

October 13:

Series: Why Do You Buy That?

Message: #6: End with Forgiveness

Text: “Don’t be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you can figure out what God’s will is—what is good and pleasing and mature.”
-Romans 12:2

Scripture: Ephesians 4:17-32 (CEB)

Memory Verse: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from everything we’ve done wrong.” -1 John 1:9

Blurb: Being in relationships means dealing with the mess that other people dish out on us. It’s hard, even when it’s people we love. But our response is determined not by what *they* do, but by who rules inside of *us*. This Sunday we’ll re-frame retaliation and hear Jesus’ calling to forgive. Trust me, if you live in today’s culture, you need to hear this message!

Kids: “Why Did You Buy That?” Bidding Game with contestants, including kids -Andrew

Commercial Videos:

Bumper video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hcs-B7XjBGU> (2014) (1:01 minutes)

Clash of clans “Angry Neesum 52” Revenge! Liam (Lee-um) Neesum

I can’t wait to have you beg for mercy, but you will get no mercy. I will have my revenge. ... You will regret the day you crossed Angry Neesum 52.”

Parody on his role in the movie *Taken*.

Sermon Commercial: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ALEiVLVJmcl> (1:53 minutes)

Vivian & Cedric “However long the path might seem, it’s time to reconcile. Penny.”

Sermon Commercial: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nn8mQpuPqvY> (11:00 - 12:54,

Andrew, please edit this commercial out from this larger message. (1:54 minutes)

Penny, much beloved German supermarket chain, commercial of a woman who had a fight with her adult daughter walks through treachery in order to go to her daughter.

Tag line: “However long the path might seem, it’s Christmas. It’s time to reconcile. Penny.”

Opening Song: *Hope Has Come* - Sanctify

Welcome: -Pastor David

Memory Verse: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from everything we’ve done wrong.” -1 John 1:9

Worship Music Set:

Goodness of God

Grace Greater than Our Sin

Restoration

Worship Prayer - Andrew

Offering: *You Are My King (Amazing Love)*

Prayers: -Andrew

Serve Moment: Trunk-or-Treat -Andrew

Why Did You Buy That? -Andrew

Message: Why Do You Buy That? #6: End with Forgiveness

Bumper video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hcs-B7XjBGU> (2014) (1:01 minutes)
Clash of clans “Angry Neesum 52” Revenge!

PP#1: *Image of “Revenge” icon to click on for the “Clash of Clans” video game, or similar.*

Video games are a great place to unleash all those feelings of anger, violence, aggression, and those desires we have to take down the other guy, to retaliate, to get revenge. “Hulk smash!” (Unless it’s Avengers *Endgame*!) . . . Or *is it* a great place to do that? The thinking is, you see, take all those feelings, and channel them somewhere else: where it is appropriate, like screaming into your pillow rather than your spouse. Take it out on the football field...go hit somebody! Or take it to your video game. Destroy! Did you hear Liam Neesum [Lee-um] in the commercial? It was a parody on his role in the movie *Taken*, but he’s tapping into that feeling we all have inside towards others who make us angry, “I can’t wait to have you beg for mercy, but you will get no mercy. I will have my revenge. ... You will regret the day you crossed Angry Neesum 52.” Revenge! Even his game name gives a hint, “*Angry Neesum*.” Did you notice he was playing a 29-year-old, the stereotypical millennial gamer, “Fatbuffetboy85?”

Is it healthy to take all of those feelings of anger and revenge, and just channel them to the game field? Now, that may be the best our world has to offer, but that’s not what Jesus followers do. We have a different path.

PP#2: Why Do We Buy That? #6 End with Forgiveness

“Don’t be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you can figure out what God’s will is—what is good and pleasing and mature.” -Romans 12:2

Why Do We But That? End with Forgiveness. Romans 12:2 “Don’t be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you can figure out what God’s will is—what is good and pleasing and mature.”

Last week we were reading from Ephesians 4, where Paul, writing from prison, was teaching the Christians in Ephesus how to live together in community. The Church is Jesus’ answer for us to grow in holiness, to become more mature as Christian disciples. He taught that the Church needs you, but also and how you need the Church. We are all given gifts by the Holy Spirit so that we are not just blessed ourselves, but so that the community of believers can be lifted up. And he instructs believers how to treat one another, calling us to that deeper relationship of unity that comes when we live godly love. We are to grow up in this maturity, and stop being babes in faith.

Well, today we keep going in chapter 4 of Ephesians. Remember, Paul is telling Jesus followers how to grow up in unity through godly love, particularly in how we treat one another. And the amazingly relevant wisdom here, is that Paul is saying that we can't take our cues from the world around us in order to live right. For us to mature, we follow God's plan, not cultural wisdom.

