

Eph 4:25-32

THEME: How to Maintain Interdependent Unity in the One New Humanity (Systemic Interdependence)

Systemic: affecting the entire body

Interdependence: relying on mutual assistance, support, cooperation, among constituent parts or members

Imperatives: 11 total in vv25-32

Speak truth

be angry

do not sin

do not let sun go down on your provocation (Ps 4)

do not give place to the devil

Stop stealing

Toil

Do not let destructive words come out

Do not grieve the Holy Spirit

Remove all evil from among you

Be good to each other

V25: SPEAK THE TRUTH TO EACH OTHER

1. Therefore (since we have been made new in holiness and righteousness),
 - a. Having put aside (lay off, aorist part.) the lie - the conscious deliberate lie
 - i. "the lie" – what we *had* exchanged the truth of God for, but *now* have been redeemed from
 1. Rom 1:25 – the sinful person exchanged the truth of God for the lie
 2. John 8:44 – Satan is the father of lies, no truth in him
 3. Eph 4:20 – You did not learn Christ in this manner! Put on the new self!
2. Speak truth, each one with his neighbor (quote of Zech 8:16, see vv14-17)
 - a. "truth" – contrasted to the lie we believed before Christ, now we see reality – JESUS!
 - b. The Gospel, we need to speak the truth of the Gospel to each other
 - c. Because the new humanity is based upon holiness and truth (v24) we speak such
 - d. "each with his neighbor" – the covenant community, the One New Humanity, speak the truth
3. *because* we are members of each other
 - a. "because" – because we are One body, we desire truth for each of us together
 - b. "members" – body parts, limbs, we belong to one another, unified under the Christ, brought together and interdependent upon one another, GET RID OF INDIVIDUALITY and "rights" within the Body
 - i. Chrysostom writes: If the eye sees a serpent does it lie to the foot? Or if the nose smells a deadly drug will it lie to the mouth? Or if the tongue tastes something bitter will it lie to the stomach?
 - c. Because we are all members of one another, every lie among us, every falsehood, every deception, harms us all
 - i. Systemic interdependence
 - ii. Every doctrine, attitude, and behavior that detracts from the glory of the gospel of Jesus Christ is detrimental to the *entire* Body
 - iii. We need to bring the medicine of Truth (Jesus) to bear upon the danger of the Lie

V26-27: FIGHT AGAINST INJUSTICE FOR GOD'S GLORY

1. Be angry (imperative) –
 - a. Imperative – commanded to be angry
 - i. How can we be commanded to be angry here (v26) and commanded to be rid of anger in v31?
 1. There are two types of anger
 - a. Self-righteous anger defends *my* glory and reputation
 - b. Righteous anger reveals *God's* glory and reputation
 2. Two ways to relate
 - a. Self-righteous anger is trying to tear another person down in order to destroy their reputation and prove my own righteousness
 - b. Righteous anger works to place the offender in line with the Truth, for their sake, to the building up of the glory and praise of God
 - ii. "provoked to anger" (by idolatry in the OT, or by injustice) (direct quote of Ps4:4)
 - i. *parorgizmos* - "proceeding out of + "anger"
 - ii. always used re: idolatry in LXX (Jer 25:6; 2 Kings 21:15; Job 12:6)
 - iii. in NT (Rom 10:19; Eph 6:4) re: injustice
 1. **Mark 3:1-6**, Jesus gets angry at the hardened hearts of the Pharisees
 2. **Luke 6:12** reveals that after this encounter Jesus immediately went out to pray and spent the entire night in prayer.
 3. In His anger, Jesus restored and put His own life on the line
 - b. "Do not sin" (imperative)
 - i. strong negative – not anger about MY glory, but rather about YHWH's glory
 - ii. How are anger and truth-telling related?
 - iii. Do not sin: anger?
 - i. Do not hold on to your anger: bitterness, hard-heartedness, speaking the truth to one another
 - ii. James 1:19-20 – slow to speak, slow to anger, for anger does not accomplish the righteousness of God
2. Do not (strong imperative) give the devil a place.
 - a. Holding onto anger that turns into sin, bitterness, even hatred/murder (1 John 3:15) give the devil a position/opportunity to do harm in the Body
 - i. The devil is a liar and will distort the truth among the Body (John 8:44)
 - ii. The devil is an accuser and will cast blame among the Body (Rev 12:10)
 - iii. The devil is a murderer and will incite hatred among the Body (John 8:44)
 - iv. The devil is a sinner from the beginning and will spread sin among the Body (1 John 3:8)
 - b. Heb 12:15 – a "root of bitterness" springing up to defile many
 - c. James 4:7 – resisting the Devil is a correlative of humility, not *self-righteous* anger
 - i. Anger tends to lead to self-righteousness and arrogance, even to a condemnatory judgment of a brother
 - ii. Even when unspoken, this type of hopeless disdain hardens the heart, twisting it into unbelief and self-centered hypocrisy out of line with the gospel of grace.
 - iii. Herein lies the opportunity, or position, for the devil. If he can get us out of line with the gospel, he has drawn our worship away from the Christ and begun a cancer of pride among the Body

