

A New Walk - Part 2

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[0 : 00] Descend upon us. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen. Amen. We're continuing our series in the book of Ephesians.

! And we come now to Ephesians chapter 4,! Ephesians chapter 4, verses 25 through Ephesians 5, verse 4.

Kindly turn in your Bibles to Ephesians chapter 4. And we will begin reading at verse 25.

Paul writes, Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor.

For we are members one of another. Be angry and do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your anger and give no opportunity to the devil.

[1 : 11] Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore, be imitators of God as beloved children, and walk in love as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.

[2 : 38] Let there be no filthiness, nor foolish talk, nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead, let there be thanksgiving.

Today I believe that the essence of what Paul writes in these verses is the following. What a believer says and does should reflect his conversion not only out of obedience, but for the unity of the local church.

What a believer says and does should reflect the fact of his conversion, the reality of his conversion, not only out of his obedience, but also for the unity of the local church.

And so today, I have decided to divide this message into two broad headings, if you will. The first a believer's speech and the second a believer's deeds.

I think it's important before we get into the substance of the message for us to consider the background of Paul's writing here.

[4 : 12] The first thing I think we ought to have in view is that Paul writes to this church, this fairly new church that he had started.

These people lived in a pagan environment. And perhaps they themselves were idol worshippers, many of them.

and perhaps no doubt they, like their neighbors and friends and relatives and co-workers, engaged in all manner of things.

So they were not saints being saved. And indeed, even as believers, they were not perfect. So I want you to understand the environment.

It's important as we consider these words, these instructions of Paul for us to grasp the context. And further, as we consider the context, we see in this chapter, beginning in verse 1 of chapter 4, that Paul is dealing with the unity in the church, in the local church.

[5 : 32] of how believers should live out their faith in community. Paul is concerned about them being of one mind, being able to get along.

In the verses you will recall from last week or the week before, that Paul had expounded on a doctrine dealing with transforming the mind.

Remember, Paul talked about futile minds and he warned that that was not the way for believers to go. That believers ought to have a transformed mind.

And Paul dealt with that issue from a doctrinal perspective. perspective. And now he comes to us with how we ought to live it out. What is it made practically for us to live the way we are expected to as believers?

And I think the other point that we should grasp before we get into these words of the Apostle Paul is that Paul seems to want to make clear that holiness is not what you and I say that we are, not what we say we are, it's not the seriousness on our faces, it's not the way we dress, rather it is about the way we live, the way you and I talk.

[7 : 25] It's not a mere concept, it's not something to be grasped, it is the way you and I live.

So bearing that context, bearing that introduction in mind, that Paul is talking to people who live in a pagan, mystic environment, that Paul is encouraging them to live in the local church in unity, that Paul has already talked to them about the doctrine of a transformed mind, and he wants them to understand that holiness is about living it out.

Let's consider what Paul says about a believer's speech. About a believer's speech.

I think there are three things Paul says in this passage about a believer's speech. Before we tell you what they are, let's consider these verses.

I'm going to read for you verses 25, 29, and 31. here's what Paul writes again. Therefore, having put away falsehood, lies, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

[9 : 03] Then in verse 29, Paul writes, let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up as fits the occasion that it may give grace to those who hear.

Then in verse 31, Paul writes, let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ Jesus forgave you. Here, Paul is writing about speech, and I think Paul wants us to see three things, that a believer's speech should be trustworthy, that when you and I speak to one another, we should be able to trust one another.

A believer's speech should be uplifting, and a believer's speech should be tender hearted. Paul wants us to see that words matter.

I don't know, perhaps, I don't know if the children still say this, but when I was growing up, we had a saying that goes something like this, sticks and stones may break my bones, but words cannot, can never harm me.

[10 : 30] You remember that? Children, do you guys still say that? Andre, do you say that? Do you guys say that? Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words may never harm me.

Huh? You don't say it. I see. Alright, so sticks and stones may hurt my bones, but words can never harm me. That's simply just not true.

words can have a far lasting negative effect, and much more significant, quite frankly, than sticks and stones.

Sticks and stones do damage to the body that actually heal. An unkind word can linger with someone for years, perhaps even a lifetime.

You know, there are things, I recall some things that some boys said to me in grade 6. I'm serious. It is just amazing. And real simple things. Real, real simple things.

[11 : 38] Can't forget it. I'm only 18 now, but people have gone to war over words. Couples have divorced because of words.

Best friends have separated because of words, and churches have broken up because of words. Words matter.

Words matter. Paul writes to the church at Ephesus, and by extension to us, and he tells them that they should not tell falsehoods, that they should not lie.

that's what Paul says. Don't lie. Don't lie to one another. Always speak the truth. Otherwise, he says, if you're telling lies, you're not going to be trusted.