PP#3: Ephesians 4:17-32 (CEB)

17 So I'm telling you this, and I insist on it in the Lord: you shouldn't live your life like the Gentiles anymore. They base their lives on pointless thinking, 18 and they are in the dark in their reasoning. They are disconnected from God's life because of their ignorance and their closed hearts. 19 They are people who lack all sense of right and wrong, and who have turned themselves over to doing whatever feels good and to practicing every sort of corruption along with greed.

Let's keep going in Ephesians 4, picking it up again in verse 17. "So I'm telling you this [how we need to grow up in maturity, in true unity with others, loving with a godly love], and I insist on it in the Lord: you shouldn't live your life like the Gentiles anymore. [Gentiles is a Jewish word that Paul uses to describe the broader culture. The Christians in Ephesus—some were Jews, some were Gentiles—certainly found themselves in a non-Jesus culture. Paul uses the word Gentile. We today might use the word "worldly," or "secular." But Paul is contrasting the worldly culture from the Jesus way.] They base their lives on pointless thinking, and they are in the dark in their reasoning. They are disconnected from God's life because of their ignorance and their closed hearts. They are people who lack all sense of right and wrong, and who have turned themselves over to doing whatever feels good and to practicing every sort of corruption along with greed."

Paul hits it pretty hard! The secular culture bases its thinking on feelings and selfish desires—he calls it pointless thinking. Be wary! It is not God-inspired! God has a plan of abundant life, He desires it for you, but it comes from a narrow path. Yes, you can gain some wisdom from culture, but remember, it cannot offer us the moorings for our lives. If it is common and prevalent, it still doesn't make it right. Christians striving for holiness, reflect on the prevalent culture and discern that it's different than God's path.

PP#4: End with Forgiveness

1. Take off Gentile Thinking

A striking example of this is human sexuality. God outlines His good path for human sexuality: It is to be expressed physically only within the bonds of marriage. Yet culture—back in Paul's day, and also today!—teaches to do what feels right. Be reflective, Church, at how much we're buying what culture is selling.

Another vivid example is money. God's path of abundant life is to be generous and giving, earning more so we can give more. Culture, however, tells us to spend it on ourselves. It may seem fun and fulfilling, but we are missing the better life. Be careful, Church. Why do we buy that?

PP#5: Ephesians 4:17-32 (CEB)

20 But you didn't learn that sort of thing from Christ. 21 Since you really listened to Him and you were taught how the truth is in Jesus, 22 change the former way of life that was part of the person you once were, corrupted by deceitful desires. 23 Instead, renew the thinking in your mind by the Spirit 24 and clothe yourself with the new person created according to God's image in justice and true holiness.

So, doing whatever feels good or practicing corruption and greed, this is our culture. Verse 20, “But you didn’t learn that sort of thing from Christ. Since you really listened to Him and you were taught how the truth is in Jesus, change the former way of life that was part of the person you once were, corrupted by deceitful desires. Instead, renew the thinking in your mind by the Spirit and clothe yourself with the new person created according to God’s image in justice and true holiness.”

Can you hear our series verse coming through here, too? Romans 12:2, “Don’t be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you can figure out what God’s will is—what is good and pleasing and mature.”

How do we renew our minds? How do we switch from Gentile-thinking to discipleship-thinking? Verse 23, “by the Holy Spirit.” It means we have to be open to the Holy Spirit to give us a different way of seeing things, a different way of thinking, a different priority, and make different decisions. We have the Holy Spirit within us. We have to make room to hear what the Spirit is saying, and we have to choose to follow that instead of our own feelings.

PP#6: End with Forgiveness

1. Take off Gentile Thinking
2. Put on the New Person

You see, we are products of our culture. We have been taught it’s perspective from the time of our birth. Choosing to follow Jesus is an intentional act, not just of faith...choosing to put our trust in Jesus for our salvation. But it is also a *continual* intentional act of our will—choosing to take off our old selves, and put on the new person Jesus made us to be.

PP#7: Fred Rogers putting on sweater in the opening of his show, “Mr. Roger’s Neighborhood.”

This November the Fred Rogers movie is coming out, “Won’t you be my neighbor.” How did he begin each show? By singing the theme song, and then changing. He took his coat off and put on a sweater. He took his shoes off and put on his slippers. Every show! Church, this is a way for us to think about holiness. Every day...in every situation, we must take off our Gentile coat and put on our discipleship sweater. Your relationship is starting to get serious, and you think you might love her. Do you try out sex to test your feelings? Take off that Gentile coat! Put on the sweater of marital commitment. Should you move in together? Why pay two rents? Start a family? Take off those worldly shoes! Walk a different path! The Holy Spirit will guide you into holiness.

PP#8: Ephesians 4:17-32 (CEB)

25 Therefore, after you have gotten rid of lying, each of you must tell the truth to your neighbor because we are parts of each other in the same body. 26 Be angry without sinning. Don’t let the sun set on your anger. 27 Don’t provide an opportunity for the devil. 28 Thieves should no longer steal. Instead, they should go to work, using their hands to do good so that they will have something to share with whoever is in need.

