

Ephesians 4:26-32
The Devil's Place
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The Devil's Place

We're going to continue this morning with the book of Ephesians. As we've said a number of times already, we're dealing with a portion of this letter now that many Christians misunderstand. I spent two weeks trying to explain what I believe is going on here. These are not just do's and don'ts of Christian religion. These aren't lists of ways to act acceptably before God. These aren't steps towards living a righteous life. We've looked at all of that before. And if you missed the two weeks that we talked about understanding these types of passages, you'll need to grab those CD's, or download those messages off the website.

Last week we looked at Ephesians 4:25, and we talked about lying and speaking the truth to each other as His body. We saw that the lying that Paul was talking about here meant a lot more than just fibbing. The lying that Paul was primarily concerned with was directly related to what he had just written about putting off one man and putting on another. Lying to one another in the body of Christ is when you bring anything of the man who IS the lie, anything of his ideas, his mind, his world, his relevance...and you drag it into Christ where it does not belong.

In a word, the lying that Paul is mentioning here is when our relationship with one another keeps alive what God has called dead, when it treats as relevant what God has buried, and when it isn't according to what God has called life. You and I must learn by the revealing of Christ what it means to relate in and by the Life of God. And anything less than the Lord's mind operating in the Lord's body amounts to a lie.

Now don't misunderstand me. God's not mad at me or you about bringing our ideas into Christ. He's not going to strike you with a bolt of lightning. But he expects something. He expects that as we are renewed in the spirit of our mind, and as we put off the man who is the lie....that we will be progressively putting off the false, putting off the lie, and speaking what the Spirit of Truth is making real in our soul. That is God's expectation for His body – that we learn the truth, and relate in the truth, as the truth is in Jesus.

Well, Paul goes on with several more statements about what he expects to be happening in the body of Christ in whom Christ is being revealed and in whom Christ is being formed. He continues with other things that should be falling away as the old man is stricken from our darkened hearts in the coming of Light. He shares other things that should begin working in us as the Life of Christ takes ground in our soul through the truth.

I understand the next six or seven verses to be exactly that. I know I'm repeating myself about these verses. It's just that we've heard these verses taught as works of the flesh for so long. We need to understand that what follows here is not Paul's expectations for righteous flesh, but rather Paul's expectation for a soul transformed by the Spirit of God. Or, in some cases, these are things that have to do with

appropriate and fitting stewardship of our earthen vessels, of our time, of our attention. Both of these are involved in the following verses. Let me read the next several verses.

Eph 4:26 "BE ANGRY, AND DO NOT SIN": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, 27 nor give place to the devil. 28 Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. 29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

I think that, with the foundation that we've laid for understanding these types of verses, most of this section should be rather self-explanatory. I think all of these statements fall quite effortlessly into one of the categories that we've mentioned already. There are, however, a few things I would like to comment on. I'm just sort of going to pluck some sentences out of this list and comment where I feel like I have something to say.

For starters, I find it interesting that Paul talks about letting the sun go down on our wrath and giving a place for the devil, and this may be all that we have time for today. I'll tell you what...there was a time in my life when I thought I understood a lot about the devil. I used to read a lot of books on spiritual warfare. I even took a class on spiritual warfare at a bible school. More than that, I got quite involved in praying with people for deliverance for a number of years.

So I was quite sure, for a while, that I had a decent understanding of the whole demonic realm. But all of that changed when I began to see the Lord. And it changed because when I started to see Him, I also started to see myself for the first time in my life. I saw myself out from another set of eyes. For the very first time I saw my own heart, some of my motives, some of my nothingness and darkness and deception.

You know, people think they know themselves. But we don't. We think that just because we experience ourselves on daily basis that that experience is according to understanding. It's not. The natural man may know what you like, but he doesn't know why he likes it. You may know what you want, but you don't know why you can't stop wanting it. **You observe yourself, but you don't really know yourself until you begin to see the Lord. And it is in His light that you and I begin to know and understand humanity for the first time.**

And I said that because when I began to see the Lord, I couldn't help but doubt my understanding about Satan. Because in seeing my self, I began to wonder what exactly Satan was really doing, or what he needed to do, because it seemed to me that I was absolutely awful without any help from him. I had always thought of Him as some external evil being that was trying to influence my otherwise neutral heart. But when I saw my heart, it appeared anything but neutral.

Maybe some of you can relate to that. I'm going to try to explain some of this in a minute. I'm just telling you something of the progression of my understanding. You think Satan is the only one who could exalt himself against the living God. You think that only Satan could take what God gave him and demand even more. Only Satan could operate in all things towards self gain, and with such defiance of truth, defiance of purpose, defiance of God. And then you see yourself clearly in the Light of Christ's appearing. And you realize that you fit that same description. I didn't know what to do with that for a while. I mean, I didn't know how this view of myself effected my supposed knowledge of Satan, demons, and spiritual warfare. I wondered if I had misunderstood the devil's job description, his purpose, his success, and his place.

