

17. WALK WORTHY OF YOUR CALLING, PART 2

(SUNDAY, JANUARY 26, 2020)

Scripture Reading: Deut. 6:1-9; Eph. 4:1-6

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever tried to explain the doctrine of the Trinity or how Jesus is truly God and truly man?

Challenging.

We seek to be careful.

We should be confident in Scripture.

False claim – The “church” created the Bible and invented the doctrine of the Trinity, etc.

How do you respond to these arguments?

- 1) Please, tell me the details of this.
- 2) The “church” did not invent these doctrines.
- 3) There were important councils that did meet to clarify and explain what the Bible teaches regarding the Trinity and the person and nature of Jesus Christ.

Four important, early councils:

- 1) Nicaea in 325 – full deity of God the Son
- 2) Constantinople in 381 – full humanity of Jesus Christ in his incarnation
- 3) Ephesus in 431 – The union of the divine and human natures of Jesus Christ.
- 4) Chalcedon in 451 – The distinctiveness and coexistence of the divine and human natures.¹

Bruce Shelley wrote:

So against Arius the church affirmed that Jesus was truly God, and against Apollinaris that he was truly man. Against Eutyches it confessed that Jesus' deity and humanity

¹ Shelley, 126.

were not changed into something else, and against Nestorius that Jesus was not divided but was one person.²

Why do I mention this history?

Our text in verses 4-6 is a Trinitarian text.

Spirit - verse 4

Son - verse 5

Father - verse 6

Have you noticed this structure before?

I noticed it in my studies just for the first time as I was studying Eph. 4.

We might say, Paul could you not have spent more time explaining this great truth to us?

Robert Letham notes that the way Paul teaches about the Trinity in the book of Ephesians shows he did not think it required extensive explanation. It was widely recognized, if not universally, among his readers. Further, it is at the very center of Paul's theology in the letter to the Ephesians.³

Our focus today, verses 4-6, is connected with the command of verse 1 - Walk worthy of the calling with which you were called.

Live your life reflecting the precious truth of the Triune nature and work of God.

Brief review of verses 1-3.

Focus on verses 4-6.

1. REVIEW OF VERSES 1-3:

² Shelley, 126.

³ Robert Letham, 85.

Central command of the entire book of Ephesians – 4:1.

This command is connected with specific actions – verses 2 and 3 and very rich theology in verses 4-6.

The actions are also a reflection of Jesus Christ.

Phil. 2:8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross.

Matt. 11:29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am **gentle** and **lowly** in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (Same two words, just opposite order)

Let's briefly review the key words in verses 2 and 3.

Lowliness

A submission first of all to God and then a humility before others.

Gentleness

Not weakness, but a proper use of strength.

The quality of not being overly impressed by a sense of one's self-importance.⁴

Focused on seeking to serve God that you are not deflected by slights, injuries, or insults, or by indeed personal considerations of any kind.⁵

Longsuffering

Steadfast endurance under provocation⁶

⁴ BDAG, s.v. "πραΰτης," 861.

⁵ Foulkes, 116. Foulkes was giving the definition put forth by Mitton (NCB).

⁶ BDAG, s.v. "μακροθυμία," 612.

Slowness in avenging wrong or retaliating when hurt by another.⁷

Bearing or putting up with each other in love.

The reality is we don't live as we are called, so there is a need for this endurance, but not with a frown but with love.

Col. 3:13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*.

Endeavoring or making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Do everything that you can to keep the **unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace**.

I emphasized that as we think of the description in verses 2-3, we must do so in light of the calling that is described in chapters 1-3.

What has God sovereignly done for you?

If Jesus humbled Himself to die on the cross, can you not humble yourself as you deal with others?

Focus now on verses 4-6:

2) UNITY AND THE TRIUNITY OF GOD, EPH. 4:4-6

What stands out in verses 4-6?

The word "one" – used 7x

Connection with Spirit, Son, and Father

Verse 3 – endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit

Verse 4 – reference to the Spirit

⁷ Foulkes, 116.

It is not that everything in verse 4 refers only to the Spirit.

Let's consider this listing in more detail.

One body

What is this referring to?

We go back to Ephesians 1.

