

# Ephesians 4:17-32

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[ 0 : 00 ]      on then our progress through this letter to the Ephesians. We come to the second part then of chapter 4, where we find the apostle continuing his exhorting of the Ephesians to remember that although they are set in a context of paganism, remember that Ephesus was the centre not only of black arts and the occult, but also of the worship of Diana of the Ephesians. It was a great pagan centre and all the immorality and all the lasciviousness that went with that which the Gentiles in particular the non-Jews were given over to in their unbelieving pagan days. But now whether they are Gentiles who have turned to Christ or whether they are those of Jewish origin, the Christians are called to be a witness a testimony an advertisement of that which is different from this sink of iniquity by which they are surrounded they could easily say, oh well look at where we're set, you know, it's Ephesus what do you expect? It's the centre of Diana worship, they're not about to give that up easily, are they?

What chance do we have? We're surrounded by the occult, we're too weak to deal with all these powerful forces of darkness and the answer to all that is yes, of course they are too weak they themselves are not going to make a difference they themselves are not going to overturn the power of the evil one and of darkness and of paganism but the Lord working in them and through them is able to you may have a room or a shed or whatever which in a time of a power cut may be an absolute pitch darkness but within that shed there may be any number of tilly lamps or candles or whatever but as long as they remain unlit you will continue in darkness now you can set them in as many shelves or as many you know tables or as many corners of the shed or the room or the bar or whatever as you like but as long as they remain unlit they will just be literally empty dark vessels there is no light in them that is what we human beings are like in our nature in our old state we are, we may have the right sort of characteristics we may be vessels which are fitted and intended to give light and to glorify God but until we are lit by the power and the light of his spirit and his work we remain dark and we remain empty that is what the Ephesians and every other person called to follow Christ will be in and of themselves the darkness will remain unchallenged by us there is nothing in the candle nothing in the candle stick nothing in the tilly lamp nothing in the oil lamp or whatever in and of itself which will give out light until it is lit and it will not be lit from within itself magically that light has to be somehow kindled or brought from elsewhere and applied to the lamp to the candle to the whatever light form it is before it will be lit up and then as one by one the lights are put on and lit and that shelf or that corner or that table or that bench wherever it may be the room bit by bit the shed whatever it may be will become filled with light and even in the midst of dark people will see through the wee windows and through the wee grass oh there is light in that shed in that place let's head for there and so it is that just as the Ephesians could none of themselves make a difference but God dwelling in them can make a difference this is what Paul is calling them to do and to be it is as though with your lamps and with your candles you are keeping them well trimmed you are keeping the glass well cleaned and polished you are making sure it's maintained properly so that as it continues to shine it doesn't become dull or running out of fuel or getting quenched or whatever our task is to maintain that relationship with the Lord so that his spirit his grace can flow into us and through us and out from us and so give light to all that are in the house in inverted commas all who are in the area where we dwell but we can be vessels filled with God's light and spirit that is what the Ephesians are called to do that is what the Scalparks are called to do that is what Scots are called to do that is what those across the world are called to do whatever nation or place or island we may be it is our calling it is our function our chief end to glorify God and to light up our little corner of the world with the light which he alone can give this I say therefore and testify in the Lord that ye walk not as other Gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind notice again this therefore it is a reference back to chapter 4 verse 1

I therefore the prisoner of the Lord the therefore of course refers back to what we read in chapter 3 in chapter 3 which begins for this cause I Paul which he takes up again then at verse 40 again refers back into chapter 2 and chapter 2 is built upon what we read in the opening chapter in chapter 1 all of it is connected together it is not so much like carriages of a train which would be uncoupled and then the train stand in itself and then the carriage be alone none of these chapters as it were stand alone they are good in and of themselves but they draw their strength their completeness their context their sense from the fact that each one fits into the other each one fits into and is built upon the one before so we have here verse 17 this I say therefore and it's a reference to what has gone previously and testify in the Lord that ye henceforth not what those other Gentiles in the vanity the emptiness the uselessness of their mind you see that these two are contrary one to another there is in the Lord on the one hand and there is in the vanity of their mind on the other hand that emptiness that hopelessness what we might say to use our illustration that darkness and it doesn't matter whether you've got deep black darkness or just grey darkness and the one looks as if it's better than the other but it's still just darkness until such time as in the Lord we are lit up we are enabled to be implanted by his spirit

