

Title: Becoming a Wise Family Part 2¹

Introduction: The sermon for today is finishing this series of becoming a wise family. Last week we went through Proverbs and highlighted the top five ways of becoming a foolish family. They were careless feet, distracted eyes, quick fists, loose lips and plugged ears.

Today we will look at what makes the wise family wise. Please turn again to Matthew 7:24-27. Last week we focused on the difference between the wise and the foolish person. But you can also notice that in the passage what is the one constant? The one constant is the rain, the floods and the winds that come to our houses. Just as there are natural storms in our lives, there are relational storms, emotional storms, and spiritual storms.

What storms of life have come to your home? Possibly the death of a loved one (young or old), discrimination, health issues, management of wealth, co-worker issues, or rebellion of one of your children. So, through the storms of life the wise family is able to stand firm because they hear the word of God and do it.

So today we will look at Ephesians 4 and glean Paul's wisdom on becoming a wise family. I will state the conclusion ahead of time. The conclusion is that the wise

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family walks in love. You can see it in v.2. I love the word walk. It shows that the Christian life is a long obedience in the same direction. We haven't arrived yet. But walk how? In love. They have a conviction about walking in love. In 4:1, Paul tells us to walk in a manner worthy of the calling. In 4:17, Paul tells us to no longer walk as the Gentiles. In 5:8, Paul tells us to walk as children of light. In 5:15, Paul tells us to walk not as unwise but as wise. And in this passage we are to walk in love.

Main Idea: So, wise families have conviction. Conviction that salvation comes from grace alone, faith alone, Jesus Christ alone. Conviction in one baptism. They have conviction about living the Christian life. They don't have careless feet. They count the costs. They weigh the scales. They have made a game plan. So that when the world's storms come, which they do, they can withstand them.

Paul writes these in the beginning of Ephesians 4. Today we will focus on the conviction of wisely walking in love.

But let's first pray for God's presence.

Ephesians 4:22-24. This is the pinnacle of wisdom. Putting off foolishness and putting on wisdom. This is important for life-transformation.

What is legalism? What is pharisaic living? It is staying in the put off part. It is simply not doing certain things. It is not put on. But you can't put on until you put off. It is a put off

and put on. So let's focus on what God's word says for today. First, the wise family is convicted about honesty.

1. Convicted about honesty v.25

The therefore roots this passage in the previous passage of put off and putting on.

Put off. The word put off is *apotithemi*. It means to take off, lay aside, rid oneself, to put off. It is used in Hebrews 12:1. Cast off sin and focus on Jesus. This verb is an imperative and we are told to continually do this. It is part of the Christian walk.

Put off what? Put off falsehood. The word falsehood is *pseudo*. It means a lie, falsehood, untrue. This could refer to any falsehood but because of the following command to speak truth, it should be understood in the sense of telling lies. We know that Satan speaks lies and is the Father of lies in John 8:44.

So we put on honesty. The word honesty is *aletheia*. It means the content of what is true, truth. You see God's desire for our mouths is not that we just shut and don't talk. His desire is that we speak the truth. Speak with honesty. What does Jesus say about truth? He tells us we will know the truth and it will set us free. Paul tells us in v.15 to speak the truth in love. We tell the whole truth, gently, kindly. Truth and honesty are upheld in love. Lies and falsehood are thrown to the side.

Why do we put on honesty?

First, because that is who we are as Christians. V.24 tells us that we are created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. Our role shouldn't be just to hang around but to glorify and honor him.

Second, because it is important for a wise family and healthy family. Scripture tells us "for we are members one of another". Paul could have based this truth on God's character or because Jesus is truth. But the Holy Spirit decided to say "for we are members one of another".

One commentary tells us, "in the body which is a model of harmonious relationships, there is no place for anything other than the truth. We are 'no longer alienated, independent beings, but people who now belong together in unity with others whom we must not rob of the truth according to which they will decide and act'.

Dave talks all the time about our church being a hospital or recovery point. But how can this happen if we don't speak the truth in love? Or if we lie all the time?

How does lying destroy our relationship?

