



**SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD**

**Friday, February 12, 2021**

**Scripture: Ephesians 4: 29-32**

**TITLE: Build Others Up**

This past Christmas, I drove my family to Florida for some time at the beach. 2020 was an amazing year, but also an exhausting year. So we needed a change of scenery. But let me tell you, driving to and from Florida from Nebraska is a lot of quality time in a van. In fact, according to our van, we spent 60 hours in the van during our 8 days away.

Those 60 hours were pretty good - in fact, a lot of fun. But let me be real: there were more than a couple moments of name-calling and tense situations.

Oh, how I wish we all would have remembered Paul's words in Ephesians 4:29-32 (NLT):

“Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.

<sup>30</sup> And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.

<sup>31</sup> Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. <sup>32</sup> Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.”

Most people don't know this, but the book of Ephesians is split into two parts: the first part is 3 chapters of theology. The second part is 3 chapters of application. It doesn't get much more practical than this here.

The apostle James would say our tongues, our words, are like a restless animal that no person can tame. It can be like a torch that sets the world on fire. I don't know about you, but I know in those 8 days on the road, I had to apologize a lot for my words.

Today, you may be struggling with anger, loneliness or pride, or something else, but the result is a tongue that brings sorrow and pain to those around you. If this is you, Paul says, in God's power, you can stop it. You can throw away that foul language. You can get rid of the cutting words, the angry tirades, the shame sessions, and the manipulation and humiliation.

Instead, be kind. Be forgiving. Why? Because God is the perfect example of love and forgiveness towards us.

You see, that's the why and how to overcome the struggles with your words. God forgives us completely. That is why and how we can forgive others freely. God loves us unconditionally. That is why and how we can love others freely. God encourages and builds us up. That is why and how we can encourage and build others up.

Today, this is my challenge for you: Find 2 people who you can encourage and build up. Shoot them a text message. Give them a call. Send them an e-mail. Leave them a sticky note, or even post on their social media words of encouragement. It can be a family member, a coworker, a friend, a neighbor, or even the barista at the coffee shop. Whoever they are, encourage them, and watch their world get better.