

Ephesians 14-07-20a

It's like NASA back there. This is Sunday, the 20th of July, 2014. We continue our study in Paul's letter to the Laodicean Church, affectionately known as Ephesians.

We are at the cusp of chapter 5, we're just finishing up the last few verses of chapter 4. Let's take a moment to go to the Lord in prayer, ask His blessing on us, give us focus and concentration, memory, and a heart prepared for application as we look at the truth of God's Word. Father, we are thankful for the many blessings you've bestowed on us, the provision you make for us, the protection you provide for us, the opportunities and challenges to put into practice what we learn, spending time together in looking at the truth of your purpose and plan for us, all of the privileges and the provisions that we have in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is such a tremendous thing to live in this age, not to be an ancient Israelite, not to be a person trying to figure out what to do during the tribulation, not someone in the ancient patriarchal days, but we live in the age of grace, we live in the age of being members of the body of Christ, being sustained and empowered and enabled and guided by your Holy Spirit, and being entered into a personal relationship with you through the Lord Jesus.

We thank you for Him, we thank you for the revelation of the truths that were revealed and embodied in Him in the pages of Scripture. We thank you that we not only live in this wonderful age of the church, but we live in the latter portion of it where the Scriptures are not distant, they're not brokered through intermediaries. We have our own copy, we have vast amounts of resources, commentary, enlightenment from the original languages, every possible tool to aid our understanding not only of the basic teachings and foundational truths, but also the advanced and the higher things that are contained in your Word.

And we know that this is no accident, we have been placed at this time and in this place for a purpose. We pray that as we spend this time studying your Word together that God the Holy Spirit will impress these truths on our heart and beyond that impress on us the criticality of our position and our privilege and our opportunity so that day by day we will be motivated, we will be thoroughly equipped to live in a way that pleases you and fulfills your purpose for us at this time and in this place. We ask it in Jesus' name, Amen.

Ephesians chapter 4, we're getting pretty familiar with this particular section. Putting away lying and this in verse 25 is literally putting away the lie and beyond that this is an aorist participle having put away the deception. All you Greek scholars know what an aorist participle does, right? The action of the aorist participle does what? Precedes the action of the main verb.

It is in some way a completed action that has taken place in past time. So before we can truly speak or speak truly, speak the truth to one another, we have to have done something first. And this is to set aside, put away the deception, the false view.

And as I mentioned in our preliminaries this morning, there is a false view that permeates our culture, that saturates our media, that is communicated even in what presents itself and tries to pass itself off as objective reporting of events. It is in fact colored and sanitized and propagandized to try to make us adopt the deception. The deception is that diversity trumps everything, that being different is in every case okay, that everyone should be embraced, everyone should be valued, everyone should be encouraged to do whatever they want to do.

It's a lie. It is the first lie that was ever told the human race. It is a twisted truth.

Does every person have value? Yes. In what context? Every person has value to God as someone He created with the opportunity to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior in this age and dedicate themselves to reflecting and appreciating the glory of God. That's value.

If someone repudiates that, rejects it, goes in the opposite direction with their fist high in the air, as far as the church is concerned, they don't have value. I say again, as far as the church is concerned, such a person who has willfully rejected the truth of God does not have value. And I say that fully understanding what it means.

This is not a person to continue to try to evangelize. This is not a person to continue to try to throw pearls in front of. I specifically stated that these are people who have not just rejected but repudiated the truth of God, have willfully embraced evil, are going in the other direction with their fist in the air, the sin of the high hand.

There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin. There is a sin unto death, John says, and you don't even pray for that. There are many people in our culture, in our society, in this country today who fall into that category and it is a waste of time to pursue them.

It is a waste of time to try to throw some impediment in their path or try to woo them or win them. They have spit on the Lord Jesus Christ. They have willfully, adamantly rejected the truth of God.

They don't want anything to do with God. They chafe under His authority. They disrespect and desire to confound and confute any standards that God has related to morality.

They are only interested in self-gratification, self-promotion. They live a self-centered life, willfully so, knowingly so. And much of the church today is trying to embrace and, you know, gentle and friendship these people back into some relationship with God.

