

Walk as children of light

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 22 May 2016

Preacher: Philip Wells

[0 : 00] Ephesians chapter 4. Let's pray.

Lord, we've sung, Purify My Heart.! So we're looking in Ephesians, and the aim of these sermons is very definite, is to do what it says in Ephesians, to end up with people who have become, people who are becoming beautiful, useful, appreciative children of the Heavenly Father, children of God. And he spells this out in terms of life as a community, in terms of how people around would see us, so what Christians would call witness, testimony, evidence that Christ is real, that this would be worked out in marriages, those who are married or going to be married as husbands and wives, that this would be worked out in our family life, that this would be worked out in our employment life, and this would be worked out in the spiritual conflict that we're all engaged in, in the kingdom as soldiers, so that we would be that in this life, and in the life to come, we will be the spotless, radiant bride of Christ in the world to come.

Because we're not spotless and radiant at the moment, it's a work in progress, but we want it to be in progress. So last time, we looked at the few verses before this, up to verse 24, and we said that Paul is moving from what he says about what God has done, from indicatives to imperatives.

So an indicative is a statement of fact, she hit me with a rolling pin, and an imperative is do it, hit him with a rolling pin.

[2 : 03] So that's the difference between indicative and imperative. He starts off with what God has done to us, sorry, for us, to us, in us.

If we're in Christ, he's done things for us, and to us, and in us. For example, we're chosen in Christ, that's what we read earlier on, we are redeemed in Christ, we are raised with Christ.

These are things that God has done for us, and to us, and in us. And then he moves from that to what we must be doing, and you remember last time we saw in verse 22, it says we were taught to put off the old self, verse 22, and to be, we were taught to be renewed in our thinking, verse 23, to be made new in the attitude of your minds, or to be renewed in our spiritual thinking, and to put on the new self, verse 24, to put on the new self.

So that's what we were looking at last time, and I think that's generally fairly clear.

I'm just wondering whether to own up to the fact that I said something was an imperative, and when I looked it up this week, they said it wasn't an imperative, it was something else. Anyway, I'm not going to go down there. Indicatives and imperatives, that's fair enough.

[3 : 27] So before we get on to it, here's something that I think is worth pointing out. There's a lot of use of the word walking. If you want to check me up on this, and you've got a Strong's Concordance, it's word 4043.

I'm just saying that. Anybody could do that. You could look that up on a computer. 4043 is the word, and you would find it was in chapter 2, verse 2, where the NIV says, you used to live in transgressions and sins in which you used to live, and it actually says, transgressions and sins in which you used to walk.

In chapter 2, verse 10, NIV says, God prepared good works in advance for us to do. The original says, good works that we should walk in.

And chapter 4, verse 1, NIV says, live worthy of the calling you have received, but the original says, walk worthy of the call you have received.

And chapter 4, verse 17, NIV says, you must no longer live as the Gentiles do. The original says, don't walk as the Gentiles walk. Don't walk as people who don't know God walk.

[4 : 49] And chapter 5, verse 2, NIV says, live a life of love, but it actually uses word 4043, which says, walk in love.

And chapter 5, verse 8, says, once you were darkness, now you are light in the Lord. NIV says, live as children of light. The original says, walk as children of light.

Chapter 5, verse 15, be careful how you live, is what the NIV says. The original says, be careful, be very careful how you walk. So I just, don't say that to confuse everybody, but just to say that he's talking about how we walk.

And walking is a very particular sort of activity. It isn't just a burst of something, that's sprinting. You sprint, and then you're exhausted. You sprint for 10 seconds, or however many seconds it is, and then you're done for for the rest of the day.

He's not talking about sprinting. He's talking all the way through about how we walk. And you don't need to be an athlete to walk, you just need to be an ordinary person.

[5 : 58] And he's saying, this is how you go through life. That's what we're interested in. Not whether you sprint on a Sunday, maybe you sprint to get here on time, I don't know.

But how you walk, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and then the next Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. He's interested in the steady, calm, regular progress of Christian people.

So I think that's worth pointing out, because nothing less than that will do. So I don't really want to get everybody excited, so I'm really excited today, because excitement will go away by tea time. You won't be excited anymore, you'll have forgotten. I don't want that. What we want is something that we learn that will still be with us by tea time, and still be with us on Monday, and still be with us on Tuesday, and through the summer, and through into next year, because it's about walking. Okay? I'm just trying to make that point. So let's revisit the way he puts this, the dynamic of these three things.

