

A Kind & Gracious People

Ephesians 4:32 & Thoughts the Year Ahead

Introduction

- As we consider the prior year and look forward to the year ahead as individuals and families, we should also give time to consider what kind of people God has called us to be. God has intended that His people would be formed and shaped by His Word and Spirit and He has intended for that to happen within a local body of believers (church).
- God has been exceedingly good to our church throughout its history, allowing us to proclaim the Gospel of His grace while conforming us into a people who are characterized by that same grace. We must not, however, take that for granted!

Main Point: In a world that increasingly lacks grace, we who have heard and believed the gospel of God's grace have an opportunity to _____ that grace in our relationships, both inside and outside of the church.

Living as a Gospel Formed People — Ephesians 4:32

The Wider Context: Ephesians was written by Paul so that believers might know that which is true of them in Christ (Eph. 1-3) and might therefore live as the church of Jesus Christ in accordance with that truth (Eph. 4-6).

Eph. 1:3—Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places

Eph. 4:1—I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called

The Immediate Context: 4:17-32 includes a series of contrasts. As those who are in Christ, believers should be characterized by the actions of the “new self” and should put off the “old self” (4:22-24). Of specific concern to Paul is how believers speak to and about one another (4:25-30), with both our attitudes and actions in view (4:31-32).

Eph. 4:30-31—³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

Eph. 4:32

“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”

Important Observations:

1. The verse has a clear grammatical structure:

Imperative (Command): “Be kind to one another, [be] tenderhearted...”

What does that look like? ...forgiving one another...

In what way? ...as God in Christ forgave you.”

2. The command focuses on that which should characterize us as believers in relation to one another:

Be: kind—*χρηστός* (*chrēstos*)—Of things: easy, pleasant, good; of people: kind, benevolent.

Luke 6:35—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.

Rom. 2:4—Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

Matt. 11:30—For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

1 Pet. 2:3—if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

tenderhearted—*εὐσπλαγχνος* (*eusplagchnos*)—Lit. good bowels; fig. compassionate or tender-hearted.

⇒ In the ancient world, the bowels were considered the seat of the violent passions (anger, love), but the Hebrews considered them the seat of the tender affections (compassion, tender mercies, etc.), hence their association with the “heart.”

1 Pet. 3:8—Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind.

Key Point: Kindness and a tender heart should characterize both our _____ and _____ towards one another.

⇒ In our attitude, we should be _____ and to extend the benefit of the _____.

⇒ In our actions, we should seek to do _____ and to ease one another's _____.

3. Kindness and compassion are shown most clearly in the act of forgiveness.

forgiving—χαρίζομαι (*charízomai*)—To do something pleasant; to give graciously or freely; to forgive, restore, preserve.

Rom. 8:32—He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

Col. 2:13—And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses,

Key Point: The implication here is that there will be situations in the church where it will be necessary to extend _____ to others.

⇒ *It should be humbly* _____.

⇒ *It should be graciously* _____.

4. The grace shown to one another should flow from the grace that we ourselves have received.

“as God in Christ [graciously] forgave you”

Eph. 1:5-7—⁵he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace..

(1) God fully recognized the reality of _____ and its consequences.

(2) Moved by love, God purposed to send Christ to _____ in the place of sinners.

(3) God will graciously _____ sinners who trust in Christ because the penalty for sin has been paid and His wrath has been satisfied.

Key Point: If we are to forgive in this manner, we must remember the _____ and its implications for us.

⇒ *We must face the reality of who we _____ and what we _____ apart from Christ.*

⇒ *We must embrace the reality of who we _____ in Christ and therefore what we can _____ by His power.*

Rom. 6:4—We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

The Forgiven, Forgiving

“Everyone says forgiveness is a lovely idea until he has something to forgive.”

—C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

1. What could our personal relationships be like if we were people who were continually _____ by the Gospel?

2. What could our church be like if we reflected God’s _____ to us in our attitudes and actions towards one another?

Col. 3:12-14—¹²Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

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