

Sermon Title: The Worthy Walk Of Oneness (Part 2)
Scripture Text: Eph. 4:1-3 (Ephesians #19)

Speaker: Jim Harris
Date: 10-24-21

Today, come to Ephesians Chapter 4.

On our previous visit to Ephesians, we saw the beginning of a spectacular sentence which launches the second half of Ephesians, and it's an all-encompassing command that is in this sentence; it's like an umbrella that stands over the last three chapters of this book. As I told you, the book fits very conveniently into two halves; the first three chapters are very doctrinal; the second three chapters are very practice-oriented—and they are connected by the glorious prayer at the end of Chapter 3, and by the word "therefore" that begins Chapter 4.

Today, we're going to finish putting the pieces together of this sentence, to learn exactly what it is that God wants us to do to put in practice what it means to be "in Christ"—that's that theme statement that occurs 27 times in the Book of Ephesians (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17).

So, here's the whole sentence; and then, we'll break it down into some component parts: "Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:1-3; NASB-1995, and throughout, unless otherwise noted).

We introduced that last time, and we saw the essence of the command. "Walk" is a very common metaphor in the New Testament; it's describing how you conduct yourself, how you live your life (e.g., Lev. 26:3; Deut. 26:17; Gal. 5:16, 25; 2 Jn. 4, 6). Your "walk" would be your Christian life, the way you walk through life. You've heard the expression: "If you can't walk the walk, don't talk the talk." Well, if your "talk" says "I'm a Christian," here's how to "walk" to make that be credible (1 Jn. 1:6; 2:4-6). These are the sum total of the activities of a person's life, or your lifestyle.

He says, I want you to "walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called." The "calling with which you have been called"—you've been "called" to Christ, you have been brought to Him by faith (Rom. 8:30). God has "granted" you "repentance" (2 Tim. 2:25); He has "caused" you "to be born again" (1 Pet. 1:3; cf. Jn. 1:13); He has "placed" you into "the body of Christ" (1 Cor. 12:13, 18; Eph. 4:12); He has given you new "life" (Rom. 6:4; 2 Tim. 1:1); He has "adopted" you as His child (Eph. 1:5); He has put His "Holy Spirit" within you (Rom. 5:5; 2 Cor. 1:22; Gal. 4:6)—*all of that* is your "calling" (1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:9; Heb. 3:1; 2 Pet. 1:10; Rev. 17:14).

And now, he says, "Walk in a manner *worthy* of that!" The phrase in English—"in a manner worthy of"—is all from one little Greek adverb; it means "worthily," and the root of it means "weight"; the idea of "walking worthy" of something is to give it the appropriate amount of weight, to place the right amount of importance on it (see Matt. 23:23; cf. Col. 1:10; 1 Thess. 2:12).

How important is it to you—all that Christ has done for you? Well, *supremely important!* So, how do you live your life? *As if* what Christ did for you is *supremely* important, and *worthy* of your *total* commitment and dedication (see Gal. 2:20).

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As we "walk in" this "manner worthy," it is going to lead to the *expression of*—in actual practice—our unity in Christ: the fact that we are "one body in Christ" (Rom. 12:5; cf. Jn. 10:16). In Chapter 2, there was a detailed explanation of the oneness that comes—even bitter, factious, *totally*-antagonistic groups like Jew and Gentile are brought together as "one new man" in Christ (Eph. 2:15; cf. 3:6). *Only* "in Christ" can there be that kind of *intrinsic*, supernatural unity (Eph. 2:16)—and that's what we strive for, and *nothing less than that*: to bring people to Christ, that we "may be one" in Him (Jn. 17:11). So, unity is part of what you are called to "in Christ"—*it is* something that God gives us "in Christ."