[7 : 14] The renewed mind, putting on, and putting off. I've got a couple of, no, in a minute I've got a picture. So the thinking.

So he's saying, I want you, no, did you notice this? So let's do this bit again. Chapter 4, verse 17. You no longer walk as the Gentiles walk in the futility of their thinking.

So they think in a certain way. They're darkened in their understanding, and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them. This is all about thinking.

What you think is valuable. What you think makes sense. What you think is a good reaction. What you think is a good way forward.

It's all about thinking. And in verse 20, he says, you did not come to know Christ that way. You have learnt something. He says, you have heard of him and were taught in him.

[8 : 17] So this is all to do with, in our incorrect way of doing it, we say the head, but what we mean is, well, what I'm saying is the thinking.

So to be a Christian, somebody famously is quoted as saying, I like it when I go to church. I can take my head off and leave it outside and I just respond with the rest of myself when I go into church.

Strange thought, isn't it? But Paul is saying, no, please bring your head in with you because your head is a very important part of you. I want you to think. I'm going to address you in words.

I want you to understand and that's the way you're going to live your new life. So he talks about the things you were taught. And the particular thing is to do with putting on and putting off.

So my example last time was to take a car, an old banger, and to make it into this wonderful eco sports car, this zooming, wonderful, shining thing.

[9 : 24] So that's the old banger full of rust, leaking oil, spluttering, breaking down, etc.

and God takes off the old bodywork and takes out the old engine and the old wheels and sort of extends it, that bit's going to be taken off, and puts on the new stuff, the new bodywork, the new engine, and transforms the old car into a new car.

So there's stuff to put off and stuff to put on. So it's a little bit of a gender-specific illustration, isn't it? Because perhaps it isn't.

But here's another illustration. So this is clothing. So I think everybody gets the idea of clothing. So let's imagine you were a painter and decorator and now you are a high court judge.

Let's just imagine that. I don't know, you've probably studied at night school and lo and behold you get the, oh, I'm now a high court judge.

[10 : 35] So this is you. You used to wear your paint-covered overalls. But you will be needing, because of the change of identity that you are no longer a painter and decorator, you are now a

high court judge.

You need to put those off and you need to put on your smart grey suit, your ridiculous wig, and your red cloak.

Okay, I'll try to exaggerate that thought. But do you see the idea? There's some stuff that now, because you're a high court judge, you put off and there's some stuff you put on. And he's saying, now you didn't used to be a Christian but now you're a Christian.

There's some stuff you put off and there's some stuff you put on. Does that make sense? So there's a little subtlety about putting on the clothes doesn't make you a high court judge.

That's already happened. But you're now adapting your behaviour to your new identity. So this is what we're going to look at in the next few verses.

[11:36] And there's an A, B and C for each section and there's something to put off, there's something to put on and there's some thinking or reasoning behind it.

Okay, you're with me so far. So now we're going to look at the text and we will find in each case something to put off, something to put on and some reasoning. Okay? No?

Yeah, okay. Right. So the first bit is about speaking the truth. Verse 25. It says, Therefore, each of you must put off falsehood and speak truth to his neighbour for we are all members of one another. We're all parts of the body together. So what to put off? He says, Put off the lie or put off falsehood or put off lying to one another.

And let's ponder this. What would be the thinking behind the lie? I wonder, Chris, would it be helpful if we had that door open just to get a little bit of possible fresh air because it's getting quite warm and I can see one or two people are struggling.

[12:56] If I fall asleep, we really are in trouble. So let's just think how, before you were Christian, you would have had some sort of thought process which would have led you to lie.

Why would you have lied? You would have lied perhaps to avoid humiliation. So children do this, don't they? If somebody's done something naughty at school, you know, who stole the teacher's apple?

It wasn't me, miss. It wasn't me, sir. Even if it was. You'd say that lie to avoid the humiliation of being caught, wouldn't you? So that would be the thinking about lying.

To avoid having to confess I got it wrong. I'm not as good as I'd like you to think I am. To avoid shame.

To avoid losing face. Perhaps you'd lie to gain approval. People do this, don't they? They sort of boast excessively and they say, oh, you know, my previous job I made millions of pounds.