Eph. 1:22 And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church, **23** which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

8x in Ephesians we have reference to the body of Christ in terms of the church.

What church is this?

The true church of Jesus Christ.

The NT does not envision believers not connected to a particular manifestation of the body of Christ, local churches.

We live in a very confusing age today.

How many different Protestant denominations are there?

What about churches like Rome that have abandoned the gospel in many ways?

God has a true church, His elect.

While we do seek to distinguish denominations and churches that are faithful from those that are not, our job is not to figure everything out, but live in light of the reality of God's truth.

There is a unity that all *true Christians* enjoy.

There is also a false unity created by men.

We reject the World Council of Churches and others apostate groups.

We must be very careful not to let the desire for unity push aside the truth of the gospel and other central aspects of the faith.

We seek to proclaim the gospel even to those who think they are Christians but do not know the gospel.

One Spirit

Holy Spirit, the one who brings unity in terms of the blood of Christ and the truth of God's Word.

It is through the Spirit's work that we are brought into the body of Christ.

One Hope of Your Calling

Hope - 3x in Ephesians

We go back to Eph. 1:18, Paul's prayer

Eph. 1:18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know **what is the hope of His calling**, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

Hope - fulfillment of God's incredible plan of redemption, the full unity found in the rule and reign of Jesus Christ.⁸

Verse 5

One Lord

This is a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Clear reference to the deity of Jesus Christ.

Lord is used 28x in Ephesians.

Rom. 10:12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.

Francis Foulkes wrote:

Where there is 'the same Lord' (Rom. 10:12), Jews and Gentiles, black and white, rich and poor, great and small, are yoked together. Neither personal ambition, nor party spirit, nor disputes about non-essentials will be allowed to break such unity, if Christ is served and honoured as Lord.⁹

⁸ Letham, 84.

⁹ Francis Foulkes, *Ephesians: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 10 of Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. IVP/Accordance electronic ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 119.

One Faith

Here is unity based on God's revealed truth.

Faith - a belief in all that God has made known to us, focused on the message of salvation in Jesus Christ.

One Baptism

Isn't unfortunate that baptism is one of the dividing doctrines among Christians?

Reflection of our immaturity as Christians.

There are very precious, sincere believers who do disagree.

Even with differences we can still say, there is one baptism.

Baptism is both a sacrament, a sign and seal, and that work which is done by God's sovereign grace, the cleansing of a sinner by the blood of Jesus Christ.

Why no reference to the Lord's Supper?

Indirectly there is in speaking of the body of Christ, the faith that we confess.

One commentator has written:

'the Apostle is speaking of the initial conditions of Christian life', whereas 'Holy Communion belongs to the support and development of it'.¹⁰

Verse 6

Eph. 4:6 one God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.

Here the pattern is different.

Here is the conclusion.

The greatest unity is that there is one true God.

Is Paul saying only the Father is God?

¹⁰ Comments of Westcott cited by Foulkes, 120.

Not at all.

There is one God and one Father.

How do we understand the language of above, through, and in?

Above or over – God’s sovereignty

Through and in – We can speak of God’s presence and His immanence.¹¹

We have to be careful here.

God is not located in His physical creation, but we cannot escape His presence anywhere in His physical creation.

And God is with His people!

1Cor. 8:6 yet for us *there is* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom *are* all things, and through whom we *live*.

One commentator wrote:

Christians believe that they ‘live in a God-created, God-controlled, God-sustained, God-filled world’ (Barclay), and even more, that God indwells them and is working out his purpose through them.¹²

CONCLUSION

Verses 1-3 – Consider the calling that God has given to you. Seek to keep the unity of the Spirit.

Verses 4-6 – The unity that we are to enjoy is based on a deep theological unity.

¹¹ Letham, 84.

¹² Foulkes, 120.

When differences arise, how must we handle them?

God has called us, we respond to that call.

God has established a basis for true unity. Our call is to seek as best we can to live in terms of what God has created.

Unity is emphasized here. There is also a God-blessed diversity that we see later in this chapter.

God is one and three.

We are to live in unity and also appreciate the diversity God has created.

Never forget your calling. Seek for unity based on God and His truth.

Prayer

Closing Hymn: 226

Benediction: Eph. 3:20-21

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.