

Ephesians 14-07-13b

Let's resume our study of Ephesians chapter 4, we're looking at verses 25-32 and we've noticed that this is a section of exhortations that are of the more or less direct imperative sort. I've given you a collection of nine of these sections that occur in the epistles of Paul. Let me just really quickly give you the references again so you can check the ones you have written down.

First of all, Romans 12, 9-21, secondly 1 Corinthians 13, 4-7, the third one was 2 Corinthians 13, 11-13, the fourth was our passage Ephesians 4, 25-32, the fifth is Philippians 2, 1-11, one of our memory verse sections. The sixth is Philippians 4, 4-9, also in our memory collection, Philippians 4, 4-9. Number seven, Colossians 3, 12-17, close parallel to our passage.

Number eight, 1 Thessalonians 4, 9-12, and finally 1 Thessalonians 5, 12-22. There are parallels to these that you can see, as I said in the letters to Timothy from Paul. Probably one of the most significant is in 1 Timothy 1-5, the aim of our charge, the aim Paul says of our charge to you, O Timothy, as a pastor, the goal of it, the purpose of it, the end desire of it, is love that issues from a pure heart.

If you wanted to sum all of these up, it's love issuing from a pure heart, and a good conscience, and a sincere faith, three feet on which that stands. It's a triangular base. Triangle is the strongest geometric configuration.

It's used a lot in construction. If you ever look at these great big construction cranes, look at all the triangles in that tall tower that goes up, and in that cross piece, and they construct all these huge buildings. It's all based on the triangle.

So the aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart, a good conscience. How do you get a good conscience? By the way, if you hear knocking in the background, either now or in some recording in the future, I think somebody's putting on a roof. Working on the Sabbath, they will pay.

Love issuing from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith. Think about that. A pure heart, this is your motivation.

Are you asking? Are you seeking? Are you knocking? Are you genuinely pursuing your relationship with God and with fellow believers? That's a pure heart. It is also a heart that is cleansed of sin. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow, Psalm 51, 1 John 1.7, 1.9, right? Pure heart. What's a good conscience? That's what Bible class is for.

How do you know right from wrong? How do you find yourself convicted and afflicted in soul based on decisions and behavior? What's good and what's bad? What's right and what's wrong?

That's a good conscience. It's not enough to be sincere, and it's not enough to have the desire. You've got to have a standard by which you can know how to proceed.

Got a difficulty with somebody, relationship issue, conversation issue, difference of opinion, difference of philosophy, you've got a conflict. Well what's right and what's wrong? Is it right to pursue and to stand up? You know, there's a time to resist the devil and he will flee, and there's another time to flee youthful lusts, run away, to fight another day. How do you know which to do? That's your good conscience.

That gives you perception. It gives you the view of reality that lets us know what to do. You say there's a bomb under my chair, I need to run away.

You look more closely, the bomb has no fuse. It's harmless. It's a chunk of C4.

It's got nothing to detonate it. It's as safe as modeling clay. Without a detonator, C4 is just putty.

With a detonator and a power source and a trigger, it's a life ending proposition. You've got to know. You've got to be able to perceive.

That's a good conscience. And sincere faith. This is your ability to cling to and abide by and stand upon the promises and the principles and the doctrines of the Word of God in the face of challenge.

I can't see it, but I believe it anyway. Our young people have an onslaught, a vicious, proactive, aggressive attack on their faith anytime they go to school. Science classes, science teachers have dedicated themselves to eradicating all forms of religious faith and Christian faith in particular.

And they will make it their mission to convert your child. History teachers, any kind of teacher in primary, secondary, university, college, any kind of education. This is what I think is funny.

I was telling, I think I was telling Ken this the other day. What I think is really funny, I saw a little video by this guy Bill Maher, M-A-H-E-R. He's got programs on.

He's a flaming atheist. He's a flaming liberal. And his stock in trade as a comedian slash commentator is to mock and deride a lot of things that he disagrees with and Christianity in particular.

And he's very bitterly sarcastic about it. But I saw him, somebody showed me a little clip of him talking about how dumb Americans are and how, you know, 70, 80 something percent couldn't name a single branch of government and didn't know who George Washington was. It's kind of like Water's World on Fox News.

You know, he goes around, puts a microphone in front of people like on spring break and asks

them, you know, who's the father of our country? And they don't know. And who was the first president? They don't know. And, you know, it's just incredible the amount of ignorance.