- d. Deal with injustice (wrongs) and anger (justice) quickly through repentance and forgiveness among the Body
 - i. Remembering that we have been forgiven by Christ (see v32; Matt 18:21ff)
 - ii. Remembering that we are saved by grace (2:8), so as not to become proud

V28: WORK HARD TO SHARE WITH OTHERS

1. Stop stealing (to take away by stealth)
 - a. The root of stealing is a sense of entitlement “people owe it to me” or “I deserve it”
 - b. Really is unbelief that the Lord will care for me as I struggle
 - i. Theft works out of a lack of faith that Jesus will provide what I need to glorify Him
 - ii. The root of every outward sin is the functional lack of dependence upon the goodness or the power of Christ
2. Start working
 - a. labor *to the point of becoming tired* by working
 - i. Stop unjustly taking things with little effort
 - ii. Start working with your own hands with great effort
 - b. Good (*agathos*)
 - i. The goal of the work is “goodness”
 1. That which benefits and builds up
 - ii. Both in a moral sense (stop stealing) and in a practical sense (providing for oneself and others in need)
 - c. With hands (part. one’s own hands) – the idea being to put those stealing hands to good work
 - d. Purpose: that he might share (give a share, “give with”) with the one having a need
 - i. The community, because we are interdependent, are to benefit one another as we have *any* means to those in real need
 1. Not the “need” that is the consequence of laziness (note the command to work to the point of being tired) or of unrighteousness of any kind
 2. Need that is real, TBD case by case (widows, orphans, translates to the incapable and/or weak in society)
 - ii. The Old Person served himself, while the New Person serves others for the glory of Christ in the Gospel, in full dependence upon the Lord to meet tomorrow’s needs

V29: SPEAK WORDS THAT BUILD UP INTO CHRIST

1. Do not bring any corrupt word out of your mouths
 - a. “corrupt” – rotten, spoiled, breaks down/decomposes
 - b. “any” – not a single word that destroys or tears down to rottenness or uselessness
 - i. Not implying that we do not wound a friend for their benefit (Pr 27:6)
 - ii. Does imply that our purpose in any “hurt” is to build up
 1. The same drug that heals can also destroy
 2. The same atomic reaction that destroys can provide energy for thousands
2. bring out the word for building up (contrasted w/corrupt) of the need
 - a. Instead (“but” of contrast)
 - b. To “build up” where there is need

- i. Every word should be suited to its circumstance, to build up
 - ii. Col 4:6 – let your word be seasoned with grace, so that you may know how to answer each person
- 3. Purpose: to give a gift to the one hearing it
 - a. Gift of “grace” – an undeserved benefit meant to “build up”
 - b. Our words are gifts to their hearers
 - i. Gifts to do good, to show them the beauty of Christ
 - ii. Gifts to do destruction rottenness
 - 1. to show them the beauty of you, self, compare (1 Sam 2:3)
 - 2. to show them the “worthlessness” of them
 - c. Make sure that our words are for the benefit, the building up, of each other

V30: WORK FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: TO REDEEM LIVES

