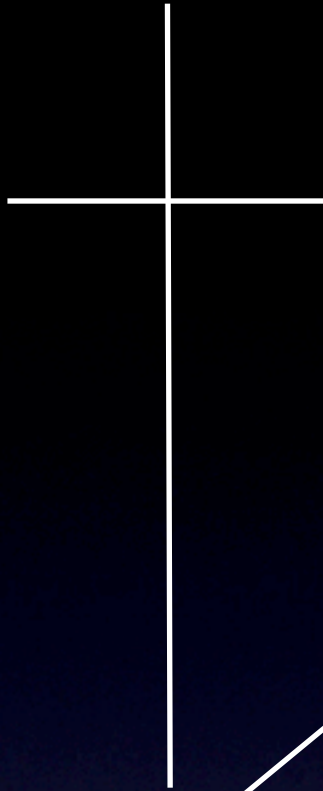


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What does this look like?

- rest of Ephesians tells us
- relational transformation
 - speech, forgiveness, sexual purity, lack of greed, wisdom, good marriage, good family, good work relationships...

Christ cannot be said to
have been learned if
transformation of
relationships has not
taken place...

How does this happen?

Building up the body

- functioning body is a witnessing body
- being blessed and blessing others
- God's blessing to the world depends on the church fulfilling its calling
- cf. Israel's failure to do this

How does the body grow?

Ephesians 4:11-16

- 4:11 - God gives leaders
- 4:12 - leadership is for a purpose - “equipping the saints”
- 4:12 - for THE work of ministry

Equipping - results...

- v12 building up
- v13 unity in faith and knowledge
- v13 maturity
- v14 stability
- v15 community

Eph 4:16 - the body

- grows as every part does its job
- each unique part, when functioning as designed, is like a ligament or tendon holding the body together
- ***here we see corporate growth of the body coinciding with transformative personal union with Christ***

Application

- Relationships in the body - rest of the letter - depend on -
 - individual gracious union with Christ
 - individual transformation
 - individual and corporate reconciliation with God and one another
 - building up of the whole body
 - leaders committed to disciple-making

Discipleship to maturity is therefore...

- NOT an optional extra but is an inherent part of salvation by gracious union with Christ (see Paul's argument in Romans 6)
- function of leadership within the body
- relational and corporate context - delivery of information alone is not enough
- involves the whole of life - nothing is excluded

Discussion Questions

- how would it change your community if this kind of transformation was a reality?
- how have you been equipped for your unique role in the body?
- how can you equip others for their unique role in the body?

Discussion Questions

- the goal of Christian leadership is people growing to maturity -
- in what ways does our practice of leadership need to change if this is the goal?