1. Lying destroys trust. Relationships are built on trust.
2. Lying does not promote love. Lying all about me. Not about the other person. Loving is you before me.
3. Lying is a barrier to intimacy.

And these three are not just for our marriage and families. This is also for our church family. Could you imagine if our church put on honesty with one another. Really put it on.

Speak the truth in love to one another? Don't you want to be a part of that? Guards would be down. Prayer would be happening all the time. Hearts would be open. Scars would be healed. Lives would be changed. Community and authenticity would be established. Humble people everywhere. No more games. Only God and his people.

So, can we be a church known for speaking the truth in love? Speaking honesty to one another? The wise family is convicted about honesty. They are also convicted about conflict resolution.

2. Convicted about conflict resolution v.26-27

The word for anger is ὀργίζομαι. It means literally being angry. But anger is different from the other vices in this passage. Paul sees that anger is appropriate in some circumstances. It can be used but it is very dangerous and can bring much harm. In other words, in your anger do not sin.

It is like your service engine light. The service engine light comes on because there is something wrong with your engine. You have a choice either diagnose the problem or ignore it. If you ignore it, then your car can be totaled. In a similar way, anger tells you when your heart is in trouble. In counseling or discipling, you need to find out the heart issue not the acting out issue. We need to diagnose the problem.

Ask yourself: why do I get angry? What is the idol in my heart? What is making me burst out in order to control? Is it

righteous anger or unrighteous anger? There are two types of anger. Righteous anger and unrighteous anger.

Righteous anger is being angry about what God is angry about. What is God angry about?

He hates it when there is injustice in the world. When there is ungodliness. Child Slave Trade, Homelessness, Broken Families, Drug Abuse, Greed, Extortion, Politics, Abortion. So many. But what is worse than injustice and ungodliness? When injustice and ungodliness are promoted as virtue and godliness in our society. Things like that should make us mad/angry. And we should strive to combat these.

However, there is also unrighteous anger. Not angry for or with God but for me. What about me? How dare they treat me that way! This is why much wisdom should be used with anger. Because it can so easily turn from helpful to slavery. In a moment.

So...how don't I let my anger turn into sin? Well let's look at God's Word. V.26-27, "Don't let the sun go down in your anger or it will create a foothold for the devil". NLT, "for anger gives a mighty foothold to the Devil". We should not let our anger go on in our marriages, in our families, in our relationships. We should deal with conflict immediately. Now the issue can be put off for another day or week. But the anger, it must be dealt with right away.

Resolve it today, because if we don't, then anger will create a foothold and create destruction. A foothold is a place to

stand. If you are in Christ, Satan has no place to stand unless you invite him. And when anger is in our hearts, then we are inviting Satan into your heart. Who wants to send an invitation to Satan to enter your house? NOBODY. How many of us because of harbored anger, bring out the good china for his welcome?

And his purposes are not to build up or edify. They are to destroy and tear down. Here are three things that Satan wants to do in your family, marriage, and church body.

1. He wants to discourage. He wants you to give up and quit. He makes small things big and big things small.
2. He wants to distort and divide. You lose perspective on people's lives. Wants leaders and families to divide.
3. He wants to destroy. John 10:10 tells us the devil (thief) comes to steal and kill and destroy.

So how do we not invite Satan? We deal with issues right away. We deal with conflict resolution. The wise family is convicted about conflict resolution. They are also convicted about hard work.

3. Convicted about hard work v.28

The word stealing here is similar to the eighth commandment, "you shall not steal". Throughout the Torah we are told not to steal. In this context, Paul was most likely speaking to Christians who were formerly thieves and he was telling them to steal no longer.

Now many of us don't physically steal things but we still physically steal. We can cheat on our taxes, cheat on paying tolls, cheat by not paying back something. It is all stealing.

The thief would steal from the orphan, widow,

And what is the resolution? Put on "honest work". The word here has a sense of laboring to the point of weariness or exhaustion. Now the point is not so you can have a big house, or new TV. The point is in the text. "So that he may have something to share with anyone in need". The purpose is to share with those that don't have anything. Paul wants us to be like the believers in Acts 4:35 and 20:34-35 who brought money and goods to the apostles so they could distribute to each person who had a need. Think of the grace and love behind this. A thief who steals from others for himself, because of Christ now works himself to work for others. If that is not grace, I don't know what is. It is as Pastor Dave always says "love at its riskiest".