[14:12] No, it's not true, but you'd like people to think it was. To gain approval. Perhaps lie to gain possessions. It's what confidence tricksters do, don't they? So they ring you up and say in a very discernible accent, you know, hello, my name is Algernon, I am ringing you from the Microsoft Windows technical department, you have a problem with your computer, that's a lie.

Why do they do it? Well, presumably to gain money. People lie and they do it for a reason. Perhaps they do it just to be cruel. And this is futile thinking, darkened thinking.

And we are to put on a new mind about this. We're to speak truth to our neighbour. And that's just straightforward, isn't it?

We're to speak truth to our neighbour. He's particularly talking about within the Christian community because that's where we're members of one another. But I think he's also talking about what sort of people we are becoming.

And we need to be becoming truthful people. And that sometimes requires a little bit of work and effort. How can I express this truth in a way which will, perhaps, if it's a hurtful truth, how can I express this truth in a way which doesn't hurt people more than absolutely necessary, if it's an uncomfortable truth, how can I express this truth to show that I really care about people, I'm not just trying to hurt them, things like that.

[16:00] But we need to learn to speak truth to our neighbour. And the thinking behind it is because we're members of one another, we're part of one another's, part of the body of Christ together.

And as with my illustration I was trying to get with the children, if parts of the body don't tell truth to one another, then the life of the body is shot to pieces, isn't it?

We can't function together unless we have good communication. So let me give you some examples where truth comes under a bit of stress.

So let's suppose somebody says to you as you come into the church, how are you? And you're actually feeling awful.

And you've had a terrible week. What do you say? Because in some ways the natural thing to be saying, I'm fine.

[17:03] How are you? I'm fine. But you're not fine. Now I think this verse has something to do with this. It's how can other Christians help you and pray for you if you can't let them know in some shape or form that you're not actually fine?

So I think that perhaps needs a bit of work because you don't say oh I'm absolutely terrible and I want you to feel terrible and I'd like everybody to feel terrible because I feel terrible.

But you do need to communicate honestly, you know, I'm struggling. Or something like that. What would be a good way of saying, you know, I've had a difficult week to be honest. Not feeling too brilliant today would value your prayers.

Something like that. So honesty in things like that. Exaggerated spirituality. The example of lying in the Bible is of Ananias and Sapphira who pretended that they'd given lots of money.

What did they pretend? That they'd given all the money to the church. They'd sold a field, they'd given all the money to the church, but they'd only given a proportion of it. There's nothing wrong with giving a proportion, but they exaggerated their spirituality by saying they'd given all the money.

[18:20] And here's a temptation for Christians. We would love people to think how spiritual we are, wouldn't we? I'm sure we would. But we have to be honest. So the one is, oh, I'll pray for you, and then you forget to pray.

We've just got to be realistic. I will try and remember to pray for you, or something like that. And yeah, honesty about our own spirituality, because none of us has arrived.

None of us has arrived. None of us gets it all right. And we need to be humble about that. We're all sinners. We all need the forgiveness of Christ. And let's be honest about that truth.

And another area in which Christian truth comes under threat is, I don't read this as much as I used to because I've stopped subscribing to the magazines that do it, but there used to be a thing in Christian magazines that they would criticise other Christians, really in what I felt was an unfair way to the point of being untrue.

And the Christian would justify this because they knew they were right. They knew they were right doctrinally and therefore they could criticise other Christians, to my mind, unfairly.

[19:46] And I think we're to speak truth. It might be an uncomfortable truth, but it ought to be true. Anyway, let's move on from speaking truth.

Put off the lie, and learn to speak truth to one another. Number two, all of that has come up at once. I didn't mean it to do that, but anyway, let's do it.

So, angry. That picture shouldn't go up on the internet because I expect it's covered by copyright.

Do you know who that guy is? Who?

It's in the 300, isn't it? Who is it? Leonidas. Leonidas. Okay, he's a king, isn't he? And it's sort of, so he's a king and he's looking angry.

And I think it points out to us that there is angry, anger is a powerful emotion. There's anger that sometimes is right.

[20:50] So if you're a king leading an army and you believe your country is under threat, then anger is the right emotion to say, our country is under threat, we're not going to let them do that, we're going to go and fight them.

