

We have finally hit the end of Ephesians chapter 4 and we just completed “What happens when I am Angry in an ungodly way”. We focused on the progression of our thoughts and minds during times of anger. We stated that in order to overcome our anger and break the cycle we need to be gracious. Jesus gives a great example of breaking the cycle in

Luke 6:27-31

"But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. "Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also; and whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either. "Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back. "Treat others the same way you want them to treat you.

Finally we said, that when one of us says “I don’t know how to be gracious to someone who ‘wears me out’” I said that was a copout answer full of sin because we all know how to be “gracious” to our friends, those we like, because after all “*they deserve it, because they are my friends...*” But Jesus says:

Luke 6:32-36

"If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. "If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. "If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners in order to receive back the same amount. "But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

That is why I said, grace to those who deserve it is not grace. It may be goodness, but it is not grace if this is your motive in your heart. Jesus says that if give because you know someone will give back, then you are not better than an unbeliever.

So the question is “How do I change?” Well we looked at **Ephesians 4:22** and we stated: You have to put off the old and put on the new.

Hover, a lot of people want to “get their life straight” or “they want to be a better person”. They do not want to steal, be lazy, speak with “bad words”, be bitter, or slander other individuals; yet, there is one problem – that is sin. We are born with this sinful nature. This sinful nature tells us that we are all

“bad” people, enemies of God ... “alienated and hostile in mind, *engaged* in evil deeds” as **Colossians 1:21** states.

The Idea is we are not born inherently “good”. We are born sinful, we are born “going to hell” we are born, followers of Satan. Here are some verse written by God through various writers in old and new testament. As **Psalms 51:5 & Psalms 58:3** state we are born from the womb sinful And **Jeremiah 17:9** tells us that our hearts are very sick and cannot be understood. That is why we can justify our evil sinful ways due to our human emotions and logic rather than from the Bible that God has given us.

We do this too much – I was just speaking to someone a few months back. I was speaking to a man who was living with his girlfriend. He called me up and wanted to talk. He asked me if he could go to heaven if he never married his girlfriend. Instead of asking the question, I asked him why did he doubt it – why was he worried. He said to me, “You know the Bible don’t you? I thought you would know”. I asked him what must he do to get into heaven. He said be as good as possible and try not to screw up and I told him with that thought process you will go to hell. In order to get into heaven you must get saved. He told me that he has heard that before, but that wasn’t what his church told him growing up. To which I responded – what did your church tell you – and he said they told him to be as good as he could and he would go to heaven.

My Friends that is the false gospel, being “Good” does not save you. Yet, the heart wants to believe that because it is sick. Your emotions want the sinful way...that is why when us guys walk past Victoria’s Secret in the mall we want to look. It is a response to want to look at half naked women – that is why you cannot trust your emotions because your emotions is from your nature your sinful, from the womb nature.

Moreover Isaiah tells us all our “good works” apart from Jesus are like filthy underwear. [**Isaiah 64:6**] Jesus tells us that apart from Him you can do nothing good [**John 15:5**] and that everyone who has done a sin is a slave to sin [**John 8:34**] meaning it has control over you and when sin says jump you say “how high”. Hebrews tells us that without faith in Jesus it is impossible to please God [**Hebrews 11:6**]

The book 1 Corinthians tells us that an unsaved person cannot understand nor agree with the words in the Bible. [**1Corinthians 2:14**] and that is why you have people who say, the Bible isn’t true. It is because they do not have the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit working in their hearts and minds.

The wonderful book of Romans is jam packed with teaching about sin. Every person who ever lived, is living, and will live will sin [**Romans 3:23**] and the reason why, because Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden at the beginning of time [**Romans 5:12**] and therefore no human being can please God [**Romans 8:8**]

That is what leads Paul to write

- Nothing good dwells in us - **Romans 7:18**
- We are dead in our trespasses - **Ephesians 2:1-2**
- We are by nature children of wrath - **Ephesians 2:3**
- We are darkened in our understanding - **Ephesians 4:18**
- Nothing pure can come out of what we do - **Titus 1:15**

Which is the whole reason why Jesus said no one can come to Him unless God the Father calls him.:
John 6:44.

Now, you may ask – why am I going through this? Because, if you have been listening throughout these last eight (8) weeks and thinking to yourself – “Man, I want to be able to handle my anger in a Godly way” or “I want to be honest and trust worthy” and “You want a better life” or “want to be a better person” – you cannot get there, unless you have dedicated your life to Jesus through the faith of what He did on the cross to save you from hell and the ONLY way you can show that you have done that – is through your obedience to Jesus, not obedience to yourself, and following His commands by repenting of your sinful, evil life – throwing away the old self, never to look back and to put on the new self and focus on the kingdom to come in the mighty name of Jesus Christ – you can do this. My point is, to focus on your motivation. Is your motivation to be a better person or is it to make Jesus look like a better savior?

