

Coastal Community Church Vision
Hope beyond our brokenness
Trust in our Risen Savior
Restoration for our city, nation, and world

Today... I choose to be changed by Jesus, I choose to seek Jesus first,
and I choose to join Jesus in His resurrection work.

Ear Tug. Ask Permission

Last week we talked about how there is no inheritance in asking all things of this world to satisfy our soul. Paul tells us to be kind, compassionate, and forgiving for a specific reason: the inheritance of love, resurrection, and healing God has for us is real and God wants us to be satisfied in Him. What we do matters. How we treat ourselves and others matters. And this week Paul continues in this same thought line, showing us from different angles what it looks like to live from our identity in Christ.

So can I have permission to talk to you about bringing to light that which is hidden in the darkness? Can I talk to you about what it means to be wise and foolish? Can I help you discern how to love others well—even if they are foolish or even evil? Can I speak to you about the real hope we have in Jesus for our hearts to change? **Pray**

So Paul starts with this really beautiful and profound truth that I want to just marinate in for a minute. Read with me:

Ephesians 5:13 But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. 14 This is why it is said: “Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

We talked a lot these past weeks about what happens when we keep things hidden in the darkness. That which is remains in the darkness—all your feelings unspoken, all your rebellion that you’ve been hiding, all your little secret and hidden habits that you hope no one will see...in the darkness these grow from small moments into monsters. The guilt of one moment turns into the monster of shame and feeling toxic. The unspoken feelings of hurt turns into the monster of anger and bitterness and unforgiveness. The unspoken words of how you were abused turns into the monster of worthlessness, abandonment, and rejection. Expose it. Bring it to the light. This is what we call ‘confession’. Speak what you’ve done. Speak what has been done to you. Speak how you feel. Bring it to the light.

So what does Paul say? Everything exposed to the light becomes visible. This is scary if you’ve grown up in a home, or in a marriage, where if you truly share how you feel you are met with anger or apathy. But here in our family, in our small groups and friendships, we are creating the environment where your confession will be met with kindness, compassion, and forgiveness.

And then what happens when you have the courage to bring what's in the darkness into the light? It starts to shine. Wait, what? Yeah. You start to shine. Wake up, friends. Take what is dead, what is wounded and hurt and suffering in you, and bring it into the light. Talk about it. Pray about it. Stop hiding...stop sleeping...stop ignoring...stop numbing the pain you're carrying. Wake up!!!! How do you get healed? It's not by stuffing it, numbing it, ignoring it, or beating yourself it up!! With all the kindness and compassion of heaven, Jesus is inviting you to bring your pain and hurt and heartache into the light. Jesus will heal you. You'll be loved back to life by your friends. And then you will start to shine.

All of our stories of being dead and then being made alive...they make us shine. The brightest light that shows your friends and family the goodness of God is when God takes your great pain and heals it for your great Good and His glory. We were once addicted, now set free. We were once abused and crushed; now we are the ones who helping heal others as we show them the kindness and compassion Jesus showed us. We were once rebellious and now we've learned how to listen and follow God's lead. We were crushed by grief and now we are the ones who comfort. We shine...not because we are perfect...we shine because that which was killing us in the darkness has now been transformed by Jesus

and it's proof that Jesus is real and that He loves you and truly does resurrect the dead.

Paul then gives us careful application to show us how to navigate through this crazy life.

Ephesians 5:15 Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

Henry Cloud, the author and psychologist, writes that a wise person isn't someone who is the brightest, smartest, the most talented, or perfect. A wise person is someone who is willing to learn, who is open to feedback, who is willing to ask for help from God and others and values what is told to them enough to implement it into their life.

All of us are wise at times. What is Paul saying? Choose to be wise!! Look friends...the days are evil. The stakes are real. What you do matters. Ask God and others for help. Listen. Doug Larson writes, "Wisdom is the reward of listening when you would prefer to talk." No one has all the answers. No one can figure everything out on your own. So if Paul is saying 'bring things into the light'...what is wisdom?

It's doing it. It's actually taking the risk to talk, to confess, to be vulnerable. Wisdom isn't intention. Wisdom is action.

We can work with wise people. Wise people are open to feedback and course correction. When the Hubble Telescope was launched, it was

a technical marvel. And then it quickly turned into a nightmare. Why? The mirror that was used to capture the images had a flaw. A billion dollar project turned into a floating piece of junk that sent back blurry images. So what to do? The team began to learn from their mistakes and get more help so that they could wise enough to fix the problem. When the Hubble Team presented the solutions to Nasa the first lesson learned was 'Don't name the telescope with something that rhymes with 'trouble.'

Teach your kids how to be wise. How? Choose to be wise!!! Show them and tell them about how you messed up...how you listened...and the benefit of actually implementing what you've learned. Trust me... they will pick it up if you choose wisdom. Kids don't learn what you show them through your actions way more than what you teach them with your words. We've all had parents or siblings or friends who refused to listen...who gave lip service to feedback but never actually did anything different. That's called being a fool. Thus Paul says:

Ephesians 5:17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

A fool only learns through pain. A fool only learns through consequences. I've been a fool sooooo many times in my life. People have given me feedback and I say 'Thank you' and then I keep on doing it my way because I'm determined to do it my way...and then pain is the

consequence. You don't have to run your life into a wall and then pick up the pieces every time.

When my friends and family have helped me in my foolishness... they are saying: Wake up!!! Open your eyes!!! See what you're doing!!! Please!!

For years I thought going faster and using force was a good plan. I still slip into this at times when I'm super stressed and just this week I've had my friends tell me: "Andy, slow down. Stop. Take a calm down. Easy. Slow down." They're helping me not be a fool.

I was telling a friend this week about my plans to handle a problem and he said to me, "Stop right now. Don't do that, at all. That's a terrible plan." And what did I do? I actually listened!!! I avoided being a fool!!! This is great because in December my friends told me, "Andy, please pray. Slow down. You're not seeing the full picture" and I didn't listen at all. I was being a fool.

When you're dealing with someone who won't listen at all, the only way to handle a fool is to give them consequences. You have to tell them what they are doing wrong, where they are not listening, and then allow them to suffer the consequences of their own choices. This takes courage because we don't want them to experience pain. But the pain of their unwillingness to listen and the damage it's doing shouldn't be just

put on us because we are being loving, kind, and responsible. The foolish person literally needs to experience the pain of their consequences so that they will learn.

I've had good employees quit because I was being a foolish boss. I needed to lose those people in order to wake up and lead differently. I've lost good friendships because I was being a fool and not listening to their warnings or receiving their help. I needed this pain to wake up and become a better friend. I've wrecked home projects and paid the price financially because I wouldn't follow directions...and I needed to pay that cost in order to wake up and learn how to follow directions.

What is the Lord's will? Wake up, my friends. Choose wisdom. Be kind, compassionate and forgiving...actually do these things. Bring that which is in the darkness into the light...confess, talk, get help...actually do these things. Pray and trust Jesus...actually do this. Wisdom isn't your intentions...it's action.

But what about people who don't even care about negative consequences? They don't mind losing friendships. They don't listen when others say their actions are hurtful. Paul talks about this next

Ephesians 5:18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery.

Debauchery is pursuing evil for evil's sake. It's not just about drinking too much. But drinking too much is a great example because it

exposes our thinking when we blow past foolishness and start choosing evil for evil's sake: "I don't care about the consequences, I don't care that I'm unavailable, I don't care that I'm dropping my responsibilities, I don't care about the hurt I'm causing...I'm going to do this because I want to do this."

What do you do with people who have blown past foolishness and are now in this category of choosing evil? You separate yourselves from them. You remove them from your life. You put up a firm boundary so that they stop doing damage. But remember...don't do this alone. You'll need wisdom. Ask for help. Get perspective from others. Pray...a lot. You don't have to be mean. In fact, your kindness, compassion, and forgiveness while you separate from someone choosing evil is what will keep you wise in the middle of your storm.

Finally, Paul offers us what to do so that we can keep choosing wisdom, so that we can build each other up, so that we can love others and stay centered:

Ephesians 5:18 Instead, be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, 20 always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Be filled with the Spirit. Paul then shows us what it's like when we choose to rely on and abide in the Holy Spirit. What flows out of our mouths isn't a mixture of manure and ice cream. It's encouragement, scripture, and love. When we worship together, we are praying together. When we worship together, we are united. When we worship together, we are putting God first and singing the truth that Jesus loves us and is more than enough. Worship is the most powerful tool against the enemy. It literally silences and casts out the demons that are trying to drag us down.

I remember when Levi was four and having nightmares. I called Debbie and asked what to do. She said 'Put worship music on, all night long, in his room.' The nightmares stopped. Two days later I asked Levi how he was doing and he told me that Jesus had given him a picture while he was sleeping peacefully the night before. When I hugged Levi, the image he had was that of holes opening up underneath the fear and the fear fell through the holes. And with tears in my eyes, I was able to tell my four year old son that 'Perfect love casts out all fear.'

When we have worship nights, literally every time someone will come back for prayer...the song that Zed will be singing matches what that person needs to hear perfectly...every time. I will literally sing over

people as a prayer...the same words the congregation is singing...and they are set free. Worship is powerful.

Wake up my friends. Open your eyes. Your kindness, compassion, and forgiveness matters. Stop trying to do it all by yourself. Ask for help from Jesus and your friends and family. Slow down. Worship. Encourage. Build each other up. You have a powerful purpose and calling on your life and you matter.

When Levi was born I ended up listening to April's dad who insisted that I cut my family out of my life. I had a lot of people tell me that was a mistake. I knew it was a mistake. But my intentions weren't actions. I didn't stand up for me, for my children, for my own family. I was a fool. It took years for me to finally reconnect with my family and there was so much damage to me, to my kids, to my parents and brothers. And then Jesus helped me wake up. I finally started to listen and then take steps to insist on doing what God and others had told me to do all along. It's taken a lot of work to repair that damage in my family. The work isn't done. And in the repair I've had to ask for help. I've had to pray. I've needed friends and counselors to help me through. Levi has been a big part of that repair as well and we talk, to this day, about how we can make it better.

All of us will be foolish at times. All of us will even blow past foolishness and wreck ourselves or others at times. It takes the body of Christ, filled with the Spirit, to love each other back to life. To worship and pray with each other...and our souls get healed. To hear the stories of being lost and found...to find hope. When I tell you my stories of foolishness, you don't think less of me. God shines through me because the credit isn't mine...it belong to Jesus. Jesus will never stop being kind, compassionate, and forgiving to you. Jesus will never leave you, even if you've been handed over to the consequences of your actions... even if you're the person other people are removing from their life. Jesus adores you, right now, just as you are.

So come to Him, all you who are weary. Lay down your burdens before Him. He will give you healing and rest. Surrender. Listen. Choose to put into practice what He's telling you. That's wisdom. And then you will shine because He who is in you is greater than the darkness in this world!!! You belong to Jesus.

Pray

Table Talk

Can we Pray for You