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Over the last few weeks I have mentioned a few times the infamous **8** lists of **5**'s which were found in chapters 1 and 2. You remember that teaching where your eyes glazed over as I explained the meaning of the numbers, the orders of the lists, and so on. I know it was hard to follow, but I think there was more to the glaze than meets the eye. I think what happened with many of you is that you began to shut down and turn off because you did not believe that those truths could apply to you in a personal way.

Last week we talked about transforming our inner-man with the truth of God's love, so before we move on in our text I want us to take the time to go through these truths once again. And even though you have heard them before we could all benefit from being bathed in these truths; so please don't shut down. I sense that we are on the cusp of an incredible emerging; I have seen it begin to happen in each of you as God has been answering our prayers and the eyes of your hearts have begun to be opened.

But now we must let these truths move beyond our ears and sink deep into our souls so they can stamp out the lies of the enemy; the lies which have stolen so much from us. These truths are powerful weapons which can be used aggressively against the enemy whenever he comes around whispering in your ears. So clothe yourselves with these truths as they are an authoritative assessment of our lives with radical implications for how we are to live.

I have always found it amazing that every one of us just wants to be loved. It is the cry of our hearts. We want to know love, be secure in love, and most importantly to be accepted for who we are—warts and all. Yet, we kick and scream, fold our arms, plug our ears, and refuse to believe that God loves us. It

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does not matter what He has done, what price He has paid, and how demonstratively He has shown us His love, we don't want to believe it. Strange; isn't it? You would think we would own it and be all about being loved.

It could be that we have been lied to for so long, and our hearts have become so hardened by the pain, that there is not much of a soft landing place in the soil of our heart for the truth of God's love. Or it could be that we are simply afraid knowing that if we were to accept this one fundamental truth then all our excuses which allow us to be self-serving and self-obsessed would be eradicated.

Perhaps we know that we would have to open ourselves up to all the truths that God has spoken over our lives and let them be absolutely authoritative over every thought and every deed. So maybe in some ways our refusal to receive the truth of God's love might be a twisted defense mechanism because we can't see ourselves going all the way and risking it all for Christ. Perhaps we think we will just fail so why bother trying. Whatever the reason, our thoughts are backwards, inside out, upside down, and all twisted around. There is no more beautiful, simple, or lovelier truth than the fact that God adores you and considers you so valuable that you were worth dying for. And if you were worth dying for, just imagine the goodness that He has planned for your life.

***Romans 8:32***

He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

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In dealing with the truth of God's love for you versus the lies of the enemy, I want you to stop and consider the fact that your feelings do not form your reality, they form impressions—allusions even—but they cannot be relied upon to lead you in truth. As such, the mere fact that you feel something does not make it real or require you to give that feeling any authority over how you live. It is just a feeling. In the same way, just because you think something does not make it real or require you to give that thought any authority over how you live. It's just a thought.

For example, I know how loud the voices in your head can be which tell you that you are worthless and somehow deserve what's happened to you. These are the same voices that tell you that if God does love you it is somehow abstract, generalized, and not in any way personal. But those voices are merely speaking the same old lies that you have been told since you were a child. Did you ever stop and think that it is bit weird that everyone seems to hear the same voices and struggle with the same lies? It should make you a little suspect about the validity of what you have listened to and believed.

I want you to understand that regardless of the volume of those voices, they merely speak lies; and, regardless of the intensity of emotion that you attach to those voices, they are still just lies wrapped with emotions. They are still however merely an artifice, a deception, a ploy raised up against the true knowledge of God; and these lies stand in opposition to the beautiful, simple, and lovely truth of who we are in God. Therefore, we are to take those thoughts captive, compare them to the truth, and most importantly be willing to toss them out and give them no weight or importance in our lives (**2 Corinthians 10:3-6**). This is the

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pathway to experiencing His peace of mind. Remember, they are just voices of the enemy, speaking lies; lies which tend to get all wrapped up in emotion. But they are not real! What is real is God and what He says about you!

Father, I pray that as we go through these truths that you would open the eyes of our hearts even further to receive what you have said about us and believe it to be true. I pray, by the power of the Holy Spirit whom you have placed within us, that you would reverse the years of hardening in our hearts which has occurred by our believing lies and giving ourselves over to the lies. And finally, I pray that you establish new connections between our emotions and the truth of your love so that our emotions will become an ally with your Spirit instead of an ally with the enemy. Amen!

As a foundation for our faith, we must know who we were without Jesus and from what we have been saved.

1. We were dead in our trespasses and sins,
2. We walked according to the course of this world (it was all we knew),
3. We walked according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience (in other words, we were enslaved to do whatever Satan and his minions wanted us to do),
4. We lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind (our minds were entwined with our old sinful nature),
5. We were by nature children of wrath (we were sentenced to eternal condemnation),
6. We were separate, or living apart, from Christ,

7. We were excluded from the commonwealth of Israel (or God's "chosen people"),
8. We were strangers to the covenants of promise,
9. We had no hope, and
10. We lived without God in the world.

This is an accurate and authoritative description of our lives prior to placing our faith in Jesus Christ. These are truths that must be internalized for they are intended to be taken personal. The Spirit is not talking about "bad" people but about you and me. If we do not understand, accept, and believe (truly internalize) how messed up, sick, ruined, damaged, destitute we are and how absolutely incapable of being "good," or doing anything which God considers to be "good," we are never going to be able to revel in the truth of what God has done for us.

Remember, only God is good! I know I have hammered this point over and over and rest assured I will do it many more times. But despite what we may think or feel, we are not capable of being "good." In our flesh, in our humanity we are children of wrath enslaved to sin beholden to the devil.

I have talked to many people about this and they do not like it; and sadly quite often reject this truth. They refuse to internalize the fact that this is personal and an accurate assessment of their lives without Christ (and their lives lived in the flesh). They refuse to accept the reality that we are all irreparably broken, which is why God is the one who has done, and must do, everything for us; it is why He makes all things new. And instead of resting in this truth, they fight against it and strive to do it "right" for God as they endeavor to find approval from God.

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But what a mistake; only God is good! This is why as we move into the next list we see that it is all about what God does for us, in us, with us, to us, and on our behalf; and it has nothing to do with what we can do or need to do. And since our starting place is absolute brokenness and neediness, everything He bestows upon us is from an outpouring of His grace simply because He loves us. And remember, don't listen to the lies. This is about you; this is personal!

1. He has blessed you with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,
2. He chose you in Him before the foundation of the world, in order that you would be holy and blameless before Him,
3. In love He predestined you to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, and
4. It was according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Christ the Beloved. (Notice it is His kind intention; in other words, He is about goodness toward our lives and He backs it with His glory of His grace)
5. In Him you have redemption through His blood,
6. You have the forgiveness of your sins and trespasses (both the intentional and unintentional sins), according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on you,
7. In Him you also we have obtained an inheritance,
8. You were predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will (what has happened in our lives is not

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- random, but it has been with a purpose and according to the counsel of His will for His purposes—He is sovereign over our lives), and
9. You were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who was given as a pledge of your inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession (which is speaking about you—you are His possession), to the praise of His glory.
  10. He made you alive together with Christ,
  11. He raised you up with Him,
  12. He seated you with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward you in Christ Jesus,
  13. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourself, it is the gift of God, and
  14. You are His workmanship (His very own masterpiece), created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that you would walk in them.
  15. You have been brought near by the blood of Christ,
  16. He Himself is your peace,
  17. Through Him you have your access in one Spirit to the Father,
  18. You are no longer strangers and aliens,
  19. You are fellow citizens with the saints,
  20. You are of God's household, and

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21. Because of Christ and your faith in Him, you can now come fearlessly into God's presence, assured of His glad welcome.
  22. From His glorious resources He will strengthen you with His mighty power through His Spirit in the inner-man,
  23. He will be more and more at home in your heart as you trust Him,
  24. He will cause your roots to go down deep into the soil of God's marvelous love,
  25. He will give you the power to understand how wide, how long, how high, and how deep His love really is so that you can know (fully experience) the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge that you may be filled with the fullness of Christ (yes, God's design is that the fullness of the Godhead dwell in you), and
  26. By His mighty power, He is able to accomplish infinitely more than you would ever dare to ask or hope.
  27. We (collectively) are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit, and
  28. We have been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord.

This is who we are and the Father has accomplished all of this through Christ. And don't forget this is very personal; Jesus left heaven, came down to earth as a man, gave up His life on your behalf, rose from the dead, and ascended into



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heaven so you can wrap yourself in these truths and live these truths. In fact, your ability to experience Christ in this life, to know the fullness of the power that has been bestowed upon you, is dependent upon your believing and internalizing these truths. They are all about you! And make no mistake; the implications for your life are nothing short of radical.

### ***Ephesians 4:1***

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called

Paul starts with a big “therefore.” In other words, because these marvelous truths are your truth since you have been “called,” the Spirit exhorts you to live consistent with this reality. He wants your spiritual reality to invade your physical reality so that everything about you (including what you do with your thoughts and emotions) will reflect the truth of who you are in God and what He has graciously bestowed upon you in Christ.

I was thinking back on all the different conversations we had this past week and I got excited because you are starting to believe. I know for some of you it does not feel like there has been any movement or progress and you feel that you are still stuck in a glass cage of emotion or still so shut down that you don't really feel anything, but I can see it happening. His love is creeping up on you in such a way that it is starting to get a word in edge wise and is beginning to silence the lies. This is more than hopeful so don't be discouraged that you don't yet have it all

down perfect; you will get there. The Father is seeing to that Himself and I know that in just a short time His love is going to pour forth from your life on to others and you will be walking in a manner worthy of your calling; it will happen!

God's love through us to others is actually what the rest of the book of Ephesians is about. Chapters 4-6 speak to what our life will look like, practically, if we choose to believe and live in the truths found in Chapters 1-3. Remember, with great privilege comes great responsibility. God does not want us to tuck these truths into our pockets and occasionally take a peek; rather, He wants us to daily bathe in these truths so that our inner-man will be transformed and we will live worthy of our calling according to these truths.

### ***Ephesians 4:2***

with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love

Now I want to caution you as we go through chapters 4-6; do not filter these passages through that part of your *old sinful nature* that wants to go and "do" for God based on "religious" notions of obedience and duty. Remember, only God is good, you are not! The next few chapters speak not to what you are to go "do" but how God will live through you if you trust yourself to Him and fully identify yourself by the truths He has spoken over your life. Your job is to believe, to cling to Him for your very life; He will do the rest through you.

For example, we are told to show tolerance for one another in love. When you

are rooted and grounded in His love, this is how God will express Himself through you. Thus, if “tolerance for one another in love” does not mark your life, it is an indication that there are still aspects of the truth that you have not yet owned. It is an indication that instead of trusting yourself to Jesus you still prefer to take matters into your own hands. Let me explain.

The very first place that the Spirit focuses us on is our relationships with one another—which just so happens to always be the proving ground, so to speak, for what is real or not in our lives. It is in our relationships (especially the close and intimate ones which are possible in the Lord) that we often find ourselves most vulnerable and most “seemingly” at risk for getting hurt. Thus, it is in these very same relationships where we tend to have the biggest reaction to someone who hurts us.

I am sure you have noticed that you tend to be more critical and harder on those whose opinion you care about than you are on some “rando” who acts like a jerk and treats you selfishly. I know I have a much easier time not internalizing the way that some acquaintance treats me, but if one of my daughters or my best friend does something that I think is disrespectful or hurtful I react fast and hard in an effort to self-protect. And often my reaction is intense and does not really match the offense.

I have thought about this a lot. You would think that since my girls and my best friend have proven over and over again that they love me that I would be less likely to react as I should be secure in their love. But somewhere deep in my soul I still live in fear. I have given them my heart and made myself vulnerable which means that they have power over me. And in those moments, I forget who I am in

God and how I am actually so ok, regardless of what is going on around me, because of the love that God has poured out on me. Like steel to a magnet, I am pulled to my *old sinful nature* and instantly I react in self-protecting and often destructive ways. But it is all based on an illusion—a lie. I am not really at risk.

This is just one of those examples where I give a higher voice of authority to my emotions and the thoughts that shoot through my mind than I do to God's word; and, as we discussed, there is often little correlation between my thoughts and emotions and the truth. I have even found that I react based on what I assume they were communicating as I read into their body language, tone of voice, facial expressions, and so on, and I don't even stop to ask if that is indeed what they were trying to communicate. And when the conflict is finally meted out, I find that it was me internalizing things based on insecurities, fears, and assumptions of what I thought was happening versus what was really going on. I find that I even react based on patterns or behaviors from past conflicts, and that is so unfair.

Moreover, even if they did legitimately do something that hurt, I gave no room for them to be human, to blow it, or to just be having a bad day. I did not let the overall context of our relationship have its rightful place. Instead, I expected something more and used their weakness or their failings as an excuse to react in the flesh and abandon what I know to be true.

But when I am at rest in the fact that I am a son of God, everything can be different. I belong to the creator of the universe who has personally chosen me to be His own. He tells me I am loved. He tells me that He adores me regardless of what I do or fail to do for Him. He tells me that I am precious and He has lifted me up with Christ and seated me in the heavenly places. With that as a foundation,

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what can a person really do to me (**Romans 8:31-39**)? Besides, God is in control of my life and in control of those He chooses to bring in or out of my life. He is my protector, my defender, my strong tower to whom I can run. Therefore, the truth is that I can rest in Him and not feel like I have to man-handle people and situations in order to protect myself.

If I believe and rest in the truth, the implications for my life are radical. I don't have to live as this wounded or scared man trying to ensure that I am safe and ok because the truth is, I am safe and ok! He makes me safe and ok; thus, I am in the best place I could ever be—in the hands of a loving God who is involved in all the details of my life (**Psalm 37:23**). I just need to align my thoughts and my emotions with the truth and thereby silence the lies so I can live the truth. You see, walking in a manner worthy of your calling is about letting Christ pass through, or pass on, to others the ways in which He has already graciously dealt with you. For example:

With all Humility. Jesus humbled Himself, stepped down from heaven, and clothed Himself in humanity in order to serve us and give His life for us. Too often however we don't want to step down, we don't want to get our hands dirty in the struggles of others, and we just don't want to be bothered. We got our own thing going on and we don't have time to deal with the brokenness of others, especially if we can just wait around for someone else to jump in and handle things.

Humility is about being available—being fully convinced that you belong to God and not to yourself—thus, He is allowed to redirect your time and attention any time He desires. Humility is about considering others more important than your comfort, your pleasure, or even adhering to your agenda desiring them to know and experience the fullness of Christ in their lives (**Philippians 2:3**). Humility is

about tuning your ears to His voice, listening, so you know what He wants you to do when He wants you to do it believing that God has chosen you to fulfill His marvelous works through you. In addition, humility is about having the right estimation of yourself knowing the only reason you can stand and function at all is because of God's work in your life; therefore, you can see others and their weaknesses through the lens of your own weakness and need for God's mercy.

With Gentleness. Because God has not dealt with us as we deserve (remember, we were once children of wrath) and has been gentle with us in all our failings, we can be gentle with others who have offended us or disappointed us in the choices they have made. This is where there has to be a separation in your mind between the ways of the world and those of the kingdom of God. From the world's perspective, I have always been able to justify why I have lashed out or reacted harshly to someone who has hurt me or offended me. After all, my reaction was just in response to their provocation—it was their fault, they started it. And while that makes full sense in a dark and selfish sort of humanistic way, it makes no sense when I consider how God has dealt with me.

Now please don't get me wrong, I am not saying that gentleness means you do not get mad or do not deal with hurtful situations. Not at all; it is very ok to be mad. In fact, you must get mad and be willing to deal with difficult situations if you are going to have healthy relationships. But what I am saying is that your anger does not have to be laced with hostility, wrath, bitterness, and self-protective aggression that is very personal and is intended to cut deep into the other person's soul. Gentleness says you deal with the issues and do not turn things into a tit for tat in terms of verbal volleys where you exchange hurt for hurt.

Besides, the last thing a person needs who has failed is to have their failure thrown in their face in an ugly, cold, harsh, and hurtful kind of way. They do need to deal with their failure for sure, but we can help them see God's perspective on things and help them come to grips with how He sees them. This will be like pouring soothing oil on their pain (***Proverbs 15:1***). A gentle hand lets them know that it is safe to fail, it is safe to make mistakes, it is safe to not always do it "right."

One other thing, gentleness is a value or quality that stems from within as it is a fruit of the Spirit (***Galatians 5:23***)—a fruit of trusting yourself to God and resting in all that is true about you. So there is a direct correlation between your believing the truth and the gentleness that enables you to have a thoughtful approach, and not a reactive in approach, in dealing with others.

With Patience. You may be wearied and tired of the way a person has been living, and you may be frustrated having to deal with the same stuff over and over again, but look how patient God has been, and is, with you. He told you these truths about who you are in Him and all that He has bestowed upon you in Christ; yet, daily you still refuse to believe. But have you noticed that He does not cut you off. He does not act annoyed. He does not tell you to get your act together. He does not call you stupid. Rather, He invites you to come and spend time with Him. And when you finally come, He is extremely patient and once again tells you that He loves you and has the best in mind for you. He tells you that you have been forgiven and can therefore just move forward in truth. He tells you that He will help you, He will not leave you or abandon you, but He will walk with you the entire way.

I believe this is what it means for us to be patient with each other. Remember,

the work of God takes rain and time. God brings the rain according to His plans. Sometimes it is a torrent and other times it is a sprinkling, but rest assured with enough time He will soften the hard soil of the heart so that it is receptive to Him. Further, He will always accomplish His purposes (***Isaiah 5:11***) and will always finish what He has started (***Philippians 1:6***). Therefore, we have to follow His lead and at times step back and not strive with a person and let the Holy Spirit do His work until the soil of their heart is broken up and is ready for our work. For until that time occurs, we will exhaust ourselves trying to break through the rock hard ground and in our exhaustion we will tend to be impatient and even intolerant.

Showing Tolerance. This concept is a bit tricky and we need to make sure we don't walk away with the wrong impression. "Showing tolerance" does not mean that we tolerate a person's willful choice to present themselves to their *old sinful nature* in the sense of being ok with it, ignoring what they are doing, or choosing to not deal with it in order to avoid conflict and hurt feelings. Rather, it means that even though a confrontation might be necessary, we are willing to suffer someone one as they work through their stuff. We are to forbear with them as they stumble and fall and, if they let us, help them up.

In addition, being tolerant means that we are willing to bear with a person and with all those annoying personality traits (which can rub us raw) which tend to pour forth from a person who is struggling with their *old sinful nature*. Remember, we forbear with a purpose and with hope. One day we will be able to experience a unique expression of Jesus through their lives; and, because we are one body, we need that specific expression in our lives to be complete and whole.

In Love. We know that according to ***Galatians 5:22-23*** and ***1 Corinthians 13:4-7***



that humility, gentleness, patience, and tolerance are expressions of God's agape love. But this phrase "in love" intimates at so much more. God's agape love has so many faces. In addition to humility, gentleness, patience, and tolerance, it is jealous, without prejudice, is willing to separate, is willing to establish healthy boundaries, always deals in truth, and always deals within the context of relationship. Therefore to really know how we are to deal with one another at any point in time requires us to have an outpouring of His wisdom in our lives. To understand this I encourage you to study **1 Corinthians 2; Proverbs 2** and go back and listen to the series "*The Faces of Love*" on the website.

For example, how God expresses His love through me to you is different to each and every one of you. It takes many forms and faces. I know that it can be frustrating and confusing for you, but I want you to consider that it is according to the wisdom that God had given me specifically for you. For some of you, He has asked me to be fully enmeshed in what is going on with your life and for others He has asked me to take less of an active role and more of a protective role where I watch and am aware of what is going on but act more like an overseer as He has placed others in your life to take a more direct role. Often He has me encouraging and building up those people so they can be fully used by God in your life.

Sometimes this is hard for me and I want to just jump in every time I see things going amuck, but I know that would not be love. I have to wait for His instructions and then only do what He wants me to do. My job therefore is first and foremost to be clinging to Jesus for everything so that as I pray over your lives He will pour out on me the wisdom I need at any given time.

Now, love always demands that we deal in truth and always in the context of

relationship. The enemy deals in lies, deceptions, allusions, and imitations; but we are to know the truth and deal with each other in the truth. Who we are in Christ and what He has bestowed upon us is to be the center of all our relationships in the Lord. Therefore, we cannot close our eyes when those in our lives give themselves over to lies and to the desires of the flesh. “In love” requires us to be connected, to be in relationship, and (as God directs) to deal with each other in honesty and truth from a desire that we all learn why we can trust ourselves to Jesus and find our strength, security, protection and life directly from Him.

I know that living this way will cause conflict, but conflict is not by definition bad. We can be in conflict with humility, gentleness, patience, and tolerance. I also know it is uncomfortable as we prefer to deal around the truth (which is the way of the world and the way we have been conditioned), but we are heavenly men and women and we do not belong to this world but we belong to God and therefore to each other. We must deal with each other in God’s agape love—we must be vessels through which the love He has given us can be poured forth and lavished upon others.

Well, that is enough for this week; we have a lot to process. I feel like I could go on for quite a while in discussing love. But next week we will pick up in verse 3 as we learn how else our lives are to manifest our calling in Christ.

I also want you to remember that all the charts we show each week are up on the website next to the recorded teaching. So you can open up the PDF and print out a copy of those truths we covered and spend your week daily bathing your mind in the truth of His love. And remember, it’s all very personal; it’s about His Love and passion for you! ... Let’s Pray