

The Pearl of the Epistles – Ephesians

Walk Worthy of Your Calling

Ephesians 4:1-6

***Ephesians 4:1-15** I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, **2** With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; **3** Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. **4** There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; **5** One Lord, one faith, one baptism, **6** One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

Introduction

There is a drastic change that takes place at the beginning of chapter four. For the first three chapters, the Apostle Paul has been building a house; the Church of Jesus Christ. He has been laying one doctrinal stone upon another and now it is time to take all this practical knowledge and put it to use.

The first three chapters were full of Amens, Hallelujahs and Praise God. There was great passion in describing the “spiritual blessings in heavenly places.”

The rest of the book is dedicated on how to “walk” the Christian life. Step by step Paul has been laying the foundation and now he is moving us out of the comfort of the building and into the byways.

How is a Christian supposed to live their life? I am sure that Paul heard this question many times and now for the church at Ephesus, he is going to give them a “step-by-step” manual. It is within these next three chapters, the second half of the book, that we will find the answer to the question. I will tell you that just like any self-help instruction book; we will have to overcome obstacles that prevent us from wholly living our lives unto God. What are some of these obstacles you ask?

1. We will have to review our current condition as a starting point. We should look at ourselves in a full length mirror through the filter of the Holy Bible.
2. We will need to seek help and to begin the process.
3. We may be confronted with our actions and habits which might need to be changed or stopped.
3. We may well encounter areas in our lives that are opposite of God’s interests.

As look at this journey of your personal ministry for the Lord, I would like to give you some advice. You will only be effective for God as your own personal walk and testimony will allow you!

So let's put on our shoes, grab our staff and take the first step in the journey for the rest of our life.

Walk Worthily

***Ephesians 4:1-3** I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, **2** With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; **3** Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord” – Even though Paul was confined to prison of the Romans under the rule of Nero, he regarded himself a prisoner of Lord because the Lord willed and ordered it of his life. True he was bound by Roman shackles, but he considered he was in service of the Lord Most High.

“...beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called” -

Walk worthy – “walk” is a metaphor for living, so it is saying “live worthily.”

The word “worthy” means so much more than have worth or value. “It means to have a worth equal to one’s position. A worthy opponent is one whose gifts equal one’s own.”¹ (Boice, 2006)

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones describes Paul’s instruction to the church as “the weight of practice equaling the weight of doctrine.”² (Lloyd-Jones, 1981)

The word vocation is the same word translated as calling. It implies a new relationship or task.³ Therefore Paul is saying that we should live our life worthy of the calling which we have received in Jesus Christ.

¹ Boice, James Montgomery, Ephesians. Baker Books. 1997. p 121

² Lloyd-Jones, D. Martyn, Christian Unity: An Exposition of Ephesians 4:1 to 16, Baker. 1981, p 24

³ Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)*. Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Alexander the Great, one of the greatest military generals who ever lived, conquered almost the entire known world with his vast army. One night during a campaign, he couldn't sleep and left his tent to walk around the campgrounds.

As he was walking he came across a soldier asleep on guard duty - serious offense. The penalty for falling asleep on guard duty was, in some cases, instant death; the commanding officer sometimes poured kerosene on the sleeping soldier and lit it. The soldier began to wake up as Alexander the Great approached him. Recognizing who was standing in front of him, the young man fear for his life.

"Do you know what the penalty is for falling asleep on guard duty?" Alexander the Great asked the soldier. "Yes, sir," the soldier responded in a quivering voice. "Soldier, what's your name?" demanded the general. "Alexander, sir." Alexander the Great repeated the question: "What is your name?" "My name is Alexander, sir" the soldier repeated. A third time and more loudly Alexander the Great asked, "What is your name?" A third time the soldier meekly said, "My name is Alexander, sir." Alexander the Great then looked the young soldier straight in the eye. "Soldier," he said with intensity, "either change your name or change your conduct."

If we are to call ourselves Christians, we should live up to that name.

"With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love" – In order to have Christian unity, there must be Christian character. Just look at these descriptors of how Paul says we should live worthily: lowliness, meekness, with longsuffering, and forbearing one another in love.

Lowliness means humility which was looked down upon by the world then and today as well. Pride was seen as strength and Paul was teaching the church that humility was a virtue that Christ embodied and the Christians follow His role.

Meekness is often misunderstood. Most would say that meekness is equal with "timidity". Meekness is the same as gentleness, another of Jesus' virtues and the Christian should voluntarily take on lowliness and meekness.

Longsuffering is tolerating the shortcomings, blunders and frailties of others.

“No virtue, perhaps, is more frequently demanded in our intercourse with others. We do not go very far with any fellow-traveller on the journey of life before we find there is great occasion for its exercise.”
(Barnes, 1957)

Longsuffering is the same as patience. Patience is the opposite of hasty. We are to “count the cost” (Luke 14:28) before we jump into any decision.

