

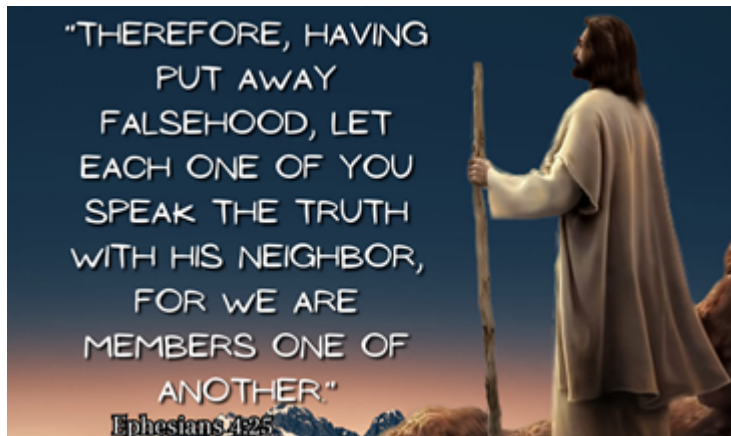
THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

“We Are His Workmanship”

Date: 11-24-24 Lesson: 29

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THE TEXT - (Ephesians 4:25-32)



(25) Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. (26) Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, (27) and give no opportunity to the devil. (28) Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. (29) Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may **give grace** to those who hear.

(Lev 19:11; Ps 15:2; Zech 8:16; Mt 5:22; 12:36; Ac 20:35; Col 3:9; 1 Th 4:11; Jas 1:14)

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

(32) Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another,
as God in Christ forgave you.

(Is 63:10; Mt 6:14,15; Col 3:8-13; 1 Th 5:19; 1 Pet 1:5; 2:1; 3:8)

STUDY HELPS

THE FORMULA OF CONCORD XI. GOD'S ETERNAL FOREKNOWLEDGE AND ELECTION

[38] On this account, as the Augsburg Confession in Article XI says, we also keep private Absolution. We teach **that it is God's command** that we believe such Absolution. We should regard it as sure that, when we believe the word of Absolution, we are as truly **reconciled to God** as though we had heard a voice from heaven [John 12: 28– 30], as the Apology also explains this article. This consolation would be entirely taken from us if we did not understand **God's will toward us** from the call that is made through the Word and through the Sacraments.

[39] **The Holy Spirit** certainly wants to be present with the Word preached, heard, and considered, and He wants to be effective and work through it. Yet this foundation would be overthrown and taken from us if we misunderstand election. Therefore, the meaning is not at all like the one referred to above, that the elect are to be the sort of people who despise **God's Word**, thrust it from them, blaspheme and persecute it (Matthew 22: 5– 6; Acts 13: 46); or, when they hear it, harden their hearts (Hebrews 4: 2, 7), resist **the Holy Spirit** (Acts 7: 51), persevere in sins without repentance (Luke 14: 18– 20), do not truly believe **in Christ** (Mark 16: 16), only make an outward show (Matthew 7: 22; 22: 12), or seek other ways to righteousness and salvation outside of **Christ** (Romans 9: 31).

[40] Furthermore, **God has ordained in His counsel that the Holy Spirit** should call, enlighten, and convert the elect through the Word [Romans 10: 17]. He will justify and save all those who by true faith receive **Christ**. In the same way, He also determined in His counsel that He will harden [Romans 9: 18], reprobate, and condemn those who are called through the Word if they reject the Word and resist **the Holy Spirit** [Acts 7: 51]. This is true even though **the Spirit** wants to be effective and work in them through the Word and persevere through the Word. In this way “many are called, but few are chosen” [Matthew 22: 14].

[41] Few receive the Word and follow it. Most despise **the Word** and will not come to the wedding [Matthew 22: 3– 6]. The cause for this contempt for **the Word** is not God’s foreknowledge, but the perverse human will. The human will rejects or perverts the means and instrument of **the Holy Spirit, which God offers** it through the call. It **resists the Holy Spirit**, who wants to be effective, and who works through **the Word, as Christ** says: “How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!” (Matthew 23: 37).

[42] Many “hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away” (Luke 8: 13). The reason is not that **God** was unwilling to grant grace for perseverance to those in whom He “began a good work,” for that is contrary to St. Paul (Philippians 1: 6). The reason is that they willfully turn away again from the holy commandment, grieve and embitter **the Holy Spirit**, involve themselves again in the world’s filth, and redecorate their hearts as homes for the devil. For them their last situation is worse than the first. (See 2 Peter 2: 10– 20; **[Ephesians 4: 30;]** Hebrews 10: 26; [Luke 11: 24– 26].)

[43] This is how much of the mystery of predestination is revealed to us **in God’s Word**. If we abide by this teaching and cling to it, it is a very useful, saving, consoling teaching. It establishes very effectively the article that we are justified and saved without any works and merits of ours, purely out of grace alone, **for Christ’s sake**. Before the time of the world, before we existed, yes, even before the foundation of the world was laid— when, of course, we could do nothing good— we were chosen by grace in **Christ to salvation, according to God’s purpose** (Romans 9: 11; 2 Timothy 1: 9).

[44] Furthermore, all opinions and erroneous teachings about the powers of our natural will are overthrown by this. **God in His counsel**, before the time of the world, decided and ordained that He Himself would produce and work in us **by His Holy Spirit’s power**. Through **the Word**, He would do everything that belongs to our conversion.

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LIFE APPLICATION

“Let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor,
for we are members one of another”

Since we are all part of the body of Christ,
why is it essential that we speak the truth to each other,
and do not grieve the Holy Spirit?