It isn't going to happen. And the Bible says, separate from such. Even when they crop up in the fellowship of a church, separate.

Cut out the infection or it is going to infect you. We don't willingly part with organs in our body. We're not happy if we lose tissue, if we lose pieces of ourselves.

It's very reluctantly. I like having all of my parts. I like having all of my limbs.

I like having all of my organs. I like having my cells. I, you know, God made me.

He gave me this body. He assigned it specifically to me. By the way, you should never feel bad about your body, whatever its strengths and weaknesses, whatever its perfections or imperfections.

You should never be unhappy with it. Why? God issued it specifically to you for a reason. With its strengths, with its weaknesses.

He gave it specifically to you. It was designed in eternity past. If it presents challenges, these are tailor-made challenges in the love of God.

Designed to help us grow, to help us learn, to appreciate. Think about Paul's thorn in the flesh. We don't know what it was, and that's by design.

Because it enables all of us to identify with Paul. When three times he goes to the Lord, he says, Lord, please deliver me from this affliction that is of some sort of bodily nature. And God said, no, it is needful for you.

It is a blessing for you. And in your weakness, my strength is going to be made manifest. So if you want to see the power of God in your own life, then thank God for the weaknesses.

Thank God for the problems. Thank God for the limitations. Thank God for the increasing disintegration.

I have learned to embrace the process of aging and loss of every imaginable capability sooner or later. And I'm still young when it comes to getting old. But we're getting there.

We're getting there day by day. And every day brings with it new recognition that it ain't what it used to be. I ain't what I used to be.

My mind is not as sharp. My body is not as capable. I don't recover as quickly.

And I think, why, Lord? Wouldn't you leave me my mind so I can study the Word of God, et cetera? No, most of it. But not all. I don't have, and you don't either, as you get past your, say, early 20s.

It starts going. And don't kid yourself. The way you treat yourself when you're young will come back to haunt you.

Get sleep. Your brain will not recover from sustained shorting of sleep. Trust me.

I'm telling you as one who knows. You think I'm tough. I can do it all on three or four hours.

Well, yes, you can. But later on, your mind is going to be a little dry sponge. And it's dry because

it's full of super glue.

It no longer wants to absorb and retain and reproduce at will. Your shelves, you put stuff on them, and there's, like, a trap door in the back. You put something there, and when you're not looking, it goes, whoosh, whoosh.

It's just gone. It's like a magic trick. Put the rabbit in the hat, look in the hat, the rabbit's gone.

But I say that to say this. This is by design. Did you ever wonder why it isn't a Benjamin Button kind of thing? You come into the world, and you're all old.

And as time goes past, you get better and better. And then you just kind of walk fully formed into the millennium. You know, you just eventually, you think about it.

God could have done it this way, perfectly within His capability. But He didn't. He did it the other way.

Why? How happier are we going to be when we get this resurrection body? I ask you, the longer you live and the more decrepit you get, the more you are going to get down on your face and bless God, any crown you've got that you want to throw at His feet, you know, Lord God, thank you for delivering me from the body of this death. And it is a blessing to get old and decrepit in the sense that for every new piece of decrepitude, your capacity to love and appreciate God is that much greater. And I am deadly serious.

I can't think of a person in this room that doesn't have some kind of physical affliction and probably beyond this room. You know why? Because we're learning the word of God. If you go out and become a reprobate, you probably get healthy as all get out.

But we all struggle. And you know why? It's a blessing. And it is a particular blessing as you learn and grow in grace and knowledge of the Savior, because this is a place of minute by minute application.

Your soul gets strong, doesn't it? When you face this and you constantly meet it with attitude. God put this in my path. God assigned me this particular cross to bear.

God in eternity past said at this time and in this place, this is the set of limitations. I am going to lay as a burden on the shoulders of this, my faithful servant, because I know they can bear it. With God, all things are possible.

I can do all things through Christ, which strengthens me. Isn't it great to learn how to apply and dwell in the strength of the Lord Jesus Christ without these tests and the physical kind are the closest and the most personal and the most constant. That's where the strength comes from.

