

Walking Worthy (Part 3)

(Pastor John Brackbill/Ephesians 4:3/2.4.15)

Bible Study Hour

Introduction:

- This evening we are returning to Ephesians 4:1-3 and looking at verse 3 and the last phrase that we just briefly touched on a few Sundays ago.
- Just to reorient ourselves to this text Ephesians 4:1-16 is about this:
 - **Theme:** Walking worthy of our calling in the unified body of Christ as He produces maturity in the body by the body.
- Especially next time we consider this text we are going to face the fact that there is One true church.
 - And this text talks about that one true church, but it talks about it in such a way that the only way you could obey the commands of this text is if you were accountable and active in a local church that is a true expression of that one true church.
- After 3 chapters of rich Christ centered glory focused doctrine, Paul says “Therefore”
 - I implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called.
- So what you have in verses 1-3 is an explanation of what kind of a walk? A worthy walk.
 - It is about a walk that only those who have been called in Christ Jesus can walk.
 - It is a worthy walk meaning, a walk, a life of conduct and practice that matches that high calling we have in Christ Jesus.
 - And specifically, though these principles are important in every area of life, it is a worthy walk within the body of Christ, specifically in a local expression of that One true body of Christ.
- So what is this worthy walk like?
 - Is it essentially reading the Bible and praying?
 - Attending church?
 - No, those things are very important, but the worthy walk that is talked about here is a walk that only God could produce in sinners like us.
 - You could call it a supernatural walk.
- What would it look like if we were each increasingly walking in this church in a manner worthy of the calling we have in Jesus Christ?

The characteristics behind a worthy walk as a church (2a)

- Humility: Lowliness of mind evidenced by not thinking of yourself
- Gentleness: Strength under control which expresses itself in a humble submissive spirit.
- Patience: Bearing up under persistent sufferings or aggravations without grumbling or retaliation

Transition: So humility, gentleness, and patience are the characteristics that must be produced in us if we are to walk in a manner worthy of our calling in Jesus Christ.

- Okay, so how do we actively pursue walking in this way?
 - Well, before we look at the ways that this text teaches we can actively pursue this worthy walk, just think about something that is unsated but necessarily implied here.
 - Can you make yourself humble? Gentle? And Patient?
 - Is that something you can discipline yourself to be?
 - No, no, these are fruits of the Spirit.
 - They are fruits and characteristics that can only be produced in you by God Himself, by the Spirit of God.
 - Yes, there are paths of ordained blessing that we must walk down upon which God graciously transforms us, but what we have to see here is that only God can produce these characteristics in us.
 - So, with that in mind, it ought to be obvious to us that the way to actively pursue this worthy walk is to be praying that God would produce this in us.
 - This ought to be high on every single one of our prayer lists and priorities.
 - That we would personal and our church collectively would grow in humility, gentleness, and patience.
 - But beyond this unstated but necessary way to actively pursue this worthy walk are the two ways stated in this text.
- This text gives us two ways, 2 lanes in a four lane highway that we must drive down if we are to actively pursue this walk that is worthy of the calling we have in Jesus.

The path to actively pursue a worthy walk as a church (2b-3)

- ✓ We saw the first one last time.
- Showing loving tolerance
 - “to take up, to bear up, to endure” (Hoener)
 - The idea is having a load that you are bearing with one another.
 - Which means, we ought to expect that in relationships we will have to tolerate things and it is God’s will that we do.
 - More specifically, it is God’s will that we tolerate things in a loving manner.
 - Unfulfilled expectations are a dangerous thing.
 - If we view relationships in our lives with the expectation that everyone ought to be kind to us and are amazed when they are not, we are going to find it next to impossible to lovingly tolerate others.
 - Do you ever find yourself with this spirit:
 - This is unbelievable, I can’t believe they are doing that, what is going on
 - Have you ever been that way with your spouse?

- Or your children?
- Or your parents?
- Rather than be surprised at having to tolerate things in relationships, we ought to expect it and ask God to help us to do so in a loving way.
 - BTW, we are not the only ones having to tolerate others, the others are struggling to lovingly tolerate us as well.
- And we ought to expect that within the local church we will have to tolerate one another sometimes and most importantly, we must do so in love.
- Which means, many times the other person won't even know we are tolerating them in love, we will just love them through the load that are causing us to bear.

