

DEEP IN SCRIPTURE

Verses & Notes January 30, 2008

Ephesians 4: 25 - 5:2 (Part 1)

- 25: Therefore, putting away falsehood,
 let every one speak the truth with his neighbor,
 for we are members one of another.
- 26: Be angry but do not sin;
 do not let the sun go down on your anger,
- 27: and give no opportunity to the devil.
- 28: Let the thief no longer steal,
 but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his hands,
 so that he may be able to give to those in need.
- 29: Let no evil talk come out of your mouths,
 but only such as is good for edifying, as fits the occasion,
 that it may impart grace to those who hear.
- 30: And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God,
 in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.
- 31: Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander
 be put away from you, with all malice,
- 32: and be kind to one another, tenderhearted,
 forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.
- 1: Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.
- 2: And walk in love,
 as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us,
 a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Introduction: A very important, essential aspect of our being faithful followers of Jesus Christ—faithful members of His Body, the Church—is our interior holiness. As stated in the verses we studied last week on Deep in Scripture, we are to “be renewed in the spirit of [our] minds” and we are to “put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.” But for this internal conversion of heart and mind to truly make a difference, especially in our relationship with God, it must also change how we relate to one another in the Body of Christ. To paraphrase St. John, if we can’t get along with each other, how can we expect to get along with God? This is what we’ll be discussing today on Deep in Scripture.

House cleaning items...

- Website, book special: “The Gift of God: The Holy Spirit,” by Andrew Apostoli, CFR
- We want your input!!! Phone: 740-450-1175
 Email: marcus@deepinscripture.com
 Forum: <http://www.chnetwork.org/forums/forum51>

REVIEW:

- **As we’ve been discussing, we believe that in Ephesians, St. Paul was preaching, from prison through the leaders in Ephesus that he had converted and ordained, to the newly baptised Gentile believers.**
 - In the first three chapters, St. Paul describes the changes that have taken place in their (our) lives once we have heard, believed, and been sealed with the Holy Spirit, or baptized...

- **Beginning in chapter 4 to the end of the book, he then describes how baptized Christians are to behave.**
 - We mentioned that in verse 17, St. Paul changed the tone and urgency of his writing as he warns them NOT to return to their former way of life:

17: Now this I affirm and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do...
 - Why did he have to do this?
 - Because as newly baptized “children of God,” they were still mere “babes in the faith,” & it is far too easy for them to presume too much on their baptism:
 - Yes, all these changes have happened by grace, But this does not mean that immediately after rising from the water, they have different personalities, different drives, different passions, free from all the past bad habits and lusts of their lives!
 - These remain, powered by what has come to be called “concupiscence.”
- **Therefore, after baptism, all believers must diligently reject their old life with its passions and habits and actively live the new life they have been given.**
 - This is what St. Paul then describes, beginning in verses 17-19 by discussing their old life as a warning:
 - Far too many baptized Christians stagnate, stop, or even progress backwards/ downwards:
 - And St. Paul was seeing this already happening in his day; it has continued to happen throughout the history of the Church; and it continues all around us, in every church, on every corner; and most of us know people who, though baptized and once active in the church, have drifted away, even deeply into sin. (This is what is described in Hebrews 6:4f.)
- **In verses 22-24, St. Paul then proceeds to summarize what all baptized believers must do to keep from digressing and instead move forward & upward spiritually (and this is a verse that I believe ought to be memorized)!**

*22: Put off your old nature
which belongs to your former manner of life
and is corrupt through deceitful lusts,
23: and be renewed in the spirit of your minds,
24: and put on the new nature,
created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*

- This is essentially a summary of all that St. Paul is teaching in Ephesians.
 - In baptism, the old nature / our old self has already been put off,
 - but now we need to actively, daily, consciously do this by turning from past habits, passions, pleasures, sins,
 - and put on the new nature / the new life in Christ that we have already received in baptism
 - but which we must actively live, by choice,
 - by renewing our minds through prayer, worship, sacraments, study, fellowship, love, etc..

St. Paul, knows from experience, however, that baptized believers do not always act like baptized believers!

- Romans 16:17-18.

“I appeal to you, brethren, to take note of those who create dissensions and difficulties, in opposition to the doctrine which you have been taught; avoid them. For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by fair and flattering words they deceive the hearts of the simple-minded.”

- Corinth: 1 Cor 1:10-11; 5:1; 6:1;

"I appeal to you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. For it has been reported to me by Chlo'e's people that there is quarreling among you, my brethren."

"It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and of a kind that is not found even among pagans; for a man is living with his father's wife."

"When one of you has a grievance against a brother, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints?"
- Philippi: Philippians 4:2-3

"I entreat Eu-o'dia and I entreat Syn'tyche to agree in the Lord."
- Ephesus! (1 Tim 1:3-7; 2 Tim 2:16-18)

"As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, nor to occupy themselves with myths and endless genealogies which promote speculations rather than the divine training that is in faith; whereas the aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith. Certain persons by swerving from these have wandered away into vain discussion, desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make assertions."

"Avoid such godless chatter, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness, and their talk will eat its way like gangrene. Among them are Hymenae'us and Phile'tus, who have swerved from the truth by holding that the resurrection is past already. They are upsetting the faith of some."
- Himself! (Phil 3:12-16)

"Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brethren, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature be thus minded; and if in anything you are otherwise minded, God will reveal that also to you. Only let us hold true to what we have attained."

 - St. Paul doesn't say, "Do as I say not as I do," nor does he avoid teaching since he isn't perfect yet; rather he speaks from beside them, as one of them, recognizing, though, that he has been given from God a special responsibility...
 - This is true for each of us...

In this section, St. Paul deal with the Importance of getting along within the Body (the Church): in 4:25c,

"...for we are members one of another."

- This refers back to the unity that believers share through baptism (2:11-22)
- Living now in love is essential: 1 Cor 13;
- St. John dealt with this, in his letters, possibly to his friends at Ephesus!
 - 1 Jn 2:9-11

"He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in the darkness still. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and in it there is no cause for stumbling. But he who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes."
 - 1 Jn 3:14-18

"We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. Any one who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. By this we know love,

that he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But if any one has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth."

1 Jn 4:20-21

"If any one says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him, that he who loves God should love his brother also."

In Ephesians chapter 4, St. Paul give some "Rules" for getting along:

- First they are NOT to live like they used to! (4:17-19)
- Sometimes things seem like all is well within the Body...
- Often it just appears so...
- Inevitably conflicts arise...church, marriage, work...
- What is one to do? joke, walk away, keep it inside, let it all out!

Two Important Prelims:

i. Fighting sometimes is necessary or at least unavoidable (4:26a)

- "Be angry!" -- possibly a concessive imperative: (Be angry, if you must)
- Even Jesus modeled "righteous" indignation within the Church (Mt 3:7; 21:12)
- But how does one discern whether one's anger is justified?
 - *Psalm 11:3, "If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?"*
 - Gal 2:11-14, St. Paul confronted St. Peter!
 - Did he follow Christ's instructions?! (Mt 18:15-17)

ii. But some fighting grieves the Holy Spirit (4:30)

*And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God,
in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*

- He is referring to the reality of what happens in baptism;
- We grieve the Holy Spirit whenever we fail to live out, by the graces we have been given, the new life received in baptism.

▪ Some "Rules" for Getting Along:

- i. Keep it HONEST! (4:25)
- ii. Keep it IN CONTROL! (4:26a, 31-32a)
- iii. Keep it FRESH! (4:26b)
- iv. Keep it CENTERED ON FORGIVENESS! (4:28, 32b)
- v. Keep it POSITIVE!(4:29)
- vi. Keep it PRIVATE! (4:31b)
- vii. Keep it CLEANED UP! (5:1-2)