Therefore, *living* in unity cannot happen until people are, first of all, "in Christ" (cf. Jn. 15:5); but then, we have to understand *what it means* to be "in Christ" (Eph. 1:3); and then, what are we supposed to *do* about that? So, let's finish this sentence. I told you last time that we would break this into two parts, under the heading: "The Worthy Walk Of Oneness," because it is all about our unity.

"The Worthy Walk Of Oneness," as we are going to see elaborated in Ephesians 4:2-3 today, is: a walk of Humility, a walk of Gentleness, a walk of Patience, a walk of Tolerance, a walk of Diligence, and a walk of Doctrine. The first five of those words come straight from the text; you'll see why the sixth one is there, when we get there.

Let's work through this. "The Worthy Walk Of Oneness" is a walk of Humility: "Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, *with all humility*..." That means: "with all *possible* humility." At every opportunity that we have a chance to demonstrate humility, *we should*.

What does "humility" mean? The word that is translated "humility" literally means: "lowliness of mind"; but what it means is, it's the opposite of "haughtiness," where you think so highly of yourself (Prov. 16:18; 21:4; Jer. 48:29; Rom. 12:16); it's the opposite of arrogance; it's the opposite of conceit. It comes from having a proper perspective of yourself and your relationship to Christ (Rom. 12:3; cf. Eph. 3:8). It's recognizing that all that you have that really matters is from God (1 Cor. 4:7; cf. Gen. 32:10); and therefore, all that you *do* for the glory of God is with that very desire that *He* be the One lifted up, not you (Ps. 115:1).

That is exactly the opposite of the world's way of telling people how to be successful in life (Prov. 30:13), the opposite of the world's way of assessing yourself. The world tells you, "Believe in yourself! You can do anything you set your mind to!" That's one really bad piece of advice, and one *bald-faced lie*! You *can't* do "anything you want to"! I wanted to play in the NBA—*not going to happen*! I *hate* it when we train kids by lying to them; you know, "There's a Santa Claus! There's an Easter Bunny! You can be anything you want to be!" *No, you can't!* But *you must be* what *God calls you* to be "in Christ"!

And we need to understand: You don't need more self-esteem! You have *that* out the wazoo! (cf. 2 Tim. 3:2) God says, "Look, I already know that you are in love with yourself. Now, get busy spending as much effort on loving your neighbor *as you do* on loving yourself." (see 1 Cor. 13:5b)

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You don't need better *self*-esteem, you need better—can we invent a word?—"Theo-
esteem," *God*-esteem: You need a *better* understanding of *who* God is, and *what* He has
done for you. And when you get *that*, and you understand *who* we are "in Christ"—
together "in Christ"—you can't help but have unity; because when you have a bunch of
humble people, wanting to glorify God out of thankfulness for what He has done for us in
Christ (Ps. 116:12), they are going to be outdoing one another to try to "build" each other
"up" (1 Thess. 5:11, 13-14; cf. Rom. 14:19; 15:2; 1 Cor. 14:12; Phil. 1:27).

"Humility" is not cutting yourself down, or discounting your ability. "Humility" is knowing
who you are in God's hands, and playing that part in the chorus which is the Body of
Christ (Eph. 4:16).

True humility, by the way, doesn't talk about being humble (Prov. 27:2). It's *not* a way to
talk, it's a way to *live*. Humility is *what you do*, it's not what you talk about (1 Jn. 3:18).
Talk about truth, talk about doctrine, talk about God—teach, preach, "reprove, rebuke,
exhort" (2 Tim. 4:2), build each other up (Col. 3:16; Heb. 10:24)—*that* is practicing
humility, where you come alongside somebody and you lift them up, you bring them along
(Gal. 6:1-2).

I don't know who said it, or I would give credit to them, but I agree: "Humility has rightly
been called the first, second, and third essential of the Christian life." We have to be
willing to be what God wants us to be.

You're familiar with the words of First Peter Chapter 5, Verses 5 and 6—"You younger
men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and *all* of you"—younger, older, male, female,
whatever you are—"clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is
opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore humble yourselves under
the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time." "The Worthy Walk Of
Oneness" is a walk of Humility.

