

Epistle to the Ephesians III Chapter Four

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Today we're going to skip ahead in the series we're doing in Ephesians and you will see why, when we get the end of this, we're going skip the third chapter and save that.

After we get the vision of the second chapter that we are all one in Christ and that the body, the temple that God is building now, resides in us through the very power of the Holy Spirit of God and we are to be joined together because of that, Ephesians 4 does something that we will see is very profound inasmuch as it tells us individually what we need to do—not only to the Church members but also to the ministers. It gives us some very important things that we need to keep in mind, because we have to keep living in this world and we have to keep growing and overcoming, and we have to keep increasing in Christian character, knowledge, grace, love and the whole purpose of the Church and so forth.

I want us all to be able to, through the very power of God's Holy Spirit, to realize the tremendous and wonderful blessing that God gives us that actually, with His Holy Spirit, at the present time, *He is tabernacling in our mind*. This means that:

- we are going to be inspired of God
- we are going to be led by God's Holy Spirit
- we are going to go ahead in the way of life that we need to

Here are the encouraging words in Eph. 4 that we need. Again, as you know I did Ephesians in an expanded amplified translation, because I've added more understanding of the meaning of the words, plus I have upgraded substantially the vocabulary to bring to us—through the power of God's Spirit in our mind, coupled with the words—the spiritual meaning and understanding that God gives to us.

Let's again reiterate what Jesus said, 'The words that I am speaking to you, they are Spirit and they are Life.' We have in our hands these words. These words are physical, because they're on physical paper, made with physical ink. We are physical, but what we are doing and accomplishing is spiritual, because language and words have a mental and—in this case with God's Spirit—a spiritual meaning to us. We're going to be able to derive out of this, from these very words—because of the Spirit of Christ:

- spiritual meaning
- spiritual faith
- spiritual hope
- spiritual uplifting

that can only come because we have the Spirit of God and what the Spirit of God is doing and with our mind and language that we have, God is bringing to us:

- His very character
- His very feeling
- His very meaning

—for us out of these words.

Ephesians 4:1: "In the light of all of this... [that is everything that God has done, everything that the Bible tells us, all that Christ has done] ...I, the prisoner of the Lord..." Here is Paul in prison writing this for us. He's trying to save and rescue the Church from internal destruction. He's trying to save and rescue the brethren from fighting, warring and quarrelling—the Jews on the one hand, the Gentiles on the other hand. He's saying, 'Look, I'm a prisoner and I can't be there to see you face-to-face and talk to you.'

So, he says, "[I] am exhorting..." (v 1). He's wanting to encourage; to bring us to the unity of Christ. That's what the whole book of Ephesians is all about when you understand it.

"...admonishing and entreating you to walk worthily... [Paul is not here correcting, beating up, lambasting, bombarding and knocking everyone down in a scathing attack. He says, 'I am pleading with you. I am]: ...entreating you to walk worthily and conduct your life in a manner becoming to the calling wherein **you were called, chosen and selected by God**'" (v 1).

When we focus in on that and take this admonishment, pleading and entreaty of Paul to us personally. Instead of looking down on some physical thing to do or not do, we say, 'Hey, God has chosen us; He has called us; He has selected us. How ought we be living our lives?' Here's how:

Verse 2: "With all humility of mind and lowliness of self-esteem..." We're living in such and age now that the whole world is being built up on 'self-esteem.' The way to have proper self-esteem is to have the Spirit of God and the love of God and then you have the proper self-esteem, because you're going to love God and you're going to love the brethren and you're going to love your neighbor as

yourself. That loving yourself is the proper self-esteem—the lowliness of self-esteem—not having the vanity and the hoop-ta-la and the rah, rah, ‘I can do all of this’ pull yourself up by the bootstraps self-psychology.

“...even meekness, gentleness and benevolence, coupled with patience long-suffering and clemency...” (v 2).

