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Sermon Notes

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Becoming Pure from Lying and Sinful Anger

Ephesians 4:25-27

The Gospel is intensely practical... it addresses every area of life. In these few verses, Paul addresses some key moral issues that impact human society at every level—lying and anger. The gospel does not leave us as we were, but calls us to a higher, heavenly, Christlike life.

CONTEXT:

1) The growing Church of Jesus Christ:

Paul had given us a powerful image of the rising church of Jesus Christ... a magnificent spiritual temple growing more and more glorious with every passing year; a spiritual structure in which we are placed as living stones in the wall for all eternity... combined with believers from all over the world in a supernaturally glorious unity. He has also given us the picture of the church as the Body of Christ, a living, growing reality, bound together by every supporting ligament, growing and building itself up in love as each part does its work.

But these images show the absolutely essential issue of church UNITY... the living stones must be fixed together with one another to make a powerful wall; the Body of Christ must be bound together in unity or the Body will cease to live.

Paul has given us this awesome picture of the supernatural unity of the Church:

But LYING and SINFUL ANGER that turns to BITTERNESS absolutely destroy church unity... so Paul wants them addressed by the power of the gospel...

2) The transformed (holy life)

Ephesians 4:1 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

It is NOT WORTHY of a Christian to live in lying and deceit... and it is NOT WORTHY of a Christian to live in SINFUL ANGER... the gospel is relevant to these sins and has power to transform us.

Ephesians 4:17-24 describes the continual three-step process of leading a transformed life:

First, he describes the OLD LIFE, the OLD MAN... the person you were apart from Christ...

Ephesians 4:17-24 So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. ¹⁹ Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.

Then, he speaks of the transformation that Christ brings:

²⁰ You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. ²¹ Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus.

Then Paul speaks of this continual three-step process:

Put off... made new in the mind... put on

²² You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³ to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Applied to these two issues, we are going to be taught here to PUT OFF LYING, which is part of the old life we lived in Satan's Kingdom, and to PUT ON TRUTHFULNESS, speaking truth to our neighbors; and we are going to be taught to PUT OFF SINFUL ANGER, but to put on righteous anger, and quick dealing with issues that might make us sinfully angry

This is PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY... rubber-meets the road, daily life holiness

We begin with the issue of LYING:

Ephesians 4:25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

Paul BEGINS with this, in all of the practical issues of Christian morality he addresses!

Why? It is FUNDAMENTAL to the nature of the Kingdom from which we have been rescued and the KINGDOM in which we now live

I. A Kingdom of Truth vs. a Kingdom of Lies

A. The Kingdom of Truth

1. The command begins with THEREFORE...

Ephesians 4:25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

2. The word “therefore” always causes us to look backward to what just preceded

Ephesians 4:22-24 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³ to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

- a. The essence of the OLD LIFE was the corruption by DECEITFUL DESIRES... desires which lied to us
- b. The essence of the NEW LIFE in Christ is one of TRUTH... “true righteousness and holiness”

Holman Christian Standard Bible: *Ephesians 4:24 ... put on the new man, the one created according to God's likeness in righteousness and purity of the truth.*

3. The Christian life is one of TRUTH, a WALKING IN THE LIGHT

- a. People who are converted speak of “seeing the light” or “embracing the truth”

1 Timothy 2:4 “God wants all people to be saved and to come to a KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH”

- b. The light of Christ has come and teaches us how things REALLY ARE

Ephesians 5:14 ... it is light that makes everything visible.

4. Christ is the KING of LIGHT, the KING of TRUTH

John 8:12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

John 18:37 “You are a king, then!” said Pilate. Jesus answered, “You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”

John 14:6 Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life.

So, light has come into the world in the person of Jesus Christ... by Him we can see all things as they truly are. By Christ all things are visible, all things are truly seen

So, nothing is more incompatible with this than LYING... it is utterly opposed to everything Christ stands for, everything Christ is

5. God is Truth

a. Christ is truth because he is the perfect representation of the God of truth

b. Essential to the character of God is the TRUTH...

Titus 1:2 God who cannot lie

Ponder that!! It is impossible for God to lie!

God is the essential, the everlasting truth

1 John 1:5-7 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another

So, to be a Christian is to walk in the light as He is in the light... it is to live and move in a Kingdom of TRUTH, in which Jesus is the KING of TRUTH... so saturated with truth that he actually IS the truth

Furthermore, this God of truth has EYES of BLAZING FIRE and he SEES ALL THINGS:

Revelation 2:18 These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire...