"The Worthy Walk Of Oneness" is also a walk of Gentleness. That's the next word: "with
all humility and *gentleness*" (vs. 2). "Gentleness" is the word that—if you've been around
for a while, and maybe had older translations of the Bible—you are probably more
accustomed to seeing this word translated "meek" or "meekness" (cf. 2 Cor. 1:10).
Remember, we ran across it in the Beatitudes: "Blessed are the gentle, for they shall
inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5), and most people know that as: "Blessed are the *meek*, for
they shall inherit the earth" (NKJV).

There's not a thing wrong with the word "meek," *except that*, in its normal usage, it has
come to have a rather passive, negative, wimpy sort of connotation to it. But the Greek
word translated "gentleness" is wrought in you by the grace of God (Gal. 5:23); it's *not*
weakness, it's "appropriateness"; and if you will, *true* "meekness," or, godly "gentleness,"
is a matter of "strength under control" (cf. Num. 12:3 with Acts 7:22), because we *have*
the power of the Spirit—but the word means *controlling* it in the right way, so that when it
comes to dealing with other people, there is a gentle, uplifting, caring, compassionate
attitude about it (e.g., 2 Cor. 10:1; cf. 2 Tim. 2:24-25).

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One famous scholar defined this word as: "That temper of spirit in which we accept His dealings with us as good—and therefore, without disputing." Listen: We know God is sovereign—He is in control, right? (Is. 46:10; Dan. 4:35; Eph. 1:11) We know He is all-powerful (Jer. 32:17). And we know He is "good" (Ps. 107:1; 119:68; 135:3). So when, in His providence, something happens, a Christian *does not* shout out, "That's not fair!" (cf. Ezek. 18:25). Oh, now, humanly-speaking, there is a *lot* of unfairness (Ecc. 9:11), but *never so* with God! We come across *gently*, we don't critique God (Lam. 3:39-40)—we try to apply His "goodness" (Ex. 33:19; Ps. 25:7-8; 145:7; Jer. 31:14; Hos. 3:5), His "kindness" (1 Pet. 2:3), His "gentleness" (Ps. 18:35), His "faithfulness" (Ps. 33:4; Lam. 3:23) in our relationships with each other. Only a humble person who understands God's dealings can truly be, in this sense, "gentle" or "meek".

Here's something that was spoken by the same omnipotent Savior who, remember, on *two* occasions *cleared* the Temple singlehandedly—you know I'm talking about Jesus, of course (Jn. 2:15; Matt. 21:12; Mk. 11:15; Lk. 19:45); in Matthew 11:29, as part of His invitation He says, "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." Look at those two words He put together: "gentle" and "humble"—or, "meek" and "humble." So, "meekness" *obviously* isn't "weakness"; Jesus was a *man's man*, and *nobody* resisted Him—at least, not successfully—when He cleared out the money changers and those selling sacrifices in the Outer Court of the Temple.

Oh, and by the way: You'll find "gentleness" in Galatians 5:23 as something that is produced by the Holy Spirit within you—part of "the fruit of the Spirit" (vs. 22).

So, this "Worthy Walk Of Oneness" is a walk of Humility; it's a walk of Gentleness; and thirdly, it's a walk of Patience. Read on in Verse 2 there: "with all humility and gentleness, with *patience*..." A very interesting word, "patience." There are two words translated "patient" or "patience" in the King James Version of the Bible—which causes some confusion, because they're both legitimate translations in English—but *this one* is actually sometimes translated "longsuffering." Again, that's a *perfectly fine* word—it actually captures the meaning of this Greek word; the problem is, people today don't use the word "longsuffering," except in the sense of, "Well, I've been *suffering* with *him* for a long time!"—kind of like putting up with something for a very, very long time.