And there's a good sort of anger, but there's also, you can see it on his face, it's a pretty scary emotion. So let's work through what it says. What does the text say? The text says, the text says, In your anger do not sin, do not let the sun go down while you are angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.

In your anger do not sin, which is a quote from Psalm 4 verse 4, I believe, do not let the sun go down while you are angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.

So putting off, putting on, putting off, put off the wrong sort of anger. So there is a wrong sort of anger. Not all anger is wrong, but there is a wrong sort of anger.

And the thinking behind sinful anger might go something like this. I react with anger. Why do you react with anger?

[22:09] Because someone's hurt me, so I react with anger. And I think that is to do with security, isn't it? somebody's hurt me, somebody's said something about me, maybe somebody's bumped

into me, and I respond with anger because I'm not so secure that that's okay.

And I compensate for that by an outburst of anger. Or maybe I'm angry because I'm jealous. So, next door neighbor, buys a fantastic new car and I think, I want a car like that.

Why should he have one? And there's anger that comes from jealousy. And I think the area that that's to do with is contentment. Am I content with what God has given me in life or do I have to be angry and jealous because God's given other people things he hasn't given me?

Or maybe I get angry because I don't get my own way. So I wanted something to happen and I had it planned out in my mind and they had to do this and they had to do that and then at such and such a time that would happen and somebody has stupidly spoiled my plans.

I get angry, why isn't this happening? And I think that's perhaps to do with the fact that in that form of thinking oneself is at the centre whereas actually God ought to be at the centre.

[23 : 51] It's God's plans that are the ones that we should be angry if they don't happen. My plans need to give way to God's plans. So there's some thinking behind sinful anger and it's not unknown for people to have this as a feature of their character that they have to work on.

You know somebody who typically explodes with anger if some of those things happen. There's also here he says do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.

So he's talking about the time that you are angry. So some people get angry very quickly and it passes very quickly. Some people it takes a long time for them to get angry and then a long time for them to cool off.

And what he says is that when you've got angry then you need to cool that off within, well he's saying within a 24 hour period which is a good rule of thumb isn't it?

It's not being exact and precise meaning to say that when the days are longer in July you can be angry longer and when the days are short in December you need to be angry more quickly.

[25 : 12] He's not saying that he's just saying don't make it your habit to be angry and stay angry for days and days and days because that's a sort of grudging anger.

And you see people like this with a sort of long lasting resentment in their hearts and what they're saying is God has got this wrong for me consistently.

That's the thinking behind it isn't it? And there's another sort of anger that he says we shouldn't have which is anger that gives the devil a foothold.

In your anger do not sin, do not let the sun go down while you are still angry and do not give the devil a foothold. Can we look at the wisdom of James chapter 1 verses 19 and 20 on the matter of anger?

James chapter 1 verses 19 and 20. My dear brothers take note of this, everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to become angry for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.

[26 : 45] So he's basically saying you just be very, very careful about anger. Depends a bit on how you're wired up, depends on your personality, different personalities have different things and they're weak in and strong in.

But learn to be slow to anger. Don't be Mr. Shortfuse or Miss Shortfuse. The slightest thing, bang, you explode.

Not a good thing to be in the habit of doing. Because it is something that does not, generally speaking, bring about God's desire.

And you might say, well they jolly well deserved it and I jolly well needed to get angry with them and nothing would have happened if I hadn't got angry. Well I suppose that might conceivably be the case but as a general rule using anger as a method of achieving things is frowned on by the Bible and says it's really getting into Satan's territory.

What to put off? What to put on? Well he does say, whoops, he does say be angry but don't sin. So there is a right sort of anger and I think that's quite comforting.

[28 : 02] Jesus got angry, didn't he, when he turned over the tables of the money changers in the temple. There's some things that we ought to be angry about and our problem is that we tend not to be bothered.

There's some things that should make us angry so just as a little example, your kids I suppose, yeah, if you've got kids, your kids might make you angry and they might be so obnoxious and so ungrateful that you really feel angry with them.

and what I would say is in your anger do not sin. So don't say to yourself, oh I should never have been angry with my children, I should always be gentle and sweet with them.

Well I don't think the Bible says that. I mean sometimes kids can be obnoxious and you need to say to them, that's totally out of order, how dare you do that, how dare you talk to mummy like that, how dare you do that, it's completely wrong.