Knowing the omnipresence and omniscience of God:

Hebrews 4:13 Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

For this reason, the deepest desire of Christians is to be characterized by TRUTH in the inmost recesses of our hearts

Psalm 51:6 Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.

So... LYING should be as far removed from the life of Christian as possible...

BUT the problem is lying is of the essence of Satan's reign on earth

B. The Kingdom of Lies

1. Fundamentally: the devil is a liar

Lloyd-Jones: Just as it is true to say that nothing so represents God as truth and truthfulness, it is equally true to say that nothing so represents the nature of the devil and his kingdom as lies.

As Jesus was wrangling with his enemies, the Jewish authorities who were seeking to kill him, Jesus said this:

John 8:44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

2. His whole kingdom is based on lies

Satan fell because he lied to himself that he had the right to take God's place... to be worshiped as God:

Isaiah 14:13-14 You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. ¹⁴ I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."

Satan deceived Eve based on a LIE... essentially slandering God, implying that God was HOLDING OUT on the human race...

Genesis 3:4-5 "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. ⁵ "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Satan lied about the DEATH PENALTY for sin, and he lied about God's essential goodness and generosity

Satan's entire evil empire is based on LIES about God

All false religious systems are Satanic lies... so also all false scientific and philosophical systems that are anti-God... they are all Satanic lies

Thus we do not repudiate lies and lying in a simple moralistic way, like we want to be VIRTUOUS or MORAL and therefore TRUTHFUL...

We as Christians see DEEPER into the essential nature of lying as a Satanic issue

3. All human beings are liars

Psalm 116:10-11 I believed; therefore I said, "I am greatly afflicted." ¹¹ And in my dismay I said, "All men are liars."

Romans 3:13-14 "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips." ¹⁴ "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness."

4. Satan motivates Christians to lie... ANANIAS and SAPPHIRA had their hearts FILLED BY THE DEVIL to lie to the church about the property they'd sold...

Acts 5:3 Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?"

Acts 5:4 You have not lied to men but to God."

Then, God struck them DEAD for lying!! This was a clear display at the beginning of the Christian church for ALL TIME how serious is this issue of lying, how devastating it is to the witness of the church, to the fellowship of the Church

Lloyd-Jones: "From our standpoint as Christians, to lie is to indicate that we have an affinity with the devil. And a habitual liar belongs to the kingdom of the devil, whose whole being is a lie. He is the father of lies, there is no truth in him. He is the embodiment of evil, and to lie is what he teaches others to do."

C. Rescued from the Kingdom of Lies, Brought into the Kingdom of the Truth

Colossians 1:13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves

II. Put Away All Lies and Speak Truth

A. The Basic Command: PUT OFF LYING, SPEAK TRUTH TO ONE ANOTHER

Ephesians 4:25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

1. Put off lying like a filthy garment
2. Put it off like a corrupting robe that defiles you
3. Resolve to speak the truth, and even more importantly, to LIVE the truth

B. Lies and Sin Go Hand in Hand

1. Lying is the most prominent characteristic in the life of sin
2. You commit a sin and immediately want to COVER IT UP, to LIE about it
3. Once you tell one lie, it becomes much easier to tell another lie to connect with the first lie
4. The thing starts to snowball... it's lie upon lie, one after the other
5. Your whole life becomes a sham, a show, a hypocritical deception

Matthew 23:27-28 Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. ²⁸ In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

C. Lying Flows through Every Area of Non-Christian Society

1. Take a party for example
 - a. The room is filled with people trying to impress one another, who are lying and flattering and exaggerating stories, concocting a bubbling brew with their words in what they include and what they leave out
 - b. People become experts at shading the truth, twisting the truth, bending the truth, airbrushing the truth till it is barely recognizable
2. Take politics as another example... we just get used to politicians LYING because the truth is so unpopular
 - a. Many networks put debates or speeches by politicians through a TRUTH-O-METER and there seems to be some level of lying in just about every paragraph
 - b. Think about the way that Hitler used what became known as THE BIG LIE, TOLD OFTEN ENOUGH with enough conviction until everyone believed it... with a powerful concoction of lies he bewitched a self-pitying, economically depressed Germany into giving him dictator's power
3. Take diplomacy as another example
 - a. National diplomats become skilled at lying to each other in the national interests of their country
 - b. Great verse in Daniel 11 about two wicked kings:

Daniel 11:27 The two kings, with their hearts bent on evil, will sit at the same table and lie to each other, but to no avail, because an end will still come at the appointed time.