But you can't see any of that without seeing Christ. You can believe it. You can believe that you're a slime ball. Lots of people believe that as a matter of fact. But you don't know the degree to which you are opposed to the Lord until you see the Lord in contrast to yourself. It's not unlike the midget analogy that I used to use years ago. Does everybody remember that? It's not the most politically correct of my analogies. But it makes a point.

If you lived in a land of little people...dwarfs or elves or midgets...you would quite naturally begin to compare them to each other. There goes a tall one. He's 3 foot 4. There goes a short one. He's 2 foot 5. You would have nothing else as a point of reference until a man of full stature appeared. And only when faced with that Person, that man...could you see what you really were.

Well, that's how it was when I began to see the Lord. I talk about this all the time, but I saw the absolute otherness and contrariness of all that I am in comparison to Christ. And then I suddenly didn't seem to understand the devil's job description as well. It quickly seemed that the adamic man did an amazing job at standing opposed to God all on his own.

And I'm not suggesting that the devil is not real, or that he doesn't have a job description. I certainly believe in the devil and demons and their work. I'm just saying that some things changed when I saw the Lord. And it was important, as it always is, for me to let a lot of my ideas go, and allow the Lord to take me back to His foundation, back to the beginning. It was necessary to let go of the ideas that had years of experience and bookshelves of books to back them up.

You never lose anything when you surrender your ideas to God. You never lose anything except lies. Truth is always given back to you in a view of the Lord. It may not be that week or that month or that year. **But sooner or later in the seeing of Christ there is the understanding of everything. Sooner or later His light explains and uncovers all things.**

Well, I haven't gotten back a whole lot of understanding about Satan since I let go of everything. But there are one or two things that now seem to be clear. I'm going to try to explain what I believe I have seen. It seems to me that Satan, along with demonic spirits, have a "place" that they call home. A place where they can influence and rule and have sway. It's a place, a territory, that was given to them, handed to them really...without much of a fight. And that place is the darkness of the adamic mind. That place is the darkened heart that is separated from the Light of Life.

And, you see, when I began to understand Satan's "place", it started to explain my initial confusion when I began to see the Lord. I had seen the filth and corruption of my own soul, and I had wondered why Satan needed to do anything when my soul was this black on its own. But the reason that what I saw in myself so resembled the serpent himself, was that **when I saw myself for the first time, I saw the realm and the land where Satan had distorted all things. When I saw myself in the Light of Christ's appearing, I didn't see the human soul as God had created it. I saw the human soul as it had become the kingdom of darkness.** The darkened, self-seeking, truth-refusing, mind of the adamic man **was** the kingdom where Satan had great authority, and great glory.

I know that's an ugly thought. It's an even uglier view. Remember the time that Satan was tempting Jesus. He brought him up to a high place and showed him all the kingdoms of the world.

Luk 4:5 And leading Him up into a high mountain, the Devil showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. **6** And the Devil said to Him, I will give all this authority and their glory to You, because it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. **7** Then if You worship before me, all will be Yours.

I'm not exactly sure how that worked. I don't know how you could see all of the kingdoms of the earth in a moment of time. I'm sure it happened. But here's my question. Do you suppose the kingdom that Satan ruled over was buildings, and infrastructure, and houses, and weapons, and chariots? Or do you suppose that his kingdom was in the people that occupied those buildings and houses, and used those weapons and chariots? I don't know what it means for Satan to have authority over buildings. But I've seen something of what it means to have my soul be the very expression of his seed.

We weren't created to be that way. We weren't created to bear the image of that seed. We were created to bear the image of another Seed, and to glorify that Seed. But a place was given to the serpent. Authority and glory were handed over to Satan, even as he said to Jesus "I will give all of this authority and glory to You **because it has been delivered to me**".

When man believed the lie, Satan inaugurated his kingdom on earth. He began a kingdom in souls. A kingdom where it was incredibly easy to hold sway over his subjects, to confuse them and deceive them and corrupt them....**because there was absolutely no light for them to tell what was going on.** There was no light or truth or understanding or perspective. Light was forfeited when they believed the lie. Therefore the house became the expression of the strongman who had taken up occupancy. I'm talking about the human soul as a house, place, land. The land of the human soul bore the image and kind and increase of the one who had authority in the darkness.

You are all familiar with Jesus' parable about binding the strongman and plundering his house. Well, it seems to me that that is exactly what was needed after the fall, and exactly what the cross accomplished. The cross took the power from the strongman, and then Christ took the house. The soul of man became the temple of the living God. We become the habitation for another seed, authority, glory. But my point is that, prior to new life, prior to being filled in our

soul with the light of life, Paul calls Satan “the spirit who works in the sons of disobedience”. (Eph 2:2)

Jesus says to the Jews.

Joh 8:44 You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do.

That is a very interesting Scripture to me. I want you to think about this for a minute. You'll notice that it doesn't say that the desires of your father he **makes** you do, or he **forces** you to do. No that's not how his kingdom works. And, incidentally, that is not how Christ's kingdom works either.