And we could discuss how you emphasise that to your children, but to feel that is in itself not a wrong thing.

[29 : 17] Don't be angry with them constantly, don't be always touchy, but it's not wrong if they're obnoxious to feel angry and to express that in the right sort of way.

But what he's generally saying is that we shouldn't be visiting the area of anger most of the time we should be people of peace.

Would you like to look at a couple of references on this? So Romans 12 18 gives this wise piece of advice.

Romans 12 18 if it is possible as far as it depends on you live at peace with everyone.

So the characteristic way of relating of Christians is that as far as they possibly can they should be at peace with people. So they're not constantly making trouble, they're not constantly falling out with people.

[30 : 28] maybe somebody I mean let's be honest maybe somebody may object to you and make it a troublesome relationship but as far as possible as far as it lies within you you try to be at peace with them.

And in Matthew 5 9 there is the blessing of Jesus upon his followers Matthew 5 verse 9 blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God.

So there's a blessing on people who make peace rather than breaking peace people who try to calm things down and resolve conflicts rather than bringing them up and blowing them up.

So you might like to ponder it doesn't give much reasoning behind this but you might like to ponder how you would react if you were driving along and somebody just bumped into the back of your car or the side of your car or any other part of your car what would be your reaction?

So I think it would certainly be upsetting it would certainly be disturbing and what I think we would aim not to do is just explode in a flurry of expletives and insults so this would be rather a testing situation for this text wouldn't it might be angry you pulled right in front of me how could I avoid you but not sin and this will happen to a number of us at the moment don't get the job I wanted really prayed about it really wanted it God didn't give it to me how do I react well I think it's rightly human to be disappointed and to be upset but just be careful in your anger do not sin do not let the sun go down in your anger do not give the devil a foothold just how we respond to that so let's go to the next bit in

[32 : 36] Ephesians which is in the area of property and possessions so we are in verse 27 he who has been stealing must steal no longer but must work doing something useful now the word is good with his own hands that he may have something to share with those who are in need I think it's the word give actually so let's do this put off put on and the reason for it so what we put off is stealing!

so Christianity is a religion which recognises the right of people to have property and to not have it pinched by somebody else stealing does not fit with being a Christian and presumably the thinking behind that is that God in his providence has arranged that so and so should possess that so and so should possess that this person should have that that person should have this he's disposed that and if we steal we're saying God got that wrong I'm having that and I'm having that as well unless I get caught so stealing taking money so it's not unknown somebody people steal from people's purses take some money out of somebody's purse that's wrong shoplifting is wrong taking things from the supermarket hiding them away not paying for them not intending to pay for them is wrong if you owe tax not declaring tax as you should is a form of theft and we shouldn't do it getting a little bit closer to the bone illegal downloads of music and software is stealing it's wrong you might say well nobody notices it's not hurting anybody everybody does it but as far as I can see from scripture if you weren't meant to have it if you don't have proper right and title to it somebody hasn't given it to you you haven't paid for it you've stolen it it's illegal fair dodging on the train so

Christian person who's who will remain nameless told me it was really rather smart to get on at Falmer not pay because you could get off sorry get on at London road and not pay on the train because you could get off at Falmer and not get caught and this was saving money well I don't think it's saving money it's stealing it's illegal it's not smart it was wrong so not to do those things I just

point them out because perhaps they need work verse 28 but must work doing something useful with his or her own hands it's interesting that it comes down to manual labour now I didn't research this but my background knowledge is that in Greek culture manual labour was looked down on that the real privileged people just sat and thought and that was a proper way to earn money just think and philosophise you don't actually do stuff but he says you shouldn't think it's beneath you to work with your hands so work labouring with your own hands that's what we're to put on and the thinking behind it is this well there is a theology of work

God has something to say about work God invented work so work isn't part of the curse that we try and avoid work is part of being human that we should embrace that's why work is so important that's why it's so important that people should have work we should encourage measures that provide employment for people that's why it's so unhelpful for people who are asylum seekers to be denied the right to work because they don't have the right in a sense to be human it's part of our humanness to work and he says here that if you work just look what it says that you may do something useful the word is good with his own hands that he may have something to share with those in need so you move from being I can't remember the word it began with be and was really very clever from being a something to being a benefactor never mind trouble with not writing everything down so some really nice

Christian a burglar yeah a burglar to a benefactor thank you very much from being a burglar to a benefactor excellent there's some really nice Christian words here something good so I think the word good is a very rich word you have something good to contribute and to give that's a very Christian word isn't it Christianity is about giving God so loved the world that he gave his only son giving is a deeply Christian thing to those in need!

