

Unwholesome Words and Grieving the Spirit
Ephesians 4:29-30
August 16, 2020, Pastor Jeremy Cagle

Well hello everyone and welcome to another service here at Grace Fellowship Chilliwack. Before we get our sermon started this morning, I just want to let you know about a few things going on in the life of our church. The Coronavirus has slowed things down a little bit, but they haven't come to a grinding halt. We still have a lot of ministry going on. And one thing we have on the calendar, as you saw in your emails last week, is that we're still moving ahead with our Spring Conference next year. We're still planning on holding that event.

If you're new to our church every year we host a spring conference here at GFC. Along with Grace Church on 99 in Squamish, we have a Bible conference where we invite a speaker to come talk on a subject from the Bible. And next year we're excited to announce that we have Dr. Ted Tripp, the author of *Shepherding a Child's Heart*; he's going to come talk about the subject of parenting. That'll be the theme of our conference next year. It will be on the topic of parenting. Just out of curiosity, how many of you have read the book *Shepherding a Child's Heart* before? Yeah, quite a number of our people have, so you're familiar with his ministry. But if you're not, Dr. Tripp has been a pastor for several years in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and he is a graduate of Westminster Theological Seminary, where he got his doctorate of ministry and pastoral counseling, with a specialty in parenting – that's been a big focus in his ministry throughout the years. He's written and spoken a lot on the subject of raising a family; so we invited him to come here, because we have a lot of young families here at GFC, don't we? We have a lot of young moms and dads. We have a gym full of them next door. Their children are peeling paint off the walls as we speak. I'm looking at the camera there and all of our people that have got their children in the room, but this is exciting for them. It's going to be such a blessing for them this year. We're also doing this because as you know, there's a lot of books being written on the topic of parenting. There's just a lot of material coming out on this subject and can be very confusing. If you are a young parent if you're a young mom or dad, it can be hard to know what to do with all that because one guy says one thing one guy says another one book comes out and then a year later another book comes in refutes the whole thing and it gets really built bewildering. And so, Dr. Trip does a good job of clearing up the confusion with that. He does a good job of explaining what the Scriptures say and so he's coming out to join us next year. Obviously, this will depend on what happens with the Coronavirus, so a lot of that will depend on what happens with the pandemic. But hopefully the borders will be open by then and he'll be able to come into Canada. But if you want to write those dates down, that'll be April 16th through the 17th. If you want to put that on your calendar. He's planning on coming out to Chilliwack April 16th through the 17th and we're really looking forward to that as a church.

I do have some other announcements as well related to the fall. Care groups are going to be starting up soon, as Jim mentioned in the announcements. We'll also start up the men's Bible

study, and I believe the women's Bible study is kicking off as well. But I'll give you some more information for that next Sunday.

But for this week, while we're on the subject of parenting and practical topics like that, I want to invite you to turn your Bibles to a book that talks about that this morning. Please open your Bible to the book of Ephesians.

The Book of Ephesians is full of practical subjects in this book of the Bible, practical topics, and we're in chapter four today. We have a practical thing to consider this morning, but I would like to read this passage to you before we get started. If you would read in Ephesians 4:17, there the Word of God says this:

So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that You walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. But you did not learn Christ in this way, if indeed you have heard him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which is in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH, EACH ONE OF YOU WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another. BE ANGRY, AND YET DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity. He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labour, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need. Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 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, tender hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Just to say a few words about this before we dive into our passage, if you've been with us for a little while, you'll know that we've been in the book of Ephesians for some time now. We've been in it since the Fall of '19, which means we've been in it for about a year. This is actually the longest we've ever been in a book of the Bible as a church. This is the longest we've ever spent in

one series, and we're doing that because there's a lot in here. There's a lot to dig out in the book of Ephesians. And we're calling this the "All of God" series because that's what the book is about. That's the theme of it. It tells us that all the blessings and riches and treasures of the Christian life come from His hand and not from us. Which is important because there's a great tendency in Christian circles today to say that we have a part to play in our salvation. There's a great tendency to say that we meet God halfway; you know, He does His part, and we do ours and we meet somewhere in the middle. And the Bible doesn't say that. The Bible doesn't say that we meet God halfway. It doesn't say that we have a part to play in this because we can't. We're helpless. So, God has to do it all.