- not everything is going to be done at once
- not everyone is going to be perfect
- not everyone is going to overcome in the same degree

So therefore, we have to be patient and longsuffering with clemency, *being willing to forgive and understand*. “...bearing with and being mutually supportive of each other in Godly love... [Too many times when someone does wrong, I tell you the ‘shotguns’ come out, the barbed tongues are shot forth and go after each other.] (Let’s be): “...mutually supportive of each other in Godly love. in tolerant forbearance...” (v 2). *You don’t have to put up with sin!* I doesn’t mean that. It means just as we are as people, because God has called us.

“...and understanding toward each other” (v 2). That’s what we’ve been able to do in our small little group. We’ve nicknamed ourselves over the years *The No Hassle Church*. I don’t have to exert authority on anyone, and we don’t have to beat up on each other. We’ve been beaten up enough, not only by the world, but by our past experience in the Church. I think we just about now are all totally healed from all of that—hopefully we are. If we’re not, then we’re getting close to it. Let’s have this tremendous attitude and love toward each other and sustain each other in this way.

Verse 3: “Being ever diligent and mindful (by maintaining and practicing Christian love)...” Always being mindful so that we practice it, we use it. What makes the Feast so enjoyable? *Because of doing this very thing right here!* Maintaining this kind of love, forbearance, love, understanding, patience, kindness, and being able to get together and fellowship with brethren and have and enjoy this Feast in that way.

“...to keep the unity of the Spirit... [That’s important because we all have the same Spirit of God. Is Christ divided? *No!*] ...with the peace, harmony and tranquility which binds each of us together, and all to God” (v 3). If we keep that in mind you see what a tremendous inspiring goal and standard that Paul is portraying for us here. That before God he’s going to die and be gone, which he is; and the Church is going to go ahead, how should the Church be able to maintain itself. We have to

fight off all these problems over here that we’ve had on one side and the problems here on another side. But interacting with each other, how are we to maintain ourselves? Here it is right here. Realizing that it is one Spirit that binds each of us together and all of us to God.

Verse 4: “There is one body (which is the Church) and one Spirit (which is the Spirit of Truth) even as you were also called, chosen and selected **in one hope of your calling**”—this is to be in the Kingdom of God, and that’s what the whole Feast of Tabernacles pictures. The *one hope of our calling* is that we are going to be with God the Father and Jesus Christ. We’re going to be with all the saints resurrected at the return of Jesus Christ, and reign and rule with Him as kings and priests on this earth, and have the tremendous, wonderful and magnificent job of bringing the rule and reign of God on this earth through the Millennium. Absolutely profound! We need to keep that in mind. That’s the whole hope of our calling.

Verse 5: “One Lord and Master, one faith and belief, one baptism and burial with Christ.” That’s what baptism is. You’re baptized and buried with Him. There’s only one way.

Verse 6: “One God and Supreme Father of all, Who is over all, and through all, and in you all.” That’s what to keep in mind. God the Father, through the very power of the Spirit of Christ, is literally in the heavenly things with us, *in us!* I know that that is something to really think upon, meditate on, really get our mind into and our spirit into, to understand that God has literally done this for us. When we have that in mind, when we each understand this:

- how much greater it is than in the Church
- how much more peace
- how much more love
- how much more growth
- how much more understanding

As we have learned, being a small group, numbers don’t matter. You can have a huge number of people—we’ve all gone to the Feast of Tabernacles where there have been thousands of people—what do you eventually have in addition to your power struggle political groups over here—a little group over here, a little group over there—and because you don’t have the love of God—that it ends up that you have party splits and people going against each other. We’ve all gone through that. *If we keep this in mind:*

- how much better our relations are with each other
- how much greater is our peace with God
- how much more enjoyable and satisfying is

keeping the Sabbath and Holy Days of God

Verse 7: “But to each of you individually...” Jesus told them, ‘Look, I want you to go out to the flowers of the field, and I want you to observe that, and I want you to understand this lesson’: In all of the glory in his palace, in the temple that he built and everything that was there, even Solomon—who was the wisest man on earth, the wealthiest man on earth—when the Queen of Sheba came to see and hear of his kingdom she was without breath, without spirit. Literally, she was so flabbergasted at what God had done for Solomon that she just literally melted.

