

“Follow the Leader!”

Ephesians 4:32-5:2

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In Ephesians 4:32-5:2, Paul exhorts Christians to follow God’s model in showing love toward fellow believers based of Christ’s great love shown toward us.

I. Imitate the Father and be kind to each other (4:32).

A. In action

“be kind to one another”

B. In attitudes

“be tender-hearted...to each other”

C. In appreciation

“just as God in Christ was gracious to you”

II. Imitate Christ and love each other (5:1-2).

A. With supernatural love

“as beloved children”

B. With selfless love

“just as Christ...gave Himself up”

C. With sacrificial love

“as an offering and a sacrifice to God”

Study Notes:

4:32- “be”—the Greek for the verb here is actually “become,” not “be.” “Be” is from *eimi*, but the verb used here is actually from *ginomai*; so it could literally read, “become kind to one another”; and the verb is a present tense imperative (command) which signifies the idea that they are to become what they are not at the present time...they need to grow in this area, and that is why Paul is giving them this command. As the former pastor of this church he probably heard reports that they were not being kind to each other. Does that ever happen with people in churches? Hmmm....

“kind”—*krestoi*, adjective used 7x in the NT in reference to the pleasant yoke of Christ (Matthew 11:30), good tasting wine (Luke 5:39), being kind to enemies (Luke 6:35), God’s goodness to sinners (Romans 2:4), good morals (1 Corinthians 15:33), and of tasting God’s kindness (1 Peter 2:3); to bestow and active and deliberate sweet blessing on someone else in contrast to the “bitter” words mentioned in 4:31.

“tender-hearted” (“compassion” NIV)—*eusplagchnoi*, from *eu* + *splanchnon*, the inward parts, the “guts”, metaphorically the seat of pain, feeling and emotion; to hurt in your gut out of sympathy for someone else. Jesus had “compassion” for the multitudes (Matthew 9:36; 14:14). He hurt in His gut for them.

“forgiving”—*charizomenoi*, from *charizomai*; used 23x in the NT and always means a “gracious bestowal” or “gracious giving” of some kind, not just forgiveness; to give a gift that is unmerited. This is not the NT word for “forgiveness”—the normal word for forgive is *aphiemi* (cf. Matthew 6:12; Luke 11:4). In the LXX this word is used in reference to the gracious gift of a house that Ahasuerus gave to Esther (Esther 8:7), in the NT of Jesus giving sight to the blind (Luke 7:21), giving a criminal freedom (Acts 3:14), saving people from drowning (Acts 27:24), to give a promise (Galatians 3:18). As a present participle it is best translated as “being gracious”; it includes forgiveness but not is restricted to forgiveness.

“forgiven”—same as a above; not the NT word for forgive *aphiemi* but again *charizomai*; here it is an aorist indicative, *echarisato*, not an emphasis upon the action but an event in summary form, viewed from the outside as a whole.

5:1—“beloved”—*agapeta*, this is a special love that God has toward His Son and believers in contrast to God’s generic love for the world as His creation (John 3:16). Historically this word referred to an “only child” on whom the parents lavished all their love in a concentrated manner, and the child, as a result, was totally content—the love quotient was met in a superlative manner...the love tank was full...that is how God loves the Christian!