I say therefore and testify in the Lord so what Paul is saying it's not just me solid parts as having a good idea and sort of bringing you the benefit of my experience and my personality no what he is saying to the Ephesians this I'm saying in the Lord God has inspired me filled me poured out through me to you not so that you'll say wow what a great guy Paul is but rather you'll say what a great God we serve and dwell in this I say therefore and testify in the Lord that he henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk in the vanity the emptiness the uselessness of their mind having the understanding darkened being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness of their heart who being past feeling a good and sells over unto their seriousness and so on now what we have in verse 18 which talks about the blindness of their heart and having the understanding darkened this word that is translated in English as blindness in the Greek it is literally hardness hardness in the sense of let's say if you were you know a young lad or whatever starting your apprenticeship maybe you're a quarry or a joinery or something like that and you're working away with your hands day in day out what's going to happen to your hands as you get older doing this job and serve your apprenticeship and then serve all your years and time serves and so on and gain experience your hands are going to get calloused you working in the fields or working at your trade or working on the fishing boat or whatever it might be or as I remember my mother with all the work she used to have to do around the house and so on and the coal and the lugging stuff in the garden and so on our hands would get rough and calloused the skin hardens and thickens and it builds up on the hands so that they become what we call calloused and when your hands or the skin becomes thickened and calloused you know like on the heel of your foot or whatever as well what happens there is you know you could take a prune and you could stick it on the top of that callous that thick hardened bit of skin you wouldn't feel it you wouldn't feel it because it is now deadened to the sense the feeling that is there so this callousing of the skin which gradually increases as we go on through life in the normal way of things it gradually deadens the sense of feeling verse 19 see what it says there who being past feeling have given themselves over unto the seriousness now this is how the understanding darkened through alienation from the life of God through ignorance is in them because of the blindness the hardness the callousing of their hearts now to take that example again of somebody starting out in life with no doubt no soft and gentle hands but then working away hard work outdoor stuff all through the the callousing is going to increase and if you come back to that person in 30 years time the callousing is not going to be lessened it's going to be increased just with the normal way of things and also as we age our skin is no longer like baby soft from when we were young or little or toddlers whatever this hardening this callousing effect increases it does not decrease with the passing years and that happens with human skin in the hands and the feet and so on and it happens too with the human heart thus the longer we go on in ignorance of God alienated from him and blind to his goodness and that is what we are reading about here in verses 18 and 19 blind to his goodness alienated from God and so on the longer we go on the more through this callousing

effect upon the heart we actually reduce the possibility or likelihood of us ever being able to come to him when we are older isn't that what we say when we're younger we say oh yeah I'll think about that when I'm older I'll do that when I'm older you know I want to live my life I want to do the things I want to do I want to follow my own idea when I'm older I'll think about that but when you are older the callousing effect the thickening the hardening of the heart will only have increased it will not have reduced people think oh well it'll be easier to come to the Lord it'll be easier to think about these things when I'm older no it won't because layer upon layer upon layer year after year of this alienation from God of this ignorance of God of this hardening of the heart will gradually layer upon layer have done its deadening work until we are past feeling and have given ourselves over to these things completely we think oh when we're older we'll do this sort of thing we will think about the Lord when we're older this reduces the possibility or likelihood of us ever come to it when we're older at a supposed time of our own choosing the thing we have to recognise is that the old nature we'll read in verse 22 about the old man that's our old self our old nature what we are by nature will never of itself choose the Lord

[ 12 : 04 ] I'll say that again our old nature will never of itself choose the Lord and the devil will never just quietly acquiesce in letting you do so the devil will leave you alone as long as you are doing what he wants if somebody as I think I've quoted in the past somebody said you know oh I don't believe in the devil and somebody's supposed to have said to them well you just try resisting him and going against him and then see how active you'll find him in your life as long as you're just going with the flow and quietly floating downstream to hell he is going to leave you alone he is not going to be active in your life you won't have any experience of the devil at once because you're just going on with the flow but try and start paddling upstream try and start resisting the devil submitting to God resisting the devil yes he may flee from you but he's not going to go quietly he is never going to let you go without a fight he will never just quietly acquiesce in letting you go if you are conscious at all of the Lord's spirit moving and at work within you if he for it can only be he who has done it you know as one commentator has put it with reference to this verse here you know spiritual life in believers is kindled from the life itself life of God

God himself is life itself you know we think about what it says in the opening or the opening verses of John's account of the gospel in him was life and the life was the light of man now this is true of Christ of course and it is true of God himself in him was life all life is ultimately centred and originated in God who is life itself in him was life and the life was the light of man where there is God there is life where God speaks and acts there is light it is the first thing he says let there be light and there was light Jesus said I am the light of the world and those who are to be his followers he says you are the light of the world a city settled and hill cannot be hid where there is that relationship with the Lord there is light where there is that relationship with the Lord there is life but spiritual life in believers is kindled from the life itself of God it is not that he sort of kickstarts our own life and says do a wee bit better with what I have given you rather he puts his own life he injects his own life as it were his own spirit into that empty shell that we were before he kindles that light in the empty tilly lamp or the empty oil lamp or the empty candle wake so that there is a flame so that there is a light in what was previously the darkness in there was life and the life was the light of man spiritual life in believers is kindled from the life itself of God having the understanding dark and it being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness of their heart the hardness of their heart the devil will never then let you just go quietly he will start to drive you back to the nail if you are conscious at all of the

Lord's spirit moving at work within you if he that it will never be you in your old nature who has done it if he has planted that desire in your heart now if you are conscious of it now in the living years now in the present day whatever age you may be whatever stage you are at then if we can say it literally and reverently for God's sake pray on the strength of that mustard seed pray for grace to continue and increase in that desire now while you still have it for it may not pass this way again we cannot presume that it will always be there indeed if it is not tended then that flame may well simply quietly go out I like having a fire on in the manse it's one of the things I really like but if I have a nice fire going or an evening in the manse and if I tend it all night if I were to sit up at the fireside constantly putting on peat or coal or whatever it may be and keeping it fed and keeping it well supplied it will keep burning and it will stay in place all night long if I attend to it but if I go to bed and leave it you know untend it till the morning especially if I don't bank it up or anything like that the fire will have gone out by the time

I come through in the morning now it may still be warm and the ashes may still be hot and it may have some little orange glow and some little bits and it might still from that little orange glow be rekindled with a lot of work and a bit of extra kindling and maybe a fire and so on but more likely it will be too late more likely it will just be hot ash that will burn your hands but which cannot be in fact resuscitated into a fire again why?

not because I poured water on it or saturated it with a fire extinguisher all I had to do was just let it go that's all I had to do was leave it untended go off to bed go and do something else and gradually it will go out if we do not tend the spark the flame the fire that the Lord gives us it will gradually go out because it is not something which is there from our human nature and it is not our human nature our old self to keep it to maintain it it takes that which is not natural but supernatural to maintain it we must maintain just as the fire you're going to maintain a flow of oxygen in order to keep the fire going if you completely cover it in a damp ground the fire will go out and if we do not keep the channels the oxygen of our relationship with the Lord open the fire will go out the flame will go out and so we have to guard against being past feeling having that callous as it were build up upon our heart over the years have given themselves over to the seriousness to work all uncleanness with greediness you see this sense of greediness desire covetousness goes hand in hand with uncleanness we see this in chapter 5 also verse 3 fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness let it not be once named among you and again in verse 5 for ye know that no whoremonger nor unclean person nor covetous man who is an idolater have any inheritance in the kingdom of