If you look in chapter four, this is one of the ways Paul says this in chapter four. He relates this to the mind. He relates this to the way people think. We don't always look at it this way, but sin affects your mind. It completely ruins it. If you look in verse 17, Paul says that the Gentiles or the lost world have a futile mind, that means they have a useless mind or a worthless mind because it doesn't work anymore. It can't do what it's supposed to do. And it says, they have a dark understanding in verse 18, which means they can't see; the lights have turned out in their head. They can't tell what's right and wrong anymore. We live in a world like that, don't we? Do we live in a world where people can't tell what's right and wrong anymore? The most basic common-sense stuff. You can abort a child in the womb, and then you can't determine what gender it is. Things like this. The lights have gone out in the mind of the world. You also see that it says they have a hard heart and they're callous which means they don't feel anything. They don't have any affection for God anymore. This has even impacted their emotions, which means that if God were going to save them, if God was going to save the lost world, here's what He would have to do: He would have to do everything. He would have to do at all. Lost people can't meet God halfway because they can't do anything. They can't even think right. Which is what the text goes on to say if you look in verse 20, Paul writes, and he says,

But you did not learn Christ in this way, if indeed you have heard him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self,

I've told you before that phrase, "lay aside" in verse 22, "and put on the new man," it's actually in the past tense in Greek to show that this has already occurred. So, it could be translated "In reference to your former manner of life, you have already laid aside the old self, and you've already put on the new." And the question is, why did you do that? Where did you get the strength to put aside the old self? The answer is it all came from God, God did it all. You don't do this in your own strength. You do it in his strength. You don't put off sin in your own power, you do it in His power.

I mention that because it's important for our passage this morning. This is all kind of an introduction to this. But I mention this because I hear so many people say they feel powerless in the Christian life. Do you guys know what I mean? Do you talk to people like that? They feel helpless. Because they sin and they can't stop. They mess up and they can't quit because it's so hard. It's so difficult. They try and they try and they try, and they fail. They work and they work and they work, and they feel like a hamster on a wheel. You know the answer to that is you know the solution to that is you need to cry out to God. That's what this passage says. You need to call out for His mercy because He does it all. You do nothing. I mention this because I also talked to people who tell me they feel like a failure in the Christian life. You guys have probably talked to someone like that. They feel like they're such a hypocrite because they sin so much. They do it so often to the point that they feel guilty all the time. This is a real problem in Chilliwack, where people come from so many different legalistic backgrounds, and they come from places where it's just rules, rules, rules; it's just commandments and laws to the point they still feel especially guilty. You know what the answer to that is? The same thing. You need to call out to God.

One Irish woman put it this way, she says, "I tremble on the Rock, but the Rock doesn't tremble under me."

The Christian life is about grace; it's not about works. It's about mercy; it's not about the law. And the only way to make it through the Christian life is through the power of God. You do it in His power not in your own. You do put off sin. You do lay aside the old man. You do all the things we're going to talk about this morning, but you do it in His strength; and this is especially important for this passage. It's especially important for where we're at today. If you look in verse 25, I'll explain this to you in a moment, but if you notice verse 25 starts off with the word "therefore" which points you back to what was said before. It says that as a result of all of these things, as a result of what God has done in you, renewing your mind and putting off the old man, here's what you need to do.