Well, remember Paul is talking about how we need the community of believers to live as disciples. So, he then goes back to getting specific for what this looks like in how we treat one another. And he says that we need to be telling each other, reminding each other, and calling each other to this counter-culture Jesus way. It means speaking this truth to each other, while the world is constantly screaming it’s way at us. Verse 25, “Therefore, after you have gotten rid of lying, each of you must tell the truth to your neighbor because we are parts of each other in the same body.”

Neighbor, here, means your *Christian* friends. Don't go around correcting non-Christians to their face, calling them into judgement. It's hard to do that right, and in a helpful way. But to other Christians, we have the love that calls us to care enough about each other to call them to stay on the path of life. Now, remember, we do that in love, always speaking truth in love. So, the very instant Paul tells us that we need to correct each other, he immediately provides the boundaries for how we do this well. Man, he knows us so well, doesn't he? Just when I was going to enjoy really letting you have it!

Verse 26, "Be angry without sinning. Don't let the sun set on your anger. [Don't stay angry too long. Why? Because it's dangerous for *your* holiness!] Don't provide an opportunity for the devil. Thieves should no longer steal. Instead, they should go to work, using their hands to do good so that they will have something to share with whoever is in need."

It was common practice in Roman culture to pilfer from those around you, even friends. And it seems that practice was not above those Christians there, either! But Paul is calling them to a different relationship with others. Others are not to be used, but to be respected, to be helped! Take off the coat of petty theft *taking*, and put on the sweater of *giving* freely of what you earn.

PP#9: Ephesians 4:17-32 (CEB)

29 Don't let any foul words come out of your mouth. Only say what is helpful when it is needed for building up the community so that it benefits those who hear what you say. 30 Don't make the Holy Spirit of God unhappy—you were sealed by Him for the day of redemption. 31 Put aside all bitterness, losing your temper, anger, shouting, and slander, along with every other evil. 32 Be kind, compassionate, and forgiving to each other, in the same way God forgave you in Christ.

All right, so Paul is on a roll! Hang on, Church, it's going to get real! Paul is talking to us! Verse 29, "Don't let any foul words come out of your mouth. Only say what is helpful when it is needed for building up the community so that it benefits those who hear what you say. Don't make the Holy Spirit of God unhappy—you were sealed by Him [given salvation, made a disciple, given the Holy Spirit] for the day of redemption [you growing to maturity]. Put aside [take off] all bitterness, losing your temper, anger, shouting, and slander, along with every other evil. [Put on] Be kind, compassionate, and forgiving to each other, in the same way God forgave you in Christ.

You know, if we would commit to live by *just this paragraph*, it would radically change all of our relationships! All of those struggles you have, with your family, friends, everyone in your circle, they all can be changed if we would take off our Gentile coats and put on our truthing in love sweaters!

PP#10: *Close up image of a mouth saying bad things, yelling, angry.*

This little orifice, how powerful it is! Unruly and uncontrollable! For me, it's a constant struggle of what I want to put in it—I do love my carbs!—and for all of us, I imagine, the struggle is to control what comes out of it.

See the double teaching here? Only say WHAT is helpful, and only say it WHEN it is needed!

Do you see that, for the Christian, your mouth is connected, chained, handcuffed, not to your feelings or your mind, but to the ears—the needs—of the person you are with. Let that soak in. Your mouth belongs to the other person! It is a speaker, an amplifier, a broadcaster, of what God wants to say to that person in the moment.

What is the worldly way? Tell them off! Let them have it! Unload! Hit them with the truth! And Christians have an added incentive. We ought to just lay it out there, because, after all, it's God's truth! But be very careful, here, Paul says. Your mouth is not connected to your feelings, but to that person's need.

Let me tell you, I struggle with this. It's so sneaky! We need the community to call us to accountability on this. We need to distinguish our desire to speak truth from their need to hear the truth. Here's a little trick I've tried to remember. If I *WANT* to speak a truth to someone—if I'm all motivated, and primed—then I should not. Because at that point, my mouth is still connected to my feelings. Let me be honest, this is most of the time! Sometimes it comes out, "I really need to tell you...." Careful! I need to say it? Then I tried upgrading to, "You need to know...." but then I realized it was a thinly veiled way of still saying "I want to tell you."

PP#11: End with Forgiveness

1. Take off Gentile Thinking
2. Put on the New Person
3. Tell the truth in love, when you don't WANT to

If, however, I really don't relish the idea of correcting them, or pointing out something, and I've tried to put it off, but it just keeps coming back, and I've disconnected my personal motivation—that usually comes with time to cool off or reflect—then I need to follow through and speak truth. Check yourself, even in the heat of intense conversation: if you want to say it, then you probably shouldn't. It's still about you. If you don't really want to, then probably you should. Then it's about them.