There is a sense of that which is true, but the idea of this word is quite vivid. It comes from the word *makros*—whenever we see the English prefix "macro," it means "big"; "micro" means "small"; those are from two Greek adjectives: *makros* and *mikros*—so, it comes from *makros*, which is "large" or "long," and then the word *thumos*, which means "temper"; so it literally means: "to have a long temper." Well, what do you mean by that—when I get mad, I stay mad for seven weeks instead of three? No. What is the opposite of a "short temper"? The "short temper" is the one that flies off the handle easily; the "long temper" doesn't (Prov. 14:29). It literally means: "to have a long fuse." And *this* word is used in interpersonal ways—that we should be, in this sense, *patient*: We should have a "long fuse" with one another (e.g., Prov. 15:18; 17:9; 19:11; 1 Thess. 5:14; 1 Pet. 2:20; Jas. 1:19).

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The *other* word that is sometimes translated "patience" is better translated "endurance" (Heb. 10:36; Jas. 1:3-4). It is not used for *people*, it's used for circumstances; and it's the word that means "remaining under"—the staying power to "remain under" something; when you have circumstances that are impinging on you, you remain faithful staying under that, practicing endurance so that in the end, God is glorified. God never calls you to suffer or "to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to *endure* it" (1 Cor. 10:13).

So, two different words—one for circumstances, one for people. The one for people means: well, "be patient" with each other (1 Thess. 5:14)—not easily "provoked" by obnoxious people (1 Cor. 13:5). Oh, and by the way: Those are the only ones who provoke you, right? Because if they're smart enough to *agree* with you and not get in our way, you don't consider them as obnoxious.

We need this with each other. And think about this from kind of the reverse perspective for a moment. The fact that this exhortation is here—that in order for us to *live out* the unity that we have in Christ, we have to be patient with each other—implies that patience is necessary in the Body of Christ; because as God continues to grow the Body of Christ, the raw material that He has to work with is *abominable*! It's people like you and me! And we are saved sinners! How many of you, on the day after you put your faith in Christ, *suddenly* changed into where your life is *perfectly* described by "the fruit of the Spirit"—all the time, every day? We are all in various stages of progressing in our sanctification (cf. Phil. 3:12-14); it's *necessary* that we have to be patient with each other. Preserving the supernatural unity that we have in Christ—*it takes effort*, a lot of it!

When this word is used about God and *His* patience, it describes His patience in dealing with sinners; and it means that God has chosen to withhold His wrath—to hold back on His wrath (Ps. 78:38; 103:10; 106:43-45)—in order to grant "time" for sinners to "repent" (Rev. 2:21; cf. 2 Pet. 3:9). That's a pretty good pattern to follow, isn't it? It's not that you want sin to go unchecked, but you want your brother or sister in Christ to grow, just as *you* want to grow.

Oh, and by the way: If you were to scour through Galatians 5:22-23—"the fruit of the Spirit"—you would also find there, the word "patience."

This is "The Worthy Walk Of Oneness," that we "walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which we have been called." It's a walk of Humility and a walk of Gentleness and a walk of Patience, and then—oh, it gets even harder!—a walk of Tolerance. He says: "with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing *tolerance* for one another in love." "Tolerance" is, if you will, the logical extension of a combination of humility and gentleness and patience.

"Tolerance" comes from a Greek word that means "to hold up" or "to sustain" or "to bear without losing your composure"—I like that; not to fall apart, "to bear with" or "to endure." To put it in our vernacular: Yeah, I'm afraid it means we have to "put up with" each other (Matt. 17:17; cf. Col. 3:13).

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And again, understand: This is talking about Christians—the adopted children of God. We, in our various stages of maturity and immaturity—we will need to learn to put up with each other, just like God puts up with us (cf. Eph. 4:32; Jas. 3:2a). He puts up with a lot from us, and that sets the pattern, for sure. The love that He showed when Christ died for our sins—that was a *forgiving* love (Rom. 5:8-11; 2 Cor. 5:19, 21; 1 Pet. 3:18a), and ours should be like that toward each other (Jn. 13:34).