Transition: But the second path to actively pursue a worthy walk as a church is...

- Diligently preserving unity
 - Diligently
 - "To be busy, eager, to make haste" (As quoted in Hoener).
 - *be zealous or eager, take pains, make every effort (BNM Morph)*
 - Being zealous about something.
 - We are to talk pains to preserve unity in the church.
 - Specifically in this local church.
 - But notice the next word...
 - Preserve
 - The implication is that we are not to be diligent to concoct some kind of artificially human contrived unity, but to maintain what we already have.
 - What is the basis for this unity?
 - Vs. 4-6 show the basis of this unity and it is rooted in the Trinity.
 - Preserve what? The unity of the Spirit
 - That unity which we already have because it is produced by the Spirit.
 - A unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
 - Meaning, we are to preserve this unity produced by the Spirit
 - And we are to do so in the bond of peace.
 - That is, in the atmosphere of peace (we have a bond of peace).
 - In the church we have a bond of peace and we are to preserve the unity of the Spirit in that sphere or atmosphere of the peace that binds us together.
 - A peace brought about by Christ.
 - So what is this unity we have in Christ by the Spirit that we are to preserve not create?
 - **1 Corinthians 12:13** For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.
 - So at salvation Jesus baptizes us in or with One Spirit into His One body, the one true Church.

- Red flags should go up in our minds when we start doing something that is unnecessary and is promoting disunity in the church.
- Red flags should go up in our minds when we see others promoting disunity rather than unity.
 - Satan loves to lead one believer into a fleshly spirit in a church.
 - Then they communicate their seemingly legitimate points about someone else in the church and gather around them more people who are being fleshly-rather than dealing with legitimate issues in the way that God has laid out in the Scripture.
 - Going to the person privately and not seeking to make a scene.
 - God commands us to be diligent to preserve the unity that we already have.
- This is something that is tested:
 - If we have to tolerate one another in love that means there are things that we don't see eye to eye on or do the exact same way.
 - But here is the really important point:
 - Those things that we do not see eye to eye on or don't go about the exact same way, do not in any way alter the unity we have in Jesus if we are each born again and therefore baptized in the body of Christ in the Spirit.
- So lets get practical:
 - Someone is really annoying you here at church.
 - Or someone just thinks so different than you.
 - And yet, you know they know Christ.
 - You have choice, you can either focus on what you don't have unity on, or you can focus on what you are commanded to focus on.
 - The unity that you already have in Christ that has been produced by the Spirit.
 - In that moment of frustration or agitation when you want to make a big deal about something that you don't see eye to eye on with another believer in this church
 - Choose to preserve the unity of the spirit you have in Christ, by consciously focusing in on what you share in Christ with that person.
 - In other words, whatever you are disunified about, is very small in comparison with the unity you have in Christ Jesus.
- Whatever you are disunified about with another true believer right now in this church is a disunity that is only earthly and temporal.
 - But the unity that you have in Christ by the Spirit with that person is a unity that will never be severed.

- For all eternity you will be unified with that person in Jesus Christ.
- I think what we have to realize is that persevering the unity of the Spirit takes work.
 - It requires some pain at times.
 - I requires lovingly tolerating things that frustrate us and we simply cannot understand about each other.
 - And why should we go to the trouble of doing that?
 - Because we are simply preserving what is eternally true about each other.
 - We are one in Christ the Spirit has bound us together in Him.
 - In the wording of verses 4-5. We have the Same Lord, the same faith, the same baptism, the same God and Father of us all who is over al land through all and in all.
- When we get to verse 7-16 we are going to see the map for a Christ exalting maturing, and fruitful church.
 - But the background to that playbook for a Christ exalting maturing, and fretuiful church is beign characterized by...
 - Humility,
 - Gentleness
 - And patience
 - As we lovingly tolerate one another and diligently preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace that we have in Christ Jesus.
- **Theme:** We are to walk in this way in the unified body of Christ as He produces maturity in the body by the body.