Believe it or not, that's what's the first part of verse twenty five. Therefore, having put away the

deception, what is the deception? It is the commercial that shows live, nubile young people trotting effortlessly along the beach with their SPF sixty five and their flawless skin and their, you know, flexible joints in there. They don't have a Morton neuroma in their foot and they don't have a torn ligament in their knee.

And, you know, it's it's what's her name, trotting across the beach in ten. You know, this is the deception. That is not God's plan for our life.

And we think, well, but why not? We've got to think a little bigger. We've got to think a little deeper, think a little bit more spiritually and eternally. We haven't been given endless physical life here to be some sort of, you know, this is the other fantasy they have.

There's so many movies now where somebody is some kind of possesses some sort of immortality. Isn't it funny how the farther they try to run away from God, the more they embrace all the things that God is freely offering? There's just vast swaths of culture behind, you know, comic book type scenarios where, well, I'm a vampire. I live forever.

I heal immediately. You know, and I'm a I'm a nice vampire because I I'm like a veggie vampire. I I get my blood from the blood bank.

I don't, you know, mercilessly bite people. So I'm like a good vampire. Seriously, is this not a metaphor for we can be righteous apart from God? A vampire for crying out loud.

And don't let the blood motif be lost on you. I can live by some other kind of blood than the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. But look at the what are these other guys that who's the guy with the sideburns? You slash him and he heals up again.

The Wolverine, you know, the X-Men type of thing. I'm possessed of wonderful abilities like unto the angels, like unto those who will be promoted into eternal glory at at the by the side of the Lord Jesus Christ. But I got there through human mutation, not through divine enablement.

And look at me. Look how happy I are. These people happy.

Are these happy movies where their little castle gets destroyed and the bald guy gets thrown into pixels? And I've seen these movies. I get to watch them. But it's interesting to me as seriously, it's interesting to me as a metaphor.

Think about it. This is what the world idealizes. Why are these things so insanely popular? Why are there people who just, you know, really get immersed in it? Same reason that people have been and continue to be immersed in the Star Trek universe.

It is well, think about it now. I'm serious. It is idealized.

There's no war. We don't use money. There's no greed.

We've done away with crime. Listen to Jean-Luc Picard talk about how wonderful the Federation is to aliens that he meets who are still primitively, you know, engaging in our kind of culture. And he says, oh, you know, they're so proud of themselves.

Oh, well, we did away with, you know, we were once like you. We were once warlike like the old Vulcans. And, you know, the Vulcans embraced peace.

And the peace is between, you know, death and war. And, you know, the weapon won't work. I saw a thing last night where the Vulcans had this death ray, do anything, weapon, amplify the mind.

But when they put all the pieces back together, the symbol of peace is between. And it'll only work if the person is angry at you. And if they're peaceful and empty their mind of anything but peace, then the weapon doesn't work.

And I'm thinking this is the world with its human instincts and its human efforts at trying to utopianize and idealize and millennialize what cannot be done because it does not deal with the inner problem of sin. Put away the deception. Having put away the deception, we can now proceed to live the Christian life.

Don't embrace the lie. So long as we believe that, you know, if we just love the homosexuals enough, they'll change their ways. As long as we love the communists enough, they'll stop trying to take over countries and stop up the flow of oil and shoot down airliners and whatnot.

The terrorists and the separatists and the, as far as I'm concerned, I just put them all under the label of commie. They're just all commies. Anything that's not American in my mind is communist.

And it's just a convenient label. I put one bucket for everything that is not built on the founding father principles of this country, which is independence, hard work, its biblical values. Go back and study the founding fathers.

They weren't deists, but you have to change the truth. You have to tell a lie to get this kind of stuff to work and to try to separate the country from its founding values and from its constitutional identity. Well, all of this is the deception.

Having put away the deception, to put it away, you have to identify it. And I've spent a little bit of time this morning just giving you some samples of what I think represents or is at least representative of the deception. It is everywhere.

It is everywhere. And all the more so, everybody's got some kind of little square screen looking back at them from their hand. Everybody does.