[ 19 : 03 ] Christ and of God this is part of the thing about this uncleanness and about the things of this world that suck us in and brought us away is that they never satisfy so we've got to have more and more and more and more of it just to maintain the level of satisfaction it once gave with greediness with covetousness we've got to have more and more and it still will not satisfy because this is not what we were designed for this is not what we were made for we were made for relationship with God as the empty lamp with its glass cover is made to be lit the candle is there not meaning as an ornamental object it is made to be lit the light is made to be put on the torch is meant to be switched on the light is meant to be given that's why these things are designed as they are and you and I are designed for relationship with God and when we try to fill that space with other things with the things of this world that seems so attractive and seems so delightful and all the things that seem like like when you're little you like loads of sugar and so on you like all the sweets and all the other stuff and that's great but when you get old and your teeth start falling out and you start getting more spots and things that's not so much fun then and then you want to cut back and then you want to stop having it so much but when you're a little and when you're comparatively mature it's great but you grow up and you see the effects of these things and you have to moderate what you eat and what you drink and so on so likewise hopefully we grow in maturity some people never do but we have a need to recognise that these things of the world will never of themselves satisfy and no matter how much people give themselves over to the seriousness to work all uncleanness with greediness it will not satisfy them either but ye have not so learned

Christ you haven't learned Christ from the things of this world although it is true that all creation and all the created order points us to Christ everything in the body and everything points to the soul every little detail of how the body is put together points to the unity and the adversity of the body of Christ all creation all heaven declares the glory of the risen Lord it is all pointing to the creator if we just have eyes to see it but despite all that we have not learned Christ simply from the fallen things of this world we have learned Christ because he has revealed himself to us because he has made himself known notice then at verse 21 what he goes on to say if so be that ye have heard him and have been taught by him as the truth is in Jesus you see this this Christianity this relationship with the Lord that's what it is it is a relationship it is not about doing religion it's not about forms or church or order or religiosity it's about a relationship it is about

Christ it is about him ye have not sold out Christ if so be that ye have heard him and have been taught by him as the truth is in Jesus it is all about Christ it is all about Jesus all other things will fall into their proper place if we have them all these things will seem all the outward things that we can't see any purpose for we will begin to see purpose for when we have Christ first and foremost what he ought to be so likewise we see verse 21 as the truth is in Jesus the truth in the original Greek there is no definite article it's not actually literally the truth it's as truth is in Jesus truth in its widest fullest most comprehensive sense as truth is in Jesus and we have to remember all truth is God's truth and I think oh well wait a minute that's that's not actually the case surely some things in the world are true all truth is

God's truth Satan is the one who is the father of lies you know there is nothing no believer has anything to fear from the advance or knowledge of science all that we may discover about the rocks or about the age of the world or whatever you know supposedly we can pour scorn rightly upon the false ideology oh yes this is billions and billions of years and so on because they haven't actually got any evidence for that and what do they say oh because of these rock layers that's what makes it billions of years old yeah well how do you get fossils down there that are supposedly only meant to be up there and so on you know they don't actually have any it's just ideology it's the anti-god ideology that's not true we don't have to fear any truth the more actual genuine discovery about the world and about science about the universe and the stars and what is on mars and what isn't we don't have to fear any of that all truth is god's truth whatever we may discover he already knew it from the beginning you know there's nothing we can find out that god didn't already know that is somehow going to take him by surprise it is satan who is the one who is the father of lies in the very face of the most basic evidence he will lie his way out of it what is the current trendy lie oh yes it's somehow controversial to say that men are men are women women are women boys are not girls and girls are not boys and that's that's controversial now to say that that's somehow politically incorrect where the evidence is there you know a baby's boy oh it's a boy oh it's a girl well apparently no it's not that's just what society has imposed on that poor child from its birth it should be free to choose whatever it wants despite all the biological fact and evidence which is not merely about our outward fitments it's about who we are within our identity our character our nature is either going to be a boy or a girl male or female or a mixture of these hormones some of more than others and so on but we are we are what the lord has made us and he has made us in his image male and female but the devil comes with his lies and says oh no of course you don't have to be that you could be anyone of 36 different flavors or whatever non-binary kind of ideas you could be it is lies it is not only lies it is visibly insanity god is the god of order of truth of clarity satan is the one who is the father of lies and from the very beginning the temptation in the garden remember what the serpent said has god really said is it really the case that this is so and all the evil i didn't need to say yes it is because i was there i heard him say it and that should be the end of it so i think oh well maybe it's not maybe there's another way of looking this maybe we can recognize this is a complex issue it's not necessarily a complex issue if god has said something it is true because god is a god of truth if god has said something is wrong it is false then it is so because god is a god of truth satan is the father of lies ye have not sold out christ with his lies if so be ye have heard him and taught by him as the truth as truth in general in its widest sense is in Jesus that he put off concerning the former conversation that doesn't mean speech it means just speech it means your lifestyle your behaviour the former conversation the old man the old nature the old person which is corrupt according to the deceitful lust now remember of course that deceitful lust is what people lived

