

## Building Each Other up by Living in Jesus

Զիրար Շինել Քրիստոսի Մէջ Ապրելով

### Ephesians 4:25-32

This week we will celebrate Thanksgiving. It is a beautiful tradition to express our gratefulness.

To start my sermon, I am going to ask you to turn right and left and share with the persons next to you **what are you thankful for.**

I am sure we are thankful for so many blessings we have received.

That is great.

I saw a funny yet a sad post that describes the American Thanksgiving:

**“Thanksgiving is when Americans give thanks for everything they have so that next day they can go out and buy everything they don’t have.”**

Human greed can never be satisfied. How about going back to Paul and our letter to the Ephesians?

Paul started with greetings of grace and peace.

Then he went ahead saying:

**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,** (Eph 1:3 ESV)

I bless you, God the Father and the Son Jesus Christ for you have blessed us with every spiritual blessings. What does it mean?

“The word “bless” is being used in two different ways;

- When we bless God, it is an act of worship and adoration. it is an acknowledgment of His being above us.

- And when God blesses us, he is not worshipping us — it's an act of condescension, it is act of God reaching down and in order to show us his love. The spiritual blessings with which he has blessed us are the multiple truths that Paul will speak of later in the chapter, which we receive from God because of Christ. These blessings are our “in Christ” not apart from Christ, and they are a lavish gift, they are a blessing.” (Kevin Kasper)

In, by, and With Grace of God. Do you know how blessed we are?

-We were dead in sin, BUT GOD made us ALIVE WITH CHRIST.

-We were dead in sin and captive of Satan, BUT GOD raised us UP WITH HIM and seated us with HIM.

-We were doomed to be children of wrath, BUT GOD allowed His Son to take our wrath on HIS shoulder so that we can experience the immeasurable riches of His GRACE in kindness towards us in CHRIST Jesus.

There are a million reasons you can be thankful for. I just want to go beyond the material stuff to the spiritual blessing of **biblical understanding** who we are and how God is shaping our character.

That is why I am thankful this morning. I was dead, and God gave me life; I was nobody, and God adopted me and gave me new name; I was alienated but God brought reconciliation to me. I had no hope, or peace, and God gave me hope and peace.

Let me finish chapter 4 today.

**Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. <sup>26</sup> Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, <sup>27</sup> and give no opportunity to the devil. <sup>28</sup> 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. <sup>29</sup> 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. <sup>30</sup> And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup> Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. <sup>32</sup> Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. (Ephesians 4:25-32 ESV)**

Last week I stressed how Paul is drawing the picture of the NEW Person. The Old is gone and the New is here. And this new person's **life has radically changed.**

**Put off the old, and put on the new:**

The old person was walking in Vanity, Futility.

The new person is walking like Christ, living IN CHRIST.

-Now Paul will bring specific areas that our character will show when we are IN Christ.

### 1. Falshood:

**Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. (25)**

Let me remind you that Paul is interested in the **unity of the body**. The best way to kill that unity is falsehood.

Lying is dangerous and can destroy relationships and the unity of the body.

Satan is the master of not telling the truth, deceiving. Church, watch your words.

For example, exaggeration is not telling the truth. Gossip, saying false things about people is not telling the truth. False words “kill” people. Read James who say how dangerous is the tongue, and it can become a deadly weapon. We can “murder” each other by words.

### 2. Anger:

**Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, <sup>27</sup> and give no opportunity to the devil. (26,27)**

People need to attend anger management classes. Anger is an emotion that can appear in our lives. Watch out how you handle your anger. When Paul says do not sin, I understand do not contemplate and “nurse” your anger. It will escalate and take you to revenge and bitterness.

We have seen Jesus “grieving” when he saw **hardened hearts**. He said if anyone hurt a child, it would be better to put a huge rock and throw them in the depths of the water. Matthew 18:6 NIV “If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

When humans hurt humans, it is justifiable to be angry. Yet we should be careful not to sin in our anger.

Os Guinness writes, “However an insult or injury is perceived, anger simply wants to ‘get back’ at the perpetrator. As a result, prolonged anger becomes a perverted desire for justice that grows into an obsessive rage and finally into hatred.”<sup>1</sup>

Watch out why are you angry, and how you will deal with your anger.

One is angry for the line is not moving in a coffee shop, another is angry for human trafficking.

### 3. Stealing

**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; (28)**

Stealing is wrong all the times, period. Paul encourages working and making honest income.

Work is a blessing. God did not curse the work in the book of Genesis. The land is cursed and not the work. Our ultimate satisfaction is from God and not from work. Work should not become an end in itself. Watch out, work can become an idol. But I see also here that our income from our work is not to just provide our personal and family needs, but God blesses us so we can become blessing to the others. (Acts 20:35, 1 Timothy 5:8, Titus 3:14, James 1:27, 1 John 3:17).

- Let me warn you **how we can rob God.**

**Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How have we robbed you?' In your tithes and contributions.** (Malachi 3:8 ESV) We steal from God when we don't give back to God; our tithes, our giving to God should be done cheerfully and not as an obligation. God blessed us; we are called to bless others.

#### 4. Corrupting Talk

**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. (29)**

Which posts in social media do you think get the most views? Those that build each other up or those that trash people?

How about in the church, do my words build the body?

If we have experience God's grace in us, we don't have a choice but passing God's grace to each other.

Do you bless people? Are you a blessing to others? Do your words build the body of the church, or your words corrupt the unity or put people down?

Again, unity and purity of the body is a central topic. Words that can build and can destroy.

Think before you speak; ask yourself:

Is it True

Is it Helpful

Is it Inspiring

Is it Necessary

Is it Kind

Is it Constructive

## 5. Grieving the Holy Spirit

**<sup>30</sup> And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (30)**

How do we grieve the Holy Spirit?

- God hates sin, not the sinner. When we use corrupt talk, we are trashing each other, we are not just sinning against our sister/brother, we are sinning against the Spirit of God.

- The Holy Spirit also unites us, **One Spirit**. When we are sinning against each other with words, or stealing, or we are full of anger, revenge... we are sinning against the **unity that Holy Spirit brings**. We grieve the Spirit of God.

“In fact, anything incompatible with the purity or unity of the church is incompatible with his (H.S.) own nature and therefore hurts him. One might add that because he is also the ‘Spirit of truth’, through whom God has spoken, he is upset by all our misuse of speech, which has been Paul's topic in the preceding verse.”<sup>2</sup>

## 6. Forgive each other

**Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. <sup>32</sup> Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. (31,32)**

We did speak about anger, wrath and bad words. I would like to end as we approach the Table of the Lord, with forgiveness.

If we have the grace of Jesus in us, if we the Spirit of God in us, it is not anymore a suggestion to forgive the other. Christ forgave me, I learn from Him to forgive.

Some weeks ago I prayed with a person whose mother was dying. He had some issues with his sister. I prayed with him and encouraged him to make peace with his sister. God gave him the courage to make peace with his sister. His mother saw this before her death. Glory to God. There is joy in heaven.

Count your blessings.

**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, (Eph 1:3 ESV)**

Let us approach the Table.

1. Os Guinness, *Steering Through Chaos* P117

2. John R.W. Stott, *The Bible Speaks Today, The Message of Ephesians*, P 144