4. Take law enforcement and the judicial system
 - a. Police detectives are so used to lying that they just assume witnesses are doing it at every moment
 - b. How much of a court trial is spent in trying to determine the TRUTH of the case because, despite the oaths that are administered to tell the TRUTH, the WHOLE TRUTH, and NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH, witnesses still lie under oath as a regular habit

D. Lying Complicates Life

Walter Scott: "O what a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive."

As you begin to cover up your sins with a network of lies, it becomes harder and harder to remember the truth... to be who you really are

1. Every relationship in life is polluted and made more complex by lying
2. The biggest problem in the Christian life is that genuine holiness can only come about when people genuinely confess and repent from their sins and no longer try to hide them before God and act like they're not true
3. SELF and PRIDE is at the root of all lying: We lie to PROJECT A FALSE IMAGE of ourselves... we want people to think well of us, or we don't want to take responsibility for something we've done, so we lie:
 - a. Exaggeration: telling a true story with a little "enhancement"... the story just grows in the telling... everything you include and everything you leave out is done for the purpose of making people think well of you
 - b. Facebook and Instagram: projecting a false image of yourself... perhaps as a fun-loving person with tons of friends having one good time after another

E. Lying and the Christian Church

Ephesians 4:25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

1. Paul's stated reason here: lying destroys the UNITY of the BODY

2. Our Christian unity is based on shared belief in WORDS... the WORDS of the gospel, the WORD OF TRUTH

Ephesians 1:13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.

3. Our unity is based on believing words spoken by each other... and our maturity grows as we speak true doctrine to each other

Ephesians 4:15 speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.

4. We MUST SPEAK the truth to each other
 - a. We must speak true doctrine, we must speak the words of Scripture to each other
 - b. We must encourage one another in Christ, speaking words of hope and faith
 - c. We must confront each other about sin, gently and lovingly
 - d. We must build up the body by encouraging people about their spiritual gifts... if we are a body of LIARS, how can we believe that encouragement is nothing more than self-serving FLATTERY?
5. Lying is destructive of fellowship... it makes unity impossible

F. Resolve to Speak the Truth

1. If you have a sin problem, be HONEST about it... repent from it... confess your sin honestly to God and to one another
2. Don't make excuses
3. Don't exaggerate your works and achievements
4. Don't seek to puff up your outward appearance in the Christian church, becoming a whitewashed tomb
5. In speaking the truth to one another, make a differentiation between a hurtful OPINION and the TRUTH... you may think that someone's clothes are ugly or their new hairstyle is ridiculous or their laugh is embarrassing... but that may just be your own UNKIND OPINION...
6. The truth is something BIBLICAL... something that relates to the Word of God, or to actions that actually occurred...

III. Be Righteously Angry

*Ephesians 4:26-27 Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,
²⁷ and give no opportunity to the devil.*

A. The Next Issue: Human Anger

1. Like lying, sinful anger is a powerfully destructive force in the Christian life
2. How many marriages have ended because of sinful anger?
3. How many church splits have come about because of sinful anger?
4. In larger society, how many people are behind bars today because of a moment of unreasoning anger that consumed them and drove them to some terrible momentary action?
5. Anger is a powerful force that must be addressed by the power of the gospel and the indwelling Spirit

B. Paul Actually Seems to Command Anger: “Be Angry”

1. NIV says “In your anger, do not sin.”
2. But most translations: “Be angry, and do not sin”
3. It seems to differentiate between righteous anger and sinful anger
4. Paul is quoting Psalm 4:4 in which David is crying out against the wicked... God tells him and all the righteous to be patient, to offer right sacrifices, to know that God has set apart the godly for himself and will sustain, protect and bless them. Though he doesn’t say it in Psalm 4, the regular teaching in David’s Psalms is that God will judge the wicked in his own good time

C. Righteous Anger is Right

1. Some people counsel that it is NEVER APPROPRIATE for a Christian to be angry ever
2. They actually would advocate a kind of suppression of all motions of anger... holding it down, pushing it inward, like a capped volcano
3. But scripture indicates that there is such a thing as RIGHTEOUS ANGER
4. The simple command here implies it: “Be angry”
5. The clearest proof of this: Jesus himself got angry

Mark 3:1-6 *Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand. ² And they watched Jesus, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. ³ And he said to the man with the withered hand, "Come here." ⁴ And he said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. ⁵ And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. ⁶ The Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.*

