

**Grieve Not the Holy Spirit**  
Ephesians 4:29-32, July 18, 2010  
Trinity Sunday VII

Beloved of the Lord..... Proverbs 13:10 says, "Only by pride cometh contention, but with the well advised is wisdom." Philippians 2:3 says, "*Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.*" James 3:16 says, "For where envying and strife *is*, there *is* confusion and every evil work." Generally speaking, usually when we have an argument, fight, or quarrel with our fellow man, our own pride is involved. The passages just quoted speak of pride, envy, and vanity as being the cause or source of most arguments. Now when we speak of quarrels, we must remember that if we faithfully speak God's Word to this world, they will hate us and quarrel with us. How many times did Jesus speak the truth to the Pharisees and they hated Him for it. They suffered from pride, and they would not repent. Therefore if the world fights and quarrels with us only because we have spoken the truth of God's Word, we need not apologize or back down.

But it also follows, if we by our words have sinned against our fellow man, believers will be sure to apologize and make peace, and no matter what our neighbor has said that might hurt us, we will forgive and forgive again, till seventy times seven. Thus there is a certain way Jesus would like us to conduct our life in the true faith. Namely, while we cannot help it if the world continually makes war against us for speaking the truth, when we have injured our neighbor by word or deed, we will readily beg their forgiveness and make peace. Jesus said, "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remember that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." In other words, how can we worship God in peace, for giving us the peace of His Son, if we have not left our brother in peace and we well know they are angry with us for our sin? First let us be reconciled with our brother, and then offer to God our praises for Him giving to us Jesus, our Prince of Peace.

Our text begins, **Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth.** Corrupt communication is rotten, worthless, and bad communication. Corrupt communication is a sin against the Second Commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." "We should fear and love God that we may not curse, swear, use witchcraft, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks." If you carelessly

exclaim "O my God" or "O God" or in anger say "God damn you", it is you who will be damned, for you are not God and you do not have the power to damn anyone, but it is your own sins which are damnable. How greatly it must anger God in heaven, when He sees His own children of faith speak like the devil with hatred, anger, and four letter words which ought not be uttered. Shouldn't our speech as Christians separate us from the children of the world? Will we then repeat in jest the black filth and smut of sexual jokes, which we never should have listened to in the first place? The Bible says, "the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell."

The way we speak dear Christian, either leads souls to heaven or hell. Since the souls of men are at stake, yea our own soul is at stake, we ought be extremely careful about these words which come out of our mouths. Not all things edify, but God wants us to speak only that **which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.** If one of our loved ones has fallen into sin, it will edify them if we say, "That is a sin which you have done." There are absolutely times when it is extremely sinful to keep our mouth shut and say nothing. But there are also times when it is a sin to rebuke. When the self-righteous Pharisees cast the adulterous woman before Jesus, "Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not." When they persisted in their folly, Jesus didn't rebuke her adultery, but He addressed the bigger picture, the pride of the Pharisees heart. When Jesus spoke, every word counted, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." Truly these words edified the Pharisees who retreated one by one like a dog with his tail tucked between his legs. After this Jesus then also edified with words the adulterous woman. "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more." With these words Jesus took away all her sins in one stroke and she believed and was saved that day. Thus to the self-righteous and stubborn sinner Jesus edified by way of the law, but to the penitent adulterous sinner Jesus edified by the Gospel and gave "grace unto the hearer". Whether we speak then the law or the Gospel, depending on the situation, our purpose is always the same, to lead sinners to Christ as His Word which brings us our own salvation.

Therefore **Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God,** namely do not quarrel and fight with your neighbor or fellow Christians like little bickering children, for then you will grieve God in His heart. Just as it hurts the heart of every parent to see their children being mean to one another, fighting, kicking, or bearing a grudge,

how much more does it grieve God the Holy Spirit, when He has taught us by the Gospel to be good obedient children of Jesus Christ? Where is the love of Christ in you dear Christian, when you are still angry about something that happened long ago? The Bible says, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath". Did you bury the hatchet but let the handle stick out? Where would your soul be for all eternity, if God through Christ buried the hatchet, but let the handle stick out? What if God said in the Bible, "I forgive you for all your sins for Jesus sake, but if you do anything bad from this day forward its death and damnation for you!" Thanks be to God our Lord does not speak this way, for "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." Remember Jesus' lesson of the unmerciful servant. Though his lord had been merciful and forgiven him his large debt, he then unmercifully went to his neighbor demanding payment of a smaller debt. When the lord of the servant heard this he said, "Shouldn't you also have had compassion on you fellowservant, even as I had pity on you?" The lord then delivered the unmerciful servant to the tormentors. Then Jesus said, "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

Thanks be to God, our strength to **Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God**, is found in the following words, **whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption**. What does this mean, that we are sealed unto the day of redemption? Speaking of this SEAL, this week we received a nice wedding invitation in the mail. On the back of the envelope there was a stamped waxed red SEAL! As in the days of old, that stamped seal indicates an official decision or decree carrying with it all power and authority. Speaking now of spiritual thing, remember we were baptized long ago and washed clean by the Word. When we were baptized God put the seal of Christ upon us, that we are His beloved and precious children, washed clean by the red and holy blood of Jesus. The Means of Grace then, in its three forms Baptism, Communion, and the Gospel Word, are God's seal, His stamp of divine favor upon us. We received the sign of the cross both upon our forehead and upon our chest in token that we are the REDEEMED of the Lord, saved and preserved for that Day of Redemption yet to come.

When Christ in the Gospel sends us His wedding invitation, it is His own body and blood given on the cross which proves His invitation to heaven is absolutely earnest and sincere. Our responding faith in Christ is our RSVP. Faith understands, believes, and trusts, "Lord, this invitation to heaven is for me, for it is written and signed in your own blood, and when the Bible says Christ died for all, this means Lord YOU died for ME." And though we are indeed unworthy

wedding guests, we have been bitter and angry people, unforgiving, bearing a grudge, these are the very sins Jesus paid for by His own blood upon the cross. By His blood you are forgiven of ALL your anger. Thus whoever the most angry and bitter person on the face of the earth may be, by way of Jesus blood, God has from His heart already forgiven this person. And the only reason this person is yet angry and hateful, is because they do not yet perceive the love of Christ for them, given to them through the cross. How can we then dear Christian, continue to be angry at someone God through Christ has already forgiven? Thus **be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you**.

Our strength to forgive always comes from Christ who has already forgiven us. Thus we are not to hold a grudge or be bitter about anything, **Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice**. Bitterness, anger, wrath, these are the dirty waters which continually flood and fill our soul, yet we must daily by repentance uncork this bathtub, drain away our anger, and by faith be filled with the living waters of Christ, namely His forgiveness of all our sins. Jesus said, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

Thus when the Bible says, "ye are sealed unto the Day of Redemption" understand it is God's Gospel seal which preserves us to the end, our beginning of life everlasting. That great wedding above us yet to come, will indeed come, because God has promised it to us, and sealed the invitation with His own blood. That faith within our heart then is essentially two hands which grasp firmly that wedding invitation knowing "I'm but a stranger here, heaven is my home". When we recall our baptism, or receive the body and blood of Christ in communion, we run our fingers upon the wax seal and we know God's invitation is sincere. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." Amen.