Jesus said, ‘This flower of the field has more glory than Solomon ever had; yet, this flower of the field is going to die and perish. Therefore, how much more does God care for you? Oh you of little faith.’

If we grow in faith and grace and knowledge, we realize, v 7: “But to each of you individually, the grace... [and all that that means] ...which is God’s gracious Divine favor blessing and generous gift was given according to the measure and portion of the magnanimous gift of Christ (His own perfect, righteous life for yours).” That is so overwhelming when you really think about it, pray about it and ask God for comprehension on it, that God gave His own life for you, individually. Not only to you, but to every individual Christian that He has called. It’s applied individually, because we have ability through the Holy Spirit to come into the very presence of God the Father through prayer.

Verse 8: “Wherefore, He says, after having ascended up into the heights... [After God had Jesus Christ ascend into heaven, was accepted by God the Father.] ...He captivated captivity... [In other words, there’s nothing else left to do as far as God was going to in relationship to what Christ had done. It was all finished!] (Because of that, for us on the earth He): ...and gave gifts to men.” To us! He gave us His Spirit!

We will see all the purpose of the ministry because we go from what our individual lives are before God, then we expand that into the whole purpose of the ministry, and then Paul breaks it down into what we need to be doing on an individual day-by-day basis in the latter part of Eph. 4.

Then he makes this parenthetical statement, v 9: “But He Who ascended, is it not also He who first descended into the lower parts of the earth?...” [What does that mean? Did He go down into hell and preach to them down there? *No! That just means He*]:...was buried in the earth! He Who descended is also the same One Who has ascended above all the heavens that He might fulfill, complete and

accomplish everything in God’s plan” (vs 9-10). What did Jesus say just before He died, the very last thing He said? *Father, into your hands I commend My Spirit—it is finished!* And He died.

Now that He’s resurrected, don’t you think that He’s going to finish all the rest of the plan of God? *Yes, He is!* That’s why we keep the Holy Days, because this keeps us in tune with the plan of God. This keeps us in tune with what God is doing. At the right hand of God the Father, you know Christ is going to complete it. What did Jesus say concerning His words not only that they were Spirit and life? *Heaven and earth can pass away, but My words shall not pass away!* He’s going to finish it. He’s going complete everything in the plan of God, to bring all into New Jerusalem and into the Family of God—which the Feast of Tabernacles pictures.

Verse 11—here is for the purpose of the ministry. This is for me as a minister. This is also for anyone else who is a minister. It’s also for all the brethren that they understand the purpose of the ministry.

Verse 11: “And He truly gave some apostles, and some others prophets; and some others evangelists, and some pastors (that is shepherds and guardians of the Flock of God) and teachers.” These are defining, not necessarily a rank as you would look at it in the military, because Paul—an apostle—said, ‘I’m the least of all the saints’—the least of the apostles.

It shows a function that is being done. Truly, when someone does prophesy and it is a prophecy from God, and it is true, then that person is *a prophet*. I don’t know of any today; I’m not going to try and set myself up as a prophet. We’ve seen in this past year how many false prophets come along. What happened to all of them who *declared* that they were prophets? *They fell right smack on their faces!*

But the pastors are to be the shepherds, that is to guide, help and lead, and guardians of the flock of God because they are *trustees!* All ministers are *trustees* to do God’s way; and teachers so that you can be taught. Everyone who is teaching need never ever be satisfied with any level of learning yourself to teach brethren, because God is going to require of everyone who teaches that they also grow in grace and knowledge. What they teach at one point is fine, well, good, terrific and marvelous—if they’re preaching the Word of God—but that can never fulfill everything that God wants to teach us. Again, what God is teaching us is Spirit and it is Life, so therefore, we must grow in that grace and knowledge as teachers constantly. Then the teachers goal is to have the disciples or learners *become as*

the teacher in knowledge and capacity.

I know that everyone of you—because I know you well enough—can do a far greater job in teaching and helping other people than you could before you were ever in our little church together. I know that as a minister I've had to grow in grace and knowledge of the Word of God to be able to impart this to you. But then, on the other hand, we haven't arrived, brethren. So, there's still a whole long way to go. Though we have this—which is all fine, well and good, and I'm inspired with it and I'm sure you are—this is not all that there's going to be to learning and teaching of God's Word. Every teacher needs to keep that in mind.