Retaliation, or, giving somebody the "cold shoulder" when someone does someone we don't like—well, basically, what we could call that is: Non-Christian behavior. You can't *ever* excuse that! Oh, you can *explain* it—you can give *reasons* why you are that way—but call it what it is: it's *sin*! It's *wrong*! It's *not* "worthy of the calling with which we have been called"! Where the love of God reigns, it's hard to have an argument because the first word of the argument should never be spoken; and if it is, it should be repented of, and it should be forgiven. And realizing that sometimes, they *do* get started; sometimes that first bad word *is* said. Well, we "tolerate one another in love"—and in that way, we avoid strife.

Peter quoted from Proverbs 10:12; in First Peter Chapter 4, Verse 8, he put it this way: "Love covers a multitude of sins." He doesn't say "love *covers up* a multitude of sins," he says that love extends to wrap its arms around the one who has even sinned against me. We "tolerate one another in love." And don't lose sight of the connection: "in love" *is* tied to "showing tolerance." A practical way to love people is to show tolerance.

Now, I promise: If you walk around *any* church, *anywhere*, for *any* amount of time—I guarantee, you won't always get your way. You *will* be "overlooked" sometimes (Acts 6:1). You may be disregarded sometimes. Why, you may be *sinned against*! And *every time* such a thing happens, that is God calling you to an *active* role in "preserving the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Will you be humble, gentle, patient, and will you put up with others in love—so that the Body of Christ can continue to be built up?

The next ingredient of "The Worthy Walk Of Oneness"—gets even tougher!—Diligence: "with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

"Being diligent" is a very important word; it means "to take care of something," "to make haste with it," "to do your best"; when we say "be diligent" with this, it means: "Move it up to the top of your priority list. Do this! This needs attention *right now*." And, by the way: It implies *determined effort*, and it implies *exerting as much energy as necessary* to accomplish it.

The very existence of this word in the New Testament, in the context of commands to Christians—that's a significant thing! I looked it up; it's used 11 times. Once, Peter says he is *going to be* diligent about something; and once, Paul says he *was* diligent about something. The other nine are connected with commands: "*You* better be diligent to do this! God wants you to be diligent to do this thing." Here, it's "diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

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Now, why do I say it's so significant to put the word "diligence" there? Well, there are false ideas running around—surprise, surprise. There's one that has been around for a couple of centuries now, saying that the Christian life is *virtually effortless*; you get saved, now you're in the boat—you just ride along with the current, and sort of by osmosis, you automatically grow up in Christ.

I remember being given a book when I was a young Christian, and it taught me about the motto: "Let go and let God." That sounds *really good*—double alliteration...it's *awesome*! It's *catchy*! It'll preach—especially to really busy people. But, do you know what? It is *antithetical* to Christianity! Yeah, look: Let go and let God *save you*, alright? You can't save yourself—all the "work" is done; it's completely done (Rom. 4:5); but in this life, while we don't try to put out a whole bunch of carnal self-effort, the Christian life requires *total effort* on my part! (Mk. 12:30; 1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:22) It is total effort on my part, under the control of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 15:10; cf. Ezek. 36:27; Phil. 2:12-13), for "the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31). And, by the way: That's something we're going to talk about *a lot* when we get to Chapter 5; we'll see it when we get there. The Christian life is toil and hard work—but it is toil and hard work, directed by and empowered by the Holy Spirit (Heb. 13:20-21).

There's another place where this one is used that you may be familiar with: Second Timothy 2:15—"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth." Now, when you learned that verse in AWANA, or wherever you might have learned it, you probably learned it: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God..." (KJV). Is it a good thing to study the Word of God? Oh, *you bet it is*! Is it a good thing to crack open the books, to go to the commentaries, to do your homework, to find out what it means? Yes, that's a *very good* thing—but it's not the command of this verse. It's saying: "*Work hard* to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth." Be diligent to grasp that "word of truth" so that your life shows: Here is how that Word should be *handled*; here is how that Word should be *applied*; here is how that Word should be *lived out* (cf. Titus 2:7). It's quite parallel to Ephesians 4:1, that we need to "walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which we have been called."

