

Series: Ephesians: *The Christian Mystery and Mission*

Week 15

CDOBC – beginning on 2/6/11

Title: **“New Life, New Habits”**

Ephesians 4:25-32- ~ June 19, 2011 – Father’s Day!

OBJECTIVE: To help believers understand the life transformation that their faith in Christ should have on their life.

Announcements

- Welcome / guests – communication cards
- VBS TKU
- BBQ’s – Jerry Drobinski to announce

Opening Prayer

It’s been a few weeks since we have immersed ourselves in the book of Ephesians. For the last three weeks, we have moved our focus to our Oikos series, helping us to understand the priority, practice and our passion for changing our world. Hopefully, you are beginning to understand God’s calling in your life – that as a believer in Christ, God has supernaturally and strategically placed 8 to 15 people in your world...your circle of influence, that He wants you to encourage them if they are believers, and prayerfully share Christ with them if they are not believers. I hope you have taken advantage of the Oikos series in our S.S. classes this month. If you haven’t taken advantage of this opportunity, be ready for other classes that will be offered in the coming months.

Now, I want to refresh your memory in the book of Ephesians. In the first three chapters, Paul’s primary focus was to address theological truths about the church – most prominently, the great ‘mystery’ of the Church as one body – Jew and Gentile together as a

new creation in Christ. Today, we are finishing chapter 4, and it's in chapter 4 that Paul began to teach the application / practice of the truths in chapters 1-3. In a sense, you could say that chapters 1-3 are what we are in Christ – and chapters 4-6 are what we should do now that we are in Christ.

Read Ephesians 4:25-32

No more deceit, start being truthful vs. 25

“Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.”

“put off” = to lay aside – to take it off – used of taking off a coat / outer garment – Acts 7:58 – “...they laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul”.

As these men “put off” or laid aside their clothes so they could perform an evil and unjust act, so we are to “put off” falsehood so we can better perform the good and just actions as followers of Christ!

“Truth is our new birthright and a mark of those who belong to God.” (Becoming a People of Grace, An Exposition of Ephesians, by Charles R. Swindoll, p. 131)

Deceit and lies are the traits of Satan – John 8:44b “Whenever he (the Devil) speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

But the truth is the very nature of God (John 14:6, 17; 17:17), and those who are His followers must reflect His character of truthfulness, not the character of Satan.

Paul lets us know why speaking truthfully is such an important issue...because we are all members of the Body of Christ!

Falsehood and/or deceit will destroy the church!

The **danger** of anger vs. 26-27

26 "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 and do not give the devil a foothold.

Context... (?) speaking truthfully to each other in the body of Christ – this might / will produce hurt feelings and anger – but we are to use this anger in a God-honoring way.

There is an anger that is righteous and Godly (Ps. 4:4).

Righteous anger is when we are angry at wickedness – at things which discredit God and things that hurt the innocent and defenseless. Bottom line, the only anger that is not sinful is an anger that is directed toward evil.

However, this is anger that we rarely practice. Usually, our anger is self-defensive and self-promoting. We get angry at those who hurt us and our anger is normally petty, selfish, undisciplined, and vindictive. This is the anger that Paul is warning us against – to deal with quickly – with great urgency – before the sun sets!

Romans 12:17-21

“17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19 Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. 20 On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

If we don't repent of our unrighteous anger – and if we allow our anger to go unresolved, it will give the Devil a foothold in our life and he will use it to drive a wedge between us and other believers – and between us and God!

The Christian work ethic vs. 28

28 He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

“Thou shalt not steal” is #8 of the 10 commandments. It is a clear violation of God's moral Law and as followers of Christ – as a “new creation” in Christ; we are no longer to live like we used to live.

Instead of stealing, God commands us to work! Not only that, but we are to work at a job that is honoring to God.

“...doing something useful”

Agathos = good/honest work – refers to what is good in quality – that our work should be employment that is honorable and not something that compromises the standards of God.

N.L.T. – “Begin using your hands for honest work...”

The purpose behind the ethic...so we can help others! Our financial gain is not solely for our own benefit and pleasure, but for us to practice generosity and charity. This verse does not negate the other Biblical passages that speak of wise financial planning and saving.

Paul writes elsewhere in the N.T. that if you're able to work, and you don't work, then you shouldn't receive charity from others!

2 Thess. 3:10-11 "...if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either."

Also, those who are capable of working, but refuse to work and thereby don't provide for their own household, are acting in ways that are worse than unbelievers!

1 Timothy 5:8 "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."

From ugly to useful speech vs. 29

29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

Psalm 141:3

"Set a guard over my mouth, O LORD; keep watch over the door of my lips."

Our speech is rooted in our heart...our speech reveals what is in our heart!

Matt. 12:34b

"...out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks."

Phil. 4:8 is the remedy to unwholesome words –

"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things."