"Therefore laying aside falsehoods, speak truth to one another." Then in verse 26, "be angry and yet do not sin." The next verse, "He who steals must steal no longer." Verse 29 is our focus for today "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth." But Paul's point is that this is what the power of God does. This is what He accomplishes in your life, He makes you put off sin. We said last week, you need to lay aside falsehood or lying. Speak the truth instead, you need to lay aside your sinful anger. Someone reminded me this week about the Journal of Upsets; we talked about the Journal of Upsets last week, but all the times you get frustrated in your flesh, that needs to stop. Stop stealing. But the point in all of this is that you need to change. That's what Paul is saying here. If you have renewed your mind and experienced the power of God, you need to be a new man in each of these areas.

I remember talking to a man here in British Columbia several years ago told me that when he became a Christian, he was a mess. His life was a total disaster. He was on drugs; he said he was a slave to them. He was a thief, and he was living in adultery. He was living with a woman he wasn't married to. And someone at a campground came up to him and told him the gospel. And someone, I don't know where, came up and told him that Jesus died on the cross for sinners, He died that they would be saved; and he believed that. He trusted in that and he said that immediately he was convicted of all that sin. Immediately, he knew it was all wrong. Nobody had to sit down and explain it all to him. He was convicted in his conscience. So he said, over the course of time, by the grace of God, he got off drugs, he quit stealing, and he married the woman he was living with. But the point is that this is what the power of God does. This is what the Lord does in our life. He changes us like that, from our sins.

We get so discouraged because we look at all the sin around us and all the evil and all the bad things. We turn on the news and it's just bad news. We get so discouraged and we say, "What are we going to do?" We're going to do the same thing they did 2000 years ago. We're going to point people to Christ. Christ changes all that. J. C Ryle said that a heart that has truly tasted the grace of Christ will instinctively hate sin. It will not be able to help it. Sin will be abhorrent to it; it will be disgusting. And that's what Paul says here. That that's what this passage says, sin should be disgusting to you, it should be abhorrent. You have a new nature now. You have a new man living inside of you, and that new man hates sin. And as we're going to see this morning, you also have the Holy Spirit living in you, and He really hates it. He despises your sin, and this is what we're going to talk about today.

So if you're taking notes in Ephesians 4, we're going to talk about two more sins to put off in this passage. That's our outline for today. That's what we're talking about this morning. In Ephesians 4:29-30, we're just following along with the Apostle Paul here, and he gives us two more sins to put off. If you were with us last week, you'll know that we started this list and we talked about some of these sins that we need to put off in verses 25 through 28. But we're going to talk about it again this week, as Paul does it again. It's like he couldn't say enough about this subject. Just so you don't get the wrong idea in your mind, just so you don't get the wrong impression, Salvation is all of God. It's all of grace, but you have to repent of your sin. That's what you do in response to the grace; that's what you do in response to God.

We have a holy God, we just sang about that in our worship time, and that holy God despises things that go against His law. So, you have to despise it too. And so, what Paul does in this passage, is he just points it out to you, he just shows you what this sin looks like that you have to turn away from. And this morning we're going to look at two more sins to put off in this passage. The first one is the sin of unwholesome words. That's where he begins the list today. The first sin to put off in this passage is the sin of unwholesome words, which refers to the sin of sinful speech. It refers to the sin of using your tongue and in a sinful way. I think we understand, you

can use your tongue in one of two ways. James chapter one alluded to that. You can use it for sin, or you can use it for righteousness. You can use your tongue, your mouth to glorify God or you can use it to offend Him. And what Paul says here is you need to use it to glorify Him. If you read in verse 29, he goes on and he says,

Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.

Just a few words on this, if you notice, as you read through this passage, you can tell that Paul is really just firing off the sins here. He's just listing them off, one after another. This is the fourth one in the list; it's the fourth one in about that many verses. And they're convicting. It's a very sobering list. I showed you last week, you know, how many of us have told a lie, right? We all have. How many have gotten angry? We've all done that, so it's a very convicting list. But it doesn't stop Paul. He doesn't mince any words here because the point he's making here is that this is the standard of God. This is God's word. If you want to please God, this is what you do, regardless of whether you're convicted or not.