John 2:14-17 *In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. ¹⁵ So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶ To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!" ¹⁷ His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me."*

This is actually an EXCELLENT DISPLAY of righteous anger... Christ's zeal was measured and patient... he took the time to sit down and weave together a whip from cords... his motive was zeal for the glory of God's house

6. More than that, the God of the Bible gets righteously angry

Numbers 32:13 *The LORD's anger burned against Israel and he made them wander in the desert forty years, until the whole generation of those who had done evil in his sight was gone.*

Romans 1:18 ¶ *The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness*

Psalms 7:11 *God is a righteous judge, a God who expresses his wrath every day.*

7. Yet God is SLOW TO ANGER... extremely patient:

Numbers 14:18 *'The LORD is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion.*

God has an extremely long fuse... waited for four hundred years for the "sin of the Amorites" in the land of Canaan to reach its full measure.

8. So... it is actually RIGHT for Christians to feel righteous anger against the wickedness of sinners in this world... it's actually WRONG to feel nothing when you read about terrible injustices...

a. Abortion... Millions of babies aborted every year

b. The mocking of God by popular culture should make you angry

- c. The martyring of Christians by terrorists in Syria should make you feel angry
- d. Frankly, your own stubbornness in sin, the habitual way you continue to do the very thing you hate should arouse a zeal and passion inside you

Romans 7:15 I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.

Romans 7:24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?

Job 42:6 I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.

- e. It should BOTHER YOU that there are hundreds of millions around the world who have never heard the name of Christ
- f. It should arouse anger inside you when you hear of wicked governments in the Sudan or other east African nations who use starvation of the people as a political strategy
- g. It should make you angry to hear of the graft and corruption of Haitian government officials who use the earthquake in their country to arouse sympathy for their suffering countrymen, but who siphon off the millions of dollars of aid that flowed into Haiti
- h. Racism should make you angry... so should all displays of prideful arrogance on the part of leaders and athletes and movie stars who flaunt immorality
- i. IF WE FEEL NOTHING, then how does the Spirit of Christ live in us, who was so AROUSED by the sins of others????!!
- j. YET, we should continue to remember that God is able to save sinners... and to find a way to separate the sin from the sinner in the hope that God will grant them repentance

IV. Be Not Sinfully Angry, But Quick to Forgive

“Be angry, but do not sin...”

A. BUT Most Human Anger is NOT RIGHTEOUS AT ALL!!

- 1. So much of our anger is based on PRIDE... or INCONVENIENCE or some other carnal motive
 - a. Cain become very angry out of jealousy at his brother Abel, because God accepted Abel’s offering but not his... PRIDE

- b. Moses became angry at Israel and struck the rock twice... losing his place in the Promised Land
 - c. Nebuchadnezzar was enraged when Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego wouldn't bow down to his idol... he lost his mind and become irrational
 - d. Saul was enraged at David because he was jealous of him, especially when the women sang this song, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands"... PRIDE
 - e. King Ahab was angry when Naboth wouldn't sell him his vineyard
 - f. King Asa was angry at a prophet for telling him the truth
 - g. King Herod was enraged at baby Jesus because he was threatened by his being called "King of the Jews"
2. Look at your own displays of anger in an average week:
- a. What makes you get angry at your spouse or your kids
 - b. Think about when your kids embarrass you in public and you are tempted to discipline them in anger... are you zealous for the glory of God at that moment, or are you more concerned about your own reputation...PRIDE
 - c. When your kids foolishly break something that will take time and money to fix, aren't you angry because of the INCONVENIENCE their immaturity will cause you
 - d. When you become angry at inanimate objects that hinder you in some way, doesn't this show how unrighteous our anger can become?
 - e. We become angry at other drivers because they inconvenience us in some way, making our lives a little harder
3. Be very SUSPICIOUS of your own anger... it is usually a display of carnal weakness and sin

B. James Calls Human Anger "Moral Filth"

James 1:19-21 My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, ²⁰ for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. ²¹ Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

He tells us to GET RID OF our filthy anger... it does not bring about God's righteousness

C. A Settled Angry Lifestyle is Great Sin

1. We must never be “bad-tempered people”... easily angered

1 Corinthians 13:4-5 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

2. Christians should not be IRRITABLE, IRASCIBLE, GRUMPY
3. This is a CHOICE we make
4. America is becoming an angrier and angrier culture... more and more examples of rage in our public lives... not just road rage but life rage... maximum illustration: people who are filled with hatred toward humanity and gun down innocent people in public places... but far less is just the daily anger that seems to characterize so many people:
5. Some have “pet peeves” in life... there’s a website dedicated to PET PEEVES called “get annoyed.com”

Drivers who don't use a turn signal.