Paul gives us some helpful advice for us regarding our speech...

Speak what is edifying:

Helpful, encouraging – be part of the solution, not part of the problem. Build up, don't tear down.

Speak what is appropriate:

Prov. 25:11

“A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.”

Prov. 15:23

“A man finds joy in giving an apt reply-- and how good is a timely word!”

Speak words of grace:

Luke 4:22

“All spoke well of Him (*Jesus*) and were amazed at the gracious words that came from His lips.”

Col. 4:6

“Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.”

The pain of our sin vs. 30

30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Christians who live as if they aren't Christians disappoints God! Just like children of earthly parents bring great sadness when they reject the standards of the family and disobey the instructions of their parents, so too when we reject God's

standards for our life and disobey His commands to us, it brings Him sorrow and grief!

This isn't an issue of losing our salvation if we do this. Notice Paul's reminder that we have been "...sealed for the day of redemption." This speaks to the certainty of our salvation – the guarantee of our salvation as we saw in 1:13-14. It's not a threat that we will lose our salvation if we grieve the Holy Spirit. It's an appeal to us that God cares deeply for us – He loves us with divine and perfect love – but don't be mistaken that His love isn't connected to feelings. Our obedient or sinful actions are not some cold, calculated, disconnected and independent actions apart from our Heavenly Father. He is intimately aware of us and concerned for us – and His joy or His heartache in regard to us is connected to our rejection of Him or our obedience to Him.

Old actions, new habits vs. 31-32

Things to avoid...

Inward sins: bitterness, rage, anger

Bitterness = a smoldering resentment that builds and intensifies over time and soon overtakes the thoughts and attitude. The person who is bitter refuses to be reconciled.

Rage (wrath-NASB) = an out of control response – a temper tantrum. The Greek word here is used of straw that catches fire – it burns very quickly and intensely, but it subsides as quickly as it started.

Anger = long-lived anger – anger that is held onto and kept burning at the deep recesses of our soul.

Those three inward sins lead to outward sins of increasing offense: brawling, slander, and malice

Brawling / clamor = shouting – a public outburst – a loud arguments with voices raised

Slander = from the Greek word *blasphémia* – to state something that is false about someone – something that is a lie in order to discredit or defame – to spread a false rumor in order to damage someone’s reputation.

Malice = that which is evil; wickedness.

We need to stay away from these things – they will control us and direct our life. We cannot control them – they are too powerful, and they are incompatible with someone who claims the name of Christ!

(“Get rid of” – Greek = *airo* – this is an aorist imperative - Calls for a SPECIFIC, DEFINITE, DECISIVE choice. "DO THIS NOW, AT ONCE, ONCE FOR ALL and in one quick action (in contrast to present imperative which commands a habitual action). Often expresses a note of URGENCY.) The Greek tense here (aorist imperative) has the idea of “*Get rid of these things once and for all – don’t let them be a part of your life from this point forward!*”

However, it’s also in the **passive voice** – which reminds us that we can’t “get rid” of these things by our own power and determination – but only through the power of the Holy Spirit that all believers have received at the moment of their conversion. Getting rid of these things is not an issue of your will to do so – it’s an issue of setting your will aside – of submitting your will to the will of God.

Things to *practice*...

Vs. 32b – Barclay calls this “*The law of personal relationships*” – that we treat others as Jesus has treated

US. (The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians, The New Daily Study Bible, by William Barclay, p. 184)

Instead, we are to be kind, compassionate, and forgiving. Three Christian virtues that destroy the vices we just listed!

Kindness is an attribute of God toward us.

Luke 6:35b tells us that God is “...kind to ungrateful and evil men.”

Romans 2:4 asks us are you “...not realizing that God’s kindness leads you toward repentance?”

Kindness is a key to reaching your oikos!

Compassion is a deep-seated empathy for someone’s need

Forgiving – is perhaps the most basic action we can practice toward others, given the forgiveness we have each received from God. If we have been forgiven by God of our endless list of sins against Him, is there any reason why we would claim the right to not forgive another for whatever offense they have made against us? Is there anything a sinful human can do to another sinful human that would rise above the level of crime that our sin has inflicted upon the one and Holy God of the universe! (NO!)

How much forgiveness should we offer? An endless amount – 70 x 7 (Matthew 18:22)

Application

Put your faith in Christ.

None of this is truly possible apart from the new life available to us through Christ.

Admit your sin to God

Believe that Jesus died on the cross for your sins

Choose to follow Christ each day – live a new life in Christ!

Examine your life

Do you have an issue with:

- Lying?
- Anger?
- Your work ethic?
- Unwholesome speech?
- A coldness toward God?
- Are you still holding onto the sins of the old life?

Repent of these things – and allow God’s truth - and the Holy Spirit to transform not just your soul – but every aspect of your life.

Close in prayer