Here's what he says here. He says, "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth." The word "proceed" there, it's an interesting word. It's kind of like it just sort of comes out of you. marinating in your heart, marinating in your soul and it proceeds up your windpipe and out. Paul says don't do that with unwholesome words. The phrase is *sapros logos* in the Greek, which means polluted words or rotten words. Words that only serve to defile a conversation.

The Jews were very concerned in the Old Testament with things that defiled them. They wouldn't touch a dead body; dead bodies defile you. If you touch a dead body, you have to stay outside the camp for a week, so they would stay far away from dead bodies. Certain foods, right? You read the Old Testament, certain foods they couldn't touch. The Pharisees took it to the extreme and they said you can't touch certain people. You can't go certain places. All that's defiling; and Paul says here you need to watch words that do that. You need to watch words that are sinful.

Some of you have the English Standard Version and it says, "Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouth." That's a good translation. This is talk that corrupts everything. I think we've all been part of a conversation that suddenly became corrupted, right? I mean, it suddenly just went sideways. After church, talking with your friends, everything is God honoring, everything's glorifying and something gets thrown in there from left field and the thing just goes sour. It's a foul word. It's a crude joke. That's what this is referring to here, but it's even more than that because the idea here is this is any speech that hinders someone's relationship to God. This is any kind of talk that takes them farther away rather than closer to the Lord. This doesn't mean you

can't talk about hockey. This doesn't mean you can't talk about your workplace. This doesn't mean you can't talk about stuff going on at home. That's all fine. The point is the tone of it. The point is where it leads that person at the end of the day. Paul says you need to change in this department because you have been changed; you're different, so your speech needs to be different now.

One commentator said, "Corrupt speech comes from a corrupt nature." Polluted speech comes from a polluted nature, and you need to show that that you don't have that now. You need to show that your nature has changed by the way you talk. We used to have an expression when I was growing up," What's down in the well comes up in the bucket." And if it's stagnant, dirty, ugly, foul water in the well, it's coming up in the bucket. And that's what Paul's saying here. But the issue here is not really *what* you're saying. The issue is *why* are you saying it? We talked about anger last week. This happens a lot. Someone stubs their toe and what do they do? They curse. What's the problem with that? The problem with that is that the curse word was in there to begin with. The problem is that that was in their mind.

You can, you can tell a child is growing by the way they talk, right? You can tell they're growing by what they say. When they're young, they can't say anything. As they get older, their speech changes and it improves and it matures. The Christian life is the same way. As you mature in Christ, your speech needs to mature. You have to grow in this department. You learn new words, you learn new expressions, you learn new ways of saying things because you're new now. And Paul goes on to show you what this looks like. If you're wondering, "Well, how do I do that?" He says in verse 29,

Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.

As you as you read that, there are several characteristics of godly speech here. There are several principles. One is, it should be edifying. Paul says only such a word as is good for edification, and that word "edify" means it builds up instead of tears down. It brings people closer to God and not closer to hell. Your speech needs to do that. I talked to someone from church this week, and I told them, "I don't think I encourage you enough. I'm sorry. I just pick at you all the time. Pick pick, pick, pick pick. I need to encourage you." That's what this says, build up.

He says it should be according to the need of the moment which means it's said at the proper time. It's said at the right opportunity. You don't just blurt things out as they fly into your head. You don't pop off on people.

He says it should give grace to those who hear which means your speech needs to be gracious. It needs to have a tone of kindness towards others. But the point is God has saved you everywhere even in your mouth. God has redeemed you everywhere, even in your tongue and people need to see it. You don't need to tell people you're a Christian; they should be able to tell by the way you talk. When you open your mouth, it should be obvious that something is different about this man or this woman. Even if we talk about fishing, something's different about them. It's obvious.

