

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for December 30, 2018

Spiritual Concerns
Ephesians 4:30-32

I. The concern of the Spirit (4:30)

- “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God,”
 - The Spirit gives us access to God
 - Ephesians 2:18 “For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.”
 - The Spirit gives us the comfort of God’s presence among us
 - Ephesians 2:22 “In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.”
 - The Spirit is transforming us and making us holy
 - 1 Thessalonians 4:7-8 “For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. 8 Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.”
 - 2 Corinthians 3:18 “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”
 - This is the first concern of the Holy Spirit in verse 30—our holiness
 - Question: How do you think the Spirit responds when we resist this process of transformation, known as sanctification?
 - The Spirit definitely is not happy!
 - Paul says that our resistance and sin *grieve* the Holy Spirit
 - Example: Israel grieved God with their grumbling and complaining in the wilderness
 - Psalm 78:40 “How often they rebelled against him in the wilderness and grieved him in the desert!”
 - Isaiah 63:10 “But they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit; therefore he turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them.”
 - Application: Does the fact that our sinning causes the Holy Spirit to grieve affect us?
 - Paul is saying that we must be motivated to holiness based upon the simple fact that our sin grieves God
 - If we want what He wants and desire what He desires, then we have all the motivation we need to turn from our sin and walk in righteousness

- We have been called to walk worthy of the gospel for the sake of unity and growth (Ephesians 4:1-16)
- We have been called to walk no longer like the Gentiles but instead in newness of life (Ephesians 4:17-29)
- Now we are reminded what needs to be removed far from us and what should be characteristic of us so that we maintain our unity and growth as opposed to the destructive habits of worldly relationships

A. Adverse attitudes and actions (4:31)

- Paul now addresses the attitudes and actions that are to “be put away from you”
 - Ephesians 4:22, “to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,”
 - Ephesians 4:25 “Therefore, having put away falsehood,”
- “Let all bitterness”
 - “The first on the list of vices to be removed is πικρία, ‘bitterness,’ which indicates the hard-heartedness that harbors resentment about the past”¹
 - Bitter toward people
 - Acts 8:23 “For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.”
 - Colossians 3:19 “Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.”
 - Application: Ask yourself some honest questions
 - Have I had negative thoughts about anyone recently?
 - If so, why?
 - It is because they sinned against me?
 - Is it because they sinned against someone I love?
 - Is it because I feel they have a better life than me?
 - Is it because they earn more attention than I think they deserve?
 - Is it because I wish I had their life?
 - Have I seen a repetition or pattern of these negative thoughts toward certain individuals?
 - If so, we have more than likely succumbed to the poison of bitterness
 - The heart is deceitful and wicked so it is not surprising that these negative thoughts might multiply if left unchecked

¹ Andrew T. Lincoln, Ephesians, vol. 42, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1990), 308.

- Ask God to reveal any seeds of bitterness that might be potentially growing in your heart today
- “and wrath and anger”
 - These two terms are synonyms
 - They capture the clearly sinful aspect of anger
 - These words are used to speak of passionate anger that boils up
 - These words identify the moments when we become heated in anger
 - This concept of anger can be manifested in different ways (yelling, violence, silence, separation)
 - The flow in Paul’s words seems to show a progression
 - If bitterness is the beginning attitude we might have regarding others
 - Then anger is the following disposition or tendency that we will give ourselves to regarding those with whom we have become bitter
 - Thus, bitterness inwardly flows into greater internal and even external manifestations of wrath and anger
 - Application: Ask yourself some honest questions
 - Have I seen or felt a change in my behavior when I am around certain difficult individuals?
 - Do I avoid them intentionally?
 - Am I quick to point out their faults?
 - Do I boil inside and bite my tongue when I am around them?
 - Do I assume the worst about what I see them doing?
 - Do I speak to them differently than I speak to others?
 - Again, the heart is deceitful and these tendencies could be some indicators of wrath and anger that is unchecked in your life
 - Ask God to reveal any tendencies of wrath and anger that might be potentially present in your life today
- “and clamor and slander be put away from you,”
 - The final two terms are clearly external manifestations of bitterness and anger
 - These terms fall into the category of speech
 - Clamor “has the idea of ‘crying, screaming, shouting,’”²
 - Slander or “βλασφημία is used of profane or abusive speech”³
 - These words would fall under the category of unwholesome or rotten speech that should not be proceeding from our mouths (Ephesians 4:29)

² Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 635.

³ Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 636.

- Here, Paul highlights how they are natural next step in the progression that he has observed
 - From attitude (bitterness), to disposition (wrath and anger), to speech (clamor and slander)
- Application: Again, ask yourself some honest questions about clamor and slander
 - Have I purposefully insulted or offended anyone recently?
 - Have I spoken negatively about people without their knowledge?
 - Has my speech lacked self-control?
 - Has my speech conveyed a tone of anger?
 - If so, ask God for wisdom for how you might try to reconcile any of these previous situations
- “along with all malice.”
 - This functions as the final all-inclusive term for sin that must be removed from us
 - “It is the all-inclusive word for badness or wickedness... Hence, it is best to translate it ‘ill-will, malice, maliciousness.’”⁴
 - Since the heart is deceitful and genius at coming up with new ways to think, feel and display evil, Paul gives this final sweeping phrase
 - Any and every form of malice must be removed and put away from us in the community of Christ’s church

B. Admirable attitudes and actions (4:32)

- “Be kind to one another,”
 - Like the things we are called to remove from us, we are also called to put on and practice righteous attitudes and actions
 - First, Paul states our need for an attitude of kindness toward one another
 - We must be striving to have an inner feeling of kindness and goodwill toward one another
 - God is a God of kindness toward us
 - Romans 2:4 “Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?”
 - Ephesians 2:7 “so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”
 - We must be striving to emulate His kindness toward one another
- “Tenderhearted,”
 - We are not just called to have a cordial tolerance of one another in kindness

⁴ Harold W. Hoehner, Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 637.

- We are actually called to have a tenderheart or feelings of compassion and affection toward one another!
- 1 Peter 3:8 “Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind.”
- Colossians 3:12 “Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,”
- Philippians 1:8 “For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.”
- Jesus saw the crowds and had compassion on them
- “forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”
 - Will exercising kindness and tenderheartedness toward one another put a stop to the sin in this body?
 - No!
 - We will sin against one another
 - When we are sinned against, the opportunity arises for our kindness and tender hearts to be revealed
 - Kindness and tenderheartedness toward one another will be specifically revealed in our regular practice of forgiving one another
 - If we will not forgive one another, then we show that we have not understood the forgiveness that God has exercised on us (Matthew 18:21-35)