

THE CROSS—ANSWER TO FUTILITY

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In Ephesians 4:17-20, the apostle Paul writes, “This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ.”

The word “vanity” comes from a Greek word meaning, “emptiness as to results.” Futility is applied to that which fails completely of the desired end or is incapable of producing any result. Paul mentions four aspects of this futility: darkness (the state resulting from the corruption of sin), alienation (separation from God and things pure and holy), ignorance (willful rejection of the knowledge of God), and hardening (blindness-KJV, a heart of stone). The mind is void of knowledge of God. The heart is void of the love of God. The life is void of the discipline of God! This leads to all manner of moral vice and greediness—the desire to have more and more. There is no redeeming aspect to sin. There is only progression in corruption and futility results.

But, Paul declares, “you have not so learned Christ!” They had come to know Jesus Christ and Him crucified! The cross means: redemption from sin (which stands opposed to darkness); reconciliation to God (which stands opposed to alienation), illumination (knowledge--which stands opposed to ignorance); and transformation (which stands opposed to hardness). In Christ, all men can be transformed in mind, heart and behavior (Gal. 3:26-27; Rom. 6:1-4).

A world without God is dying needlessly in futility. There is an answer. The cross of Jesus Christ gives men the answer to real meaning and purpose for life. It gives hope in this life and in the world to come.