You know, if you think about it, this is a this is a big one for us today. This is a big issue because we talk so much, don't we? I mean, let's just be honest, we all do. Any given day, you say a lot of words, which means you have a lot of opportunities to fail at this, right? I don't care if you work by yourself, you still talk a lot. I mean, studies have been done on this. And according to this statistic, the average person says about 10,000 words per day. 10,000 words per day. And some of you who talk to yourself, say more than that. If you whittle that down, that's 400 words per hour and seven words per minute, which is just staggering to think about, especially if you put sleep into that it even makes it even larger. For some of us is just talk, talk, talk all day long. It's just words, words, words; and the scary thing is that God remembers every one of them. The frightening thing is that the Lord will call us to account for each word that we say. Matthew 12:36 says

But I tell you that every careless word people speak, they will give an accounting for in the Day of Judgment.

And let me tell you what's frightening about that passage. What's scary about it is it says God will remember every careless word. Not every careful word, every careless word. Not every word that we say on purpose, but every word we say by accident, which means that we should pay attention to this. We should take our speech seriously.

I remember talking to a man several years ago, he told me that when he came to church, he expected to say whatever he wanted. He expected to speak his mind and I told him, "Listen, friend, I can't do that, and I'm the pastor of this church. I can't say whatever I want, and I'm an elder here, because I'm accountable to God. I have a higher authority over my mouth, and so do you." You can't say whatever you want. None of us can.

You know, it's interesting, if you read other books of the Bible, and you notice how much they talk about this. We don't say as much about this today, but if you read a book like Proverbs, it's amazing how much Proverbs says about the tongue and your mouth because that's where wisdom is found. That's where true knowledge is found. And that's where stupidity is found. That's where foolishness is found. Proverbs says if you want to find a fool, just listen to him speak. You know just a few examples of this if you want to write these down if you're taking notes.

Proverbs 10:8 says, “The wise of heart will receive commands, but a babbling fool will be ruined.” And that's a powerful image there. It kind of sticks with you because the idea is that a wise person receives command. A wise person receives counsel because he'll be quiet, and a fool won't. He just keeps talking, babbling on and on and on without ever saying anything. There's no mute switch on a fool. You can't turn them off.

Proverbs 15:1-2 says, “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable, but the mouth of the fool spouts folly.” When I hear the word spout, I think of a water sprinkler, just spout, spout, spout, spout. That's what a fool does with his folly. It gushes out of him like a waterfall. I've heard people talk and afterwards I said, “Did you know what you just said?” And they said, “No, I have no idea.” You need to have an idea. That's foolishness.

Proverbs 18:21 says “Death or life are in the power of the tongue.” Which means your life can be made or ruined with your tongue, your life can be kept or broken by it. I mean, how many people have lost their jobs because of their tongue? No other reason. They weren't lazy. They weren't inept. They were qualified, but they said something. How many people have ruined their marriage?

Proverbs 13:3 says, “The one who guards his mouth preserves his life.” Which means you need to guard your mouth; you need to put a wall around it so that nothing comes out of your mouth except the things that glorify God. I've learned throughout the years, that when I don't know what to say, it's best not to talk yet. I'll tell somebody that, “You know, I don't know what to tell you. Let me think about it, and I'll get back to you.”

You know, to get even more practical, one author said this means a couple things. This means we shouldn't talk so much. I think we all understand that. That's pretty obvious. You need to limit the amount of words that we say. This means we should be good listeners as well. So many of us do such a poor job of listening to other people. We want to be first in the conversation, get our words out there. We need to stop doing that. Put them first; ask them questions. This means we should watch our tone when we speak. It's been said it's not what you say, but how you say it that get you in trouble. Watch your tone. But this is an area that we all need to grow in, Amen?

This is an area that we all need to work on. In fact, this is so important that this is the fourth sermon you've heard on this over the last couple months, because over the summer we did a three-part series on the tongue, on taming the tongue. And taming the tongue means you almost got to beat it down like a wild lion. And that's what we did this summer on a series that Quintin Smith did on James 1. He looked at how to use our words, how to change them, how to grow in this department, but if you missed it, I would encourage you to listen to it. Because this is one

way you grow in the Christian life. This is one way you show your change. You show it with what you say.

