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Ephesian 4:32, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Often, in a Bible student's life, there will be verses of scripture that find a special place in their hearts. Not that any verse in God's Holy Word is more important than another, but it's just the way we think as we deal with our own personal experiences. One verse that has been a great blessing to me is the one previously cited. In my early efforts to preach the Gospel of Christ, I met a man named S. W. Causey. Br. Causey was a deacon at Mount Paran Primitive Baptist Church (where I began to labor and am presently laboring to pastor). Br. Causey would often quote this verse to me and the congregation. One day I asked him why he often referenced this verse? He said it was because it taught so very much. I agree with my dear brother who has gone home to be with Jesus. This verse teaches so very much, and even though we are not able to fathom the depths of a verse in God's bible, I would like to scratch the surface and glean what I am able for the remainder of this effort.

(1) "be ye kind..." A former pastor of mine sent a note out a few weeks ago which read, "In a world when you can be anything, be kind." Those words touched my heart. In Paul's effort to teach the Ephesians what proper discipleship meant, he said "be ye kind." Being kind is more than just asking, "How are you today?" It's showing yourself friendly (Prov 18:24); controlling the tongue to say the right things (Col 3:6); and always considering our brothers and sisters in everything that we do (Rom 12:10).

(2) "tenderhearted..." When the Apostle Paul exhorts the Ephesians to be "tenderhearted", he is calling on them to be compassionate and sympathetic towards one another as they face the trials and troubles of this world. Paul taught the Romans to "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep (Rom 12:15) and the Galatians to "Bear ye one another's burdens,..". If we are Christ's disciples, we should humbly follow these commands and instructions. In following, it may require us to visit one who is sick; call to encourage a discouraged little lamb; or even listen to a heavy hearted soul when they just need to talk. Whatever we are called on to do, let us do so remembering the Lord's mercies and compassion towards us.

(3) "forgiving one another,..." Paul had a good understanding how grudges and hard feelings would hurt the fellowship of the saints. Our Lord Jesus Christ taught clearly the importance of forgiving (Matthew 18:23-35). And you may be saying, "It's just tough for me to forgive and forget." The Holy Spirit knew that those words would come across the lips of a child of grace. So, He inspired Paul to write concerning the motivation of forgiveness. The motivation of forgiveness is the fact that you have been forgiven by God for "Christ's sake..." When we ponder the sins of omission and commission that could be laid to our account before God, the offenses of a brother or sister towards us will pale in comparison. If the Lord has forgiven us of so much, we should have no difficulty in forgiving others.

In closing, I would say, that even though much time has elapsed since Br. Causey talked to me about this verse, I am still in agreement with him. If we would labor to adhere to this lesson, we would find more peace in the Church and in our own personal lives. There is a life the children of God can live in this world wherein they can find more peace and joy, but that life is only found in doing what God's Word commands. Phillipians 4:9 reads, "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, DO: and the God of peace shall be with you"(emphasis mine). Amen!

