

Make Peace - LG Study

Scripture Focus: Colossians 3:12-17 & Ephesians 4:17-32

We're continuing our journey thinking about how we can Live Together Well.

Step through the passage from Sunday: Colossians 3:12-17

- v12a - **how does Paul describe God's people?**
 - [chosen, Holy & dearly loved]
 - this is our identity - it is foundational
 - **How might understanding our identity affect our ability to forgive?**
- v12b - What should we clothe ourselves with?
 - [compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience]
 - these are characteristics we should all look to develop
 - if we do, forgiving is easier and more productive - (possibly even less necessary)
- v13 - this is where the rubber hits the road - where you get to put those newly developed characteristics into practice - and in addition, to practice forgiveness
 - forgive as the Lord forgave you
 - Lord's prayer (forgive us as we forgive)
- v14 - having clothed yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility & gentleness, and practiced forgiveness, we should then put on the overcoat of? ___ [love]
 - love trumps everything
 - **Why is love described as binding everything together?**
 - **How does love enable forgiveness?**
 - **What happens when we try to forgive without love?**
- v15 - the result of developing the earlier characteristics, practicing forgiveness, and "put on love", how does Paul suggest our hearts can be

transformed?

- [the peace of Christ can rule there]
- **what's the relationship between forgiveness, peace & thankfulness?**
- v16 - **What is the "message of Christ" that Paul says we much allow to "dwell within us richly"?**
 - notice it's not all plain sailing though - we still need to teach & admonish one another
 - but notice how Paul says we should do it...
 - [through Psalms, hymns & songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts"]
- v17 - Paul seems to acknowledge that living together well will look different for each of us in different circumstances. **But whatever it looks like, what does he say is non-negotiable?**
 - [do it all for God's glory - in the name of Jesus and giving thanks to God the Father]

Going Deeper:

Read: Ephesians 4:17-32

This passage is a slightly more detailed version of what Paul wrote to the Colossians. He opens by calling the Ephesian Christians to live a different life to that of the Gentiles, reminding them of the difference that the truth of Jesus made to them, and their call to be made new in the attitude of their minds. He says they should put off their old selves and put on their new selves to be like God.



"be made new in the attitude of your minds" Eph. 4:23

My natural, human responses often need to be kept in check. I have to be deliberate in my response to difficult situations, rather than simply allowing my mind/heart to react. Responses involve the brain - reactions only engage the central nervous system. But however natural or ingrained our reactions may be or become, it is still possible to be made new the attitude of our minds.

Question:

- which of your "natural" attitudes do you most struggle to keep under control?

Verses 25-32 are full of good, practical, common sense relational advice that we'd be wise to put into practice.

At University our first module was "Biblical Studies" and I still remember the lecturer explaining v27 in a really helpful way, such that any time I read it I still change the language.

When Paul warns us not to "give the devil a foothold" in Ephesians 4:27, he uses the Greek word "topos" which carries rich implications about territory and legal rights. Just as a foreign embassy represents sovereign territory within another nation - with its own jurisdiction, diplomatic immunity, and protected status - so too can areas of persistent sin become like sovereign territory for the enemy within our lives. The word was used in military contexts to describe a strategic position or base of operations, suggesting that what begins as a small compromise can become a launching pad for wider influence.

This understanding transforms how we view things like unresolved anger & unforgiveness, which Paul specifically connects to this warning. Rather than seeing sin merely as isolated acts, we recognize that persistent sin can establish something like "diplomatic rights" - a protected space from which the enemy can extend his influence into other areas of our lives. Just as an embassy's sovereignty must be legally granted by the host nation, these footholds only exist because we've given permission through our choices. This highlights both our responsibility in establishing such territory and our authority through Christ to revoke those rights and reclaim surrendered ground.



"Do not give the devil an embassy..." Eph. 4:27

Question:

- where have you given the devil a foothold/embassy from which to take advantage?
- what do you need to do to reclaim that ground?

