

This is a Great Mystery

A Study of Ephesians

Week 20 – Ephesians 4:28-32

Prayer – Lord Jesus, we look to you for guidance through our earthly lives. Forgive our sins and empower us to live according to your will. Bless us as we further discuss parts of your will today. Amen.

From last time – We spent time talking about...

- Taking off the old self and putting on the new self.
- The connection between Jesus and truth.
- The Christian and anger.

Were there any lingering questions or comments on any of those things?

Some questions we did not get to last week

1. Ephesians 4:27 says, “Do not give a place for (or to) the devil.” You might be more familiar with either giving the devil a “foothold” or an “opportunity.” The Greek word is “place,” but these other options fit. Regardless of the translation, in what ways does this phrase fit with what Paul is saying about anger?
 - a. In what other ways could we apply this encouragement to other specific sins?
 - b. Paul assumes that his audience knows how to not give the devil a place. How do we fend off the devil and his schemes to try to find a place in our hearts?

Ephesians 4:28 - ὁ κλέπτων μηκέτι κλεπτέτω, μάλλον δὲ κοπιάτω ἐργαζόμενος ταῖς [ἰδίαις] χερσὶν τὸ ἀγαθόν, ἵνα ἔχη μεταδιδόναι τῷ χρείαν ἔχοντι.

Let the one who steals no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he has something to share with those having a need.

2. This section is nothing new for those who are baptized into Christ. John the Baptist addresses similar thoughts (questions, really) in **Luke 3:8-14**. Let’s go there and see that John’s and Paul’s messages are practically the same. What stands out to you in these verses?
3. Let’s say a member of St. Paul’s is guilty of shoplifting at Walmart. The value of the items they stole was around \$500. What would be some fitting ways for this person to bring forth fruits of repentance?
4. This verse, especially the last phrase, builds off today’s worship theme of helping others. Ultimately, that’s what Paul is concerned about—love for God and love for neighbor.

Ephesians 4:29 - πᾶς λόγος σαπρὸς ἐκ τοῦ στόματος ὑμῶν μὴ ἐκπορευέσθω, ἀλλὰ εἴ τις ἀγαθὸς πρὸς οἰκοδομὴν τῆς χρείας, ἵνα δῶ χάριν τοῖς ἀκούουσιν.

Literal: **Any talk rotten from your mouth do not let come out, rather if anything [is] good for building up according to the need, so that it would give grace to those who listen.**

Readable: **Do not let any rotten talk come out of your mouth, but only that which is beneficial for building up according to what is needed, so that it would benefit those who listen.**

5. For what reasons might the literal translation be the way that it is? In other words, why would the Holy Spirit and Paul put the words in the order they did?

6. σαπρὸς – the third word of the sentence – literally “of such poor quality as to be of little or no value;” or “bad or unwholesome to the point of being harmful.” Shorter definitions – evil, worthless, spoiled, rotten. We might automatically think of cussing and cursing, which are obviously not beneficial. What would be some “rotten, harmful, or of little value” ways to respond in the following situations?
 - a. A fellow Christian admits to you that they don’t believe the Bible is really God’s Word.

 - b. In talking with a close friend, they confess a sin to you that has weighed on them for some time and wonder if God could ever forgive them.

 - c. A fellow member begins a conversation with, “She asked me not to tell you, but I have to tell someone.”

7. On the opposite end of the spectrum, what kinds of words would achieve the goal Paul is looking for in the same situations?
 - a.

 - b.

 - c.

8. Which type of response do you think Christians are better known for? Why do you think that is?

9. Notice again the goal and what it focuses on—love for God and love for neighbor. This verse even takes us back to the unity concept brought up earlier in chapter 4.

Ephesians 4:30 - καὶ μὴ λυπεῖτε τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον τοῦ θεοῦ, ἐν ᾧ ἐσφραγίσθητε εἰς ἡμέραν ἀπολυτρώσεως.

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

10. The word “grieve” in this verse was always a strange one to me; maybe I’m alone in that. What does it mean to grieve the Holy Spirit? Well, before we answer that, I dug into the word λυπεῖτε a bit. Its other options are “vex, irritate, offend, or insult.” That helps me understand the phrase much more clearly. To grieve the Holy Spirit means to insult or irritate him (if God is capable of being irritated). In what ways might we do this?

11. The “day of redemption” is an interesting concept. I think we would often think of a future day of redemption; and that’s not wrong. However, redemption can be spoken of as having taken place in the past, taking place right now, and yet to take place in the future. Explain how each is true for us:
 - a. Past –

 - b. Present –

 - c. Future –

What comments and questions do you have?

Ephesians 4:31 - πᾶσα πικρία καὶ θυμὸς καὶ ὀργὴ καὶ κραυγὴ καὶ βλασφημία ἀρθήτω ἀφ’ ὑμῶν σὺν πάσῃ κακίᾳ.

All bitterness and rage and anger and quarreling and slander—let them be taken away from you—with every [kind of] wickedness.

12. This is a continuation of what grieves the Holy Spirit and how to conduct one’s speech. So it’s not exactly a repeat of verse 26, where Paul talked about being angry but not sinning. This is a special application for what kinds of speech we are to get rid of. Looking at each style of speech, whom are we thinking most about when we think and speak in such ways?

Ephesians 4:32 - γίνεσθε [δὲ] εἰς ἀλλήλους χρηστοί, εὐσπλαγχνοί, χαριζόμενοι ἑαυτοῖς, καθὼς καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἐν Χριστῷ ἐχαρίσατο ὑμῖν.

[Always] be to each other kind [and] compassionate, forgiving each other, just as also God in Christ forgave you.

13. These are more present tense verbs, hence the “always”—the action to be continuous, simply the way a Christian lives their life! Still, it would be a little clunky to sandwich “I forgive you” into every conversation we have with a fellow Christian. So, how can we constantly forgive each other?
14. The words “kind” and “compassionate” are ones that we maybe hear about but don’t ponder often. What things should we keep in mind so that we can strive to be kind and compassionate not just to fellow Christians, but to everyone we meet?
15. What a beautiful way to wrap up this chapter! Paul opened chapter 4 by talking about living a life that is worthy of your calling. And, while he touched on it throughout the chapter, he lands on where we find our strength, ability, and motivation for living that life—God has forgiven us in Christ.

What comments and questions do you have?

Upcoming schedule: On September 19, we will move into the sanctuary for Bible Class and take part in a hymn sing/virtual concert as part of the new hymnal initiative. We will begin Ephesians 5 on September 26. On October 3, there will be an open forum about the Peter Plan. Following that, we should be able to continue through to the end of Ephesians without other “interruptions.” The plan for what’s next after Ephesians is to discuss the worship service as it will be presented in the new hymnal, since there will be some differences from how we currently conduct services (nothing major, but some noticeable things). But Ephesians 5-6 come first ☺

Closing Prayer – Son of God, Eternal Savior CW 492 v. 2 and 3

**Come, O Christ, and reign among us,
King of love and Prince of Peace;
Hush the storm of strife and passion;
Bid its cruel discords cease.
By your patient years of toiling,
By your silent hours of pain,
Quench our fevered thirst for pleasure;
Stem our selfish greed for gain.**

**Bind us all as one together
In your Church's sacred fold,
Weak and healthy, poor and wealthy,
Sad and joyful, young and old.
Is there want or pain or sorrow?
Make us all the burden share.
Are there spirits crushed and broken?
Teach us, Lord, to soothe their care. Amen.**