[38 : 14] and the idea of being sensitive to those in need and not just saying they're weak they're indigent lazy the Bible does say sometimes people are lazy but it also says people can be without not just because they're lazy but because they need and if you work you go from being a burglar to a benefactor you can contribute to the good of other people and I just put a few thoughts here gambling now I don't know whether you do the lottery I don't know whether you think it would be a Christian thing to do the lottery I am quite suspicious about whether it's a Christian thing I don't think it's quite theft but God has made a number of ways in which we gain money and things one of them is if people give them to us I suppose we could say if you have a competition and the competition is for the fastest runner and the fastest runner gains a prize the

Bible talks about gaining a prize and work so you put in an honest day's work and you get paid an honest day's pay and gambling doesn't fit out any of those so I would say that we don't steal we aim to work and I don't think gambling is a Christian way of acquiring wealth so you might like to ponder that you might say well I'm not actually gambling for what I win I just want to make a donation to this particular good cause they're running a lottery or something like that well anyway it's not really about gambling it's about stealing here's another question what happens if I can't find work because in the time when Paul wrote I guess if you needed work you would just go around knock on somebody's door and say give me some work I can dig some potatoes

I can paint your wall and they would say yeah okay but nowadays it's not so easy to find work so I think we could apply the principles perhaps in some other way and say well even if I can't find work I can do good I could volunteer with my time and I could give to people in need in some other way but the principles there we're not to be stealing we're to be trying to be benefactors number four let's move on the power of words verse 29 do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths but only what to their needs that it may grace those who listen and do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption So this is about words and there's something to put off and something to put on so what we have to put off is unwholesome talk verse 29 and the word there is rotting not as in rotting!

Dean but as rotting fruit so something that's decaying smelly unpleasant gives an infection you just don't want to go near rotting stuff the little voice in my head says what about cheese that's rotting milk that's nice forget that put that thought to one side think of rotting apples so words that rot so let's talk about words that rot now what I'm about to say is a little bit culturally dependent there is the element of what of your upbringing what socio-economic class you belong to what your upbringing was and also what your nationality is because if you are sitting here and English is not your first language you will not have the same instinct that a native

English speaker has so I would say rotting words would certainly include the words that you would find on American movies there's the F word and the SH word which in American movies comes up a lot and if you are a non English speaker you might say well everybody says those words and so I'm giving you the advice that in Christian culture those words would be seen to be come under this category of unwholesome talk I think as a general rule words that are to do with sexual intercourse words and parts of the body used for that and usually going to the toilet those words are not helpful words they are used in the form of thinking well for one reason to fill in a gap when you can't think of anything to say so if you notice that people say what they've actually said is about five words but it's come out as 25 words because every space has been filled with an

[43 : 52] F or something like that and all it's done is given them time to think of what they really wanted to say so in Christian talk I don't think we would do that because those words really the effect of them is either to say nothing or to shock or to diminish what God has made to be a beautiful and private thing and to bring it into conversation just to devalue it so it might well have been your habit to use those words before you were a Christian and you never thought anything of it but now you're a Christian I would ask you to rethink why are you using those words what function do they have are they not words that rot rather than words that as he says are good for building people up so there's words that are simply we would say swear words and there is words that are used simply to insult and belittle so you see this on

Facebook don't you see it on the comments section of news reports my employers are a load of British Rail are a load of the council are just a load of like that so I would say that from this text it's saying that Christians would not think that that is a good method of conducting a discussion you might have problems with your employers you might wish to debate with them you might differ with council policy or implementation but the constructive way would be not simply to use expletives but to debate it in a more constructive way now I'm going to be a little bit careful with this because in the Bible sometimes in order to shock and in order to show disgust the Bible itself uses words that I would find very embarrassing to use from the pulpit this morning so that's why I say there's a bit of a subjective element in it but we're told to generally speaking put off put away words which are simply rotting and rotten and to put on words that are good do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths but only what is good for building others up according to their needs so this wonderful word good is in there this word to build up and according to their needs so the needs implies a certain sensitivity what is the need of this person do they need kick up the bottom or do they need a hand around their shoulder do they need what do they need what's the good word to help this person and it actually says to grace them so grace is a kind word isn't it what can I say that will give something enriching to this person I mean thank you is a good example isn't it thank you I appreciate what you've done well done or some such congratulations some such word of encouragement and the reasoning behind it well there's a couple of reasonings which I'll try and do quickly because time is moving on the Bible has a lot to say about the power and the significance of words so there are at least two things that we have the ability to use to be sort of weapons for good one of them is money and one of them is words and similarly they can be weapons for bad Matthew 12 says rather soberly Matthew 12 36 and 37