People who drink directly out of the milk/orange juice container.

People that don't use coasters.

People who blame anything but themselves for THEIR failure.

People who sit next to you on public transportation even when there are other seats available.

Noisy eaters.

When people take 20 napkins, use one, then throw them all away.

People who talk too loudly on their cell phone in public

Socks getting lost in the laundry

When a person makes a sucking noise with a straw when the cup becomes almost empty.

People with bad table manners.

People who take too long to accelerate when the light changes because they’re using their smartphone

People that interrupt you

6. But going through life constantly annoyed and irritated by these kinds of things seems a direct violation of the Christian life:

Philippians 4:12-13 I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ¹³ I can do everything through him who

7. Even worse: FITS OF RAGE (Galatians 5:20)
 - a. Excessive, violent anger; loud outbursts
 - b. Being out of control, shaking violently, throwing things
 - c. Completely sinful!!!
8. Worst of all: SETTLED ANGER... long-term anger... BITTERNESS, VENGEANCE
 - a. Someone has been sinned against... and they can never forgive
 - b. They live the rest of their lives in a quiet SEETHING state... corrupted by anger
 - c. Unforgiveness is a corrosive acid that destroys their souls

D. The High Cost of Anger

1. Jesus linked anger to MURDER

Matthew 5:21-22 "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' ²² But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca, 'is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

2. How many people are in PRISON right now because anger took over and they did something they will have cause to regret the rest of their lives
3. How many marriages have ended because one or both of them had anger issues and said things they can never take back that destroyed the relationship?
4. How many parents have abused children in corporal punishment because they were sinfully angry when disciplining?
5. Anger is like a DRUG... it changes you physiologically, clouds your judgment, takes over and brings you where you do not want to go

E. Quick to Forgive

Ephesians 4:26 Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry

1. This is a strong advocacy for quick forgiveness
2. Jesus urged us to seek reconciliation with someone immediately

Matthew 5:23-25 "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. ²⁵ "Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still with him on the way, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison.

3. So, in marriage... if you are having a conflict, resolve it as quickly as you can... letting the sun go down on your anger means the greater possibility of settled BITTERNESS
4. Also within the Body of Christ, we must get rid of anger and seek reconciliation QUICKLY... WITHOUT DELAY
5. The longer it takes to come to forgiveness and reconciliation, the greater the danger of bitterness is

V. Do Not Give the Devil a Place to Operate

A. Anger is a DANGER ZONE in which the Devil Has Great Power

Ephesians 4:27 do not give the devil a foothold.

1. When Christians are angry at each other and refuse to forgive and reconcile quickly, they give the devil a BASE OF OPERATIONS from which he can wage war on the church or family
2. Think of the BEACHHEAD of Normandy after the D-Day landings... that is a “place”, a “foothold” from which the Allies waged war
3. So also bitterness and unforgiveness is a “place” a “base of operations” from which Satan can work terrible mischief
 - a. Factions and divisions can creep up
 - b. A “root of bitterness” can spring up which bears bitter fruit for years

4. Matthew 5: So if you have sinned against someone and you are aware that they are upset with you, leave your gift in front of the altar and GO IMMEDIATELY to reconcile that person to yourself
5. Matthew 18: If someone else has sinned against you, it says to go and show that person the sin, lest you become bitter against them

B. The Remedy is the Gospel

1. Sinful anger, vengeance, bitterness is diametrically opposed to the grace of the gospel
2. We were God's enemies, reconciled to Him by the blood of Christ
3. God has forgiven all our sins by sheer grace... how can we be settled into anger with another sinner

Matthew 18:23-35 "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. ²⁵ Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. ²⁶ "The servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' ²⁷ The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. ²⁸ "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded. ²⁹ "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.' ³⁰ "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. ³¹ When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened. ³² "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. ³³ Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' ³⁴ In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. ³⁵ "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."

4. Bitter anger and settled unforgiveness is opposite to the gospel
5. COME TO CHRIST... to free you from anger

Summary:

Paul is revealing to us the ramifications of the gospel of Jesus Christ

We are called on to "live a life worthy of the Lord" by the power of the Spirit

That involves freedom from LYING and SINFUL ANGER... may God purify us
as a Church and cause us to live in the freedom of pure love!!