

PP Together!

Part 6-Ephesians 4:32 (page 978 pew Bible)

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PP (Music Video) That song, by the group, *The Farm*, refers to an event that happened during WWI on Christmas Eve in 1914, along the Western front in France
 The war had been costly with more than a million men already killed, leaving bodies scattered between the British and German trenches called '*No man's land*'
 But on this night, all along the German trenches could be seen candle-lit Christmas trees while a German baritone voice began singing the carol, Silent Night
 One British soldier later wrote, "*They finished their carol and we thought that we ought to retaliate, so we sang, The First Noël*" and when we finished, they all began clapping
 Both sides joined in on *O Come All Ye Faithful*, two nations singing the same carol in the middle of a war with each other
 Eventually that cease-fire spread over a 500 mile stretch of the Western Front
 The Germans rolled out barrels of beer for the British while the Brits shared plum pudding
 There were even soccer matches between the two sides, and though eventually the officers commanded battle to restart, some later admitted they shot high over the heads of their new friends
 In the midst of a terrible war, the birth of the Prince of Peace had a powerful effect

What is the effect that Jesus Christ can have in His church, between people who hurt each other
 In marriages, in families, in friends, on school playgrounds, and college dorms?

Can we cease-fire, and forgive?

Martin Luther King, Jr once said, **PP** "*Forgiveness is not an occasional act, it is a constant attitude.*" Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

How do we develop that attitude and live out the beauty of **Ephesians 4:32**?

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

If we had just looked at this verse, we would be slammed under an unbearable weight
 How on earth can we do this, for as Alistair Begg once said, '*The whole world tilts toward pain*'
 We offend and are offended, we hurt others and are hurt by others, we sin against and are sinned against and the result is pain after pain

Certainly we cannot be kind, tenderhearted, forgiving in our own effort

To find the keys to how this is impossible, we have to look at the context surrounding this verse

Context is critical and we can understand that with the saying we've all heard: $1+1=2$

If you go the store and put a dozen eggs in the cart, but then decide you have a lot of baking to do and add another dozen, then you have two dozen eggs... $1+1=2$

But now change the context: if you add a drop of water to another drop of water, you don't get two drops of water, you get one larger one

$1+1$ doesn't always 2

Context is king they say, so it is important to put this verse back into its surrounding context and most modern translations of the Bible help us with this

The ESV, like most translations, puts some helpful titles on sections of the bible

These have been added to the bible, not as divinely inspired headings, but as handles to help us organize and understand what the author is about to say

PP Above **4:17** in the ESV is the title, '**The New Life**', and above **5:1** is, '**Walk in Love**'

These two headings help lead us to the context of **verse 32**, and they help provide our outline
“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”
Ephesians 4:32

PP 1-The ‘new self’ is necessary

Let’s just read through this passage, starting with **verse 17** and I’ll explain as we go
“No longer as the Gentiles do” is not an ethnic slur, but a reference to an unbeliever
 Don’t live like an unbeliever anymore...because their minds are darkened, they have no light,
 they are in ‘ignorance’ without knowledge and do not have life within them
PP Romans 1:19-20 tells us that ***“what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For His invisible attributes, namely, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.”***

That passage tells us that many do not want to admit this truth, so they suppress it
 This is how, **Ephesians 4:18**, people become darkened in their understanding, the light of truth
 goes out like a dimmer switch in their souls, and when it does, sinfulness increases
 For the Christian, the light of understanding has been turned on, **verse 20**, for *the* light, Jesus,
 has shined in the darkness of our souls, so we can see and believe on Him for salvation
 When you believed in Jesus, entrusting your life to Him, several life changing blessings
 happened in you
 Your old life, your old calloused heart was taken out of you, and you were given a new heart, a
 new center of our being
 Paul uses the language of old, worthless clothes, and new, beautiful clothes
 With salvation, God cleans out your wardrobe, your moral actions patterns of living, because
 they don’t fit, they don’t look good on the child of the heavenly Father
 The old clothes, your old nature, when you look in the mirror of God’s Word, look terrible on the
 Christian
 The way you used to live Christian doesn’t fit on your new life, and it isn’t in your new wardrobe

To become a Christian is to make a definite decision to put those old ways off, to strip them off
 and in their place, put on ***‘the new self, created after the likeness of Christ’***

What you have been given is not an improved old you, but a God-created new you-**4:24**
 And Paul has already said in Ephesians what we created for

PP “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:10

This is our new life...created in Christ Jesus to live in a good way, a beautiful way

Why has God done this for His people?

