

Walk the Talk!

Text: Ephesians 4:1-6

Introduction:

1. Review of main outline.
 - Our Wealth (Chap. 1-3)
 - Our Walk (Chap. 4-6:9)
 - Our Warfare (Chap. 6:10-24)
2. This chapter: We enter the second major part of the Epistle dealing with the believer's walk. We go from position to practice, doctrine to duty, beliefs to behavior, creed to conduct, worldview to walk etc. **Truth is transforming!** There are somewhere in the order of **41** imperatives/commands (H. Hoehner) in this section. Kenneth Wuest summarizes this transition well, "We come now to an important dividing point in this letter. The first three chapters contain doctrine, the last three, exhortation. This is the proper order, for only in doctrine can one see the sweet reasonableness of the exhortations, and obtain the necessary power and technique to obey them. In brief, God says in chapters 1-3, "I have made you a saint." In chapters 4-6, He says, "Now, live a saintly life." **You are a saint now live like a saint!**
3. When people make statements like, "Don't talk to me about doctrine – just let me live my Christian life!" or "It makes no difference what you believe, just as long as you live right," they reveal their ignorance of the way the Christian life works. We all order our conduct according to our beliefs and values!
4. This section (Vs. 1-16): The key theme is unity (See Vs. 3 and 13).
5. This lesson (Vs. 1-6): We will consider the opening exhortation to walk worthy and how that moves towards the theme of unity. To that end, we will divide the portion under three headings.

I. THE CALL TO A WORTHY WALK (VS. 1)

A. The Person making the Appeal (Vs. 1a)

1. "I therefore" = on the basis of what has been previously taught. In light of who we are in Christ, Paul exhorts the believers on how to live for Christ.
2. "the prisoner of the Lord" = they are reminded again of Paul's situation in the will of God. In many ways, Paul was an example of the very dedication and consecration he was asking of the Ephesian believers. He was in prison on account of His total commitment to the walk God had ordained for him.

B. The Passion of the Appeal (Vs. 1b)

1. 'beseech' = the word means to exhort, to urge, to plead. This is no dispassionate, dry appeal. Paul is not about to give a list of suggestions for the believers to choose from in relation to their Christian lives. He is going to issue Divine directives for their lives. It is essential they live as Christ would have them so he issues this impassioned plea.
2. Note: It is entirely right and biblical for the preacher to fervently call believers to consecrated Christian living. He has no authority to put the commands of Christ in the form of suggestions, giving the saints

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the impression, they can take or leave them. These are Divine demands.

C. The Point of the Appeal (Vs. 1c)

1. 'walk' = the word speaks of our conduct and lifestyle as Christians.
2. 'worthy' = has the sense of worthily, suitably, in a manner worthy of.
 - a. the word has "the root meaning of balancing the scales – what is on one side of the scale should be equal in weight to what is on the other side." (MacArthur) It means "having the weight of another thing. Thus, Paul exhorts the Ephesian saints to see to it that their Christian experience, the Christian life they live, should weigh as much as the profession of Christianity which they make." (Wuest)
 - b. Therefore, to "walk worthy" means that our daily lives need to correspond to the high position we have in Christ. "The emphasis is on conduct that is in balance with or equal to one's call." (Hoehner)
3. "the vocation wherewith ye are called" = the word 'vocation' means 'calling' and comes from the same root as the word 'called' in the verse. This is a reference to our salvation. We heard the call of God through the Gospel, responded to that call through repentance and faith and were saved.
4. Illustration: When we think of a vocation, we think of one's occupation or profession (e.g., nurse, doctor, mechanic, office worker, tradesman etc...). Perhaps you've heard of "vocational training" which is training to prepare you for a particular career. That's your earthly vocation. But don't forget your high and heavenly vocation (calling) to be a follower of Jesus Christ!

II. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A WORTHY WALK (VS. 2-3)

What does a worthy walk actually look like in practice? The Apostle now outlines this for us. To walk worthy of our calling is to:

A. Walk Humbly (Vs. 2a)

There are two words that both describe humility:

1. Lowliness – the word is made up of 'low' and 'mind', thus literally meaning humbly/lowly thinking. Speaks of having a humble opinion of oneself. The same word was used by Paul in Acts 20:19 where he mentioned to the Ephesian elders that he had served the Lord in Asia with all "humility of mind". Apparently, this word was coined by the early Christians as the Greeks and Romans had no word in their vocabulary for humility. To them, humility was abhorrent. Pride and self-assertion were highly valued.
 - a. It is significant that humility is mentioned first. Without humility the other graces mentioned will not be present. As pride is the fountainhead of wickedness, so humility is the fountainhead of righteousness.
 - b. The Christian life begins with humility. You must humble yourself to admit you are a sinner in need of a Saviour. "And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