The wise family is convicted about hard work. But they are also convicted about building up.

4. Convicted about building up v.29-30

The fourth command is to put off filthy talk. This is a rare word which has a sense of rotten or putrid. It was used to refer to rotted wood, diseased lungs, rancid fish, withered flowers, and rotten fruit. It is used in the context of a fruit that bad trees bear.

Illustration: Now I have this apple here. It is pretty old. Could you imagine if I asked Laura for an apple to eat while working on this sermon and she handed this to me? And what if I didn't notice how bad it was? I would have taken one bite and then what? Vomit, spitting out, washing my teeth many, many times. That is the imagery Paul is trying to use. Corrupt talk is like vomiting on someone.

Rather put on building up talk. Words that are good which is the opposite of rotten. Building up is central to what the Holy Spirit is communicating to us. And in vv.12 and 16 of Ephesians. The word is ἀγαθός. We get the name Agatha from it. It means what is good, what is helpful. When you talk to people build them up. Don't you want people after they talk to you to be in a better place than they were?

How do you build up?

1. Words build up. Good words. Beneficial words. Encouraging words. Words that help people become more like Christ.
2. Timing of words. Make sure when you tell people good words that it fits the occasion. The text says, "as it fits the occasion".
3. May they give grace. Think about it. Your words can give grace. They can give someone something they don't have. They honor the person and give them hope when down. Joy when sad. They are powerful.

Why? The other reason to put off these actions are because they grieve the Holy Spirit. This grieving shows the

personhood of the Holy Spirit. This passage helps us understand the Trinity. The Spirit is not some impersonal force or power. Rather is a person who enters us when we trust in Jesus alone for salvation.

This also shows our security. The text says we were sealed for the day of redemption. We are sealed by the Spirit and he is our seal (1:13). We are sealed when we trust in Jesus alone for salvation. The day of redemption is similar to the 2nd coming of Christ or the day of the Lord when Christ returns. This seal cannot be broken because the Spirit is the seal himself.

The word grieve means deeply hurt. Grieve is a relationship word. A sorrow word. It makes someone sad. You can only injure someone if you have a relationship, you can't injure a stranger. Laura or Dave can injure me. Strangers can't.

This is important. If I was at someone's house for a BBQ and someone was mouthing off about a person. I could tell Laura, let's go. We are not going to put up with this. But the Holy Spirit can't leave us when we sin. The Spirit can't leave itself. He can't leave you.

The Holy Spirit will never leave nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). And tomorrow can be a new day for your family. For our church. If we are convicted about put off corrupt speech and put on building up.

The wise family is convicted about building up. They are also convicted about forgiveness.

5. Convicted about forgiveness v.31-32

We must choose to forgive in all situations. Jesus writes in Mark 11:25, “²⁵ And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.” Or in Luke 6:37, Jesus says, “Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven”. In the Lord’s prayer, Jesus taught us to pray, “and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. Jesus taught us a lot about forgiveness. He even modeled it on the cross. His last words were, “And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Even in death he had a forgiving heart and he forgave us our sins.

How do we forgive? Do we have a forgiving heart? It is hard to forgive, right? That bossy supervisor, that nosey neighbor, that mouthy mother in law, that rude sister or brother, that arrogant co-worker, out of control children, bitter spouse. We really live in a sinful world. But we are called to forgive them. If we don’t we will bring much pain and suffering into our homes.

How do we forgive? Get alone with God and do three things. Write down the person, the pain, the plan.

Now when should we be careful with our forgiveness. We should be careful in two circumstances.

When we are enabling. Are we enabling people? Enabling corrupt speech or abuse or lying?

When we are risking. If my father was into narcotic drugs, do you think I am going to bring my children to visit him just so I can forgive him later? No. If a wife knows she is going to be abused by her husband, should she let him and then just forgive him later? No. In those circumstances, we must speak the truth and protect.