People, they won't believe what you say when you say something that is, in fact, the truth. they'll take you with a grain of salt, or they'll wear you loosely.

[12 : 57] Telling lies is really common, and is often considered harmless. We do it because it is easy, and we think no one will be the wiser.

It's often why we do it. people lie to make themselves look good, or to prevent others from looking a certain way when they see them.

People lie to make others look bad. They lie to get thanks. you know, I heard this saying about Bahamians.

Tell me if you've heard this one before. They say that Bahamians lie for people they like, and they lie on people they hate.

You heard that one before? They lie for you if they like you, and they lie against you if they hate you. But it's really hard.

[14 : 03] This is the point that Paul makes. Paul, it is hard, near impossible to trust someone who has been found in a lie.

Someone close to you, family member, a brother, sister in church. Sometimes one feels under tremendous pressure, and bleeds out lies.

sometimes, perhaps, maybe this has happened to you before. Somebody asks you a question, and without really giving it a great deal of thought, you blurt something out that is an untruth.

Maybe that happened to you before. Let me suggest, if that were to happen to you, it's quite okay to go back and correct it. Indeed, even if one were to tell a lie in an intentional way, it's okay to go back and correct it.

It is a marvelous thing when one exposes one's vulnerability, when one confesses and says, you know, listen, brother, you know, you and I spoke the other day about XYZ.

[15 : 14] I was not totally transparent with you. I lied. Paul writes, put away falsehood. Let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor.

And then Paul writes here about neighbor in this instance. Paul is talking about members of the local church. I found that the best way to not lie is to not do anything that you would be ashamed of.

Paul tells us that our words, our words, can be destructive or they can build up.

They can tear down or they can be grace filled. Some people are just unkind with their words.

And some people are quite the opposite. Perhaps someone has offended you and your first inclination is to give them like we say a piece of our mind.

[16 : 28] But that's not what Paul teaches here. It's what the Bible teaches. We should not repay an offense with an offense. Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouth.

but only such as is good for building up. This is the word to us this morning.

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouth. Paul gives to us practical things for us to live by. God. But only such as is good for building up as fits the occasion that it may give grace to those who hear it.

John Stark in his commentary on the book of Ephesians writes, If we are truly a new creation of God, we shall undoubtedly develop new standards of conversation.

Instead of hurting people with our words, we shall want to use them to help, to encourage, to cheer, to comfort, and to stimulate them.

[17 : 55] You see that? We can use our words, surely we can use our words to tear down. Yes, we can use our words to hurt, but we can also use our words to help, and to encourage, and to cheer, and to comfort, and to stimulate.

And guess what? It's not expensive. It costs nothing to give a comforting or an encouraging or a stimulating word.

Stodd then went on to quote Proverbs 12 and 18. This is what it says. There was one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise, the tongue of the wise brings healing.

healing. The tongue of the wise brings healing. And that's what you and I are called to do, to bring grace to those who hear us.

And we consider these words that the apostle Paul uses to highlight how destructive words are. In fact, I want us to consider them further.

[19 : 16] Listen to what Paul says about how destructive words can be in verse 31. Paul uses such words as bitterness, wrath, and anger, and clamor, and slander, and malice.

harsh words to describe how our words can be so weighty and harmful. But instead, Paul says, our words should be tender, kind-hearted, and forgiving.

I want to make a final point in this section. And Paul says here in verse 31, he says, be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ Jesus forgave you.

I think Paul is making the point when he says to us that our words ought to be forgiving. Paul has in view, I believe, that sometimes somebody says something to us, about us, or does something to us, that is totally false.

And Paul is saying that rather than hitting back with our words, we ought to be forgiving. In other words, Paul is making the point that there is no excuse for bitterness, for slander, and for malice.

[21 : 03] Let's now consider what Paul writes about a believer's deeds. In these verses that we are considering today, Paul helps us to see that this new walk that you and I ought to be about as believers, that there are some things that should be characteristic of this walk.

The first I think that Paul wants us to see is that this walk, we should be temperate, we should be restrained, we should be generous, and then finally I think Paul wants us to see that we should be moral.

We should be temperate, we should be generous, and we should be moral. This is what he writes in verse 26. Be angry and do not sin.

Do not let the sun go down on your anger. and give no opportunity to the devil. Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with another in need.

And then in verse 3 of chapter 5, Paul writes, thanksgiving. But sexual immorality and all impurity of covetousness must not even be named among you as is proper among saints.

[23 : 00] Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor cruel joking which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.