“...*forbearing one another in love*” – forbearing is the same as enduring, put up with and to hold oneself up against. The Apostle taught the importance of charity in his first epistle to the church at Corinth in the famous “love chapter” of the bible.

1 Corinthians 13:4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

Where true charity (love) is demonstrated, the Christian will be able to endure the actions of others with little effort.

“*Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*” There are two actions in this one verse. Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit means “eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit” (ESV). The Christian should be eager to promote the unity within the congregation as led by the Holy Spirit. The congregation is made up of Jews and Gentiles and we know that man has a sinful nature. Any number of transgressions, insults, affronts and wrongdoings rise each and every day within a body of believers. These offenses may produce quarrels which result in loss of power of the Holy Spirit within the congregation. Then the world will see division and not unity. Unity of the Spirit will produce peace.

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Walk United

Ephesians 4:4-6 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Unity permeates these three verses. The number “one” is used seven times. Christians are to be united as:

“*One body*”, meaning the body of Christ, the church. Christ died for the church and the church is one body of believers. While the church may have many different forms of worship, services and ceremonies, there is but one universal group of believers called the church.

“*One Spirit*”, that is the Holy Spirit. It is the same Spirit that lives in the hearts of the believers. This is the Spirit that called us, gave us instruction and knowledge, prays for us and seals us unto the day of Salvation.

“*One hope of our calling*” - As there is only one body of believers and one Holy Spirit, there is only one hope of your calling; and that is entrance into the Kingdom of God.

“*One Lord*” This is evidently the Lord Jesus as the Holy Spirit is mentioned in the previous verse and the Father is mentioned in the next verse. There have been and will continue to be charlatans masquerading as Jesus. But there is only one Lord and Savior. There is only one Christ, but many anti-Christ’s.

“*One faith*” – Since the Christian is to be bound by unity in the same body, Spirit, calling and Jesus, it would make perfect sense that there should also be unity in belief. This may mean the same belief in doctrine or the same confidence in the Savior or both. Christians should be one in their belief in the Lord Jesus. But here is where the rub comes in. Many practicing religions that consider themselves Christian may not have the same doctrines. I believe the Apostle is trying to unite believers to practice the good sound doctrines of the Lord Jesus.

“*One baptism*” – This does not concern the mode of baptism, instead it affirms the consecration upon the individual when the baptism is performed in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

“*One God*” – There is but one God in the universe and He is to be worshiped. There is unity among Christians because there is but one god. In countries or religions that worship more than one god, there cannot be unity of affection and love.

For example, in just a few minutes the National Football League will have games being played in cities across America. There are 32 teams and each of them has their followers. The fan will attempt to identify with their team by wearing jerseys, ball caps, and placing window decals on the automobile. No team has all the support of all the fans. That is the way with multiple gods. There can be no unity, but with one God, there is unity.

“...and Father of all” – The unified position of acknowledging that there is one God, is the basis for Him being the Father of all His people. No matter which country a believer lives, or what language is spoken, or wealth or status, they are equal and of the same Father.

“...who is above all” – This Father God is sovereign, matchless and above all things including time, distance, principalities, and powers.

He is Omnipotent meaning *all ruling* or as scripture sometimes translates it as “Almighty.”

He is Omnipresent meaning *being present everywhere at the same time*.

He is Omniscient meaning *having complete or unlimited knowledge, awareness, or understanding; perceiving all things*.

“...and through all” – When viewed through spiritual lenses, we can see that God the Creator permeates all things in nature and cosmos.

Isaiah 6:3 *And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.*

“...and in you all” – Every believer’s heart is the dwelling place of the Most High God! Since this passage concerns the unity of the church, it only makes sense that the Apostle would end with the same God, dwells in every heart of the believer.

The Apostle John captures a very tender moment in the prayer of Jesus to the Father found in the seventeenth chapter of the Gospel of John.

John 17:20-23 *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; 21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. 22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: 23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.*

Conclusion

Matthew Henry: “Nothing is pressed more earnestly in the Scriptures, than to walk as becomes those called to Christ’s kingdom and glory.”

Dr. Wayne Barber in his sermon, Walk in a Manner Worthy, Part 1⁴ said:

The word for "worthy" is the word axios. It refers to the intrinsic value of something.

There is a difference in the intrinsic worth of something and an appraisal of what that intrinsic value is. What is your value of your salvation?

The value of your salvation is going to determine how you live. You see, if it has not affected your lifestyle, if it has not affected the way you talk to people and about people, if it has not affected the way you treat others, then friend, you have got a low appraisal value of something that is intrinsically worth far beyond what you have even realized yet.

Therefore, your life is not measuring up to any standard that God requires.

Robert C. Crowder

⁴ Wayne Barber, Walk in a Manner Worthy, Part 1, http://preceptaustin.org/new_page_18.htm