- 1. Do not grieve (make sorrowful, sad) the Holy Spirit of God
 - a. Connected with “and” indicating that it is strongly connected to the previous section (concerning speech among each other)
 - b. Grieved – to cause sorrow, distress, sadness
 - i. Isaiah 63:8-10; Gen 6:5-6; Matt 26:22; Mark 3:5 (close relationship b/w anger/grief)
 - ii. Strongly indicates that the “Holy Spirit of God” is personal and not merely a force or activity, for an activity cannot grieve
 - iii. Our harsh/rotten words that tear each other down actually sadden the Holy Spirit.
 - c. In whom you were sealed
 - i. We received the seal of ownership by the Holy Spirit: We belong to God
 - ii. This is why it grieves Him to see us tear each other down
 - 1. He has sealed us for redemption!
 - 2. If we are tearing each other down, we are actively working against His purposes, the purposes of the Holy Spirit within
 - iii. For the day of redemption
 - 1. We are given the seal of ownership until we are completely redeemed from sin on the day of Christ
 - a. PRESENTLY IN THE LORD: The indwelling of the Spirit frees us from the *obligations* and the *condemnation* of sin through the atonement of Christ
 - b. IN THE FUTURE DAY OF THE LORD: The redemption that comes on the day of the Lord is freedom from the very *presence* of sin
 - i. 1 Cor 15:20-26; 1 Thess 5:8-10; Rom 8:23ff
 - 2. For the believer in Christ, the day of the Lord is a wondrously good event!
 - a. Do not fear the day of the Lord, for it is your redemption!
 - b. The Spirit’s seal upon you, signifying and securing your complete redemption as one who belongs to God

V31-32: GET RID OF ALL EVIL AND BE GOOD TOWARD ONE ANOTHER

- 1. Let these be put away from you (together)

- a. Bitterness – root of evil attitude
 - b. Wrath – trunk of evil disposition or perception toward another
 - c. Anger – synonymous with wrath, one stronger in action than other
 - d. Clamor (loud crying out) – branches of evil speech toward another
 - e. Slander (blasphemy, speech intended to harm one’s reputation) – branch of evil speech
 - f. All malice (ill-will, evil, depravity, wickedness, intent to injure) – the whole tree of evil toward each other
2. Be (imperative) these things *for* one another
- a. Kind (good, for the benefit of the other)
 - b. Tenderhearted (“good” + “affections” used of compassion)
 - c. Forgiving
 - i. Just as God forgave (aorist) you all in Christ
 - ii. GOSPEL CENTERED RELATIONSHIPS – established upon the person, work, and promises of Jesus as our “center” from which all of our attitudes, dispositions, and actions flow
3. All of our attitudes and behaviors need to be brought in-line with the gospel of grace based upon these main truths of the Gospel:
- a. My sin goes deeper than I can even imagine (so be humble with fellow sinners)
 - b. Jesus’ love goes even deeper than my sin, more deeply than I can even dare to hope (so be boldly joyful and full of hope for you and for others in Christ)

Conclusion:

We ALL need each other to bring us to the truth on a consistent basis. The propensity of our hearts to wander away from a single-minded trust in Jesus to other things as the basis for our “good-standing” before God means that we need each other to bring the Truth to us daily. Systemic interdependence means that we are allowing our *entire* life come into contact with the *entire* life of other believers for the purpose of the glory of Jesus Christ.

So, we encourage each and every one of you to bring your entire life into a home group where you can be reminded, encouraged, and exhorted to see Jesus as our hope and as our life. Our home groups are not merely created for the purpose of community, the community already exists. Our home groups are created so that our community may glorify Christ more effectively and consistently and so that we can live in the hope and joy that the gospel of Jesus has brought us into. It is in these close-knit relationships where Jesus Christ is consistently honored and praised that we grow in His grace. It is here where we learn to trust Him and stop trusting the lie in the way that we live. It is here where we learn to cut down the tree of malice and to be kind to one another through repentance and forgiveness, all for the glory of the grace of Christ.

To Him be honor and praise for all of eternity! May your praise continue right now!