In a cemetery located just outside of Hatfield, Massachusetts, there was a tombstone dating back to the 1700s. It said this, "Beneath this stone, a lump of clay lies, Arabella Young, who on the 24th of May began to hold her tongue." She didn't hold her tongue until she died right on her tombstone. And that's a good reminder because you don't want someone to say that about you on your tombstone. You don't want someone to say that about you at death. You want to hold your tongue now.

Which leads to another point to consider this morning, another sin to put off in this passage. The first one is unwholesome words. This refers to the sin of sinful speech, and the sin of using our tongue in a sinful way. It's a very common sin. That's why Paul puts it in here. We do this more than we would like to admit and leads to another thing to talk about. Another sin to put off in the passage, and that is the sin of grieving the Spirit. A second sin we're going to talk about this morning that we have to put off is the sin of grieving the Spirit, which refers to the sin of offending the Spirit or hurting Him with our words or our actions. To get your attention here to show you how serious this is, Paul says this is how much damage you can do with your words. You can actually grieve the Spirit of God with them. If you think God doesn't care what you say you got to think again. And if you read in verse 29, the apostle writes and he says,

Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

As you go through this passage, you can see that Paul comes to a pause in the conversation. It comes to a break, because if you notice, he mentions a specific sin in verse 29. He mentions a specific behavior there, "Let no unwholesome word proceed out of your mouth." And then he says something general here; this is a very broad statement. "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit." One commentator says, "Paul just kind of hurls that in there." It's just kind of like thrown in without a warning because this doesn't refer to a particular sin or a behavior. It refers to the result of your behavior. This is what your behavior can do. This is what your sin will do. It will grieve the Holy Spirit. It will upset Him. That's why it's such a big deal when you sin. It's very serious thing to do.

It's one thing to grieve your neighbor, but it's another thing to grieve the Holy Spirit, right? It's one thing to offend your friend, or your relative, or your neighbor next door; it's another thing to do that to God. And Paul says this is what our sins do. They offend God. This raises the stakes and puts this on another level. I don't like being lied to. I don't like it when someone is mad at

me. I don't like it when someone steals my stuff and tells me an unwholesome word. But that is nothing compared to how God looks at all of this. That's nothing compared to what the Spirit says about it.

This phrase, just to explain this, the phrase "Holy Spirit of God," it means just what it says. It's a reference to the Holy Spirit or the third person of the Trinity. The Bible tells us God is that. He's a Trinity; God in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and this is the third person here. This is the Spirit and if you do a study of Him, you'll see that He's called a lot of things in the Bible. The Holy Spirit goes by a lot of different names. So, for instance, He's called the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of God because that's who He is. He is God's Spirit or the unseen part of Him. We can see Christ; He took on flesh. You can't see the Spirit; He does the hidden mysterious things in the Trinity. He's also called the Spirit of counsel and the Spirit of truth because He does that as well. He reveals truth to us. He's the one who inspired the Bible. He's called the Spirit of life and the Spirit of wisdom. He's called the Spirit of grace and knowledge and power and might. And one thing that He does, He has a lot of roles in the Bible, but one thing He does that Paul is referring to here is that He indwells us. The Spirit indwells, which means He lives inside of us. He takes up residence in our heart.

Just a few verses about this particular doctrine, but 1 Corinthians 3:16 says,

Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

It's a powerful verse if you think about it. It means just as the Spirit of God dwelled in the Old Testament temple, just as the Spirit lived in Jerusalem above the Ark of the Covenant and the Most Holy Place. Now in the New Covenant, the Holy Spirit lives in you. That should boggle your mind, right? No offense, but I wouldn't want to live in you, and you wouldn't want to live in me. But the Spirit of God lives in you. He lives in me.