So what does this life dedicated to Jesus look like? What does a life of repentance look like? What does it look like to be a Christian? Let us read:

Ephesians 4:32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Very simple, last week we spoke about being Gracious, now we are speaking about Being Merciful. You can be merciful in three ways this verse mentions.

- Kindness
- Tenderhearted
- Forgiving

Today we are going to focus on “what is mercy”. First let us define “mercy”. Mercy is the “taking away punishment one deserves”. One way I remember this is when you play Ultimate Mortal Kombat 3 – they would have finishing moves and if you press the run button then press “down down down” then instead of performing a finishing move – the screen would light up and say “MERCY” then the fighter could fight again. It is in that fight they loser doesn’t deserve to fight again – however, you gave them life back for the purpose of fighting.

The same goes with Biblical mercy except there is no hand to hand combat. God showed us mercy through Jesus by allowing His son to die on the cross for the purpose of giving those who follow Jesus mercy (**Taking away hell**) and giving grace (**Giving life to those who do not deserve life**).

We too can take on Biblical mercy with one another through our kindness. There are a lot of people who do not deserve one good thing in this earth. Whether it be due to their treatment of you, your family, others – whatever, a lot of people can be crooked, evil and demonic. There are even the “crooked Christians” out there – but you know what...it is kindness that leads to repentance.

Romans 2:1-8

Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same *yourself*, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you think lightly of the riches of His **kindness** and **tolerance** and **patience**, not knowing that the **kindness** of God *leads you to repentance*? But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. **[Emphasis mine]**

There is a huge error of on if Christians should “judge” things. Some people believe, no we shouldn't and others say we should. Well the quick answer is, as a Christian we need to discern what is right and evil (i.e. judging) however, we need to exercise mercy, grace, patience to work out the change. The problem is, we exercise the discernment but we won't exercise the effort. Why? Because, it is easier to sin and take the short cut – rather than love, and take the long suffering path. Why again? Because, we want this quick fix, the most comfortable way that will please ourselves rather than others.

Therefore, did you know that when you take the short cut and dismiss someone without putting forth the effort you are storing up judgement for yourself? God doesn't want a merciless, ungrateful, unforgiving person in His Heaven. Those kinds of people have no place in Heaven. In fact Jesus says:

Mathew 7:21-24

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.' "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock.

This is a scary verse, because Jesus is telling us that there are people who will say Jesus is Lord; yet, they do not enter the kingdom of Heaven. There will be those people who even do ministry in the name of Jesus (prophesise – preach, cast out demons, perform miracles) Why? Read the rest of the verses – they did not do the will of the Father who is in Heaven. You must hear and ACT on the name of Jesus.

That is why Paul says:

Romans 2:4 Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

Here we see Paul speaking to the people who live in Rome, asking them rhetorical question. See the verse right before this tells us that we need to not be quick to pass judgement on people and quickly omit them from our lives, but to show mercy to them (allowing them the opportunity to change) – instead of giving them their due we are to be kind and tolerant with them showing patience because if God had not done so we would all be damned right now and wouldn't have the opportunity to sit in this room right now and be drawn to God through faith in Jesus.

Let me tell you a story:

I got a call on Friday, from a GM, who wants to fire a guy. He told me, I have a guy on suspension and I am sending the documentation to you today to approve his termination. He sends it over and the documentation looks ok. So I call the GM back and ask what happened. You see this guy is on his third written warning which is grounds for termination, so it must be solid right – it shouldn't be like you sneezed and forgot to wash your hands kind of termination that just is nitpicky. So, this guy was actually rude to his regional bench engineer and when told to stop he did and walked out of the room. At that point the GM followed him down the hall and asked for his keys and told him to go home. To which the associate asked "Am I being fired" to which the GM said, we will talk on Monday. This went back and forth until the GM said "Go Home". So he goes home and then I get this call that the associate was suspended.

Here is the catch – the associate never signed any paper work that he was suspended. He was never told what the violation he committed was, and he was never given the opportunity "justify his actions" or "state his side of the story". Now if you are getting fired – wouldn't those 3 things be very important to you? I would think so.

