

Intro: Garrison. Deacon on Lead Team. sUp. If you have a Bible you can turn to Ephesians 4 v 25.

Names. Before we hop in I want you to pull open up to your journal, pull out your phone and go to your notes app. But we're going to brainstorm for a little bit. I want you to think of a person that you don't like. Now maybe you wouldn't say you *dislike* them, of course not, you're a nice person. But how about this: Do you have someone in your life, that when they walk into the room, you cringe a little bit. You get anxious when they walk in. You do everything in your power to avoid eye contact. It makes the event worse if you see them walk in the room. Who's the person that you love talking about when you're with your people? You know, hanging out with friends, roommates etc, and this person's name comes up and you just can't wait to make a dig. Who's the last person you had an anger fantasy about? You know? Like playing out a conversation where you always say the perfect thing that puts the person in their place. Who was it? Maybe it's someone you actually hate. They did something to you, big or small. Whatever the reason, you don't like them. Can be in our church, someone you serve with, maybe your spouse or roommate. Maybe a parent. Write the name down. We'll come back to that.

Recap: Last week Tim talked about a huge idea in the Christian life: putting off the old self. How our minds, our loves, and our lives must look different as followers of Jesus. As Christians, we have been made righteous before God, adopted as His children, and now we fight to live into that reality.

And we're going to continue to see how our identities as Christians should bleed into our personal lives.

Specifically in tonight's text: In our relationships. **How we treat one another.**

Now, before we go any further, I think it's worth noting that **when Paul starts giving specific examples of how we are to live as followers of Jesus, one of the first things he talks about is our relationships with others.** That is significant.

Relationships matter in following Jesus—they matter a lot.

I'll be honest, tonight's text preaches itself and there's a lot. Paul is giving a list of things to do as Christians as we fight to put off the old self. And it's all pretty clear. But there are still huge implications of how we're to live as a church family.

Here's what we'll see: 5 shifts in how we relate to one another.

With that lets hop in. Ephesians 4:25.

Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

1. From lying to truth-telling.

Paul starts with rebuking a lifestyle of 'falsehood'. So at face value, we'd think he's talking about lying. Don't lie to one another. Which may sound simple. Don't lie. Got it. But there's a specific way falsehood plays out for us.

One of the ways **Falsehood shows up in our lives is when we're different than what we claim to be. I.e. pretending to be something you're not.** Which I think we're all guilty of to varying degrees. Can look like:

- Hamming up a story to sound extra funny or interesting or even bad. Just tweaking the joke just a little so its more impressive, gets a bigger laugh.
- Social media. Gotta look good for those 350 followers. Gotta keep up with our friends and family and how good their lives look.

This is all image management. We're lying to one another.

We don't think we're lying, or living a life of falsehood, but we are.

This can bleed into our relationships as a church really easily. Couple ways I see it pop up:

- Someone's at CG and asks you how your marriage is and you say 'Fine. Great.' And it's anything but.

Or we try to put a bow on it right?

- Like yes I lashed out at my wife and kids this week, but we're working through it.
- Yep I spent all week overwhelmed with anxiety about work, kids, money... but I processed it and I'm good now.

We start to caveat all the bad things going on in our life. We may not think of this as lying or falsehood, but that's precisely what it is.

It's just like what Tim talked about last week where we're almost innocent, except this time, we're almost honest.

And Paul says that we should speak the truth to one another. **'Putting off falsehood' looks like telling people that you're not okay. It wasn't a good week. I don't believe the Gospel at all. Tell someone.**

When we tell partial truths about ourselves, we're preventing church family from rallying around us. Which is the point! And so in light of all that, Paul says, let's tell the truth with one another.

First shift is from lying to truth telling. Look back for the second.

Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and give no opportunity to the devil....

2. From sinful anger to dealing with anger.

It's interesting because Paul says not all anger is sinful. Anger is our emotional response when what we see around us isn't in line with how we think things should be. Which may sometimes be correct and in line with God's values and commands. I'll give an example. Divorce? Racial discrimination? That should make you angry. There's nothing good about that and the correct response is to be upset.