Galatians 4:6 also says,

Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

And that phrase "Abba Father" could be translated Papa Father, or Daddy Father. It's a term of closeness and nearness, and the point is that the Holy Spirit draws us close to God. He draws us near to Him, which means that when you sin, He feels it. It's what Paul is saying in this passage. When you offend God, He knows because He goes through it with you. A lot of Christians think they sin alone, you don't sin alone. You're responsible for it. It's your fault, but your sin grieves

the Holy Spirit. He doesn't disobey with you. He doesn't sin with you. That's not possible, but He feels the effects of it; so Paul says you need to stop out of respect for Him, if for no other reason.

A lot of times when people sin, they talk about accountability. "I need an accountability partner. I need someone to hold me accountable." Well, that's true. There's definitely a place for that, but at the end of the day, if you want to sin, you're going to sin. If you want to hide it, you're going to hide it. There's no accountability partner in the world who is omniscient, except this One. There's only One who goes wherever you go, and that's the Spirit of God. This is the greatest accountability you have. Nothing is higher than this.

The word "grieve" here it's an interesting word. It's the word *lypēō* in Greek, which means to make someone sad or cause them pain. Because when you sin it does this to God. This is in the continuous tense to remind you that if you keep sinning you keep grieving Him. If you do it over and over and over again, you cause Him pain over and over and over again. You know, to put that in perspective, when you sin one time God should send you to hell, right? When you offend Him one time you should go to the lake of fire for all eternity. That's what you deserve. That's what sin costs and out of love and kindness and mercy and grace and compassion toward you, God does this. He grieves. God grieves over your sin, and if that doesn't get your attention, and that doesn't hold you accountable, and that doesn't make you want to stop, there is nothing that ever will. You can't take this for granted. You can't take this lightly. This kind of doctrine should make you fall on your face and cry out to God for forgiveness.

In his commentary on Ephesians, William Barclay says that when we're young and we disobey our parents, we grieve them, don't we? We grieve them. Any parent in this room who loves their child will tell you that "When my child messes up, I don't kick them to the curb. I don't throw them out of my house. I'm sad, because I love them." It's even more so with God.

If you're a believer this morning and you're sinning, let me tell you something, the first emotion God has. There's anger there, but that anger has been paid for at the cross. The punishment was paid for at the cross. What He feels toward you right now mostly is sadness. You're making your God sad. You are making Him angry as well, but the anger has been punished on Christ. There's a rift in the relationship. There's a tear there, and you have to stop out of love for Him.

Verse 30 says

Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

That phrase, "day of redemption" means day of your final redemption. The day when you will be saved; it's a reference to Judgment Day. Because the Spirit will be with you for that long; the Spirit will be with you until Judgment Day. He'll never leave you. He'll never depart from you.

And Paul says, “Don't make Him miserable until then. Don't wear Him out with your constant sinning.” I mean, one hand you can't wear Him out, but don't make Him sad.

I've been in ministry for a few years now. I've done it for a little while; and I'll tell you, the older I get, and I've heard other men say this, the older I get, the sadder it gets. Because people do terrible things. They do awful things. Now I'll also add that the older I get, the happier it gets, and the more joyful it gets because people do wonderful things. People are the reason you stay in the ministry, when you see them repent of their sin. But there are days and even weeks when you see them do horrible things. They lust, they lie, they cheat, they steal, they hurt each other. But here's the thing, I can't imagine what God sees them do. I can't imagine what the Holy Spirit sees because He sees everything, and He chooses to stay with us.

You know, this may be why Paul puts this here in the book of Ephesians. It may be why he puts this in here, after saying, “Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth.” And that could be because the Ephesians were doing that. This was especially a problem for them. They were doing awful things to each other. They were saying awful things. You can imagine if you came from a place like Ephesus, it would be like a cesspool of sin, and their speech would just be horrific. So, Paul says “You need to stop doing that. I mean, if anything else, if I can't get your attention,” Paul says “Let this get your attention. You are grieving the Holy Spirit of God.” This is what matters the most. This is what it all boils down to. Sin is a breach in the relationship with God. That's why it's a big deal. This is why you need to stop.