Verse 12 is the purpose of the ministry, no other purpose. It's not to have a name, not to have a building, not to build a following, not to be looked up to, not to be looked down upon. Here's the purpose of all the ministry:

Verse 12: “For the purpose of **perfecting the saints** (bringing them to full spiritual maturity)...” That's what perfecting is—isn't it? *Yes!* So that you can qualify, so that I can qualify, through the very power of the Spirit of God to be resurrected through the grace and mercy of God when He returns.

“...for **the work and labor of serving and ministering**... [For what purpose?] ...for the **edifying**... [teaching, instructing, up-building; not for the correcting, pounding and punishing] ...and building up... [not the tearing down] ...**of the body** of Christ (which is the Church); until **we all**...” (vs 12-13). Paul is including himself. He's including all of the ministers.

“...everyone of us arrive at and achieve the unity, completeness and oneness of the faith and belief, and obtain the knowledge and understanding of the Son of God...” (v 13). That is a lofty goal—isn't it? *Absolutely!* That is always out there on the horizon for us, and we are always walking toward that, always striving out and reaching for that, and helping each other along the way with it.

“...to develop into a spiritually mature person, into the measure of the spiritual stature of the fullness and completeness of Christ” (v 13). That's a tall, huge order—isn't it? *Yes, it is, and that's what it means*, that we attain to that; that is our goal; that's what we need to constantly be going toward.

If we stumble and fall along the way, get up, let Christ clean you up, dust you off and keep right on going till we reach that spiritual stature of the fullness and completeness of Christ. Then we'll be fulfilled at the resurrection and when we are living in our reward in the tabernacle of God with Jesus

Christ, as the Feast of Tabernacles pictures.

Verse 14: “So that we are no longer spiritual babes...” not just beginning.

- you have strength *because of God's Spirit*
- you have stability *because of the Word of God*
- you have understanding *because God has given that to you*

“So that you are no longer spiritual babes...” and are able to ‘eat that strong meat’ (Heb. 5). This is what we're covering; this is powerful, brethren, what we have here. What we are going through is *strong meat*, because you're no longer spiritual babes.

You are not “...being tossed here and there like waves of the sea and being carried about and buffeted helter-skelter by every wind and whisper of doctrine...” (v 14). Haven't we endured some of those storms recently? Wasn't that just depict what's going on in the assault against the Church? *Absolutely!*

“...those teachings of men through their cunning trickery and craftiness, for the purpose of systematizing the erroneous, fraudulent deception—*that perverse religious error!*” (v 14). That's what it means in the Greek: *systemizing the fraud or the falsehood!*

Isn't that what happened right after the apostles died? *Yes, indeed!* Then we have the fathers of the Catholic Church who then develop all this systematized fraud and cunning connivery of men. That's the ‘religion’ that was palmed off as ‘Christianity,’ having nothing to do with Christianity other than being dressed in the clothes of Christianity. Just like Jesus said, ‘There will be false prophets who will come *dressed in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.*’

Verse 15: “But on the other hand, be upholding and sincerely and diligently maintaining the Truth in Godly Divine love... [‘agape’—*Godly love*] ...that we may grow up into Him... [there again is the growth] ...in all things... [everything that you do; everything that you think; every fiber of your being] ...in Christ Who is the Head, from Whom the entire body is individually and unitedly fused together and compactly knit as one...” (vs 15-16)—as God looks at the Church though we may be a group here or a group there, or a group over here—whatever it may be.

But I think that God right now, in scattering the Church, is doing several things:

1. He is weeding out all of those who are not sincere in the first place
2. He getting out all those who want to demonstrate to God their own works

He's going to test them whether they're going to love God or go off on their own and do their own thing.

3. He is doing it so that the Church will be in small pockets and there everywhere in the world just like salt, because we're the salt of the earth

Which means then that we're not going to be a high level, high visibility, monolithic target for Satan to go after. Satan will feel comfortable, because he will feel that he will have accomplished his purpose by scattering the Church. Yet, everything that Satan tries to do to destroy the Church and the work of God—wherever it may be—comes to futility.

