



SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD

Wednesday, February 3, 2021

Scripture: Ephesians 4:1-3

TITLE: Cut Them Some Slack!

“Why can’t you kids just get along?!” I wish it wasn’t true, but these words come out of my mouth more often than I care to admit. I know what you’re thinking: “Do you mean, Pastor Nat, that your kids are normal kids, who disobey and get on each other?” Let me tell you, they are total boys, with sin natures fully intact. Now, they are good kids - sweet and still pretty innocent - but it’s amazing how quickly that family peace is broken. Well, this isn’t just a family issue. It’s a spiritual family thing as well.

What do I mean? Well, let’s turn back to Ephesians in Chapter 4:1-3 (NLT), as Paul speaks into this very topic:

Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. ² Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love. ³ Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace.

Paul calls himself a prisoner. Paul recognizes that being a Christian isn’t a passive decision. It’s active and binding. Paul says, “Hey, when you get saved, you get handcuffed to Christ. His power is your power. His direction is your direction.”

So what? Well, Paul says, as a Christian, you are to lead a life worthy of your call and identity. You are a child of God by grace; therefore, live like a child of God saved by grace. You have an identity and a job description, so live like it.

How? Well, one way is by rejecting pride and knowing who you are in Christ. You didn’t save yourself. Don’t act like it. You aren’t the best thing since sliced bread - Jesus is. Remember that.

But not only are you to live with humility, you are to be gentle. Now, that sounds a lot like kindness, but that’s not what Paul meant. He meant to be self-controlled and sober-minded. We are not to live an erratic life, influenced by the culture, your situation, or the news report. No, we are lead and influenced by Christ.

Not only are we to be gentle and humble, but we are also to be patient with each other, and put up with each other’s faults, blind spots, and errors. We, who have been shown much mercy, should give mercy freely.

And when we do these things, we can experience a greater level of unity and peace in the body of Christ.

Now, I get it. We are all different. We come from different cultures, backgrounds, denominations, translations, etc. But God has said, as you live, be humble, gentle, patient, and merciful. When we do these things, we'll experience greater peace and unity today, as the church, and as the people of God.

So here's my challenge for you today: if you're at odds with someone in the faith body, reach out to them. If you've sinned against them, apologize and ask for forgiveness. Maybe the issue isn't with you, but maybe the issue is with another believer. Reach out to them via phone, text, social media, or e-mail, and just let them know "I was reading Ephesians 4 today, and I needed to let you know I value you and appreciate you." And then let the Spirit lead you in what else to say. But chances are, in order to establish and experience that peace in the spiritual family, it will take some patience, humility, and mercy.

Try it and share with us the results.