Everybody's got a smartphone. Everybody's got a tablet. Everybody's got a computer.

And it's a constant stream of deception. You have to work hard to get that thing pointed at Bible Hub or Bible.org or W.A. Criswell.com or some place where you can get truth, because by default, that thing is going to send up and offer up and constantly bombard you with the deception. By the way, just as a quick technical aside, if you use, as you probably should, something besides Internet Explorer on your Windows computer, particularly Firefox, there is an add-in for Firefox that I highly recommend.

It is ABP, Add Block Plus. And you can stop a lot of distracting pop-up side stuff. I was trying to read an article for this class, and I kept hearing a feminine product commercial, audio.

I'm reading a Christian website, and I'm getting feminine product audio looping, looping. And there's all these ads everywhere. And I noticed that the last time I did an upgrade on this laptop, I didn't put Add Block Plus on my browser.

And when I went back and loaded it, the sweet sound of silence and non-interference from a bunch of distracting stuff as I read a Christian website with a Christian article about a Christian topic. So find ways to suppress the noise of the lie when you can. And this is an example of how you can do it.

For those of you that are more technically oriented, download a copy of hosts. The file is called hosts. It goes in your System32 folder under Drivers, Etc.

Again, I'm talking to you technical types of readers. You just momentarily tune out, take a breath. Your hosts file will override, and you can download ones that say, if you go to this website, if you get a call to this website, here's what you should point it to.

And it will point it to the local loopback address. And so there are people who maintain a list of thousands and thousands of ad sites, and they put them all in there and list them. And it says, now, if your machine makes a call to this site, just loop back to yourself, which means it just goes nowhere.

And if you go in, there's instructions for this. Just Google hosts. H-O-S-T-S.

Not host.txt, not host site. It's just hosts. Your hosts file.

It's in Windows. And if you replace your hosts file, which is very short, with this long list of ad sites, 99% of all ads will disappear from your browser because it can't find them. It just comes back to you, and you don't have them.

So word to the wise, in Windows, just find a way to put a hosts file, and you'll save yourself a lot of grief. Back to our suppression of the deception. Deception, suppression.

That's what we're talking about. Having put away the lie, let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. Be angry and do not sin.

We've looked at this in great detail. I explained the difference between thumos and orge and parorgismos. Thumos, as you remember, is the emotional sort of uncontrollable response that you can get.

Being angry is a present imperative here, just like the action of the aorist participle precedes the action of the main verb. A present imperative means keep on. 1 John 1, 7, if we keep on walking in the light as he keeps on being in the light, we keep on having fellowship, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, keeps on cleansing us.

That's the force of the present. Durative action in present time. This is a present imperative.

Keep on being angry. That's what it says. It's an imperative.

Keep on being angry. But this is not thumos. This is orge.

Orge is an abiding attitude. What is your attitude toward evil? It ought to be an ongoing rejection of the anger sort. Do you think God is ever not angry at evil? God's always angry at evil.

The wrath of God doesn't come and go. God is not moody. God has policies.

God has attitudes. God has a view. He has an opinion about patterns of sin.

He has an opinion about people who willfully, deliberately, rebelliously pursue those patterns and those practices. God has an attitude, and it is orge. You and I are commanded to keep on being orge at these things.

If God's mad at it, you should be mad at it. Not in an emotional, impulsive, uncontrolled way. This is a measured wrath.

This is a measured rejection of an ongoing and abiding kind. It is a settled attitude. It's settled.

It's constant. It is fixed. It is a standard.

It is a norm. It is a policy. There are certain things that the military has no toleration for.

Zero tolerance. One of the extreme cases being disobedience of a direct order under fire in a combat situation. There is no time for debate.

There's no time for second guessing. If you're in a platoon and the platoon commander says, you three guys grab your weapons and advance into that withering machine gun fire, you go. And if you refuse, he will shoot you and find somebody else.

Validly so. There is zero toleration for disobedience of a direct order under fire, as it should be, as it must be. Well, that doesn't seem to be to my benefit.