So what are the benefits of forgiving? Why should I forgive? First, damaging attitudes are eliminated. Look at verse 31.

Bitterness. It is a metaphor derived from the description of something that had a bitter taste, such as a plant or water. It’s like acid on the face. It burns and is horrible.

Wrath. This is more to express human anger. It is also used for rage. Kind of like a wood burning stove. Wrath is building.

Anger. This is the unrighteous anger from before. It is a violent outburst.

Clamor; harsh words. This can also be translated shouting or screaming. It used in the terms of people shouting back and forth in a quarrel.

Slander; evil speaking. It is any kind of speech that is defamatory or abusive.

Malice; malicious behavior. It is mean-spirited or vicious.

We must strive to put these off from our lives. They are evil, ugly attitudes and ungodly behavior.

Second, healing can come. How do we know that we have forgiven others? v.32. We will be kind and tenderhearted.

Kindness is an attribute of God himself. Psalm 34:8 states, “Taste and see that the Lord is good”. Psalm 145:9, “The Lord is good to all”. Paul writes in Romans 2:4, that it is God’s kindness that leads people to repentance. When you see that person, your not thinking of all the evil. You see them as new. You don’t have to have the hammer out.

Tenderhearted or compassionate. This literally means to have healthy intestines or bowels. It has a figurative sense expressing the internal feeling. It is having sympathy for a person. It is the opposite of a hard heart. It is being tenderhearted. It means that if the person comes to you, you actually listen and care. You aren’t secretly happy if they are suffering.

Third, just as Christ died for us.

The wise family is convicted about forgiveness. But there last conviction is the most important. They are convicted about love.

6. Convicted about love v.1-2

So we finally come upon the final exhortation of this passage. We are commanded to be imitators of God, as beloved children.

The therefore and imitators shows the link to the previous verse on forgiveness. The words, “as beloved children” means more than a relationship. It is the basis on which we are able to become imitators. It is also the basis in which we are able to walk in love. Eph 1:5 tells us we have been adopted in God’s family. You might not have had a father growing up. But now you have an eternal Father. And in v.2 “as Christ loved us”. We are loved by our heavenly Father.

Ephesians 4:17 tells us to no longer walk as the Gentiles do. In other words, walk according to Christ, walk in holiness. But the wise family understands that you can’t walk in holiness alone. You must also walk in love. Paul is telling us to live a life a love. And living a life of love means that your thinking, attitudes and behavior are to be characterized by the Grace of God.

You see the wise family realizes that the model and foundation of walking in love is found in Jesus Christ and what he did on the cross for us.

So what does it mean that he gave himself up for us? Look at v.2, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. The word sacrifice and offering to God is rooted in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, the Jews would constantly offer animal sacrifices for their sins. Now though, Hebrews 10:5;8 tells us that Jesus died once for all. There is no more need for sacrifice which is why we don’t have an animal up here. Jesus is our High Priest and our sacrifice.

But Jesus is also a fragrant aroma. His perfect life and sinless life was a sacrifice that is a fragrant aroma to God. It appeased God's wrath. That is why we live by grace alone, by faith alone, through Jesus alone. We can't do it ourselves. We can only walk in holiness and walk in love through Jesus.

Conclusion

So where do we go from here? We have visited the home of the foolish family and we know where they are going. We have visited the home of the wise family and we know what they stand for. What do you want for your family?

In order to become a wise family you need to go to the source of wisdom which is Christ himself (Luke 11:31; 1 Cor 1:30; Col 2:3). So the first step is to have Jesus in your life. You must trust in Jesus. Without Christ in your life none of this makes sense.

What if you are a wise family that has been acting foolishly? Put off foolishness, put on wisdom. Put off self and put on Christ. You have a choice to make. Review final points of previous sermon.

What if you are a wise family that has been acting wise?

Persevere, finish strong. Don't stop now. Cross the line at full speed. Paul writes in 2 Tim 4:7-8 ⁷ "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." ⁸ Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will

award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing." Keep going strong and finish the race well.