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Whosoever therefore shall **humble himself** as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 18:3-4)

- c. The Christian life must continue in humility! James 4:6 “But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, **God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.**” E.g., Humility to learn from God’s Word and to cooperate with the change He wants to bring in my life; humility in our dealings with one another within the local church; humility in family living etc...
2. Meekness – has the idea of gentleness, the opposite of roughness. It is by product of humility. Meekness is not weakness or a disposition to compromise on truth. “The word was used of wild animals that were tamed, especially of horses that were broken and tamed. Such an animal still has strength and spirit, but its will is under the control of its master. Meekness is power under control, the control of God. A meek person is not avenging, self-assertive, vindictive or self-defensive.” (Macarthur)
 - a. Meekness is self-control, the ability not to retaliate and react in one’s own self-interest, a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). The word “implies the conscious exercise of self-control, exhibiting a conscious choice of gentleness as opposed to the use of power for the purpose of retaliation.” (Hoehner)
 - b. Illustration: Christ said of Himself, “I am meek and lowly in heart” (Matt. 11:29) but in no way was Christ weak. Consider His cleansing of the temple from those profiteering from the worshippers. When faced with arrest in the garden, Christ could have summoned the armies of heaven to His defense (12 legions of angels – Matt. 26:53) and yet He did not use that power, choosing rather to submit to the will of the Father and go to the cross.

B. Walk Patiently (Vs. 2b)

There are two words that both describe patience:

1. Longsuffering – literally means “long tempered”, the ability to endure discomfort without fighting back.
 - a. It refers to “patient endurance under injuries inflicted by others. The Christians response towards circumstances and events.” (Strongs) Trench defines the word as “patience with respect to persons.”
 - b. Illustration: God is the greatest example of longsuffering where He withholds His wrath, giving us opportunity to repent (Rom. 2:4). “Thus, must the believer stay his or her impatience or vengeance when wronged by another believer, exhibiting patience one toward another, especially in the light of the union of believing Jews and Gentiles into one body.” (Hoehner)
2. Forbearing – means to bear with, endure.
 - a. Who we are to forbear – “one another”. To put it simply, we are to bear with and endure one another. Robertson suggests it has the idea of “holding yourselves back from one another.” It is the opposite to that attitude where one is always ready for fight and quick to enter into conflict with others.

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- b. How we are to forbear – “in love”. These qualifying words make it clear that this is not a cold, clinical “putting up with” each other like we sometimes do. There is warmth and sincerity in our hearts as we are influenced by Divine love. This ‘love’ is the ‘agape’ love which is a love that seeks the highest good of the one loved. It is others centered love as opposed to self-centered concern. It is love that gives. It is Calvary love. It is the love described in 1 Cor. 13:4-7.

C. Walk in Unity (Vs. 3)

1. The Attention to Unity (Vs. 3a)
 - a. ‘endeavouring’ = means giving diligence, making every effort, to exert one’s self, be zealous. “It speaks of determined effort.” (Wuest) The same word is translated ‘study’ (2 Tim. 2:15), “do” or “give diligence (2. Tim. 4:9, 21; Tit. 3:12, 2. Pet. 1:10, 3:14) and ‘labour’ (Heb. 4:11). Synonyms for ‘endeavour’: Striving, aiming, laboring, struggling, exerting, seeking, trying.
 - b. “to keep” = means “to keep by guarding, to guard by exercising watchful care. It speaks of guarding something which is in one’s possession.” (Wuest) The same word is also translated ‘observe’ (Matt. 23:3), ‘watched’ (Matt. 27:36), ‘preserved’ (1 Thess. 5:23) and “hold fast” (Rev. 3:3).
 - c. “the unity” = comes from the root word ‘one’. To be unified is to be one – in “one accord and in one place” (Acts 1:14, 2:1, 46; 4:24; 5:12)
 - d. Challenge: Unity is a very delicate and fragile thing in a church and can easily be disrupted unless each member takes this responsibility to heart. Our unity is a vital part of our witness for the Lord (John 13:35).
2. The Author of Unity (Vs. 3b)
 - a. This unity is attributed to the work of the Holy Spirit – “the unity of the Spirit”. Through the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, they had been placed together into one body. They were unified in their position in Christ, now that unity was to be lived out and maintained in the local assembly at Ephesus. “Unity is not uniformity. Unity comes from within and is a spiritual grace, while uniformity is the result of pressure from without.” (Wiersbe)
 - b. Psalm 133:1-3 “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like **the precious ointment** upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.”
 - c. Note: As we “walk in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:16), the “fruit of the Spirit” (Gal. 5:22-23) is produced in our lives which results in “the unity of the Spirit” (Eph. 4:3).
3. The Aid to Unity (Vs. 3c)
 - a. ‘bond’ = that which binds together. “The word was used in ancient writings to refer to the binding together of a defense structure or the fastening of garments. It comes from the same

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root as 'prisoner' in verse 1 so it has the idea of being chained. Hence, the chaining together of peace." (Hoehner)

- b. 'peace' = the binding factor which will preserve the unity which the Spirit has produced. Remember, peace is possible because of what Christ accomplished – He is our peace, He made peace and He preached peace (2:14-16). Expositors: "The unity wrought among these Ephesians by the Spirit of God will be theirs in so far as they make peace the relation which they maintain one to another, or the bond in which they walk together."