But that's not always true. Paul warns us to resolve anger quickly. But even goes as far to say our anger gives opportunity to the devil! **There's a clear connection between anger and temptation to sin.**

While anger may not always be sinful, it is dangerous.

Maybe your anger starts out pretty reasonably. A friend who is living in sin. You're upset for them. Or you see someone sin against another person. Maybe you've legitimately been sinned against. But that can quickly turn into resentment, gossip or divisiveness. And you're now sinning, regardless of what the reason is.

And don't just think that anger is an external thing. There are just as many people, if not more who rage in, rather than out. And your head is full of hate, self righteousness, judgement and bitterness. **Either way you've sinned in your anger.**

So the shift is from sinful anger to dealing with our anger. Here's how that may look:

- May sound simple. Talk to God first. How often are you praying for the people you're mad at? What about your boss? You're doing the opposite of what your anger is telling you to do.
- If you're angry because of what someone said or did, whether it was intentional or not. Talk to God. But then talk to them with humility. 'I don't know if you meant it this way, but this felt off and was hurtful.' Keep short accounts. Don't sit on stuff.

Look back for shift 3.

Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

3. From stealing to giving.

Hopefully, the bulk of us are not out there robbing people in our spare time. If so, you should probably stop that. But most of us probably aren't in that place. That doesn't tend to be the issue we're talking about in our Lead Team meetings. But, there are more *subtle* forms of stealing—rounding way up on the hours you invoice for, wasting enormous amounts of time on the clock when there's work to be done—things like that.

And even if you don't struggle with that side of things at all, I do want you to notice here the contrast that Paul makes. So he doesn't just say that we should go from stealing to earning faithfully. He says the opposite of stealing is "doing honest work, *so that you may have something to share with anyone in need.*"

The opposite of stealing isn't just earning faithfully—it's giving generously.

So I know the bulk of us in this room have jobs where we're earning money and providing for ourselves so we don't have to go out and rob people—and that's great, keep that up. Let me affirm you. But my guess is that very few of us show up to work in the morning thinking "I'm so glad I have this job so that I can be generous to other people."

And my guess is that if some of us took an honest look at how we spend our money—our budgets wouldn't reflect that we think that way either.

But Paul is making the point here that **God isn't just interested in making you fiscally responsible. According to the Bible, you can be incredibly smart and responsible with your money, and still be completely ignoring God with your money.**

Your money is not just for you. It's for God and others. **You are called to be financially responsible AND radically generous.** Hop back in:

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

4. From corrupting talk to talk that builds up.

Lets talk about gossip for a sec. Here's a real story that I saw play out with a few friends a couple of years ago. Friend of mine, Carrie, was talking with a guy, Bill, in our church. They're at a member meeting and Carrie says hello to Bill as they're walking past one another. He didn't hear her and just kept going about his day. A few days later, Bill and Carrie are in a room with friends and Bill tells a joke and it was sarcastic, silly stuff, not even saying he was right. But Carrie didn't like it. Fast forward a year. Carrie has told everyone around her that Bill is a total jerk that doesn't care about people. He's incredibly self centered and unloving. All because of those two interactions. Never talked to Bill about it. Ending up leaving the church because of it and everyone around her had problems with Bill because of the story she told about him.

This is a true story and I've seen it happen a lot. Her interaction with Bill formed a lens that she viewed everything about him through. And she went around telling everyone how awful of a person he was and it could've been avoided if she would've just asked him, 'hey what was up with you not responding to me saying hey? And that joke hurt my feelings, why'd you say it?'

But she let her anger fester. She didn't deal with her perceived hurt, and formed a lens where she could only view him negatively... and that will lead to gossip.

Gossip is talking about your perceived problems with the wrong people. It's not wrong to process. But you've got to talk to the right people. 2 quick ways to deal with Gossip:

- Talk to the person. If you're upset about something, talk to them.
- Go up. There are going to be times when you don't know what to do. You don't know what to say to the person, or even if they actually did something wrong or if it's your perception. Or it's too big of an issue for you to resolve by yourself. When you need to talk, go up. Go to a leader in our church who is responsible for shepherding you. If you're in a CG and you have a problem with someone, talk to your CG leader. If you're a CG leader, and you have a problem with someone, talk to someone on Lead Team or Tim. Take your problems up.

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by 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, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

5. From resentment to forgiveness.

I think our temptation as we read through a passage like this is to go "okay, we shouldn't lie, but what about...?" "Okay, we shouldn't be angry, but what about...?" "Okay, we shouldn't gossip, but what about...?"

As we said last week, we can be tempted to take good instructions... in the bible and try to figure out all the exceptions to them. "But don't you know they did...?" "Yeah but you should know what's going on in my life, it's a lot."

So Paul does 2 things here. One. He clarifies, in case you didn't know. This is a huge deal.

We cannot miss how big of a statement 'Don't grieve the Holy Spirit is'. When we sin against one another, we're grieving God. Your sin against a person is a sin against God.

So if you're like me and tend to overlook gossip, this is a gut punch. Our gossip isn't just innocent venting at game night. It's tearing down others. It's not okay just because we do it with our friends and family in most social settings, it grieves the holy spirit. When we cancel and

cut 'toxic' people out of our lives, we're just living with bitterness and resentment, and it grieves the Holy Spirit.

And then he draws the line again. "just so we're clear with all this—I want you to put away all "bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander and malice...and anything else that resembles these things

---->**In case you didn't get it, anything that comes close to what I just listed is off.**

Put them all away. And do something else. Forgive.

We're called to forgive one another. And look at the way he writes it: *as God in Christ forgave you.*

There are not many more convicting things in the Bible as that. Forgive as Christ forgave you.

Paul says that in order for us to be able to treat each other well, we have to remember the cross. You have to see what Jesus has already done for you. That your debt to God, surpasses anything that anyone has done and could do to you.

The worst thing that someone has said to you, the worst thing that someone has done to you, the worst sin committed against you: it's not even close to the wrong that you've done to God.

To truly see yourself as a beggar before God, unable to make things right with him, to plead for your life. And to see him forgive you in Christ, welcome you to his family, eliminate your debt through Jesus's work on the cross.

It enables us to become forgiving people. Forgiving in spirit. Understanding in spirit. Gracious in spirit. Giving the benefit of the doubt as a life posture.

If we've truly received it, we will be enabled to give it.

I don't know about you, but I need this. I wish this wasn't true of me, but I don't know if there's something I struggle with more than forgiving others. Prepping for this sermon I found myself with a long list of folks that have hurt me and that I'm still mad at. I think I could write down 10 names. I hate it but there are times when I'll just be reminded of the situation and it's like I start to relive it. And the anger boils up. Then I end up going through each one and relive it again and again.

*And it gets even harder because everything in our culture says that I should cancel them and try to hurt them like they hurt me. Something I've realized in the past few months, I hate cancel culture broadly, but if you've hurt me, there's nothing I want to do to you more than a good dose of canceling. **And I'll let all that hate and anger fantasies play out in my head.** And then I'm stuck there. And if you know what I'm talking about, you know that you just feel sick. Like even if*

you're 100% in the right, even if the person really did something wrong, abused you, sinned against you... you just feel gross and tired and heavy as you sit in that resentment and hurt.

I'll be the first to confess that I need a heart that forgives as Christ has forgiven me. To be so convinced of what Jesus has done for me, to have such a grasp of the mercy He has poured out for me, that it rolls over into my relationships with others. I need it.

The beauty of the Gospel is that God has forgiven us of infinitely more than anyone could ever do to us AND He gives us infinite resources to be able to do the same. He gives us His Spirit. You have THE Spirit of grace and forgiveness living inside of you Christian.

Forgiving one another is the heart of the relationships we have with our church family and with everyone else around us. The way we're to treat each other is to be marked with Gospel fueled forgiveness.

Confront/Forgive. And that is why I asked you to write down those names. We've got 5 shifts in how we treat others as Christians:

1. From lying to truth-telling
2. From sinful anger to dealing with anger
3. From stealing to giving
4. From corrupting talk to talk that builds up
5. From resentment to forgiveness

We're actually going to respond right now. We're going to give some space to pray and talk to God about the name you wrote down and then we are going to respond by confessing, confronting and forgiving one another.

