

THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

"Rags of Unbelief"

Ephesians 4:25-32

Introduction

1. True believers are not to conduct themselves as non-believers. Regretfully, the behaviour of many believers is inconsistent with their profession (vv. 17-19).
2. Christ has been learned in a new way (v. 20). This presumes "hearing" Him and being "taught" by Him (v. 21). These ideas include "putting off" (v. 22), "being renewed" (v. 23) and "putting on" (v. 24).
3. Details of the major truths in Christ (vv. 21-24) are the concern of the present section (vv. 25-32). It is assumed that action has been taken as appealed (v. 21-24). The result will include the exclusion of certain behaviour. "Wherefore" (Διὸ Dio v. 25) makes this clear. Here is the list of sins to be dealt with.

1. BANISHMENT OF LYING v. 25

The aorist middle participle "putting away" (ἀποθέμενοι apothemenoi) points to a critical involved action. "Lying" includes every kind of deception as dishonesty in personal relations, business, and government. In contrast, the present tense "speak" is linked with "truth" (anarthrous). The preposition "with" (μετὰ meta) marks association with other members of the body through union with Christ.

2. CONTROL OF ANGER vv. 26, 27

These verses allow for "righteous indignation" (cf. Mark 3:5), but it is qualified by three statements:

a. Guard against sin

Anger which is selfish, undisciplined, and uncontrolled is always sinful (ὀργίζεσθε καὶ μὴ ἁμαρτάνετε It orgizesthe kai me amartanete). It can easily degenerate to this level.

b. Never cherish anger

This is the import of v. 26b. Anger can easily take root, hence must be quickly deposed. No brooding.

c. Resist Satan's exploitations

Devil means "slanderer" (διαβόλω diabolos). Believers are told not to give him room to act (μὴ δίδοτε me didous). If he gains a foothold he will destroy and exploit.

3. CESSATION OF STEALING v. 28

The present negative suggests stealing was actually going on (μηκετι κλεπτέτω me klepteto). It is to stop. Moreover, on the contrary, honest labour (κοπιᾶτω kopiato) and work (ἐργαζόμενος ergazomenos) with ones hands is urged. Purpose: (ἵνα hina) to require not money for oneself, but sufficient to help others. Subsistence economics is not taught here. The present tense of "give" (μεταδιδόναι metadidonai) suggests persistence and strikes at idleness.

4. SUPPRESSION OF BAD LANGUAGE v. 29

"Corrupt" means rotten, putrid, worn out (σαπρὸς sapos). It is used of fruit (Mt. 7:17) and fish (Mt. 13:48). So foulmouthed talk or worthless speech is to be "non-uttered" (ἐκπορευέσθω ekporeuestho). Contrariwise, "if there be any" (εἴ τις ei tis) that is serviceable for something or suitable, it is to be good for edification (πρὸς οἰκοδομὴν pros oikodomen) of the need, i.e. applied to the need. In this way (purpose ἵνα hina) the doing of kindness will come to the hearer. Therefore, the object of Christian speech is to impart a blessing to the hearers.

5. PUTTING AWAY HARSHNESS v. 31

"Put away" is an aorist passive imperative and means to make a clean sweep of things (ἀρθήτω artheto). The items are:

a. Bitterness (πικρία pikria)

This has reference to resentful and harsh feeling. Harshness of speech and feeling. Virulent temper.

b. Wrath (θυμὸς thumos)

This speaks of passionate and passing bursts of anger. It relates to fury.

c. Anger (ὀργή orge)

Here is the settled disposition. It refers to an embittered or irritated spirit, and one which persists this way.

d. Clamor (κραυγὴ krauge)

This is an outcry of passion (cf. Heb. 5:7). It connotes controversy with uncontrolled railing and intemperateness. Public quarreling is involved.

e. Evil Speaking (βλασφημία blasphemia)

Here is slanderous whispers or injurious speech in reference to brethren. Anything which is not sacred is also included.

f. Malice (κακία kakia)

This word marks the deep unkindness of the self centered Christless heart. It is the vicious disposition, spite, ill will, or wickedness.

Conclusion By "putting off" this sort of behaviour linked to the old man, the Holy Spirit will not be grieved and a proper spirit exhibited (vv. 29, 32).

Note: In response to all recorded above, two amazing commands are given: 1. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit" (v. 30) the present tense negative commands: stop grieving the Holy Spirit (μὴ λυπεῖτε me lypeite). All the sinful acts of Eph. 4:25-29, 31 are obviously at issue. Moreover, anything sinful will grieve the Holy Spirit. This must stop. God's way of dealing with sin is given (1 Jn. 1:9). Since a believer is "sealed unto the day of redemption," (ἐσφραγίσθητε esfragisthete) the eternal security of a believer is not at stake. 2. "Be ye kind one to another." The present tense imperative verb means "to become" (γίνεσθε ginesthe) The process teaches the doctrine of experimental sanctification. Hence this command expects changes in the attitude of the child of God. He will "become" kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving. The standard for this sort of behaviour is God Himself (καθὼς kathos). It is He Who has "graced" (forgiven ἐχαρίσατο echarisato) us "in Christ." So saint, you do the same!