in and dwelt in and all of us would be in that were it not for the grace of christ remember what paul wrote to the corinthians first corinthians chapter 6 verse 11 when he talks about know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of god be not deceived neither fornicators nor idolaters nor adulterers nor ephemeral nor abusers of themselves of mankind nor thieves nor providists nor drunkards nor revilers non extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of god and such were some of you but ye are washed but ye are sanctified but ye are justified in the name of the lord jesus and by the spirit of our god you see what the message is here it's not just oh well for the good people you're okay for those who are indulging in all these bad things or you've had it no this is good news for sinners in whatever state of lostness they may be found in whatever degree of depravity they may have been engaged there is hope for sinners there is opportunity of freedom and newness of life there is dignity and the restoration of their lost and fallen humanity in Christ this is good news for sinners there is none beyond the reach of God's grace put off concerning the former conversation the old lifestyle the old person the old man which is corrupt and the word corrupt means perishing decaying like a corpse decaying it's dead it's corrupt according to the deceitful lusts and be renewed in the spirit of your mind and that you put on the new man or the new person which after

[ 29 : 11 ] God is created in righteousness and true holiness that which the Lord gives is of himself and there is nothing which is of himself which is impure in any way now of course the Christian he or she is still going to be struggling there's going to be a spiritual warfare within the flesh lusting against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh as Paul writes to the Galatians there's always going to be that inner conflict until we are finally perfected for him but that is not because what God has given us is somehow defective it is because the old nature there's remnants of it still there it is because there is still that impurity within us of the old flesh the old nature it's as though you've got a flower bed or a field whatever and you dig out all the weeds and you clean away all the nettles and the brambles and the thorns and the thistles so you can prepare it for planting the stuff that you want whether it's corn or whether it's crops or whether it's flowers whatever it may be you clear away all the junk that was in it before but you know as you're waiting to plant and as you're going to buy in your seed or whatever and then after a few weeks you see

James there's other weeds still coming I thought I cleared them all away and you thought you had and you had dug as deep as you could and you beat as high as you could but my goodness there was still some there that you do that were beginning to spring back up again so you've got to keep on working and you've got to keep on weaving you've got to keep on at it because the old nature is not going to give up without a fight the devil is not going to let you go quietly he's going to keep fighting with what he has which is the old sinful nature but as the Lord has planted his spirit within his children that will grow and increase and be blessed within them that which is of God is always pure and always perfect and the reason there is the conflict within us the reason there is still sin is because the old nature fights tooth and nail as it goes down and down and down and sometimes it will suddenly seem to have a big burst of energy but then when it's defeated it will go down again and get weaker and gradually more and more it will be eclipsed and it will be overcome until it is finally vanquished at the last it is still there but there is nothing imperfect or impure in what

