

November 29, 2015  
Sermon for the First Sunday in Advent  
St Peter Lutheran Church  
Bowie, TX  
Larry Knobloch, Pastor  
**Faith@Home** series  
Ephesians 4:25–32

*J.J.- Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus*

Ephesians 4:25–32 (ESV)

<sup>25</sup>Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. <sup>26</sup>Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, <sup>27</sup>and give no opportunity to the devil. <sup>28</sup>Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. <sup>29</sup>Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. <sup>30</sup>And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup>Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. <sup>32</sup>Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Amen.

We are in the fourth part of the series Faith@Home. We've looked at "The Home as a Seminary," "The Home as a Trauma Center," and "The Home as a Filling Station.

Today we look at "The Home as a Safe Place."

To begin, we are going to talk about something that all of you are probably familiar with. Some in movies or books, some in firsthand events.

They mangle, maim, maul and murder. They wreak havoc, heartbreak and hell. They kill innocent men, women and children.

A few years ago the Essex Corporation was awarded a million dollars to help curb their senseless bloodshed and wholesale destruction.

What am I referring to? LAND MINES that had been left in the ground from different wars over the years. Farmers and children run across them with devastating results.

There is another land mine that causes the same type of devastation. It's the leading cause of divorce and the single greatest destroyer of children. It's deadly, demonic and straight from the prince of darkness.

What am I referring to? UNRESOLVED ANGER.

Today, as we wrap up our series Faith@Home, we do so under the theme "The Home as a Safe Place." How can we create homes that are free from unresolved anger so that hidden land mines don't explode and leave people wounded and broken and hurt and in hell?

To begin, we must acknowledge that anger is an emotion and, like many emotions, there's nothing wrong with anger in and of itself. In fact, some anger is good; we need to express anger when we see an injustice or when someone is trying to violate us. In such cases, our anger is what motivates us to take appropriate action. Jesus in today's Gospel lesson is an example of this.

Anger can be a good emotion if it gets us moving in a godly direction; but if it takes root and festers it becomes a land mine of resentment buried deep within our hearts ready to explode.

Now some of you are saying, "I don't have a serious problem with anger. I just lose it every now and then."

My hunch is that you know how to hide your problem from people outside your family. You find yourself on a tirade in your family and your cell phone rings. You get in one more jab; I mean you are really letting someone have it and then you answer your phone and say, "Hello. I'm great. How are you?" Who are we kidding?

Paul gives us four ways to demine (that's the technical term) unresolved anger.

### **1. TELL THE TRUTH**

Tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth; but, notes Eph 4:15, speak the truth in love.

*"Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another."* (Ephesians 4:25).

"Honesty is ... the best policy." We wear masks. We play games.

There are two words that we need to remove from our vocabulary: never and always. In our effort to make a point with those we love and live with we tend to exaggerate.

Stretching the truth to make a point sets the timer on the explosive land mine of anger. It is just a matter of time before things get really ugly.

Another word to refrain from when in a spirited discussion is you. It is much better to use “I words.” “I feel.” “I think.” “I believe.” That takes the emphasis off of the other person or people you are talking to, which makes your statements less aggressive and doesn’t put people on the defensive as much.

## **2. RESOLVE IT SOON**

*“Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.” (Ephesians 4:26-27).*

“One of these days” can end up being “none of these days.”

A few years ago the Associated Press published an article titled *“Wars’ Lethal Leftovers Threaten Europeans.”*

It describes how unexploded land mines are threatening the lives of people; these land mines are not from Bosnia or from other more recent conflicts, but from World War II! The article states, “Unexploded bombs become more dangerous with time.”

What do you think?

Recently a woman working as a volunteer in an Illinois prison decided to launch a program for prisoners to send their mothers cards for Mother’s Day. The men prisoners jumped on the idea. The program was so overwhelmingly successful

that the volunteer decided to follow up with a similar program on Father's Day.

How did the prisoners respond by making Father's Day cards?

How many participated in the program?

Zero, nada, no one. Why?

To a man, these prisoners carried anger toward their fathers.

Their unresolved anger, in many cases, gave the devil a foothold and they ended up committing a crime.

### **3. BUILD PEOPLE UP**

*"Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear." (Ephesians 4:29).*

Note the word unwholesome. The same word is used in Matthew 13:48 where it is could be translated "rotten fish"! And rotten fish stink!

Instead, Paul says to build. Just as a home needs constant maintenance (for leaky faucets, cracked walls, uneven sidewalks), so our families need to be constantly rebuilt, repaired and renewed.

Good words include, "I love you," "Great job," "Way to go," "I really appreciate you."

Finally, to demine those land mines and keep needless explosives out of your home ...

### **4. LET IT GO**

*"Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice." (Ephesians 4:31).*

It is so hard to let go of a hurt; and our society doesn't help us. Recently a man named Allan Poole launched a new business called Revenge A-la-Cart. For \$50.00 you can send someone flowers that are dead, of course.

There is another company that will send your enemy dried cow manure in the mail; just dial 1-800-COW-CHIP. On Amazon you can order books titled Get Even I, Get Even II and Your Revenge is in the Mail, all for \$14.95.

The myth is that you'll get rid of anger by being angry. The truth is that anger begets more anger.

*"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you"* (Ephesians 4:32).

How has God in Christ forgiven you?

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ... made us alive with Christ. For it is by grace you have been saved through faith. And this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God; not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Eph 2:1, 4-5, 8-10).

How would you feel if, after enjoying a nice meal at a local restaurant, the waitress handed you a bill for \$30,000? You would probably say, "Hey. What's up? Do we really look like we ate that much food?"

The waitress would say, "All of the customers here decided to make you pay." "That's not fair," you respond.

But that's exactly what we do when our unresolved anger explodes; we make everyone pay. And that's not fair.

So what's the solution? You've heard it once already, let me read it to you again:

*"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you"* (Ephesians 4:32).

Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus!

Amen.

S.D.G.—Soli Deo Gloria

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### **Sermon Outline**

The Home as a Safe Place

Ephesians 4:25-32

1. Tell the Truth.
2. Resolve it Soon.
3. Build People Up.
4. Let it Go.