III. THE CREED OF A WORTHY WALK (VS. 4-6)

The unity of the believers is strongly emphasized in these verses with the seven-fold use of the word 'one'. True unity is not divorced from truth but is based upon doctrine for two reasons:

- Paul has just spent 3 chapters laying a doctrinal framework before he gives this call to unity.
- Paul now demonstrates that unity is connected to doctrine in Vs. 4-6.

Central to this unity is the Person of God, the Trinity – The Spirit (Vs. 4), the Son (Vs. 5) and the Father (Vs. 6). Paul explains "in more detail how elements of the Christian faith revolve around the three Persons of the Trinity." (Hoehner) There is no connecting conjunction (like 'for') giving the transition a somewhat abrupt and forceful tone.

A. Unity in the Spirit (Vs. 4)

1. One body – a reference to the body of Christ. The local church is the visible manifestation of the body of Christ. The Ephesians had been united in Christ's body, the Church.
2. One Spirit – the Holy Spirit who indwells each believer. This verse revolves around the Spirit.
3. One Hope – this hope is attached to the believers 'calling'. This calling refers to our calling to salvation. The Holy Spirit was the agent of this call. "Hope for believers is not the world's "hope so" but the absolute certainty that God will deliver what He has promised." (Hoehner)

B. Unity in the Son (Vs. 5)

1. One Lord – clearly this is a reference to Christ as the Spirit is mentioned in the previous verse (Vs. 4) and the Father in the next verse (Vs. 6). This verse revolves around the Son. There is only one Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 4:12 "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
2. One Faith – the word is used in two ways in the New Testament.
 - a. Subjective Faith – faith exercised by the individual in Christ for salvation. It could therefore refer to the "one act of trust in Christ for all both Jew and Gentile." (Robertson)
 - b. Objective Faith – the body of revealed truth, N.T. doctrine. Jude 1:3 "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for **the faith** which

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was **once delivered unto the saints.**” It is this sense that is most likely in view in this verse.

3. One Baptism – reference to water baptism which in the New Testament is always for believers and by full immersion in water. There are not multiple baptisms such as infant sprinkling, pouring or baptism of adults for salvation. Only believer’s baptism **after** salvation as a public testimony and confession of one’s faith in Christ. Biblical baptism essential for unity in the local church.
 - a. Note: This is not a reference to the spiritual baptism of the Spirit or it would have been connected with the Person of the Holy Spirit in the previous verse. Also, the truth of being spiritually baptised into one body has essentially already been covered in the previous verse where the “one body” is mentioned. 1 Cor. 12:13 “For **by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body**, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”
 - b. The reason baptism is connected with the Person of the Son is because upon exercising faith in Christ for salvation, the believer is to be baptized as a public confession of his faith in Christ (See Acts 8:37).

C. Unity in the Father (Vs. 6)

1. One God – the great truth of Monotheism, that is, that there is only One True God. This verse revolves around the Father. Deut. 6:4 “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is **one LORD:**” Isaiah 45:6 “That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, **that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else.**”
2. Father of all – not teaching universal salvation. God is the Father of all born again believers. If we have the same Heavenly Father and are a part of the same spiritual family, we have every reason to be a unified people. Several truths are stated about God the Father. He is:
 - a. **Above all** – this emphasises his transcendence and His sovereign position over all believers. Not only is He the sovereign Lord of the universe but also of His children. Every aspect of our lives is to be under His authority.
 - b. **Through all** – emphasises His immanence. He works through the lives of all His people to accomplish His purposes.
 - c. **In all** – emphasises His indwelling. The Father indwells each believer in the Person of the Holy Spirit. What a blessed thought! We are indwelt by the Triune God – indwelt by the Spirit (Rom. 8:9), by Christ (Col. 1:27) and the Father (Eph. 4:6).

Conclusion:

1. Are you living in a way that is consistent with your high calling in Christ?
2. Are you walking in humility and bearing with others patiently?
3. Are you a contributor to church unity or a disrupter of church unity? Are you watchful and careful about your attitudes, words and actions and their effect upon others? Are you alert to threats to unity from the devil and divisive individuals? How much effort are you making towards unity right now?