God has given us the new man the new personality which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness wherefore putting away lying speak every man truth with his neighbor for we are members one of another you see we're not simply members of the one body one body yes that is true one body the bride of Christ but also belonging to that bride of Christ we're members of each other if we harm each other we harm ourselves if we wound another part or member of the church of Christ we harm and wound ourselves we damage ourselves when we attack one another putting away lies speak every man truth with his neighbor we are members one of another we belong with one another this is how God has ordained it to be be ye angry and sin not let not the sun go down upon your wrath neither give place to the devil now of course this is a maxim which is often used for example in wedding services and between husbands and wives and that is right and it's good that that should be the case you shouldn't really sort of turn away from each other and put the light out grumpy and not make up at all you ought to seek to make your peace and be ready to apologise one to another yes that's true but it's not just of course in the marital sense just like you know that that verse in 2 Corinthians verse 6 chapter 6 where it says be not unequally yoked one with another it's not actually talking about marriage it's very applicable to marriage but it's not talking about marriage it's talking about the relationship of believers and unbelievers in the world and in business and so on so likewise be angry and sin not let not the sun go down upon your wrath it's not talking primarily about husbands and wives it's talking about brothers and sisters in

Christ it's talking about the relationship within the church when it says be angry and sin not anger you'll notice is not explicitly forbidden if it be for example as Christ's anger against evil or against unrighteousness if we think of Mark chapter 3 at verse 5 we read why he had looked round about upon them with anger being grieved for the hardness of their heart he said unto the man stretch forth thine hand and he stretched it out and his hand was restored whole as the other when he healed the man in the synagogue he was angry when he saw the hardness of their heart likewise in the beginning of John chapter 2 when he cleansed the temple the first night the Jews Passover was at hand and Jesus went up to Jerusalem and found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves and the changers of money sitting and when he had made a scourge a whip of small cords he drove them all out of the temple and the sheep and the oxen and poured out the changers money and overthrew the tables and said unto them that sold doves take these things hence make not my father's house a house of merchandise now when Jesus is doing that we imagine he said excuse me just mind if I just don't hit me a table thank you so much I'm just going to pour out your money here is that right thank you yes no problem no he's going to whip it his hand he is flipping the tables he's scattering the money he is setting the beasts all free he is lashing this way and that because he is angry at the insult done to his father's honor by what they have made his house of prayer into anger is not explicitly forbidden but sin with it is of course still sin just as we see that it is right it's fine enough to have indignation against evil or unrighteousness indignation and dishonor done to God or wrong done to man that is justifiable anger Jesus was angry but he didn't sin but wrath is not to be continued now there's one commentator I'll just read the quotation here passion is sinful you might think passion well surely that's talking about you know kissing and love and so all these things no that's just how it has come to be a plan passion is sinful derived from the latin term passio which means suffering so this is why you get the passion of the



Christ his passion and cross it's not that oh he's really passionately enjoying being healed to the cross passion is suffering because it comes from the term passio implying that amidst seeming energy and vitality a man who is passionate is really passive because he is the slave of his anger it has control of him his thoughts his feelings his anger or perhaps his lust if it's in the sense of you know kissing and love making and so on people are all passionately doing so that means that you have become the slave of your emotions and your feelings and your drives they control you you have become their slave therefore you are passive you are helpless in the teeth of these things which have the control of you you are going through passion you are going through suffering because you have become its slave you are enduring suffering hence passion the passion of Christ and so on because passion is suffering you have become the passive slave of your emotions your feelings your anger your lust whatever it may be it rules you you instead of you mastering it and being in control of it wrath then is forbidden anger not necessarily so let not the sun go down upon your wrath now why does it specify that one reason is because the sun going down if you remember the sun going down was the end of the Jewish day the evening in the morning or the first day so in other words Paul is saying is before a new day begins and you and your brother part one from another perhaps you part never to meet again supposing you part from him in anger and then you know he does the ancient equipment falling under a bus or he has an accident or he falls ill and dies and you never see him again you never got a chance to make your peace to say you were sorry to put things right you don't know that you will ever see him or her again you don't know that you will ever meet again you'll ever be able to put things right you don't know whether it's a relative or it's a loved one whether it's a fellow