So it's not anti- *intellectual studying* that we're saying; we're not against the intellectual part of things, but the point is: Make it your highest priority that your life is under the control of the Word of God (Matt. 4:4; Lk. 11:28), so that in every aspect of the Word of God, you are accurately handling it, that you are putting it together from all of its parts. Very same word as Ephesians Chapter 4, Verse 3: "being diligent." It means our determined effort (Ps. 119:106), exerting the energy it takes to understand the Word of God (Eph. 5:10, 17) and live worthily of our calling in Christ (Jn. 13:17).

You'll never have unity—we'll never practice The Worthy Walk Of Oneness like Jesus wants—while we sit around on our spiritual behinds saying, "Let go and let God!" We must be *diligent* on our part—*work* to "bear with one another" (Col. 3:13); tolerate one another; practice "patience," "gentleness," "humility," as we fulfill our calling.

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The Worthy Walk Of Oneness is also a walk of Doctrine. All of the other five words that I put in my outline were in the text. This one isn't here, but trust me: "Doctrine" is.

What are we saying? Look at the whole sentence again. Notice where we are to aim—*focus*—our diligence: "Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Why did I say "Doctrine"? There's a little subtlety here. If you translated it exactly literally into English, it would sound silly; but before the word "peace" in the Greek is the definite article: "*the* peace"—"be diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of *the* peace." Now, that only makes sense if there's a *specific* peace that you're talking about—and *there is*, in the context: See Chapters 1, 2, and 3, especially Chapter 2: Christ "is our peace, who made...the two into one new man" in Christ (vss. 14-15).

So, The Worthy Walk Of Oneness is *based* upon—*rooted* in—the doctrine of us having "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). We have "peace with one another" (Mk. 9:50) because we are all at peace with God, and therefore we belong together in Christ (2 Cor. 13:11).

So, back up then: That makes the word "preserve" make more sense, doesn't it? It is also translated "keep it," or "maintain it"—keep it going, maintain this standard. It means to guard something by exercising watchful care of it, to protect something that is precious. It means guarding something which is *already in your possession*. This passage *does not tell us* to create unity, because we *can't!* God *did*—"in Christ"; we are responsible to maintain it, "preserve" it.

What does he mean by "unity"? "Unity" is derived from the Greek word for the number "one." It's a noun form that describes the quality of oneness. Another wrinkle of it is the concept of unanimity. That means people working together for common goals—every analogy you can think of for teamwork is legitimate here (e.g., Phil. 1:27). Humility—understanding: "What is my role on this team? If I'm the place-kicker, don't put me on the defensive line; it's not going to go well for any of us!"

We do what we need to do. We practice gentleness. We build up our teammates. We put up with one another. "You dropped that pass? Okay—catch it next time! Let's go!" All of that fits into the idea that we support each other and we encourage each other.

To have unity *does not mean* that we are all *identical*, or that everyone has the same skill or the same style or the same preferences; but it means that we are *united* by a common belief—a common *life-changing* set of truths of what God has done for us in Christ (e.g., Acts 26:18; 1 Cor. 6:11; Col. 3:12; 1 Pet. 1:1-2).

One comment on this word says: "We believe, just as though we were all one person," or, "We believe in one and the same way." (cf. Rom. 15:5; 1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 2:2)

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Unanimity—"unity," oneness—doesn't mean *sameness*. As a matter of fact, it wouldn't have any meaning if it wasn't based on *diversity*! We wouldn't need unity if we were all *identical*! We need unity, which is comprised of all of our diversity, woven together under the sovereignty of God by the power of His Spirit. He has placed *every single member* of this body *exactly* where we belong (1 Cor. 12:18), so that together we can work as the most effective unit possible. So, it's "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"—it is the unity that the Spirit of God creates, and ours is to maintain it.