You know, when I craft my messages each week, I have a mantra prayer. I've been praying this for years, and I've asked my daughter to pray it with me and for me each week..she continues to do it in college for me! It's, "Lord, send down power from the Holy Spirit so that my message may be your words for your people." Years ago, Rebekah upgraded it to, "*shoot* down power...!" I take sermons seriously...I want it always to be only God's words.

But you know, really, isn't this true for all my words—our words—all the time? I need to stop making this prayer only for my sermon writing, and making it for every time I talk with those that God has placed within hearing range of my mouth! My wife—and kids!—will tell you I have a ways to go on this! But it begins when we surrender our mouths—and our hearts that they are connected to—to God. We want our mouths to be amplifiers for the Holy Spirit within us.

Now, my message today is "End with Forgiveness." We see at the end of our Bible passage: a call to forgiveness. But I want to show you a pretty cool commercial about restoration.

We were in Germany this past summer, and in Germany there is a beloved supermarket chain, called Penny. Over the past few years, they've run commercials around Christmas that have nothing to do with groceries. Instead, they've chosen to make commercials about the restoration that needs to happen among loved ones, who experience separation in various ways. Their tagline is, "However long the path may seem, it's Christmas. It's time to reconcile. Penny." I suppose they want you to be thinking of Penny during the holidays, so when you do your extra Christmas shopping, you will go to Penny. But they are tapping into the awareness that even the worldly culture recognizes the need for forgiveness and restored lives. Take a look.

Sermon Commercial: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ALEiVLVJmcl> (1:53 minutes)

Vivian & Cedric "However long the path might seem, it's time to reconcile. Penny."

PP#12: Ephesians 4:17-32 (CEB)

29 Don't let any foul words come out of your mouth. Only say what is helpful when it is needed for building up the community so that it benefits those who hear what you say. 30 Don't make the Holy Spirit of God unhappy—you were sealed by Him for the day of redemption. 31 Put aside all bitterness, losing your temper, anger, shouting, and slander, along with every other evil. 32 Be kind, compassionate, and forgiving to each other, in the same way God forgave you in Christ.

So, let's go back to the end of Ephesians 4, the last verse, verse 32. Here's where I saw that Paul ends this long teaching on community, with forgiveness. He ends with forgiveness. I've been chewing on that a bit. This seems to be the anchor to which everything else is tied.

Our ability to speak truth in love, to put away our anger, to be united together with others, to be kind, compassionate, all comes from the Holy Spirit within us. We have the Holy Spirit in us because we have come before Jesus, surrendered our Gentile culture, and have committed to taking off our former way, and put on holiness. We have repented of our sins, and we continue to repent of our tendency to follow them still, and we receive God's forgiveness.

It is this forgiveness that places the Holy Spirit within us. It sets our feet on the path of discipleship. And it points us in God's good way. It is because we have been forgiven, and that we have our experience of forgiveness, that we then, in turn, pass that on to others. We have been treated in forgiveness, and we then treat others with that same forgiveness. We forgive others, how does Paul put it? "In the same way that God forgave you in Christ."

PP#13: End with Forgiveness

1. Take off Gentile Thinking
2. Put on the New Person
3. Tell the truth in love, when you don't WANT to
4. End with forgiveness by beginning with it!

When we are forgiven, we are changed from being hostile to God, from being His enemy, to being restored to God, to being His family. Our relationship changes! And that relationship change with God also changes our relationships with each other, the other members of God's family. Our forgiveness reminds us that we approach others in forgiveness, forgiving them for whatever irritates us. And that forgiveness becomes the basis for how we speak to them, help them, are kind to them.

The Gentile wisdom is to redirect our offense, our desire to get revenge, to perhaps a game or other outlet. Jesus' way is forgiveness. It doesn't redirect our desire for retribution, it takes it away completely! When we take our offenses and anger and desire to punish, all to Jesus, He takes them and gives back to us words of life to speak instead. We are made able to treat the other with love, spoken in truth.

I want to end with one more commercial, another Christmas commercial by Penny on reconciling. It's about a mother fighting with her daughter, and their relationship rips. But the mother takes an Ephesians 4 journey, with her inner journey of determination, courage, and trust, all represented symbolically, through the storm of conflict, to reconciliation. Notice, in the end, just how long the physical journey was!

Sermon Commercial: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nn8mQpuPqvY> (1:54 minutes)

Tag line: "However long the path might seem, it's Christmas. It's time to reconcile. Penny."

Closing Song: *We Are the Free* -Sanctify

Memory Verse:

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from everything we’ve done wrong.” -1 John 1:9

Announcements: -Pastor David

Benediction: -Pastor David