You know, I've seen people struggle with sin. And I'll tell you, the ones who get victory over it are the ones who understand this. The ones who get victory over their sin, the ones who defeated, are the ones who understand that their sin is first and foremost, against God. That's why accountability is kind of a secondary thing. It's fine. It's important, but the most important thing is your accountability to Him. When someone gets that, when they understand that, they start defeating their sin. It all changes for them because now they understand that “I don't sin out in public and go home and I don't pretend out in public to be a godly person and then go home and hide it anymore.” When they stop doing that, that's when they change.

On the flip side, I'd also add that the ones who get victory are the ones who understand that they're not alone in the fight. They're not alone in the battle because God is with them. The Spirit is with them. You can't fight in your own power, but you can fight in His. You can't defeat sin in your own strength, but you can defeat it in the power that He provides.

A W. Tozer said it this way, he said, “Religion can reform a person's life, but it can never transform him because the law alone can't do that. The commandments can't change a person like that. They don't have the power, but God does. God can transform anyone.”

Which leads me to ask, do you believe that this morning? I don't know where everyone's out on the issue of sin in your own life, but do you believe that God can transform you? Coming to church can't do it. Doing a bunch of good works can't do it. Giving money away, all that kind of stuff; none of that can change you. But God can. He doesn't want to reform you; He wants to transform you. He doesn't want to change you a little bit when you're out in public; He wants to do it a lot. That's how you win the battle. That's how you change.

To ask this another way and make this personal. How is your speech this morning? How are your words? Do they edify or are they unedifying? Do they build people up or tear them down? Do you talk too much? Do you speak your mind? Do you do you expect to say whatever you want to? I ask you that because If you do that and you want to change this morning, if you do that and you want to repent, there's a wide-open door. God doesn't want to just save you everywhere but your mouth. He wants to save your mouth too. And He can. If you call out to Him for help. Will you do that today? Will you call out to Him?

You know in my studies this week I found a story. The evangelist, Leonard Ravenhill, used to tell of a man who lost all his money in the stock market. He went bankrupt, totally flat broke. And when a rich friend of his found out about it, he started sending him money with a note attached to it that said, "more to follow." Every month he would faithfully send him money with a note said, "more to follow, more to follow, more to follow." And Leonard Ravenhill said, "That's what God has done for us. That's what the Holy Spirit has done for us. He's given us more to follow. He's given us more grace. He's given us more mercy. He's given us more help for the battle ahead. We just have to believe and trust in that."

Friends will you do that this morning? You don't fight alone. The church is with you, your friends are with you; but more importantly God is with you. And you just need to call out on Him. Will you do that today? Let me close us in prayer that we all would. Let's close in a word of prayer.

Father, we do pray for Your help in these things. We read a passage like this one, and I think all of us want to crawl up off the floor or fall down on the floor because we fail at this. Our words sometimes can be terrible towards others. And yet here You are in the midst of such a convicting passage giving us such hope. There is a Spirit, there is a Saviour on the cross, and God the Father, You are there in heaven waiting to help us. Lord, I pray for my friends this morning who have read this passage. If they are feeling convicted, they will know that there is salvation; there is hope from their sin. If they're in Christ, they already have it. They just need to believe they are; they just need to take what's already there, there is more to follow. And I pray they would do that today.

For those who are lost this morning, I don't know where everybody's at. But for those who have not trusted in Christ, Lord would this bring them to their senses? Would just this simple discussion, this simple passage, show them where they fall short and show them they have a Saviour.

Lord, we thank You for the Spirit. We thank You for the ministries that He does that we don't even think of. The things that we don't see. He lives inside of us, which means that as we go from this place, He will go with us. With each and every one of us who are Yours. He'll be with us in our homes. He'll be with us in our jobs. He'll be with us with our families. He'll be with us with our friends. Help us not to grieve Him. Help us not to put Him to shame, but to remember that He is with us and that we can triumph and defeat all sin with His help. Spirit would You help us today we pray, in Jesus name. Amen.