The "bond" is that which ties something together. We are going to see a lot more about that word; just put a mental checkmark by that word; we are going to see that word again in Chapter 4, as we move a little bit further on.

So, this is The Worthy Walk Of Oneness: Humility, Gentleness, Patience, Tolerance, Diligence, and Doctrine—all woven together. We can't *create* unity—oh, but we sure can mess it up, can't we? Ours is to "preserve" it! Ours is to live in such a way that *what God has done* shows through us (Matt. 5:16).

So, think about what that implies: Any time there is a lack of unanimity—a lack of oneness, a lack of unity—in a group of Christians, one or both of two problems have to exist.

One problem is: Someone lacks understanding of what God has to say on the subject. Somebody is failing to understand the basis of our peace, the basis of our unity—which is spelled out for us in the Word of God, especially right here in Ephesians 1, 2, and 3.

Or, the other problem is: Even if they understand it, someone is *refusing* to allow the Holy Spirit to be in control; they just won't bring their life and their practices, and set it side-by-side with that list of the fruit of the Spirit and say, "How am I doing today?" If we will allow the Spirit to be in control of our lives by weighing our decisions what we know the Spirit is and wants (Gal. 5:16; cf. Prov. 3:5-6), then we will be practicing that "unity."

You know, it's not all that complicated. That's really the beginning and the end of the matter. It is summarized there in Ephesians 4:1-3; and now, in God's grace, he is going to elaborate on it a lot more in the remainder of Chapter 4, and Chapter 5 and Chapter 6.

No matter how much we try to complicate it, if Christians can't agree on something, it's either a problem of information or obstinacy. If it's information—teach each other, "reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction" (2 Tim. 4:2). If it's obstinacy, if somebody is just choosing to be a jerk—Greek word—say, "You know, my friend, you're being a jerk. Cut that out!" You might find a better way to word it.

But look, understand: This is about what God has done for us in Christ! This isn't some pie-in-the-sky goal—that we "preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"—*this is the standard*! This is *what God expects* of us! And if we are feeling estranged within the Body of Christ—well, there is either a problem of information, or there's a problem of obstinacy...and *let's take care of it!* (cf. Ps. 34:14; Rom. 14:19; Heb. 12:14; 1 Pet. 3:11).

Sermon Title: The Worthy Walk Of Oneness (Part 2)
Scripture Text: Eph. 4:1-3 (Ephesians #19)

Speaker: Jim Harris
Date: 10-24-21

Now, that sets us up for the next few verses. There is a Theology Of Unity that is coming to us next. That gives us about a week to practice some of these things that we've learned now, not to mention the next however many years we have until we are with the Lord. My friends, it is a Worthy Walk Of Oneness!

I have been around a lot of Christians for a long time. I've never been around a group that seems more committed to this than this group is, so let's make sure we keep at that, and let's make sure that we live in relationship to one another in such a way that somebody can say, "Aha! *That* is how that's supposed to work!" Oh, that will be to the glory of God! (Jn. 13:35; cf. Ps. 133:1)

Let's pray:

Our Father, thank You for Your wonderful goodness to us in Christ. Thank You for this unity, this oneness that You have created—"one body...one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all." It is Your work, Father. It is Your Church. It is for Your glory. Teach us to be the components of that body that make it all the better for those around us. And Father, where we tend to withdraw—rebuke us, Father; convict us where we need to be convicted. Where we tend to become haughty and easily offended—convict us where we need to be convicted. Oh, and Father, certainly if there are any broken relationships in our midst, teach us to take the initiative to be the ones that mend them for Your glory. Thank You for what You are doing in Your Church. Thank You for what You will do in Your Church. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.