I want to say it this way...God has a relentless desire for His church, ***‘the body of Christ’*** **4:12**
 He loves the church, and He is building the church up for a dwelling place for His Spirit **2:22**
 The church made up of both Jews and Gentiles saved by the death and resurrection of Christ
 Did you know, that nobody ever had a clue that God would create the church?
3:5 tells us that no human beings saw it coming
3:10 tells us that no angel or demon, ‘rulers and authorities’, none of them saw it coming
 It was a mystery that only God knew, and He new from eternity past

In the church He would abolish the *‘dividing wall of hostility’ 2:14*

If you visited the Temple of God in Jerusalem you would walk into the massive Court of Gentiles

If you were not a Jew, that was as far into the temple precinct you could go, for on the low wall that surrounded the next court in was a sign hung at intervals

It read, **PP** *“Whoever is captured past this point will have himself to blame for his subsequent death.”*

That wall was referred to as the dividing wall of hostility, separating Jew from Gentile

But in the Christ, that barrier was torn down, and the two joined into one body called the church

Do you see that we are back along the western front, in no man’s land, playing soccer with our enemy because the prince of peace has come?

This is the effect of Christ, to bring warring parties together, to reconcile those at odds, and to heal relationships that have been broken

I had a friend of mine in Uganda message me this past week, and asked how America was doing

I told him that we are an incredibly divided country right now and he promised to pray for us

The answer to the division in our country is not politics, it is not Gillette ads on toxic masculinity, it is not green deals or steel walls

The answer is the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, and the church has been created to be the display of togetherness and that brings us to Ephesians 4:32

PP 2-We are to walk in love with one another in the church

“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us...” Ephesians 4:32-5:2

You would do yourself a favor by unseeing the words ‘Chapter 5’, for there is no break between **4:32** and **5:1**, as the word ‘**Therefore**’ tells us

We imitate God, we look like our heavenly Father when we’re kind to one another, tenderhearted and forgiving

PPPP i. Kindness is the character of God, **PP** *“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 is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.” Luke 6:35*

PP Kindness comes in to its beauty when it is on display to those who most do not deserve it

In fact, **PP** *“God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?” Romans 2:4*

So first we have kindness, displayed wonderfully when given to the undeserving

Is there anyone at Cornerstone who is ungrateful, harsh, or undeserving of your kindness?

You have a new life, the power of God to be kind to that person, and the Prince of Peace is telling you to put your new clothes on display and walk in the good works created for you

We are to be **PP** ii. *‘tenderhearted’*, meaning to feel compassion in the deepest part of our beings

It is common when seeing someone in terrible suffering, that your hand goes to your stomach,

It feels like a kick to the gut and that is the word tenderhearted...you feel the pain of another

The Christian has been created in the likeness of God, and Christ repeatedly demonstrated a tender heart toward those helpless in their suffering

PP iii. Then we come to *'forgiving one another'*

There are 3 Greek words for forgive, and this one is an attitude and not about removing of guilt

You can see this attitude even in the Greek word, which is **PP** *charizomai*

Charis is the word grace, we named our daughter Carissa, which means grace

PP *charizomai* is to show yourself gracious

It is to freely give grace to another who does not deserve it and has not earned it

Even if the person has not said sorry, or repented, the attitude and heart of grace is there

It is the exact opposite of what is found in **Ephesians 4:31**, *"Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice."*

Put these out of our hearts, and have an attitude of grace toward those who have wronged you

This is the forgiving heart of David toward Saul who kept trying to kill him

It is the same heart in Joseph toward the very brothers who sold him into slavery

It is the heart of Jesus Who prayed that His Father would forgive those crucifying Him

It must be our attitude, as **PP** *"it is [your] glory to overlook an offense."* **Proverbs 19:11**

Forgiveness is the highest human virtue, the glory of men and women

PP *"Never does the human soul appear so strong and noble as when it forgoes revenge and dares to forgive an injury."* E.H. Chapin

John MacArthur said forgiveness is **PP** *'The most god-like act you can do'*

And this gracious attitude toward the offender is to be initiated by us and it is to be a continual practice for the one who has been *'created after the likeness of God'* (4:24)

For those who put off the old clothes of the sinful nature, and put on the new clothes of the new nature, we are to be dressed in forgiveness at all times and in all places

We graciously let the hurts go, and in this way we imitate God, show that we are His children, and walk in love

The Christian has the power, the wardrobe, the motivation to love others, even the underserved who hurt us, by being kind, tenderhearted and forgiving

This is how we are to walk in love, now please hear me...with one another, together in the church

Christian, you have put off your old self, and put on your new, you are a new creation designed to live like God, a member in God's family, the church

Therefore, we are to be kind to each other in the church, tenderhearted, forgiving one another

Always having a gracious disposition and attitude even especially to those who hurt us

This is how we walk in love, live a life of love, and in doing so, we imitate God Who in Christ has forgiven us

Is there someone you need to display kindness, tenderheartedness and a forgiving attitude to? Don't wait Christian, you have all you need to begin today!

Amen?

Pray