Well, Bill Maher was just decrying this up one side and down the other. And what I think is comical is his brethren, his philosophical brethren, the liberal, atheistic, materialistic secularists have been in charge, utterly in charge, have had every piece of control of the equipment for education for the last 50 years. And so if everybody's dumb, Bill, guess whose fault it is? Your stuff is not working, you know, your education system.

And don't tell me the conservative evangelicals are running the education system in America. It's liberal, atheist, secularist, humanist, materialists that have been running it ever since the 60s. And so for him to mock and deride Americans for not knowing anything, guess whose fault that is? Yours, Bill.

Anyway, I digress. But there's an issue here that is in our passage, and it is the issue of truth. It is the issue of truth.

And truth and love are intertwined in Paul's exhortation. So when he tells Timothy in 1 Timothy 1.5, the aim of our charge, the aim of saying, leave behind deception, the aim of put off the old man and put on the new man, the aim of all of these things that we've seen that he built up to in the first three chapters and he's now giving us this gnomic exhortation, the goal of it, he summarizes in this one verse when he's talking to Timothy, he says, look, when he says the aim of our charge, this is Paul's charge to Timothy and Timothy's charge to his congregation, the goal of it is love that issues from three intertwined sources, a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith. So as you look at this list of nine great exhortational passages, at the top of that list, the goal of these exhortations is love from those three things.

That's the goal. If you have any question about how to interpret them, think of the goal. Well, what does it mean that I should have no disagreements? Look at the goal.

Well, what does it mean that I should put off concerning the former man? What does it mean that I should put on? Look at the goal. Love, pure heart, good conscience, sincere faith. That's the defining ethos of the whole thing.

In 1 Timothy 2 verse 1, Paul says, When he tells Timothy, here's what you should do as a pastor. First of all, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving. This is why often when we get together, we review those who are in need, and remind ourselves that we need to pray.

We need to pray for those here in this assembly. We need to pray for those who are in the greater fellowship that goes beyond this room. We need to pray for Dr. Eddy and his congregation, and those in the school, and those that that ministry touches as it goes forth with the gospel of Jesus Christ, and with the teaching of the Word of God.

Pray for one another. Supplications, prayers, intercessions on behalf of all. By the way, in Acts chapter 1 verse 14, Things that everyone can agree on.

Would we all agree that it would be wonderful for Dr. Eddy and his staff and faculty, and his students and his church members to be able to shine the light of the Lord Jesus Christ in the fastest growing Islamic area in the world, with one of the largest Islamic populations, 135 million people in Indonesia? Wouldn't it be great if Dr. Eddy could be a light shining in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation over there? We can all agree with that. We can all with one accord pray about that. And we can pray for each other in the same regard.

So this is the set of instructions. But now back to our passage, Therefore putting away lying. Now I ask myself this question.

Have we got a big lying problem in our midst? Are we just walking around lying to one another? Where's my coffee? I don't know, when you've actually taken it and drunk it. I mean, is this a problem that we have? That we're just lying to one another? Think about this now. Ask yourself a question.

Here we are in this passage, and it's all about truth and deception. What sort of truth slash deception problem do we actually have? Is this just meaningless? Does it not pertain? Because when I first thought of this, I thought, well, you know, I can think of a lot of issues. I can think where we might be impatient.

I can think where, of course, you know, that's my first thing that always comes to my mind, because that's my besetting difficulty is just patience. But I think, well, you know, maybe not enough trust of God in a difficult circumstance. We sort of forget, and we get caught up in the moment.

I think everybody's subject to that. Subjectivity is easy to fall into. Eyes on self, eyes on people, eyes on circumstances.

I think of a lot of things. And yet Paul, after building this huge foundation in the beginning of this letter, when he gets to chapter 4, he says, look, the problem is deception, and the answer is truth. And he says, stop, put away the deception, and let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor.

And if you look at the rest of this, it's all about truth versus deception. Verse 29, This is truth versus deception. If you're speaking something that doesn't impart grace to the hearers, that is corrupt, well, it's false, right? That's not true.

The truth of God doesn't corrupt. The truth of God doesn't disgrace people. Look at verse 31.

Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking. Bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice. All of this is pretty much a focus on verbal

interaction, verbal sin, verbal injury that we do to one another.

And this, I think, starts to answer the question, what is the deception, the pseudos that he says we need to put away? This is amplification. It's all of a piece. These aren't different, unconnected, disconnected things.

