

Build Each Other Up in Love



Sermon Text

Ephesians 4:1-32



Big Idea

God, through the Holy Spirit, has called us out of our former life of darkness and into communal life of loving service, for the maturing of God's church. But this doesn't come easily; this requires regular renewal of our minds to put on the new self.

Christian call: one life of love, building each other up into maturity

Christian calling: humble, gentle, patient love (1-3)...within the context of community (3-6)

Our high calling is to love others well, seeing them grow into maturity in Christ (knowledge of God) and building each other up in love.

Problem: we are deceived by our hearts

Our hearts deceive us into thinking we have pure motives, but we do not. We scheme and manipulate to get what our hearts desire.

We manipulate by moving Against (attack), Away (avoid), or Towards (appease) others. These tactics do not seek to build up others but rather (attempt to) get them to fulfill our passions. In the process, we hurt others and grieve the Holy Spirit.

Solution: renew your minds

We regularly minimize our own sin and elevate the sins of others. Renewal of our mind is seeing our natural tendency toward selfishness, come back to the cross in humility, seek Christ's unmerited grace for us, and ask the Holy Spirit to do an inner work again. From this place of renewal, we can "put on the new self" in acts of loving service towards others.

Key diagnostic question: am I generally moving toward people to:

- Manipulate them to extract benefit for me?
- Honor them as belonging to God and see them mature in Him?

Our most difficult relationships reveal who we truly are, not our most loving ones.

Reflection Questions



- What high calling have you been living for? Financial "success"? Corporate advancement? Well-balanced and "successful" children? Leisure?
- What heart movement comes most naturally to you: Against, Away, Towards? How do you most readily see yourself in these movements?
- In the midst of living amongst sinners who sin against us, what practices have you developed to "renew your mind" and "put on the new self"?
- The passage seems to imply two activities happening at once, both the "renewal of our mind" and the "putting on of our new self" (acting in love to see others grow in maturity). How do you reconcile how these two activities happen at seemingly the same time? Is this simply "faking it til you make it"?
- In what ways is the Holy Spirit calling you to change so you live for others, making your life a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God?