What's going to happen now is that it's going to multiply. There's going to be this group over here and this group over there; if you don't believe it open up your directory of Sabbath-keeping churches and you're going to be overwhelmed with the number of different churches that are preaching Christ. Maybe not all in sincerity, maybe not all in knowledge, maybe not all as we're doing here, but nevertheless, they are part of the Church of God, and as God looks at the Church it is His Spirit that is doing it and pulling it together, and that's how God views it.

But for us, as our congregation here, v 16: "From Whom the entire body is individually and unitedly fused together and compactly knit as one through the combined support, which every joint and part is able to supply, according to the inner working of each separate part... [the inner working of God's Spirit in our minds as part of the Body of Christ] ...through his individual capacity and ability..."

God called each one of us. We all have that individual capacity and ability, and as God adds the Spirit, that we use that, that we apply ourselves in the way that God wants us to.

"...for the increase and spiritual growth of the body and the spiritual edification of itself in Godly Divine love." There is the perfect picture of the Church. This is Paul's inspired vision of what God wants the Church to be. Howbeit, he knows that in this age and time it's not going to be. But it is in the Word of God so that we can pick it up, read it, study it, know, and let the words of God sink deeply into our heart and mind so that we can strive for this ideal picture and unity of the Church. I think in our small, little church, God has blessed us with it. We pray that God will keep us with that.

Verse 17: "Therefore, I am saying this and testifying in the Lord..." Now we have warning;

let's notice how Paul is doing his correcting. He's exhorting, which is encouraging and uplifting. He is admonishing, which is pleading and asking us to. Now he gives a little more straightforward warning as to what we should not be doing.

Then, on the other hand, Paul does not do like a lot of preachers have done: that is you stand up there and you lambaste everyone and you give every sin in the world a good heavy hard lick and whipping and lashing—tongue lashing and otherwise—and then you make some astounding statement in erroneous bloody words and condemnation, and you walk off the stage as if you have accomplished something. *NO!* Let's notice how Paul does it. He hits it real hard and then he says, 'On the other hand, do this...' Eph. 4 is really telling us how to live our lives to attain to what we've been studying about.

Verse 17: "Therefore, I am saying this and testifying in the Lord that you are to walk no longer in that mode of life, and that you are no longer to be conducting yourselves even as the rest of the Gentiles are..." John said, 'Don't love the world, neither the things in the world, because everything that is in the world—the lust of the eyes, the lust of flesh, and the arrogance and pride of life—is not of the Father but is of this world' (1-John). We're not to live our lives that way!

"...walking in the vanity and superstitions (of false religion with its idolatrous demonic Satan worship)... [Ephesus was the center of Artimus or Diana-worship.] (All of that satanic wrong way): ...concocted in the imaginations of their own minds (as inspired by the 'prince of the power of the air'—Satan himself)!" (v 17).

I brought to bear what not only the Bible says in this particular sense, but also every thought as you find in *The Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop as it focuses in on the kind of religion that the Gentiles have.

Verse 18: "Having their understanding shrouded in darkness, and clouded in deception, being alienated and estranged from the life of God, on account of the ignorance and sin that is in them, through the adamant insensitivity and hardness of their hearts. Who having cast aside and utterly abandoned every proper feeling and emotion..." (vs 18-19)—which we see now being re-enacted in this world.

If you want to know where you're going to find this in the world today, just turn on your television—there it is! We have now where little kids are going around and shooting people in total utter disregard for life. "...having cast aside and utterly abandoned every proper feeling and emotion,

and having become insensitive and calloused in mind and conscience, have given themselves over to every lewd, unclean deed with ravenous, devouring lust and consuming greed” (v 19). The most fitting description I could give of this society today and what God means with these words.