And you can see a little bit of a chiastic structure here. Look at verse 32. I think this section is well divided in the New King James.

Look at verse 25. Putting away the deception, ha-soudos, each of you speak truth with his neighbor. We are members one of another.

Look down at 31 and 32. Bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, evil speaking put away from you with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another.

You remember forgive in both Hebrew and Greek. The root meaning of the word to forgive means to release, to release. Talked about that in the first session.

Release. Forgiving means just let it go, let it go. Maybe you feel you were, something thoughtless was done, something unkind was done.

Usually these are omissions. We can take offense at omissions. I can't believe you didn't remember my birthday.

I can't remember you forgot our anniversary. I can't remember, I can't believe I asked you to pick this up on the way home and you didn't. I can't believe I asked you to do this thing and you didn't.

We get offended at omissions and it offends our pride. We think am I not important enough that you would treat this as the sacrosanct omission that I thought it was when I gave it to you? That I expected you to have nothing on your mind but me and somehow it didn't happen and now I'm offended. That's how we often wind up having difficulties is when we have an expectation and it isn't met, positive or negative.

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another. This is the putting away of deception. And I ask myself now if these truly are, if this is kind of a chiasm and these two things are complementary ideas, how is being kind, tenderhearted and forgiving the same as putting away the deception? Here's how.

Here is how. What is the lie if we are not tenderhearted, we are hardhearted? If we are not forgiving, we are unforgiving. And if we are not kind, we are unkind.

What is the lie? There is a lie there. What is it? I have an issue with this person. They have either committed or omitted an action that I am offended by.

And what is the lie? I can feel better about this. I can get justice for this by being unkind,

unforgiving and hardhearted. I will get satisfaction in this situation by these things.

That's a lie. You will not get satisfaction by being unforgiving. You will not be happier being hardhearted.

And you will not mend and edify and build up and glorify the Lord Jesus by being unforgiving, unkind and hardhearted. It's a lie, but it's a lie our nature tells us all the time. You know what? You need some pain from me.

You need some retribution from me because I find this whole situation just untenable and I just can't, this can't stand. We can't leave this this way. I'm going to fix it by being the following things.

It is pseudos. It is a lie to think that by adding another sin, you know they say two wrongs don't make a right. If someone has, let's say they have in fact been something they shouldn't have been or they did something they shouldn't have done or they forgot something they shouldn't have forgotten, said what they shouldn't say, fought what they shouldn't think, did what they shouldn't do, omitted what they shouldn't have omitted, whatever it may be.

Let's say that you're right. You're absolutely vindicated by every standard of right that right can produce. I stand on holy ground.

In my righteous judgment, I'm absolutely correct. To be hard-hearted, unkind, and unforgiving doesn't fix that. Did you notice how many different places and in one of those gnomic saying sections, vengeance is mine, I will repay, do not render evil for evil.

Do good to those who hate you, pray for those that spitefully use you, treat your enemies well. It's a lie to think that you can infuse these negative things into a bad situation and that will make it better. That is the lie.

And when you speak it, when you use your tongue to perpetrate it, you are speaking lies to one another. And Paul says, put away the deception. Any rank unbeliever, any godless atheist can infuse evil.

In fact, that's all they can do is infuse more evil into a situation. We have the gift of God's Spirit. We have the power of God's Word.

We have the example of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have the mission of reflecting His glory in a dark world. You're not going to accomplish any of that following Hasudas.

It's not going to happen. Put away the deception. Our nature tries to tell us that lie just like Satan told the lie to Eve in the garden.

Don't you see that disobeying God is going to make things better? That's the lie. Disobeying God is going to improve the situation. That's Satan's original lie in the garden and we've been falling

for it ever since.

Pursuing what feels good, pursuing the way that seems right to me is going to... I'll get this thing fixed. It's a lie. Put away the lie.

Speak truth with one another. Now, does this mean ignore the fact that somebody has malfunctioned? It says speak truth. If someone has malfunctioned, that's a truth.

You can speak that truth, but what has changed? I'm not speaking this evaluation, this recognition in anger, in retributive pain giving, in self-seeking, satisfaction-oriented desire, orge, par orgizmos. Remember that? Par orgizmos is that which accompanies wrath. It moves from a flash of anger.