[ 38 : 42 ] Christian you have no guarantee of tomorrow don't let the new day the sun going down in the Jewish terms begin with that old wrath that old argument still there you don't know when you'll have the chance to put it right how would you feel if the last words between you and somebody else were words of wrath and anger and spite and that's not what you want on your conscience we only have it because we think there'll be plenty of time to put it right for them to come crawling to me and apologize over me perhaps to admit maybe I did some things wrong to and to make your peace you don't know how long you will have to make your peace do it now do it quickly don't let the sun go down upon your wrath now just as we said wrath is forbidden but anger not necessarily there are some situations where we say wrath anger can be right just as if you think about vaccination where that is a little bit of poison something poisonous injected or given to the body so that in a small amount it won't do you major harm but the body itself will react by building up antibodies against this thing it detects and thereby building up what we call an immunity a little poison can be used as a medicine it can be used as a vaccination a little anger can do good if it is righteous anger if it is not sinful anger but we shouldn't let the sun go down and laugh neither give place to the devil what does it mean about giving place to the devil well if you turn to chapter 6 and we see it um see it verse uh verse 12 for example where it says we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities that means spiritual demonic powers against powers against the rulers of the darkness of this world against spiritual wickedness in high places who is the ruler of the darkness of this world is the prince of darkness it is the devil of course now if you go into the night into the darkness with wrath anger spite still there you are giving him all the ammunition he needs the darkness is descending not only in a physical sense but in a spiritual sense and the longer you go on at odds with that brother or sister in christ the darker it is going to get in your heart the harder it is going to be to make your peace then it gives advice practical advice of course let him that stole steal no more but rather let him labor working with his hands instead of stealing with the hands the thing which is good that he may have to give to him that need it now you see that the emphasis here that that theft is associated with idleness it is associated with you know i can't be bothered working i'm just going to steal from other people so instead rather work hard not so that oh you provide for your own needs that's good but the motive for working hard is it so that you've got enough to give to people who don't have anything that's what your motivation for working let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth for that which is good to the use of edifying that it may minister grace to the hearers and grieve not the holy spirit of god we are by you're sealed unto the day of redemption as some of you will remember from the prayer meeting last wednesday i was desperately looking for the the verse that correlated with first timothy four verse two where it talked about having the conscience seared or branded with a hot iron where there's the imprint of that hot iron as it were on the skin for evil and the verse i couldn't find uh and of course this is where it's from ephesians four verse 30 talking about being sealed with the spirit of god the spirit of god is the seal that which is put upon us that which testifies uh to whose we are this by which we are sealed it's

it's there also uh in chapter one likewise being sealed unto the day of redemption god has imprinted his seal upon us for good as opposed to being branded or seared with a hot iron which is for evil all bitterness and wrath and anger and crammer evil is being put away from you with all manners and be kind one to another tenderhearted forgiving one another even as god for christ's sake hath forgiven you now this isn't just a sort of winding up and finishing off because the fact that christ has forgiven us freely at huge cost to himself the cost of his own life ought to humble us for the comparatively uh cost free comparatively easy forgiving of one another although our pride doesn't like it and the reason we see that is that chapter five begins with another of these therefore be therefore what's the therefore it's reference to forgiving one another because god for christ's sake hath forgiven you what we have received we are to pass on the light that we receive is in order to shine out the blessings we receive are in order to be shared the good that the lord gives us is meant to be distributed so that we become channels of god's grace the words that we use the life that we live is itself part of the witness jesus said in matthew 12 verse 35 a good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things and an evil man out of the evil treasure our words likewise should testify to whose we are every idle word jesus said that men shall speak they shall give account their all in the day of judgment that's a scary thought there mustn't be wrathful words there mustn't be spiteful words there mustn't be evil words and behavior that feeds and stalks the devil's fires those fires blaze against other people and feed us a prideful anger are not the things we should be focusing on rather it is the light the gentle warm light of christ which we receive from them is to be given out to others whether in ephesus whether in scalpy whether in the center of pagan worship or heathen darkness we may not be able to change the world all at once but we can cause a little candle that has been lit to shine in the dark place like the stars in the sky showing these little pinpricks of light that god has not abandoned his people he has not abandoned us in the midst of the years but he continues to give the light of the world because in him is that life of which the light is the center to banish the darkness to overcome the evil and to continue the victory of his kingdom the tumors into his kingdom until he comes again