

## Walk Worthy Ephesians 4:1-6

### INTRODUCTION

Please turn in your Bibles to Ephesians 4:1-6. We return this morning to the study of Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus under the banner of **Ephesians: In Christ**.

Throughout our life, from beginning to end, our identity is linked to our actions. Who we are affects how we should act. This is the basic principle of life to which Paul appeals in our opening sentence of chapter 4. In the first three chapters he said, **"You are a child of God."** Now in the fourth chapter, he is saying, **"Act like one."** Throughout the rest of this letter, he spells out for us in specific detail how we are to act.

Chapters 1-3 of Ephesians speak of the Christian's birth; chapters 4-6 speak of the Christian's walk. In the first three chapters of Ephesians, Paul has reminded us of our spiritual birth. He has contrasted what we once were, apart from Christ, to what we now are in Him, and the hope of the blessings which are yet to come. Now, in Ephesians 4, Paul speaks to us about learning how to walk. In the first 16 verses, Paul speaks positively of our walk. **Our walk is to be conformed to our calling.** In verses 17 and following, Paul contrasts our new **"walk"** with the way we formerly **"walked"** as lost sinners.

Here's **Ephesians 4** in a nutshell: **Paul advises the Ephesian Christians (and you and me) to live the way God's people should live. Two particularly important things should characterize your lives. First, since you are spiritually united in Christ with all other Christians, live in unity with one another. Minister to others and let others minister to you. In that way, you will all grow to spiritual maturity. Second, live holy lives. Put behind you the sins of the past and live a moral and ethical lifestyle that reflects the values of Christ.**

Because of God's great plan of salvation and the believers' new identity in Christ (belong to God, belong to one another - one in Christ), Paul appeals to them to maintain the unity that already exists in the one body God has created. This unity is an essential and a natural by-product of the common

faith they confess, but it must also be maintained through developing the social virtues associated with selfless love.

*With this in mind, let's dig in...please note...*

### I. The \_\_\_\_\_ to walk worthy (Eph 4:1)

The **"therefore"** takes you back to all that Paul said in the previous chapters. **"In view of all that I have told you about what God has done for you then you need to respond and live in an appropriate manner."** The **"therefore"** is the connective joining the doctrinal with its application. **It implies that there is a response to doctrine that shows up in our practice.** Without that response, we've not fully understood the doctrine. Paul is not interested in giving out theological truth for the sake of increasing head knowledge, because that is worthless to the individual unless it is applied in the person's life. **The Christian life is not to be spent in the Ivory Tower, but on the streets of daily living. Theology is never to simply make you feel like you know a lot of biblical stuff.** It's always to change your life and practice, to conform you more and more to the image of Christ.

Paul reminds them again that he is the **"prisoner of the Lord."** This is not to shame them into living for Christ, but rather to demonstrate by his example that it is entirely possible and reasonable to live for Jesus Christ in all circumstances. A divine perspective when facing difficulties does make the difference. In my readings this past week, I ran across this quote from Holocaust survivor **Corrie Ten Boom: "When a train goes through a tunnel and it gets dark, you don't throw away the ticket and jump off. You sit still and trust the engineer."** (<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/583815-when-a-train-goes-through-a-tunnel-and-it-gets>)

Paul was in prison and being guarded by Roman soldiers, yet his own perspective was that he was a prisoner of Christ, because no jail could hold him unless Christ wanted him there. Paul was not upset about it for he saw the hand of God at work in the situation and that the gospel of Jesus Christ was going forward because of it. Paul is just making a quick reminder to them that walking worthy of God's calling is worth it regardless of the circumstances encountered.

## II. The \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ unity (Eph 4:2-3)

**Unity is God's gift to the church.** We don't work to establish or produce unity. Unity is present because of the work of the gospel and the indwelling Spirit. Instead, we must give every effort to maintain what belongs to the church as a display of the glory of God among redeemed sinners.

How do we maintain the unity provided by God through Christ for His people? Christian character is to be marked by certain qualities. Which ones? The text provides the answer:

### A. \_\_\_\_\_ (4:2a)

One fascinating thing about humility is that it's not just a state of mind or something passive. Instead, humility is an attitude of service that unites the church and holds it together. **So, it's not just thinking humbly, it's living humbly by considering yourself a servant and serving others**, just as Jesus, who came not to be served but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many.

### B. \_\_\_\_\_ (4:2b)

The gentle person subjects their will to His will and that is what meekness is all about. The meek person trusts God without resistance, submitting and doing what He says regardless of circumstance or outcome. They rely on God's goodness and sovereignty to do what is right and best, not their own abilities. **Gentleness is the opposite to self-assertiveness and self-interest.** God is in control, so we are not occupied with ourselves or our own strength at all.

### C. \_\_\_\_\_ (4:2c)

The word here means **"long tempered"** and is sometimes translated as **"longsuffering."** We show **"patience" or longsuffering** as we bear up under the weakness or provocations of others with a patient, gracious spirit that demonstrates Christ's love.

## D. \_\_\_\_\_ (4:2d)

### E. \_\_\_\_\_ (4:3)

**It takes hard work and vigilance to live the Christian life for everything about it is contrary to our human nature.** We are in a battle against sin that would desire to control us. Read Romans 7. This is Paul's description of this battle. **Christianity is not for the slothful, the lethargic, or the lazy. God did not save us so that we can sit back and relax.** By His grace He saved us for the purpose of good works as pointed out in Eph.

## III. The \_\_\_\_\_ for unity (Eph 4:4-6)

Unity does not happen because a group of people call themselves a church. Rather, unity is a Trinitarian gift. That's easily noted in this context of diligence to preserve unity by the emphasis on the members of the Trinity in verses 4–6: **"one Spirit...one Lord...One God and Father."** The One God revealed in three distinct personalities is one God not three. He therefore exists in unity. The Father doesn't have one set of attributes, the Son another, and the Spirit yet another. The unity of the divine persons in the Godhead is such that nothing else in our existence can compare to it. Yet when He works redemptively in a people and unites them to one another in the church, He seeks to display the beauty and power of His unity.

Verses 4–6 point to seven **"ones"** that constitute the foundation on which the Spirit effects a true oneness among the redeemed.

A. \_\_\_\_\_ (4:4)

• One body –

• One Spirit –

• One hope –

B. \_\_\_\_\_ (4:5)

• One Lord –

• One faith –

• One baptism –

C. \_\_\_\_\_ (4:6)

## **CONCLUSION**

What can we take with us this morning?

**At an individual level**, when you boil it right down, we have two basic problems. One is that we believe the wrong things; the other is that we don't act consistently with our right beliefs.

Wrong beliefs in the here and now can cause pain, confusion, money and even your life. Wrong beliefs about Jesus Christ can have eternal consequences.

Not acting in a way that's consistent with our beliefs can also have detrimental effects. There are a lot of times that we believe exactly the right thing, but our conduct doesn't line up with our beliefs. If this is you today, go before the Lord and admit and agree with Him about your sinful living. These are our two basic problems: wrong beliefs and inconsistent conduct. Most everything that's wrong with us is some combination of these two problems.

**At a church level**, are we walking in unity? If not, or if we wish to enhance it, we must do four things:

- **First, we must \_\_\_\_\_ on our unity, deeply rooted in the Holy Trinity.**
- **Second, we ought to \_\_\_\_\_ on Christ.**
- **Third, we need to \_\_\_\_\_ the Holy Spirit to help us cultivate a character which builds unity — a character of humility, gentleness, patience, and loving forbearance.**
- **Fourth, we must be \_\_\_\_\_.**