Verse 20: “But you have not learned this way of life from Christ.” See what Paul does? See how he handles it? He doesn’t come directly down on any individual. He says, ‘Look, you all used to live out here and this is the way it was with all of these emotions, sins, greed, sexual uncleanness and idolatry.’ Notice how he does the correcting:

Verse 20: “But you have not learned this way of life from Christ.” Rather than beating up and leaving on the spot, he picks them up and turns them around and heads them in the right direction.

Verse 21: “If indeed you have heard Him... [which you have] ...and have been taught and instructed in Him, exactly as the Truth is in Jesus (then you are to do this)... [notice how he gets them going in the right direction] ...You are to renounce, forsake, and rid yourself of your former mode of life, even that conduct and behavior of the old, obsolete person.... [which you had before baptism] ...—that old self, which is corrupt, degenerate, depraved, according to the obsessive compulsions, deceptive lusts and avaricious greed” (vs 21-22)—which then rules this world!

Verse 23: “And you are to be renewed and regenerated... [restored, made right] ...in the spirit of your mind (through the power of the Holy Spirit).” That’s what God wants for us! That is going to bring us to this full point of spiritual knowledge and understanding. That’s what the whole Feast of Tabernacles is about: that we put away the old self; that we put down those things that are there and:

- walk in Christ
- walk in His way
- walk in the Truth
- walk in the Spirit
- walk in God’s commandments

All of those altogether are absolutely fantastic!

Let it be the renewing of your mind, and the regeneration of the spirit of your mind through the power of the Holy Spirit of God. That’s what it needs to be.

Now, if you find yourself over here and you sin, and all that sort of thing, get right back into the Word of God. Let it cleanse you. Repent of your sins. Go forward and do the things of God.

Verse 24: “And that you yourselves are to

put on...” It’s very interesting in the Greek. There is what is called ‘the middle voice’ verb, meaning this: you are to do something yourself. In English we could have it this way to make it even more profound, and you could say: *I go into the house*; or making it even more meaningful: *I am going into the house*. Even more dogmatic: *I am myself going into the house*. Whenever you see yourself in anything that I have translated, it is most generally (there are a few exceptions) the middle verb. This is something you yourself are to do. It’s not something you’re going to require of someone else to do so that it will please you and make you happy.

What they do, really in truth and fact, has absolutely no relevance with what you do. It does inasmuch that you have relationships with each other, and your personalities and lives are meshed with each other—husbands and wives are to become one flesh with each other, and one in spirit, heart and mind—but in reality you have to, with the Spirit of God within you, let God be converting you. No human being can truly convert another human being. That’s why it is ‘you yourselves.’

(go to the next track)

Verse 24: “And that you yourselves are to put on are to put on an be clothed with the new person... [and that sometimes is very hard] ...that new Godly character which according to God is created in righteousness and Holiness of the Truth.”

God works with us, to create this in our lives! I can tell you by experience, and I can tell you that it is true—you know by experience, and know that it is true—that there are many ups and down in growing and learning, and changing in spiritual overcoming. That there are certain things that you go through and you can look back on your life and see certain things that happened in your life—which once you have gone through and suffered those things; once you have learned some of those things—what happens? *You reach*:

- a new conviction of spirit and mind
- a new faith and determination and hope in God that you’re going to go forward

Don’t you? *Yes, you do!* That is putting on “...the new person, that new Godly Character which according to God is created... [God is creating in you for the resurrection—obviously] ...the righteousness and Holiness of the Truth” (v 24).

Isn’t that fantastic? Now you see how God does the correcting—right? He lambastes the sin, saying, ‘Don’t do that. Get yourselves squared around and get your mind in the right way, and be following God.’ As a matter of fact it says ‘be followers of God’ (Eph. 5:1).

See the difference? See how it is? Then Paul holds out the glorious thing we need to do, and then he does some correcting and tells us what to do. After we have the *new character*, what are we to do?

Verse 25: “Wherefore, as you yourselves have already been renouncing and casting aside the falsehood and pseudo-sincerity of human nature, let everyone of you be speaking Truth with his neighbor, because we are members of one another. Be angry, but do not sin... [there’s a time for anger] ...neither let the sun set on your wrath or any of your disputes” (vs 25-26).