Yes, Paul instructs you and I to be temperate. He instructs us not to lose our tempers.

Have you lost your temper recently? Have you gotten so bad that you couldn't control yourself? Has that happened to you recently? Well, Paul's writing to you.

Actually, Paul's writing to all of us. He's writing to all of us. He says, but notice though, and this is really important for us to see here. Paul writes, be angry.

So Paul doesn't say that anger is in and of itself wrong. He doesn't say that anger is in and of itself a bad thing.

[24 : 04] He says, be angry. As John Starr points out in his commentary, Paul identifies three characteristics of the believer's anger.

I'm going to consider them. I want us to consider them. But let's labor a little bit longer on this point of Paul's instructions to us to be angry.

angry. I believe that Paul is saying to us that righteous indignation, righteous anger is completely fine.

In fact, we may, as believers, quite frankly, not be angry enough. Perhaps we're not angry enough about abortion.

Perhaps we're not angry enough about the abuse of children. Perhaps we're not angry enough about the treatment of the poor.

[25 : 17] Paul says, be angry. But then Paul clarifies this point.

He writes, be angry, but do not sin. Paul has in view here that sometimes when we are angry, Paul wants us to consider what is it that is motivating our anger?

What is behind it? What is driving it? Is it something that is selfish? Are we trying to guard and protect ourselves?

What is it really? And then Paul writes, not only should we not sin when we are angry, we are angry, we don't let the sun go down on your anger.

Now some have taken this to mean quite literally, you know, if you're angry, don't go to bed angry kind of thing. But that's not what Paul says here.

[26 : 32] That's not what Paul meant here, I should say. Now, there are a couple thoughts about this point that I think might help us a little bit.

One is that some have taken this to mean that, well, you know, if I've got an issue, say, with my wife, and we are discussing this issue and there is no resolution, that we ought to deal with this before we go to bed.

Well, first of all, the scripture doesn't say that. It doesn't say that the issue itself needs to be resolved, certainly. I mean, you might say, well, we ought not be angry with one another, and that would be true, but it certainly doesn't say that the issue itself needs to be resolved.

And the other point is, you know, that there are some places where the sun really don't go down. So I don't, so I think really that this is not to be taken literally.

What Paul is saying to us, don't let our anger flourish. Don't let it grow into something else. Don't let us take on a life of its own, so that it's overwhelming.

[28 : 12] And then Paul writes about anger. He says, don't, do not sin, don't let the sun go down on your wrath, and give no opportunity for the devil.

Don't allow your anger, don't allow it to form into hatred or something worse. Don't allow your anger to drive you to do something, to harm someone, or to disobey a law.

be angry, and do not sin. Give no opportunity to the devil.

And then Paul writes, do not steal. Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work.

he says about the one who would steal, he says, not only ought you not to steal, but you ought to work and be a generous giver.

[29 : 26] Don't steal. That's the eighth commandment. I think we just covered that. Thou shall not steal. Guess what?

Perhaps you're thinking, that this commandment, this instruction, this command relates only to taking things.

You know, say, boy, you know, I haven't stolen anything, or I don't do that kind of thing. But what about taxes?

Ouch. Ouch. Ouch. what about customs duties? And what about claiming extra time when it was not spent?

Paul says, not only should we not steal, but we should work hard and be generous givers.

[30 : 33] not and then as we come down to the concluding verses of the section that we are considering, Paul emphasizes that we ought not to commit sexual sins.

Listen to what he says in verse 3 of chapter 5. but sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you as is proper among saints.

Let there be no filthiness, nor foolish talk, nor crude joking which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.

Paul says don't commit sexual sins of any kind. Do not be covetous.

Don't desire something that is your neighbor's. Don't seek to compete. Paul wants to make sure that everything is captured here.

[31 : 50] He says sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you. All impurity.

All impurity or covetousness. Then he says don't engage in filthy or foolish talk.

Paul covers the full garment here. Believers are not only to not engage in sexual sins, they are not to make light of or joke about them either.

Paul makes that really, really clean. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking. You and I know, you know, I don't know about the women, although I suspect you all experience similar things as us guys do.

But when fellows get together, especially if unbelievers are present, it's not unusual. In fact, quite frankly, more often than not, there is some kind of innuendo about sex, some joke, some crude joke.

[33 : 23] Paul says that you and I as believers should not engage in that. Brian Chappelle, in describing Paul's instructions here, summarizes it this way.

he says, we can experience purity only by denying ourselves impurity.

Let me read that again. Brian Chappelle says that we can experience purity only by denying ourselves impurity.

and then he goes on to say, this means that we must deal radically with sins we attempted to excuse such as immorality and greed for such the apostle urges a starvation diet.