We are so deceived about this. Again, we think we know why we do something. We think we know ourselves. People say all the time, “I do whatever I want”. “I wouldn't do anything that I don't want”. Ok. Granted. But here's the question. **WHY** do you want it? Sure, you did what you wanted. But why did you want to do it? What was driving you to want it? Why were you lusting for it? Why couldn't you stop thinking about it? Why were you so afraid not to do it? These are questions that we don't understand about ourselves.

We think we're free. We actually think we're free because we do what we want. But we never back that up one step and ask the question – “why do I want it?”. “Where do these demands and desires and fears and purposes and lusts and agendas come from in me?”. Can you hear what I mean? “You are of your father the devil **and the desires of your father you WANT to do**”.

We think slavery is when somebody makes us do something that we don't want to do. Well, I suppose that's one form of slavery. But wouldn't it be even worse if somebody made you want something that was according to their will and nature and purpose? Wouldn't that be an even greater control over you? I mean, its one thing to have somebody forcing you to do something against your will. That stinks, but at least you still have your will. But what if there was a slavery where your master had control of your actions because he had control of your will. Now that would be something much more subtle, and much more deadly.

The Jews were confused on this very issue. Jesus called them slaves. They proudly retorted that they had never been slaves to anyone, and were, in fact, free. Jesus told them that anyone who sins is a slave to sin. What a perfect answer. You wouldn't sin if you didn't **want** to, and THAT is the proof that you are slaves.

No, they said, we are slaves of God and do what He wants. We're the chosen people. We're the Jews! Jesus said, if God were your father you would love me. If God were you father you would want what He wants, love what He loves. But, as it is, you are sons of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you **WANT** to do.

You see, the nature of our bondage isn't really that Satan tells you what to do. **The nature of our bondage to Satan is that his nature working in our darkness makes us want what He desires, what He is.** It makes us expressive of his nature, his way. And that is why anything you do apart from the Light of Christ's life is evil. It doesn't matter what it is. Man can do many good

things, that are good as things, but which are still evil at their source and motivation and fountainhead.

And it is exactly the opposite when it comes to Christ. We think that Christ working in our soul is going to tell us what to do. **But Christ doesn't want to tell you what to do. He wants to be why you do all that you do.** The more Christ is seen and formed in you, you will notice that God is not giving you instructions. You will notice that Christ is constraining you according to your own desires. Your desires become His desires. Your will is conformed to His and you act out of your will. The nature of our bondage to Christ as His body is not that He tells us how to live, but that His nature works in us by Light in such a way that we desire what He desires, we desire what He is, we become the expression and glory of Him.

But back to my point. The darkness of the adamic soul became the place where Satan could have his expression, where Satan could bring forth the increase of his seed. Now, in saying that, I'm not saying that every human being is possessed by the devil like the little girl in the Exorcist. But I am saying that he has a place of influence, a place of expression, a place of *deception* wherever he finds the darkness of the adamic mind. And in us, those who have been born of God's Spirit...he has no possession of our souls, he has no power of death...but where we give him **a place**, where we hold onto the darkness...THERE he can influence and deceive and confuse and glorify himself. There he can blind our eyes and keep us from seeing in the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

That is why I find this verse interesting. In verses 26 and 27, Paul is talking about not letting the sun set on our anger, and not giving the devil a "place". It obviously doesn't have to be anger. It could be anything of self that we hold onto. Anger only exists in our soul because we are holding to self. Think about it. What is anger? Why does it exist? Generally, it exists because we are demanding something from others for ourselves. Whether those demands are legitimate or not, you don't really feel angry with someone unless YOU are holding onto your life.

It's the same with all of the adamic emotions that wage war with our soul. Lust is man's demand to take something unto himself. Fear is man's concern to lose something from himself. It's all the same. It's all holding on to self, holding onto darkness, holding onto something other than Christ our life.

And I said all of that to say that it seems to me that wherever we are holding onto the darkness of the adamic man, demanding things for self, holding on to self, holding on to ideas about God and theologies for the good and gain of self, it is there that the enemy can find a dark "place" where he has freedom to move and influence and deceive and work his kingdom.

We who are born of God's Spirit have the reality of new life in our soul. That is true. But that Life must be allowed to shine its light into every dark corner of our earth-bound, self-obsessed soul, or there is still darkness where the enemy can find a "place" to abide. Where Christ's life has overtaken our soul in the light of the truth, there is no place for the enemy. Darkness cannot stand in his light.

It reminds me of where Jesus said: **Joh 14:30** "I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me." Yes there is nothing of Satan in Christ, but there is a place for him in us to the measure that we hide from the light. And that's what we're doing if we're holding on to the adamic man. That's what's going on if we are stewing in anger, feeding our lusts, obeying our insecurities.

And so Paul admonishes believers to let that man go. Let the light take that man, take that darkness, out from the redeemed soul so that Satan no longer has his place. As we are transformed by the renewing of the spirit of the mind, put on the new, and put off the old, Satan loses his place. But if we hold onto that man, hold onto the darkness where self loves to hid, then we keep his place in tact. Amen.