I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken for by your words you will be acquitted and by your words you will be condemned so when he says careless I don't think he means you know you said past the corn flakes when you really meant past the shredded wheat that was a bit careless of me but I think he's saying words which have you know like like a bullet you know imagine you you're an armed police officer and you have the power to stop a terrorist but you need to be very careful how you aim that you don't just go firing off in all directions that would be very negligent and he's saying with our words let's not just fire them off without thinking but you know sometimes they're very important words sometimes there are just fun words sometimes there are ways of expressing things but be careful okay let's move oh no we shouldn't move on because the next thing says the

[49 : 30] Holy Spirit can be grieved do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption the Holy Spirit very kindly seals us and reassures us and makes us know and sense where we're headed and that we're secure in Jesus Christ and he is a person and he says that if you choose to put on what you're supposed to be putting off you grieve the Holy Spirit and he says you don't want to do that you don't want to be doing that you don't want to be grieving the Holy Spirit he's God with you so valuable so important I'll move on so the last few

verses talk about deep and abiding attitudes and here's somebody exploding that's the explosion and this is what to put off and there are things that in the world people would say well that's just what happens but in the church it shouldn't be normal it should not be what goes on and he says get rid of bitterness sour spirit met somebody today wish

I hadn't met them had a chat with them went away feeling much worse they were so sour don't he says get rid of bitterness and get rid of rage rage Mr.

Short fused I just said something to them they went off the deep end oh dear went home trembling really put off rage put off anger this is the sort of sullenness a long term hostility put off anger and put off it says brawling but I think it means shouting and screaming we think of domestic incidents have you walked past a house or see people in the street walking along I told you and they're shouting at each other and you think oh this is awful and it says put off shouting screaming like that at one another slander say speaking evil of others behind their backs people do that and they would consider it normal and they would consider it justified but in the bible it says that's not what Christians do if you have a beef with somebody you raise it with them and you don't talk to other people about it you go to the person concerned you might perhaps get some help in going to the person concerned but you don't spill that out to don't slander put that away and malice every form of malice just me sort of plotting evil I would hate and I think I could honestly say God has spared me from this particular thing of sitting around just thinking how you can achieve somebody else's downfall and he says I don't know whether that's your particular temptation but put that away any kind of malice and what to put on well these beautiful things they're Christ like things be kind to one another and compassionate to one another forgiving each other just as in

Christ God forgave you be imitators of God as dearly loved children live a life of love just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God and these are all God things and Christ things kindness sort of a gentleness yeah kindness compassion so compassion is not the contract of when of what somebody deserves and how much they you know they haven't done this for me I'm not going to do that for them compassion goes out to somebody even though they don't deserve it compassion and forgiveness so and so said something to me I shall never forgive them for that I shall never forget what they said and we're told to forgive and forget and the reasoning behind it is the cross which is simply this that's how God treated us did [54 : 12] God say so and so said this to me I shall never never talk to them again we were so obnoxious to God and we came back to him and we said I have been totally out of order and God said no problem you're forgiven that's how God treated us we were vulnerable before God God didn't squash us let's not squash other people we were stupid before God let's not be rude to other foolish people let's remember actually as far as God's concerned we were being complete idiots let's just think about it that way so here we are moved to the end the Bible says you were a painter and decorator now you're a high court judge put off the clothes that the painter!

and decorator had put on the high court judge things well it actually says before you didn't know God now you're a Christian be the person God has made you in Christ behave like the person God has made you in Christ think about your actions and reactions with a spiritually renewed mind think why am I doing this does it fit with the Christ I have learned and we've looked this morning at how this ability and words that we use and attitudes that we have and put off the old and put on the new and let's sing together together