By the way, there are different words for anger in Greek. And this word, orge, is not an impulsive flash of anger. This is something that is the result of thought and consideration.

Have you ever thought about something and the more you think about it, the angrier you get? That's orge. This is not somebody elbowed me in the ribs and I didn't like it and I looked over in a flash of indignation. That's not orge.

Orge is, as I think about this and consider it, I'm getting madder and madder and madder. Are you kidding me? Seriously? People feed this. You mentioned to somebody, they say, well, I can't believe it.

It's just like, well, yeah. It's like when you take two small fires and put them together, they instantly suck more oxygen and the two make a bigger fire than the sum of the parts. That's orge.

And par orgizmos is when this persists. He says, be angry and do not sin. It is okay to be, as we say, righteously indignant about a thing.

But do not let the sun go down on your par orgizmos. That means you can think about it. You can get indignant over it.

But then you've got to cycle your truth. You've got to put it in perspective. You've got to settle the crocodiles back down in the swamp.

Don't keep throwing food in there for them. Don't keep putting chum in the water for the sharks and the piranhas. You know, all right.

You recognize the thing is wrong. It's okay to be offended at a wrong. Then stop.

Par orgizmos is when anger moves into a pattern of anger, what we call bitterness. If somebody drops grandma's china and it breaks and you think it was from carelessness, somebody was, you know, just being really careless, which they shouldn't have done, and something breaks and it's irreparably lost, you can say, you know what? That carelessness, which I've seen before, is

something that really needs to be fixed. You could get angry about that.

How many times have I told you not to be careless with valuable things? You've done it again, and I'm righteously angry about that. But if that persists, if that carries forward into now I'm holding a grudge, every time I look at that person I think about that dropping plate. Every time I, you know, tomorrow and the next day and the next, and I treat them differently because you're a careless person.

You can't be trusted, and I'm going to remind you, and I'm going to dig and twist that poker in you every chance I get. That's part orgasmus. It's okay to say, that shouldn't have happened.

You screwed up, and I'm not happy about it. However, do you think God is offended when we sin? Especially, you know, if we've been learning His Word, and we know better, and we screw up anyway. Do you think that God is just up there? Well, you know, Jesus died on the cross, so it's all okay.

I think God looks at us and says, come on. How many Bible classes do you have to listen to? How many hours do you have to spend in prayer? How many times do I have to forgive you? You do the same thing. When are you going to learn? Look at God's words to Israel in the Old Testament.

Israel in the Old Testament, believer in the New. Does God get indignant at Israel for their failures when they repeat them stupidly? I don't think God is just a calm sea of equanimity when we sin. I think He's not happy, but He forgives.

He cleanses. He separates our sin as far as the east is from the west. It's a process.

You talk about how grieving is a process. You move from anger to bargaining to I don't know what all it is. There's some set of steps that everybody allegedly goes through for grieving.

Well, I think there are steps when it comes to sin and forgiveness. When you are the offended party, it is okay to be offended initially. It is not good to remain offended indefinitely.

That's what this is saying. I think it's clear. So be angry, do not sin, do not let the sun go down on your wrath.

There is a time to be angry and there is a time to forgive, which in the Greek means what? Let go. That's what the word means. Let go.

Let go. Afiemi is the common word for forgive. Here we have charizomai, grace.

Charis, grace. Charizomai. You have the idea of the delight, what delights.

A grace, kairo, to rejoice, C-H-A-I-R-O. And you reach that place where you can once again enjoy

good fellowship. If you are really put out with somebody, there is no joy there, is there? If you are really put out, the joy leaves.

Husbands and wives know this. You get crossways. The first thing that leaves the relationship you forged at the altar is joy.

The joy just goes out of it. People talk about a joyless marriage. Do you know why there is a joyless marriage? Because there are things going on that are unforgiven, in some cases unforgivable.

But joy leaves. This is charizomai. This is actually a participle.

This is either a middle or passive participle. And forgiving one another is being a happy person. And even secular psychology has recognized that when you let go of past offenses, this is one of the keys to temporal happiness, is not holding on to old baggage.

This is what the whole primal scream therapy is about. Because you are going to go all the way back and let it all out and let it go. Primal scream.

They mock us for having faith in God. Faith in God is so much more rational than most of what these agnostic secular humanist materialists, name them, come up with. There is stuff, multiple universes.

Seriously? And you mock me for not having evidence for my faith? Show me evidence for multiple. You can't even find the edges of this universe. What are you going to say? There are other universes.