There are good reasons for this: If you don’t resolve the problem, or clear it up yourself, by time the sun sets, what’s going to happen when you’re trying to sleep? *You aren’t going to sleep!* You’re going to:

- think about it
- brood about it
- bitter about it
- hate about it
- fight about it
- relive it over and over
- multiply this thing in your mind

What is that going to be? *Great gargantuan clouds of leaven, which are cutting off the Spirit of God?* So, don’t let any dispute go beyond sunset. If you can’t resolve it then, put it aside until you can. But don’t let it brood and brood in your life.

Verse 27: “**Do not give opportunity** (or, so much as an opening wedge) **for the devil** (to work in your lives).” I likened it to *an opening wedge* because you don’t want to be like Eve. Here she’s strolling in the garden—BING!—‘Hello, Eve, has God really said that you shouldn’t eat of any tree?’ The woman said, ‘Well, God says we can eat of any tree accept the tree in the midst of the garden.’ What was that? *An opening wedge!* We’re not to give that *opening wedge* for the devil to work in our lives.

They had some Christians there that they were doing things they shouldn’t do, v 28: “Anyone who is stealing, let him never steal again. But rather let him labor hard, working with this hands in whatever is good...” This is a true living principle.

They’re taking convicts and, instead of putting them in a cell and saying ‘you better be good, we’re going punish you because you’re a dirty rotten criminal—which they are, that’s true—and only calluses them. You have to have a willing attitude. You can’t take a hardened criminal and make something new out of him unless he has a change of heart and a willing attitude, which is likened unto repentance. What they’re doing up in the San Jose area, they’ve taken those who want to

and they’re teaching them how to cook for professional cooking as chefs and things like this. It is doing what this verse says; it is giving them an opportunity to work with their hands so that they won’t be crooks anymore, or not to be stealing anymore.

“...in order that he may be able to impart to anyone who has need (rather than taking from him)” (v 28). Perfect solution!

Verse 29 is where all of us fall short; this verse convicts all of us. We all have a long way to go to get out of this: “Never let any vicious word or foul language come out of your mouth, but if there is any need or opportunity for speaking anything, let it be profitable, good and virtuous, with a view toward encouraging edification.... [rather than vilifying denunciations] ...Do this that it may be of benefit to others, thereby imparting grace to those who are listening”—which is what we are endeavoring to do during this Feast of Tabernacles for everyone of us here.

Verse 30: “And do not grieve, frustrate or distress the Holy Spirit of God...” I can tell you, you can almost know when you do that, because God’s Spirit will react in you—sooner or later—and you’re going to be convicted in heart and mind, and you’re going to do some mighty powerful repenting. So, when we have these words here, and when we know this, this really helps us.

Also remembering about the Holy Spirit “...(which is, also, the stamp of identification showing that you belong to God)... [because God knows where we are; God knows where His Spirit is; and according to God that lets even Satan the devil know that we belong to God! ‘Hands off, devil, these don’t belong to you.’] ...by which Spirit you are all sealed until the Day of Redemption” (v 30).

Verse 31 is part of what we need to do:

- part of getting the leaven out of our lives
- part of getting the sin out of our lives
- part of building that Godly character

“Remove and expunge all these evil character habits...” I want you notice strategically where this is placed. After he’s gone through all of what we would call the fourth chapter of Ephesians, now he comes right down to the nitty-gritty of some of the correction that he is bringing.

These are the things that within a congregation start the problems and difficulties, which are so much leaven and can expand and grow and sour people and attitudes. Since we have put this away, brethren, and we are growing in grace and knowledge, we can look back and see how that happened in the churches that we were in. So,

remove and expunge all these evil habits:

“...bitterness, indignation, wrath, complaining, criticizing and evil speaking (which tends to blasphemy), and every form of wickedness and depravity. And come to this state of spiritual character...” (vs 31-32).

Notice again, every time there is some kind of correction or denunciation of sin, what does Paul do? *He gives you a goal to shoot for! He gives you a way out of that!* I want you to go back and restudy these verses in chapter four and I want you to see how he holds out the good, lambastes the evil all the way through. It’s just like A/B—A: show the good; B: lambaste the evil. So, he does here in the very last verse:

Verse 32: “And come to the state of spiritual character, that you be of a kind and gracious disposition to one another, even tenderhearted and compassionate; be forgiving each other, exactly as God forgave you in Christ.”