Brian is saying and Paul he is summarizing and I think quite well what Paul is saying that our diet for these sins should be starvation.

[34 : 42] Let's starve them out. Let's not even joke about it. It's that big of a deal. Let's not even take the first step because the first step leads to another which leads to another which leads to yet another and then to the ultimate let's starve it at its root is what is the essence of what is being said here.

The Christian life as we conclude is not intended to be lived in isolation. Instead we are to live faith in community.

Unity is important and is achieved when each of us puts off the old self and puts on the new self.

When our walk is anew. We need God's grace to do that. Let us be wise and not just hear the words of the apostle but let's endeavor to live them out as well.

Let's do our best to live them out as well. I want to direct your attention to the closing words of the apostle Paul in verse 4 of chapter 5.

[36 : 19] Just for context I want to read the entire verse. let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking which are out of place.

Then Paul concludes this verse. He says but instead let there be thanksgiving. Paul says don't do this as he has been instructing us throughout these verses telling us what to take off what not to do and then he says this is what you ought to do.

Now you might say well how does this fit in? Paul says don't engage in sexual immorality. Don't talk filthiness but instead let there be thanksgiving.

Here is how you and I should consider these words of the apostle Paul. Thanksgiving for what? Thanksgiving because our eyes are open to the truth.

Thanksgiving for what? Thanksgiving for grace. Thanksgiving for salvation. Thanksgiving for awareness. Thanksgiving for the fact that Jesus Christ has paid the penalty for all of our sins.

[37 : 47] These ones that Paul has mentioned specifically and others. And so we can join the song writer who says yet not I but Christ in me.

what gift of grace is Jesus my redeemer? There is no more for heaven now to give.

He is my joy my righteousness and freedom my steadfast love my deep and boundless peace. To this I hold my hope is only Jesus for my life is wholly bound to his.

Oh how strange and divine I can sing all is mine yet not I but through Christ in me. Thanksgiving for what?

Thanksgiving because it is Christ in me. He is my joy and he is my righteousness and my freedom.

[39 : 01] My steadfast love my deep and abounding peace. He is the one that gives us consciousness that helps us to see that at least at the very least brings to our minds that listen this is wrong to even to consider much less to do.

He is the one that paid the price for you and I on Calvary. I can sing all is mine yet not I but Christ in me.

Let us pray. Father O Lord we have read and we have heard the apostles words and Lord there is there are so many opportunities for confession so much we can acknowledge Lord we have had place before us a mirror we have found ourselves wanting Lord we need your help Lord by your Holy Spirit help us help us Lord Lord we ask in the name of Jesus that you would cause each heart to take seriously the words of the apostle Paul

Lord help us Lord to embrace these words to to seek to walk as you would have us to walk to cast off the old self and to put on the new self and Lord help us to see that we are not condemned because of what Christ Jesus our redeemer has done for us and so Lord in the name of Jesus we pray that while the words of the apostle Paul were convicting to all of us that they were not condemning to any of us because oh Lord we understand the work of our redeemer

Jesus Christ in the name of Jesus we pray and God's all God's people say Amen thank you to please stand as we sing our closing and not I Christ!

[42 : 07] what gift of grace is Jesus my redeemer there is no more for heaven now to give he is my joy my righteousness and freedom my steadfast love my deep and bound is peace to this I hold my hope is only Jesus for my life is holy bound to him and oh how strange and divine I can sing all is mine yet not I but through Christ in me verse 2 the night is hot but I am not forsaken for by my side the Savior he will stay

I labor on in weakness and rejoicing for in my deep his power is spread to this I hold my shepherd will defend me through the deepest valley he will be oh the night has been won and I shall overcome yet not I but through Christ in me though though fate I dread though fate I dread I know I am forgiven the future sure the price it has been paid for Jesus bled and suffered for my father and he was raised to overthrow the grave to this

I hold my sin as can defeated Jesus now and never is my free if all the chains are released I can sing I am free yet not I but through Christ in me with every breath I long to follow Jesus with every breath I long to follow Jesus for he has said that he will bring me home and day by day I know he will renew me until I stand with joy before the throne to this I hold my hope is only

Jesus and all the glory evermore to him and when the race is complete still my lips shall redeem yet not I but through Christ in me yet not I but through Christ in me yet not I put through Christ in me let us pray Father thank you Lord for the reminder that we find in those very comforting words that were just sung yet not I but Christ in me finally brothers rejoice aim for restoration comfort one another agree with one another live in peace and the

God of love and peace will be with you the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all in Jesus name amen you are now dismissed if there is anyone who desires prayer it will be our pleasure to pray with you God