Heaven help us when this generation has to go into any kind of a ground war, because it has been taught that self-interest is the number one priority. Well, I don't find that to be good for me. You have something I want and I should have it.

Therefore, what is right is for me to take it from you. And there's no compunction. There's no twinge of conscience.

There's no shadow of doubt that it would be right to take what you have. Because in their mind, look, ever since I was an infant, what has been right for me and what makes me happy is what has been done. And anything that troubles the vista of Caribbean Sea in my mind has to be taken out of the way.

I can't be troubled. I can't be challenged. I can't be told no.

I can't be given a bad grade. I can't lose. I can't compete in a way that might make me a loser.

I must, there must be games with no score kept. There must be no competition. There must be no, nothing to trouble my serenity.

And you telling me that I need to go up there and endanger myself, well, that troubles my serenity. So guess what? I ain't doing it. It, you know, harshes my mellow.

So listen, it's coming. You are going to see the decapitation of forward progress because people just won't go. They won't.

And if anything, listen, you want to talk about people losing their peace, as I've said many times, disrupt the internet, take away GPS. And you will see the jungle almost instantly. You better have some personal protection because it's going to get ugly within 24 hours.

Within 24 hours, there will be crime, person-on-person crime like hasn't been seen, except in situations like the Watts riots back in the late 60s. You will not believe how ugly and how quickly it will get that ugly because there are systems with no backup. There are supply chains with no backup whatsoever.

Well, be angry, be angry and keep on being angry, but not sinfully. God gets angry at evil. God gets angry at disobedience and rebellion.

Does God sin? No. So there is an anger that is not sin. Jesus fashioning the whip of cords and driving the money changers out.

Did he sin? Did he sin? Did the Lord Jesus sin? Was he angry? Y'all are very passive today. Did the Lord Jesus sin when he drove out the money changers? Was he angry? So there is an anger that is not sinful. That is the pattern.

Did Jesus go down there every day and drive out the money changers? He made it clear. Did you think his anger over that ever went away? How many times did Jesus go to the temple? How many times did he see these money changers? How many assembly feasts were there in Israel each year? You can answer that one. How many assembly feasts are there in Israel each year? How many times were the men of Israel to assemble at the temple? Oh boy, we're going to go back and do the first part of Leviticus again.

Three. Passover, Pentecost, and trumpets slash atonement slash booths, the fall feasts. That was an assembly time.

Passover was an assembly time. Pentecost was an assembly time. Three feasts in the year.

Two at the beginning, one at the end. Right? Every time Jesus went to Jerusalem, what did he see? Money changers. How many times did he drive them out with a whip fashion of cords? Careful now.

Twice. Once near the beginning of his ministry and once at the end, right? Yes. But he didn't do it every time.

And that tells us that even though we have this ongoing attitude of anger, there is a time and a place to express it. And doing it at the wrong time in the wrong way or at the wrong place can turn it into sin. Let not the sun go down upon your par or gizmos.

This is that which accompanies the orgy. This is where you start to engage in fisticuffs or bitterness, exasperation, irritation that is visible on an ongoing basis. That's par or gizmos.

It is one thing to have the anger. It's something else to be constantly bitter, irritable, short, impatient because of it. There is a time and a place.

And Jesus demonstrated that to us. So, nor give opportunity, give place to the devil. If we fail in this, Satan is going to seize it as an opportunity.

Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give to him who has need. Let him who stole steal no longer. Having put away the deception, speak truth, be angry without sinning.

And let him who stole steal no longer. I asked this question at the end of our study last time, and I ask it again now. Is this really a big problem? Is thievery one of our bigger issues in the fellowship, in the assembly? Do you think it was then and it pretty much isn't now? What is this stealing exactly? Is this just the raw, hey, where's my purse? What happened to my wallet? And where's my jewelry? This is pretty high up in the order of things.

And we have to assume one of two things, either in Laodicea, there was a big thievery problem in the church. People were just stealing from each other. Or this is a kind of stealing that we need to

know more about.

The latter is the case. And we're going to take our break. And when we come back, we're going to see what is Paul talking about when he says, let him who stole steal no more.

But let's pause here and take a break.