Isn’t that so important to do? *Yes, it is!* Remember the parable that Jesus gave? Remember the parable of the man that owed him so much money? This very, very important; because the greatest gift that God has given us is *forgiveness*. The greatest gift that we can give to each other is this very kind of thing; that kind of *forgiveness*.

Matthew 18:23: “Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven is compared to a man, a *certain* king, who would take account with his servants.” That’s what we are before God. We’re servants and He’s going to take account of us. Too many times in our interrelations with people, we want God to forgive us our sins, but we’re sure not forgive anybody their sins. So, He’s got a parable here to teach us.

Verse 24: “And after he began to reckon, there was brought to him one debtor who owed *him* ten thousand talents.” That’s an awful lot; great, huge notorious debt; or a great, huge notorious disastrous, abominable, wretched life that has gone through every sin under the sun. Brethren, when God brings new people into our church—which He will—there are going to be people out there who have gone through drug addiction, homosexuality, whoredoms, stealing, lying, cheating—all of these things. This is the 10,000 talents that was due.

Verse 25: “But since he did not have *anything* to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.” What is the wages of sin? *Death!* Do you want that payment to be made by yourself, or by Christ? If you want it to be made by Christ, what are you going to allow the other person?

Verse 26: “Because of this, the servant fell

down *and* worshiped him, saying, ‘Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’... [I’ll take care of the whole thing] ...And being moved with compassion, the lord of that servant released him, and forgave him the debt” (vs 26-27)—every bit of it.

Now he’s in the Church of God. We will use this analogy. Now he’s overcoming and growing. Now he’s reached a certain level of attainment, understanding in the Spirit and power of God. Now he is righteous. Not yet converted, but too many times this is how we have dealt with each other. Not recently, but could be, and we’ll just have it here to finish the whole lesson.

Verse 28: “Then that servant went out *and* found one of his fellow servants, who owed him a hundred silver coins... [a little, teeny, eeny, bitty nothing; for women, that’s how you feel when you get accosted for alleged short skirts or alleged too much makeup] ...and after seizing him, he choked *him*, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe.’ As a result, his fellow servant fell down at his feet and pleaded with him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ But he would not *listen*; instead, he went and cast him into prison, until he should pay the amount that he owed” (vs 28-30).

Verse 31: “Now when his fellow servants saw the things *that* had taken place, they were greatly distressed; and they went to their lord *and* related all that had taken place. Then his lord called him *and* said to him, ‘*You* wicked servant, I forgave you all that debt, because you implored me. Were you not also obligated to have compassion on your fellow servant, even as I had compassion on you?’” (vs 31-33).

That’s the whole lesson that Paul is teaching us here in Ephesians. We’re to be tenderhearted, forgiving, kind; but on the other hand, the one who is forgiven should not then use that as a cloak and guise to go ahead and perpetrate their continued evil anymore than this man who was forgiven should go ahead and reach out and grab his fellow servant by the throat and go after every ounce of blood from him.

Here’s what will happen if it isn’t done the way God wants it, v 34: “And in anger, his lord delivered him up to the tormentors, until he should pay all that he owed to him. Likewise shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each *of* you does not forgive his brother’s offenses from the heart” (vs 34-35).

Tremendous lesson for us! Even though we come to these things which are very mature, very profound, uplifting and loving, it still goes back to the very foundation of the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Let's use this fourth chapter of Ephesians *as a guide, as a means for individual growing and for the goal for each of us*, not only for the ministry, but of all of the brethren together *so that we can attain to that spiritual tabernacle of God and dwell with Christ forever!*

Scriptures in Ephesians from *The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians, An Inspirational Study* by Fred R. Coulter

All other Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Ephesians 4:1-32
- 2) Matthew 18:23-35

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Hebrews 5
- 1 John
- Ephesians 5:1

Also referenced: Book:

The Two Babylons by Alexander Hislop

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