That is what I am talking about – you can't just judge someone like that without trying to correct it or find out what is wrong. You can't just throw down the gauntlet like that without giving someone a chance to explain. It is not fair it is not kind. It doesn't lead to repentance. It is not tenderhearted, but hard hearted. In fact, if God would have just tossed us into Hell when we sinned we wouldn't be here right now. But In His kindness has given us the opportunity to change and Repent **Acts 17:30**. If the GM would have heard the person out they would have found out this guy is having a hard time in life. He was just devastated by Hurricane Ike, His wife is trying to divorce him, he has is second son due in about a week, and his boss hates him. Hmmm...sounds like the GM is pretty hard hearted don't you think?

How would the person in this situation repent if his boss would have a softer heart, a forgiving attitude, and a kind soul? The GM should have asked him, what is up – and when he heard of all the issues asked him if he wanted to take some vacation or time away from work to get his life straight. Giving him a "kick at the cat". Maybe then, the associate would change his ways (repent) and get a better attitude or ask forgiveness, apologize; yet, he wasn't given the opportunity, management hates him and they are probably going have huge issues with the one person who wasn't treated fairly – and I will get a lot of calls. I guess you can call that job security.

Anyhow, you can't just say you love Jesus and then live a life that is against all that He says. That is why Paul is writing to all these churches 2000 years ago telling them you have to put off the old life and put

on the new. You have to act on your salvation, you have to do your salvation. As one of my favorite preaches says – *“You can’t say you’re an apple tree, and produce oranges. Because then you are an Orange tree!”* And that is exactly what Jesus says in **Mathew 7:17-20**.

Mercy leads to repentance when tied into Grace. Kindness is an example of Mercy and Grace that leads to repentance, but if your motivation of kindness is just surface level, burying animosity inside then you are not being merciful or gracious but deceptive and how does it lead to repentance? It doesn’t because it is sin. Remember, our study on honesty? It is almost impossible to be consistently kind without the power of Jesus living in you. I mean it is VERY hard work because it is deceptive. Have you ever tried being kind to someone, you don’t like? I mean, if it weren’t for Jesus – you’d probably want to kill that person, but you don’t – because that is breaking the 6th commandment.

It is very hard to “act” when Jesus is not in your heart – you always end up “blowing it” because without Jesus that is all it is vapor, vanity and just as a filthy worthless garment.

CONCLUSION

- We must realize our motivation for Mercy; that is being Kind and tenderhearted and forgiving. Are we “acting” out those “good deeds” to bury anger and become bitter? Or are we trying to look “religious” by cleaning the outside of the cup rather the inside of the cup? Are we calling ourselves an apple tree when we are really an orange tree?
- Are we seeking to unify the believers destroy division and doing that in love?
- Senseless motions are empty and does not restore – it may in the short run but time will reveal the hurt and the pain never went away.
- I attached a study guide for us please do this at home if you really want to seek change in your life.

T.A.P Out – Study Guide

THEOLOGY – engaging the scripture

- What is God Doing in Our Lives?
 - Think through these verse as a stepping point: **Romans 2:4; 1 Timothy 1:15; Colossians 1:13,20; Hebrews 12:5-11 ; John 17:23; Ephesians 4:3, 13; Colossians 3:14; Romans 12:16, 15:5; 1 Corinthians 1:10; Philippians 2:2**
 - Mark or write out what is Merciful, Kind, Tenderhearted, and Forgiving
 - Why do you think God does this? What was the purpose of Jesus? What other Bible verses come to your mind?
 - Why do you think this was a topic in beginning of the Church?

APPLICATION – engaging our hearts

- Think of the Last Time You Were Upset With a Friend or Family Member
 - How did you deal with it?
 - Did you blow it off?
 - Did you tell others about the person who wronged you?
 - Did you begin to “notice” all the “wrong” things they do?
 - Did you begin to show other people the “wrong” things they do and did the people you tell begin to talk bad about that person too?
 - Did you confront the person *after* you told others about the “wrong” thing they did, and your friends “got your back”?
 - What was the “end result” of this issue? Did it affect your relationship moving forward; if so, how?
 - How do the previous questions relate to **Ephesians 4:29, 31**? Is this any different than unbelievers? If so, how? What is the motivation for unbelievers?
 - What does the Bible say about handling issues? Think through **Mathew 5:24; 18:15-17; Galatians 6:1**. What is the motivation for believers?
 - How are you doing in this area? Have truly prayed about it? Have you sought out any resources? (i.e. A teacher or leader/elder in the Church, a pastor a Deacon you can speak to – read **Proverbs 11:14**)

PRAYER – engaging God

- Thank God for His Grace of the Word and its power to pierce between bone and marrow and into soul and spirit to judge our thoughts and intentions.
- Confess your sins before God, where you have fallen short of His standards.
- Ask God cut your callousedness and soften your heart to be merciful, specifically focusing on being kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving.