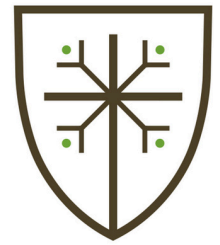


The Best Use of the Time

An Ephesians Sermon Series

SERMON NOTES



June 21, 2026

SERMON INFO

TITLE

"A Tested Regula"

PREACHER

Rev. Tim Frickenschmidt

TEXTS

Isaiah 60:1-3, 19-20

Ephesians 4:25-30, 5:7-16

Matthew 5:13-16

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. If you evaluate your own relationships by the paradigm Paul gives (Truth, Anger, Work, and Words), where do you see particular areas that look more like the surrounding culture than like Christ?
2. Do you already have a "rule of faith?" If so, how does it serve to support the life you have in God? If not, what might you include in such a rule?

SERMON IN SUMMARY

This week, Tim continued our summer series on Ephesians four and five looking at the question, "are we making the best use of the time?" In this week's passage the Apostle Paul offers a paradigm shaping the Christian life as members of one body in Christ.

Paradigm for Intimacy

Last week, Josh talked to us about sexual immorality and how the lives of Christians were to be different and set apart from the rest of the culture of Ephesus. Paul tells the Ephesians, "do not become partakers with them." But his command extends beyond just sexual morals. He gives a four-fold paradigm for relational thickness in the body of believers: Truth, Anger, Work, and Words.

First, Paul says that since we have taken off THE lie, the lie of idolatry from Genesis 3 that has laid on humanity since the beginning, we must forsake all lesser lies and just tell the truth in any and all things. All truth is like light and illuminates what is good and right. No relationship can be good and right unless truth is central to it.

Without the truth, anger will reign in a relationship. There is such a thing as righteous anger. God's anger is always predicated on love and is always self-giving in order to protect and restore. But our anger is not like that at all. If anger burns too quick, too hot, or for too long, we know that sin has crept in. And most of the time, human anger is characterized by one (or all) of these things.

The third piece of Paul's paradigm is work. Not just any work but hard work, tiring work that wears you out but does not burn you out. The adjective he uses is *honest*, not important, enjoyable, easy, or prestigious. Paul is concerned that work is honest and hard in order that we might have something to share, to give to others. Conflict is fueled by a failure to work hard for others. Dishonest work produces rotten words. Paul says don't use words that make people sick. Rather, build up with words that are true and that quench anger. Those kinds of words are themselves a kind of work. They are hard but they are light in the darkness.

A Rule to Discern

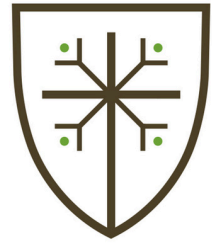
In order to live into this paradigm we need, first and foremost, understanding of the death of Christ and the life in which we share because of it. Christ is the truth. He bears the full force of God's righteous anger for us out of love. His work is the cross and he himself is God's Word to us. Jesus was raised in order to send the Holy Spirit to live in our souls. He came to change us. As members of Christ, we are now filled with his life and light. Paul doesn't say you *have* light, he says you *are* light. You are not who or what you used to be. God has come to live in your heart and made you into spiritual light for the sake of others.

In order to discern truth while in the midst of our culture, we need a rule of life. Tim used the analogy of a trellis in a garden. A vining plant without a trellis on which to grow will simply spread out along the ground and become entangled in the weeds and grass, indistinguishable from them. A personal rule of faith is like this trellis, not a law that binds and condemns but a tool to support, to guide, and to direct. As a starting point, consider the ten spiritual practices adopted by All Saints (see next page for list).

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All Saints Ten Spiritual Formation Practices

1. Word & Prayer
2. Smaller Groups
3. Study
4. One-on-One Relationships
5. Sabbath
6. Retreat
7. Tithing and Sacrificial Giving
8. Fasting & Moderation
9. Hospitality
10. Service

Learn More about
the Practices:

