

Traditional Home service Sunday 8th Aug

OPENING PRAYER

Let your merciful ears, O Lord, be open to the prayers of your humble servants; and that they may obtain their petitions make them to ask such things as shall please you; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

PRAYER OF PENITENCE

Let us return to the Lord our God and say to him:

**O King enthroned on high,
filling the earth with your glory:
holy is your name,
Lord God almighty.
In our sinfulness we cry to you
to take our guilt away,
and to cleanse our lips to speak your
word, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

PRAISE

Let everything be said and done in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God through Jesus Christ. Sing psalms, hymns and sacred songs:

Let us sing to God with thankful hearts.
Open our lips, Lord:
and we shall praise your name.

HYMN 1 (*Take my life and let it be*)

READINGS - 2 Samuel 18.5-9,15,31-33
Ephesians 4.25 - 5.2
John 6.35,41-51

TALK

CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Spend some time praying for our nation, our community and our families.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

HYMN 2 (*Love divine, all loves excelling*)

CONCLUSION

The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, establish, strengthen and settle you in the faith; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

HYMNS TO USE

1 Take my life and let it be
consecrated, Lord, to thee.
Take my moments and my days;
let them flow in endless praise,
let them flow in endless praise.

2 Take my hands and let them move
at the impulse of thy love.
Take my feet and let them be
swift and beautiful for thee,
swift and beautiful for thee.

3 Take my voice and let me sing
always, only, for my King.
Take my lips and let them be
filled with messages from thee,
filled with messages from thee.

4 Take my silver and my gold;
not a mite would I withhold.
Take my intellect and use
every power as thou shalt choose,
every power as thou shalt choose.

5 Take my will and make it thine;
it shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart it is thine own;
it shall be thy royal throne,
it shall be thy royal throne.

6 Take my love; my Lord, I pour
at thy feet its treasure store.
Take myself, and I will be
ever, only, all for thee,
ever, only, all for thee

1 Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heav'n, to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art.
Visit us with thy salvation;
enter ev'ry trembling heart.

2 Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit
into ev'ry troubled breast.
Let us all in thee inherit,
let us find the promised rest.
Take away the love of sinning;
Alpha and Omega be.
End of faith, as its beginning,
set our hearts at liberty.

3 Come, Almighty, to deliver,
let us all thy life receive.
Suddenly return, and never,
nevermore they temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.

4 Finish, then, thy new creation;
true and spotless let us be.
Let us see thy great salvation
perfectly restored in thee.
Changed from glory into glory,
till in heav'n we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love and praise.

Sermon Notes - Adrian Morton
Ephesians 4:25 - 5:2

Put off falsehood, limit anger and build each other up...!

I want to continue working through Ephesians this morning.

I've said previously that this letter to the Ephesians is kind of split into two halves.

The first half looks at what God has done for us in Christ.
Who we are in Him.

The second half gives more practical instructions as to how that works out.

In light of what God has done for you, this is how you are to behave.

And our passage this morning fits into this second half.

It gives instructions as to how we are to behave as Christians.

Our passage also begins with *therefore* so links it to what has previously been said.

Paul has just been talking about putting off your former self.
The way you used to be before you followed Jesus.
And putting on your new self.
Created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

I don't know about you that sounds a big calling.
To be created to be like God.
Later it says, 'Be imitators of God..'

In other words though, he is urging this church to live consistently with who they now are.

Its a good message for us.

Remember what God has done for you in Christ.
Who you are in Him - that you are righteous in Him...

Now live in accordance with that.

Live consistent with your righteousness.

Also, its worth saying while we look at this passage that the context is unity within the church body.

In the early part of Ch4, Paul has said 'make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace...'

So these exhortations to live well are so we maintain church unity primarily.

That's the place the enemy is going to try and get a foothold in.
He wants to spoil our relationships - our unity.

And yes, individuals make up community... and whilst of course, lying, stealing, being overly angry, are not good things for us as individuals, the Spirit is grieved primarily because those things wreck relationships and therefore our unity in the Spirit.

And let's not forget its Holy Spirit life that is the basis for church unity.

Not worship style or doctrine...

Lets look in more detail at our passage:

v25... Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbour, for we are all members of one body.

So 'neighbour' here is our Christian brother or sister...

I'm sure we all understand the need to speak truthfully to each other.

We will all know that lying destroys trust in any relationship.