Well, mathematically it makes my equation work. Are you kidding? I've got par or gizmos. I'm going to... But forgiving one another even as God in Christ forgave you.

Does God enjoy fellowship with us even though we are sinful? How can He do that? How can God enjoy fellowship with me? Well, He doesn't get there by remembering all of the bad things I've done, all the dumb decisions. And, you know, can you imagine God up there? I send a guy to seminary. I put a Bible in front of him.

He can do the Hebrew and the Greek. He can see it all day long and look at the mistakes he makes. But God enjoys fellowship with even me.

How does He do that? Well, it's not by remembering my sins. This is the gift the Lord Jesus Christ has given us, the blood of Jesus Christ. It is a gift.

The Lord Jesus humbled Himself, sacrificed Himself so that I could be forgiven and so that God could have joy in relationship with me. You and I need to have the mind in us that was in Christ Jesus to be sacrificial in putting away the sins and failures and shortcomings of others and pray

and trust and hope that they will do the same for me so that we together can enjoy each other's company, can enjoy each other's fellowship. Charizomai.

Forgiveness is restoring the joy. Let go, put off the old man with the pseudos, that by hanging on to this, it's going to get better. If I remember all your sins, that'll improve the marriage, that'll improve the relationship.

Yeah, let's all keep a list. That'll make things... there's some joy. I'm going to enjoy reminding you of everything you've ever done that was wrong.

And you're going to enjoy... Seriously, it's a lie. It's pseudos. Put that off.

Be kind to one another. Tender-hearted. What does tender-hearted mean? It's the opposite of hard-hearted.

Tender-hearted means you're flexible. It's not essential. Let it go.

Afiyemi. Charizomai. Let it go.

That's where the joy of our faith, the joy of our relationship with God and the joy of our relationship with one another, let go of the lie, embrace love. Where does the love come from? Tell me. Where does the love come from? Three places.

Tell me. 1 Timothy 1.4 The aim of our instruction, the aim of our charge is love from what? Pure heart. Good conscience.

Sincere faith. Do you know how to have a pure heart? Yes or no? I can keep going. We're just three minutes over.

Do you know how to have a pure heart? Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a right spirit within me.

Do you know how to have a pure heart? I can't hear you. Do you know how to have a pure heart? Do you know how to have a good conscience? Look at this enthusiasm just goes to the bottom. Do you know how to have a good conscience? How? That's pure heart.

Good conscience, of course, you've got to have a pure heart to have a good conscience. So that is a step. Conscience, what is your conscience? Paul Simon has a great song.

Who's that conscience sticking to the sole of my shoe? Every time you walk, you've got gum on your shoe. You're trying to walk, but you've got this, Hey, wait a minute, something's nagging at me. Who's that conscience sticking to the sole of my shoe? That guy's got a great way with words.

Conscience is your standards. This is how you know what's right and what's wrong. How do you

know what's right and what's wrong? It's in your lap.

It's in your heart. It's in your mouth. It's in your mind.

It's the Word of God, right? This is what we're doing. We are cultivating a good conscience by studying the Word of God. Pure heart, good conscience, what else? Sincere faith, genuine faith.

How does this happen? This is a decision. This is a policy we set for ourselves. So, can we do this? Can we do 25 through 32 of Ephesians 4? Do we know how to walk in love, to treat each other in love, to forgive motivated by love, to pursue the joy of relationship in love? Do we know how to do this? Do we have the tools to do this? Yes.

1 Timothy 1, 4. The goal of our instruction, the aim of our charge is love, and here's the sources. It's as plain as God can make it. So, what excuse do we have for not doing it? There is none.

So, on that note, we will conclude, and we'll pick up next time. We'll get into Ephesians 5. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word. Thank You that You have not obscured it, You haven't made it distant or unattainable with the presence and power of Your Holy Spirit, with the example and the record of the Lord Jesus Christ living this way before us and showing us that it can be done by a human being in the power of Your Spirit, living by every word that proceeds from Your mouth.

We thank You for the love and the compassion and the grace that You have expressed toward us in giving us this opportunity and giving us all of these wonderful resources and sources of strength to draw upon. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will remind us, keep us ever mindful, encourage us in His ongoing presence and ministry so that we can walk in the light, so that we can walk in love, and we can truly reflect Your glory and the glory of the Lord Jesus now and in the ages to come. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen.