

DEEP IN SCRIPTURE

Verses & Notes February 6, 2008

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

- 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 St. Paul stated in Chapter 4 of Ephesians, 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 already taken place in their (our) lives once they heard, believed, and then were sealed with the Holy Spirit, or

baptized. Their relationship with God, with each other, and with themselves were changed by grace. As St. Paul wrote in chapter 2, ***“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God -- not because of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”***

- In the grace of baptism, they were saved from their old nature, not because of anything they did on their own, while living in that old nature, but rather because God loved them, and by grace opened their minds & hearts, partially through the preaching & witness of St. Paul and others.
- But now after being baptized, they must actively, by grace, chose to live this new life: they must reject their old way of life, with its passions and habits, and actively live the new life they have been given; they must put off the old nature and live a life of holiness, or as St. Paul says, walk in the good works which God prepared beforehand for them to do.

- In verses 22-24, St. Paul summarizes this: (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.*

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

- Last week, we looked in St. Paul’s other letters where he referred by name to baptized Christians who were not living out their baptisms.
- In this section, 4:25-5:2, St. Paul give some “Rules” for getting along:
 - 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!

- In 4:25c, St. Paul emphasizes that he is primarily discussing getting along within the Body:
 - ***“...for we are members one of another.”***
 - This refers back to the unity that believers share through baptism (2:11-22);
 - We can’t always expect these rules to work with those outside the Body;
 - In fact, Jesus & the NT writers warn that we should expect the opposite...
 - But, yet this does not mean that these rules do not apply in our relationships with unbaptized brothers & sisters! No, rather we are to live this out regardless of how they treat us!
 - Here the Golden Rule applies!
 - “Do unto others AS you would have they do unto you.”
 - Not “Do AS they do to you” or “Do BEFORE they do to you.”
 - However, here St. Paul is especially talking about how baptized Christians are to live together, both in community as well as in families, marriages, and apostolates!

Two Important Prelims:

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

“Be angry but do not sin”

- “Be angry!” -- possibly a concessive imperative: (“Be angry, if you must.”)
- Even Jesus modeled “righteous” indignation within the Church (Mt 3:7; 21:12)

ii. But we must be careful!

“Be angry but do not sin”

- **Just because our anger may be justified does not necessarily justify anger!**
 - We need to separate anger from emotions, like charity & forgiveness!
 - Uncontrolled anger can lead to sin, which grieves God! **(4:30)**
“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”
 - First, St. Paul is referring back to what happens to us in baptism;
 - 1:13-14, *“In him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, which is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.”*
 - 1 Cor 3:16-17, *“Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If any one destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are.”*
 - We grieve the Holy Spirit, we destroy God's temple, whenever we fail to live out, by the graces we have been given, the new life we received in baptism.
- **So the question arises: how does one discern whether one's anger is justified, and not merely emotion reaction to something we don't like?**
 - 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)
- **We need to recognize the importance of Church Authority:**
 - Jesus established His Church on the foundation of the Apostles;
 - He gave His Spirit to His Apostles for their leadership of the Church (Jn 14-16);
 - This leadership was passed on through the laying on of hands:
 - **1 Tim 4: 14**, *“Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophetic utterance when the council of elders laid their hands upon you.”*
 - **2 Tim 2: 1,2**, *“You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”*
 - He established leadership within the Church for the guidance of the Church:
 - **Eph 4: 11-13**, *“And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”*
 - **Rom 10: 13-15**, *“For, ‘every one who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.’ But how are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? And how can men preach unless they are sent?”*
 - So when we get angry because we encounter things in the Church, within the Body, that we don't like, we must look to the teachings of the Church to determine whether our anger is justified, and especially whether any actions we might consider taking are justified.

Some “Rules” for Getting Along:

- I offer these recognizing, just like St. Paul, that I am certainly not perfect yet!
 - I know these rules...but I also know how difficult it is to live them out;
 - The enemies (the world, the flesh, & the devil) constantly fight against our willingness to bring our lives in line with God;
- And so these “rules,” are guidelines & goals for us to follow in grace.

1. Keep it **HONEST!** (4:25)

*“Therefore, putting away falsehood,
let every one speak the truth with his neighbor,
for we are members one of another.”*

- Note the parallel with “put off old” and “put on the new,” -- emphasizes our willful responsibility to carry out by grace what our baptism did by grace.
- But here St. Paul finetunes this: we are to put off falsehood that affects our relationships:
 - Think how often our relationships / communications are flawed because of misunderstandings, missinformation, or prejudice.
 - Sometimes we hold back telling the truth because we’re afraid of hurting feelings:
 - Certainly this is sometimes appropriate...we need to be tactful and charitable...
 - But yet how often do we hesitate telling the truth because we’re more afraid of conflict? Because we’re more concerned about our own comfort levels rather than what is best for the other person?
- Here St. Paul calls us to be honest in our relationships:
 - **Identify & put off falsehood in our attitudes;**
 - Remember Jesus said this?
Mt 7: 3-5, “Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.”
 - Just as charity and forgiveness begin with ourselves, so does being honest in our relationships.
 - **Speak the truth with one another:**
 - This involves remembering what he said earlier: (15)
“Speak the truth in love.”
 - And separating “truth” from “opinion.”
 - Even St. Paul did this in his letters: 1 Cor 7:10-12
“To the married I give charge, not I but the Lord, that the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does, let her remain single or else be reconciled to her husband) -- and that the husband should not divorce his wife. To the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her.”
 - **Honest communication requires humility!**

2. Keep it **IN CONTROL!** (4:26a, 31-32a)

3. Keep it **FRESH!** (4:26b)

4. Keep it **CENTERED ON FORGIVENESS!** (4:28, 32b)

5. Keep it **POSITIVE!**(4:29)

6. Keep it **PRIVATE!** (4:31b)

7. Keep it **CLEANED UP!** (5:1-2)