But there is something wider going on here.

'put off falsehood'...

I remember in our previous church Louise and I spending much time with a couple who were having marriage difficulties. And we just didn't seem to get anywhere. They eventually split up and a while later we learned that he was having an affair. He

never told us that. He was presenting a false view of himself and the marriage.

I believe the Lord can only work through truth.
Jesus said, 'I am the truth...'

I've been to see people and I can just sense there is an unspoken agenda that is directing the conversation. There are things not spoken about that should be said. Whether it's embarrassment, or cowardice or I don't know, but there is something, there is some truth not being revealed, and it means we are dealing in falsehood, not truth. And I've come away unsettled, and realising it probably wasn't that fruitful conversation.

It's a commonly spoken caricature about the church.
That people put on their Sunday best, nice hats...

And present themselves as if they have got life altogether.
When in fact they may have got out of the car swearing at their spouse and children.

Or have had a horrendous week, succumbing to temptation etc

But what is happening is that they are presenting falsehood.
They are presenting themselves as not who they really are.

And I'm not advocating that we always reveal our inner most struggles to everyone we meet.
That would be exhausting, both for the teller and the listener.

But we need to operate out of who we really are.
We need church environments to be a place where people can be themselves, even if that means we all see each other not at our best sometimes.

Churches that tend to be rule based.
"You can't do that, we don't agree with this..."

Those churches tend to keep a lid on truth. And it encourages people into falsehood. Because people are too afraid to be real. Because they feel they will be shamed.

But mature churches, I believe, are not churches that keep sin hidden.

But allow sin to be seen for what it is

And mature churches are non judgemental - rooted in grace, forgiveness, mercy...

'put off falsehood'...

v26 - In your anger do not sin, do not let the sun go down while you are still angry,

In my Bible, this verse has a footnote - Psalm 4:4.

Its a quote from that Psalm - it always worth following footnotes.

The Psalmist has been accused, unjustly, of some crime or sin, even though he is innocent.

God replaces the anger which resulted from the lies of others with joy and peace.

Its ok to have a righteous anger, particularly if we've been accused unjustly.

Jesus got angry about injustice, how His Father's house was being used.

He got angry about how sin was causing such destruction in people's lives.

There is righteous anger.

<Speak about Ed walker - Hope into Action>

There is also unrighteous anger.
If our anger has come out of injured pride, malice, or a spirit of revenge it is unrighteous anger.

And let's not be tempted to regard our own anger as righteous indignation and other people's anger as sheer bad temper!

But regardless, Paul is saying, even righteous anger needs a time limit.

Else it has the potential to give the enemy a foothold, a place, in order to destroy relationships.

Anger is such a powerful emotion, it needs limiting...

do not let the sun go down while you are still angry,

is good advice for all relationships...
Sort it out before the day ends.

v29 - *Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.*

I sometimes wonder what it'd be like if whenever we spoke to someone, it was with the intention of building them up.

And I know I can't manage that all the time.

Sometimes, I'm distracted, or feeling impatient, or moody, or tired and I'll say something quite short, or clumsy.

And it has the opposite effect of building someone up.
But what if we just spoke to build others up more.

What a great environment it'd be ...
People would come just to be encouraged!

I've sat under the teaching of John & Carol Arnott on many occasions. The Arnotts led the church where the Toronto blessing happened...

One of the habits John Arnott has, is when he speaks he often will say to the hearer's -
turn to your neighbour and say:
the Father loves you
Jesus is and about you and wants you as His friend
God sees who you really are and still loves you deeply

Being English, I find it really uncomfortable.
That I have to speak to a stranger...
But I understand why he does it...
We are to build each other up...

v30 - *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.*

So the things we've been talking about and *bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice* will grieve the Holy Spirit.

Instead be...

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

The Holy Spirit is a person of course.
The more we see Him as that, the less we'll want to grieve Him.

To finish...

Ephesians and other letters also remind us that we mature as Christians being part of a church community.

These letters were written to church communities.

As individuals, we can't grow to maturity apart from being in the body of Christ.

And that's not just about turning up on a Sunday when we gather for worship.

But it's about belonging in some way to a group of believers.

So, together, as we mature as a church,

As we put off falsehood and speak the truth.
As we put a limit on our anger.
As we build each other up...

We will increasingly see the life of God displayed amongst us.

Amen!