You may be a little hesitant, which I get. But let me show why we're doing this. 59 times in the New Testament we see 'one another' statements. These are 59 commandments where we are called to 'do' something towards another person.

Jesus Himself affirms this, saying multiple times that if we have something against someone else, we should be reconciled to them before we even worship. And if they have something against us we should do the same! **So what we're going to do right now is do what the church is told to do all throughout the Bible.**

Look back at your name. What does a conversation with that person look like? What do you need to confront? What do you need to confess to that person?

Maybe as we were talking through the shifts you thought of someone. Maybe you see it in yourself. Where do you see:

- Living in falsehood. Where are you living in falsehood? Managing your image? Maybe you need to confess that to someone and let them in for the first time.
- Acting on sinful anger. Have you seen someone hold onto anger over big or small things? Have you lashed out at someone and need to ask for forgiveness?
- Have you held back from giving generously? Go talk to someone. Go confess it.
- Have you gossiped? Go talk to the person you gossiped to and the person you gossiped about. Does someone in your life have a tendency to 'vent', really just bash others around you? Talk to them.
- Are you holding onto bitterness? Are you withholding forgiveness? Do you know someone who is bitter and resentful towards you? Maybe another way to say it is it just feels off with them. Some things are just awkward. Talk to them.
 - I will say this. I think a lot of us probably have hurt and bitterness towards people that have done major wrong to us. Things like abuse, other horrific sin. Don't hear me wrong, I'm not saying, hey you better go resolve this today. Nope. I'm sorry those things happened to you. A lot of people on my list fit into that category. I will say this, Jesus, the Bible are clear that we're to forgive everyone, and I'm not going to sit up here and get into the ins and outs of what that may look like for you. But what this probably looks like for you is praying for that person, and then talking to a trusted friend, CG leader, or Lead team about it during this time. To bring them in for prayer and to get help starting the process of forgiveness.

For the rest of us, I want you to talk to the person on your list. Maybe they're in the room, maybe you need to make a phone call. Or maybe it needs to look like a confession. I wronged you. I sinned. Or I just made a dumb joke I'm sorry.

A Good way to know if you're there: Can you hug it out and pray for one another? If so you're good.

But we're going to do this right now. And at the heart of it is forgiveness. Treating one another as Christ treated us. When you go talk to someone you're moving towards forgiveness. When someone talks to you, the goal is forgiveness.

Let me pray for us and we're going to have space for 15 min. I'll call everyone back and we'll take communion together.

Pray.

Turn over to Matthew 18.

21 Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" 22 Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times."

Peter's doing the exact thing we just mentioned. What's the out?? Where's the line? Jesus response, seventy seven. Which is a way of basically saying, "forgive so much you couldn't really even keep a count of it. Keeps going.

23 "Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. 24 When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents.

A talent was worth about twenty years wages for a laborer. So this debt is absurd. Twenty-years of wages times 10,000. It would be somewhere around 6 billion dollars. It's preposterously large and unpayable.

25 And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made.

His entire family would now be enslaved, for generations, to pay for this debt.

26 So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' 27 And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt.

This is meant to describe you and I. Or Peter, who is asking the question. Jesus is saying that God has forgiven a debt in our sins against Him that could not possibly be measured. An absurd debt. An unthinkable sum.

28 But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii,

A denarius was about a day's wages for a laborer. So this was still a large debt. A hundred day's wages. But the point is, it's nothing compared to what this man was just forgiven for moments earlier. He's fresh off of his knees begging for his life and that of his family. He has no hope outside of the king's undeserved forgiveness.

and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.' 29 So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.'

Is that familiar? It's the exact line he just spoke to the king. The only difference is that this guy's debt is way less than the debt he owed the king.

30 He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. 31 When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. 32 Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. 33 And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' 34 And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. 35 So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."

Jesus creates a hyperbolic scenario as he often does to make a point. He describes a situation so ridiculous that no one thinks it could actually happen. Jesus is not teaching that if we forgive others it will cause God to forgive us.